



## Command Message

# COLORADO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

March 2020



As we roll into March, I want us to focus on my **strategic directive of operationalize**. Operationalizing our force will optimize the structure of our organization for mission command, talent management, and specialization. Increased readiness will be the measure of our success. Operating on the concept that Mission Command = Intent + Empowerment, we want our leaders to lead and grow at the unit level. To allow leaders to grow, we want to highlight our Soldiers' talents and place them into the right positions for them to keep learning and growing. Placing our Soldiers in stretch assignments that use their specialties and strengths will increase our readiness and lethality.

March 29th is National Vietnam War Veterans Day. We use the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration to thank and honor our Vietnam veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the nation, with distinct recognition of former prisoners of war and families of those still listed as missing in action. Take the time to **thank a Vietnam veteran this month**. "One day we all will remove this uniform. No amount of time, no conflict, nor the challenges in life can cut the golden thread uniting veterans, both past and present, in a unique and everlasting bond." – LTG Aundre F. Piggee

The Colorado Army National Guard is always ready to serve our country and provide support when needed. Currently, 240 service members are mobilized to support the warfight overseas and last month we welcomed home Detachment 1, Co. B, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment from a year-long deployment to Afghanistan. On the home front, we stand ready at the RTI facility on Fort Carson to support a request from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control to provide lodging for up to 250 U.S. Citizens and their families returning from China in the wake of the Coronavirus outbreak. Once again proving we are a critical component to our nation's warfight and humanitarian efforts; we are **always ready and always there**.

During National Women's History Month in March, the Colorado Army National Guard joins the nation to celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of our sisters in uniform. The 2020 Women's History Month theme is "Honoring the Past, Securing the Future!" This theme honors the brave women who fought to win suffrage rights for women and for the women who continue to fight for the voting rights of others. Women have played vital roles in our force since the Revolutionary War. Today women are Soldiers, Army Civilians, Veterans and family members who are critical members of our COARNG team. Recently Deborah Manzanares became **the first female command sergeant major** of a COARNG field artillery unit – and one of the first women to fill that role in a field artillery unit, at large – when she accepted the colors of the 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery Regiment. Leaders like CSM Manzanares help pave the way for our young Soldiers to blaze new trails each year.

In a difficult time for one of our own COARNG members, I am honored to be a part of an organization whose members have volunteered in a non-duty status to aid the El Paso County Sheriff in search of Gannon Stauch. My thoughts and prayers are with the Stauch family. Remember to always support your brothers and sisters in arms.

The ACFT is coming. **I challenge all of you** to take personal pride in your physical fitness and set the example of being combat ready. This month your assigned task is to try to do 3 sets of 10 sumo squats five days a week. Ultimately, the ACFT will help transform our fitness culture, reduce preventable injuries and attrition, and enhance mental toughness and stamina so we are ready to deploy, fight and win on any battlefield.



Colorado Springs, Colorado - U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Deborah Manzanares receives the colors of the 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery Regiment, Colorado Army National Guard from 3rd Battalion Commander U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jason Stuchlik, during a change-of-responsibility ceremony at the Regional Training Institute, Fort Carson, Colorado, Jan. 4, 2020.

(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Zach Sheely)