



Year In Review

Since 1860, the Colorado National Guard has served our communities, state and nation in times of peace and times of strife and always as the first military responder during state emergencies.

The Colorado National Guard is a diverse, community-based force of more than 5,500 Citizen-Soldiers and Citizen-Airmen from all walks of life—college students, single parents, doctors, pilots, police officers, attorneys, teachers and artisans, to name a few.

These service members commit one weekend per month—and at least two weeks per year—to train and polish skills for missions both during peacetime and war. Between those military commitments, they live and work in communities across Colorado.

The National Guard is unique compared to other reserve force components because of its dual state and federal missions and because more than two-thirds of our members serve part-time.

The National Guard supports both our state and nation to provide trained, well-equipped men and women to augment the active force during national contingencies or war, and provide state assistance during disasters, both natural and manmade.

The National Guard provides a broad range of capabilities at a cost of only five percent of the total base budget of the Department of Defense.

When not mobilized for national defense, the Colorado National Guard serves under the command of the Governor through his appointed Adjutant General. The Adjutant General of Colorado is a gubernatorial cabinet member and also serves as the executive director of the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

The Colorado National Guard is always ready, always there and a great value for America.



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Fellow Coloradans,

This issue of our Year in Review will give you a deeper understanding of your Colorado National Guard.

During 2024, hundreds of our Soldiers and Airmen deployed overseas, integrating with our joint force and allies for air, engineering, field artillery, and special forces operations.

Our Guard members kept watch here at home, defending the aerospace and cyber domains.

Our search and rescue teams helped responders to save lives and reduce suffering.

We're supporting a Whole of State team to create a protection plan for critical public and private infrastructure.

People are at the center of these Colorado National Guard stories, and they're our top priority. Our men and women have dedication, experience, professionalism, skills and values that are essential to our continued success. Our families, employers and communities shore up our resilience.

While turning these pages, you'll see that we're focused on warfighting readiness for large-scale combat operations. This priority aligns with the intensification of great power competition and a growing risk of great power conflict.

Our third priority is to innovate and modernize our force. By embracing emerging technologies, posturing for growth, and delivering innovative solutions to our Soldiers and Airmen we will ensure the Colorado National Guard remains a leader in national defense and state support operations. Partnerships—local, national, global—play a key role in this Line of Effort.

These three priorities—People, Warfighting Readiness, and Modernization/Innovation—guide everything that we do in service to our communities, state and nation.

We remain: Always Ready, Always There.

Hold the High Ground!

Major General Laura Clellan
The Adjutant General of Colorado

Jared Polis
Governor

Laura L. Clellan
Major General, COARNG
The Adjutant General

The Colorado National Guard has
Three Priorities / Lines of Effort:

- **People**
- **Warfighting Readiness**
- **Modernization and Innovation**



The Colorado National Guard traces its origins to 1860, when the 1st General Assembly of the Jefferson Territory authorized the formation of two military companies – the “Jefferson Rangers” and the “Denver Guards” – to protect and serve the citizens in and around the newly-founded city of Denver. Shortly thereafter, in March of 1862, Colorado’s First Volunteers engaged and barely defeated an equal-sized force of Texas Confederates at Glorieta Pass, New Mexico.

Over the next few years, Colorado militiamen fought other Civil War battles, mostly in Missouri and Oklahoma, as well as engaging in multiple skirmishes with Native American tribes in the surrounding area.

From 1889 to 1914, the Colorado Volunteers found themselves constantly called on to quell violent miner strikes including the infamous Colorado Coalfield War during 1913-1914. By the time this major labor uprising finally ended, 66 people had died in the violence including several Colorado militiamen.

Colorado’s 1st and 2nd Infantry Volunteers mobilized for the Spanish-American War in 1898 and helped the U.S. claim Wake Island and go on to fight in the Philippines – even earning the distinction of being the first to enter the city of Manila. During a heated battle, Colorado’s Lt. Col. William R. Grove “gallantly rushed to the aid of his colonel and, armed with only a pistol, charged at several enemy rebels and compelled all not killed in the gunfight to surrender.” Grove’s bravery earned him the Medal of Honor.

In 1916, Colorado Soldiers were called upon as part of the Punitive Expedition along the southern border of Arizona. Their mission was to protect and defend from invading parties led by the nefarious Mexican rebel, Pancho Villa – and try to capture him and his raiders who had already killed 24 Americans. Under the



Soldiers of Colorado’s Chaffee Light Artillery pose for a photo in 1878.



Maj. Alphonse Ardourdel (CO Adjutant General 1936-1939)

leadership of Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing, 15,000 U.S. troops chased Villa and his men for nearly two years, finally withdrawing in 1917 without ever capturing him.

By 1914, the “war to end all wars” was ravaging Europe, and every unit in the CONG was mobilized and sent overseas during World War I. At war’s end, 4,300 enlisted Soldiers and 200 officers from Colorado had been drafted into federal service.

The precursor to the Colorado Air National Guard, the 120th Aero Squadron, was originally organized Aug. 28, 1917, and reconstituted as the 120th Observation Squadron, 45th Division Aviation, in 1923. The squadron’s first aircraft (JN-4E “Jennies”) proved to be impractical for Colorado’s altitude and could only be flown in early morning and just before sundown when the air was heavier.

From 1927 to 1929, the Colorado Army National Guard was called upon to bring order to more violent strikes by coal miners near Boulder. They also helped law enforcement officials with a mutiny and rioting at the state penitentiary and assisted with tracking down bank robbers and bandits across Colorado.

In 1936, southern Colorado was infested with a plague of locusts and its Citizen-Soldiers were activated to protect property and help with extermination efforts. Two years later, hundreds of CONG troops were called upon to help find, exhume, rebury and organize the graves of thousands of veterans scattered across Colorado and nearby areas.

By the time the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor



Members of the 120th Observation Squadron pose next to their "Jenny", circa 1923.

in 1941, all COARNG units had been mobilized, preparing for a war with Germany. Colorado's 157th Infantry had been assigned to the 45th Infantry Division. Ironically, since 1926, the 45th ID's shoulder sleeve insignia featured a swastika, a common southwest Native American symbol, switching to a Thunderbird emblem in 1939 after the Nazi party officially adopted the symbol. While some COARNG units served proudly in the Pacific theatre, the bulk of them shipped overseas with the 45th ID for the invasion of Italy. They fought gallantly, with heavy losses, in multiple battles throughout Italy, France and Germany and participated in four beach landings. In late April 1945, Lt. Col. Felix Sparks, Commander of the 3rd Battalion, 157th Infantry Regiment, was ordered to secure Germany's Dachau concentration camp, liberating 30,000 tortured men, women and children. Two weeks later, Germany surrendered and the 45th marched into Munich – the birthplace of the Nazi party. By the end of the war, the 157th had served for 511 days and nights on the battlefields of Europe.

Following WWII, the first Air Guard unit to be organized was HQ, 59th Wing, COANG June 15, 1946. The 120th Observation Squadron, which was activated in January 1941, was redesignated while on active service as the 120th Tactical Reconnaissance

Squadron and was further redesignated as the 120th Fighter Squadron, Colorado National Guard, June 30, 1946. They were stationed at Buckley Field, Denver, flying the P-51 Mustang.

In 1947, the 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron organized an aerial demonstration team called the "Minute Men." This team was federally recognized in 1956, making it the first and only Air National Guard precision aerial demonstration team. The team performed in more than 100 air shows for more than three million people in 47 states and five foreign countries before being disbanded in favor of a federal team of Air Force pilots, the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds. The Minute Men flew the F-86F-2 version of the Sabre jet.

In 1950 and 1951, as a result of the Korean conflict, several Army Guard units and the entire COANG were ordered into active Federal service. Personnel of the CONG served in Korea, Europe, and the Continental U.S. during this emergency.

The CONG was again called upon to furnish manpower for the military buildup during the "Berlin Crisis" and served honorably from Oct. 1, 1961, until they returned home in August 1962.

In 1968, nine COANG units were called upon once again to serve on Active Duty

during the "Pueblo Crisis". These units remained on Active Duty until April 30, 1969. Service was performed in Vietnam, Korea, and in 49 CONUS and 11 overseas bases. The 120th TFS was the first reserve component unit in the nation to be committed to combat during the Vietnam Crisis, flying over 6,000 combat missions in F-100C Super Sabre jets out of Phan Rang Air Base in southern Vietnam.

During one of Colorado's worst natural disasters – the Big Thompson Canyon flood of 1976 which devastated the town of Estes Park and killed 144 people – Colorado's Military Police, Aviation, and Maintenance units rushed to the assistance of local authorities.

The COANG deployed to Turkey for a NATO Exercise in 1979 becoming the first Air Guard unit to deploy under "bare base" conditions, being provided with only a runway and a water supply. Many more deployments to Turkey and other NATO countries would follow, building critical interoperability with our allies as our nation fought the Cold War.

When the Air Force reestablished its world-wide air to ground gunnery competition in 1983, the team from the COANG won it all, including the Top Gun award, beating all other active and reserve entries.

Minute Men perform at an air show in 1956.



The Persian Gulf War ignited in late 1990, and several CONG units mobilized for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm including the 1157th and 1158th Transportation Detachments which were the first National Guard units in a combat zone since the Vietnam War.

The following year, over 1,300 CONG members were mobilized to support World Youth Day when Pope John Paul II and an estimated crowd of 100,000 descended on Denver. Medical personnel treated nearly 21,000 heat-related injuries during the delegation's 12-mile march in the hot July sun.

In March of 1994, the Governor signed an executive order establishing a state partnership for peace program with the former soviet-occupied country of Slovenia. This on-going relationship led Slovenia out of a Warsaw-pact mindset and onto the path of acceptance into NATO all the while fostering an enduring friendship between them and Colorado.

When tensions flared in Haiti in 1994, B Co., 5th Bn., 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne) was mobilized to provide civil support as part of Operation Maintain Democracy. SF detachments were assigned throughout the country ensuring regional stability and security for democratic elections as well as oversight for projects improving Haiti's collapsed infrastructure.



CONG UH-60 on a search & rescue mission in 2024 using advanced hoist procedures.

The 137th Space Warning Squadron at Greeley ANG Station became the first National Guard unit to support Air Force Space Command in 1996. Nearly three decades later, the 137th provides our nation the only survivable and enduring mobile missile warning and nuclear detonation detection capability.

1997 proved to be a tasking year for the COARNG: The 104th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment was activated in support of the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia; High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site (HAATS) pilots successfully found and recovered the wreckage of a missing Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt that crashed in the Colorado mountains; hundreds of Colorado Citizen-Soldiers from various units provided security and escort for the president and other world leaders during the Summit-of-the-Eight held in Denver; several MPs volunteered to be part of the U.N. peacekeeping force in the former republic of Yugoslavia; and over 300 Colorado Guardmembers were activated during a blizzard in October.

In 1998, Colorado SF and Aviation personnel helped local law enforcement track down three fugitives who killed a police officer in Cortez, Colorado, and wounded two others before fleeing. After several days of combing the canyons on the Colorado-Utah border, it was determined that they killed themselves.

Over 100 COARNG Soldiers were called to assist law enforcement officials April 20, 1999, during and after the atrocities at the Columbine High School massacre in Littleton, Colorado.

After the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center Sep. 11, 2001, hundreds of Colorado Soldiers and Airmen were mobilized to guard Colorado airports and sensitive sites as part of Operation Noble Eagle. Over the next 12 years, nearly every unit served at least once as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. The 140th Wing remains on alert; defending the homeland 24/7 against airborne threats with a fleet of

F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft as part of the Aerospace Control Alert mission.

A landmark alliance was made April 13, 2004, between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the CONG through the State Partnership Program.

During the Colorado floods in 2013, the CONG assisted by providing 980 personnel for ground and air search and rescue operations that evacuated a total of 3,233 people and 1,300 pets. The CONG provided 10 helicopters and more than 200 military vehicles for rescue and response efforts across the state. The flood response included the largest domestic airlift rescue operation since Hurricane Katrina. In addition, Colorado Guard members assisted local law enforcement at 67 traffic control points, filled 12,000 sandbags, and transported 48.3 tons of cargo.

Colorado Guard space capabilities further expanded when the 138th Space Control Squadron at Peterson Space Force Base activated in 2020, providing a deployable and cutting-edge electromagnetic warfare capability.

Nearly every year, elements of the CONG are activated during emergencies including floods, fires, snowstorms as well as search and rescue efforts. Beginning in 2020, CONG members served 840 operational days for the COVID-19 response, which was the largest and longest response in Colorado history.

In December 2021, 56 COARNG Soldiers from the 220th MP Company provided security and traffic management in response to the Marshall Fire in Boulder County, Colorado. Burning over 6,000 acres, the Marshall Fire was the most destructive wildfire in the state's history.

Additionally, units are continuously federally mobilized for on-going peacekeeping missions. The CONG is without fail training and performing national security missions; proving they are Always Ready, Always There.



Gov. Jared Polis
Commander In Chief



Maj. Gen. Laura Clellan
The Adjutant General



Command Chief Master Sgt. Lisa Perry
Command Senior Enlisted Leader



Brig. Gen. Bren Rogers
Asst. Adjutant General, Army



Brig. Gen. Myk Bruno
Director of Joint Staff



Brig. Gen. Micah Fesler
Asst. Adjutant General, Air



Command Sgt. Maj. Erik Miller
State Command Sgt. Major



Col. Isaac Martinez
Chief of the Joint Staff



Command Sgt. Maj. Jon Crowe
DJS Senior Enlisted Leader



Command Chief Master Sgt. Jeremy Jenkins
State Command Chief



Brig. Gen. Tod Fenner
Land Component Commander



Col. Michael Pribil
Chief of Staff, Army



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Mike Coppock
Command Chief Warrant Officer



Col. Ben Couchman
140th Wing Commander



Command Chief Master Sgt. Byron Philips
140th Wing Command Chief



AEROSPACE CONTROL ALERT

The 140th Wing is a North American Aerospace Defense Command Aerospace Control Alert-trained flying unit that conducts air sovereignty missions, as tasked, throughout North America. In this capacity, the unit's F-16 Fighting Falcons are ready to detect, deter, deny, or, if necessary, defeat any airborne threats to the U.S. and Canadian airspaces.

The new commander of the Continental U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command Region and 1st Air Force paid a visit to the 140th Wing, COANG, Oct. 31, 2024, citing its importance to the homeland defense apparatus.

"The 140th is obviously a critical part of our homeland defense enterprise, and the NORAD agreement with our partners to the north," U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Luke Ahmann said. "We will continue to think about how to integrate not only the 140th

but all of our alert assets to better protect America as we pivot from a post 9/11 type threat to a more advanced peer threat of the future."

The 140th Wing has served as an ACA-trained unit since Sept. 11, 2001, operating 24/7 while providing NORAD a means to request air assistance for security patrols quickly or to react to potential airborne threats and aggression. Aircraft, aircrew and launch personnel diligently ensure the immediate capability to respond to potential airborne threats.



ELECTROMAGNETIC WARFARE DEMO

Members of the 138th Electromagnetic Warfare Squadron, 233rd Space Group, COANG; 114th EWS, Florida Air National Guard; 109 EWS and 150 EWS, Hawaii Air National Guard, demonstrated electromagnetic warfare capabilities, including the Night Owl space system, during U.S. Space Command's Apollo Nexus Tech Demo Day at Peterson SFB, Colorado Springs, Aug. 29, 2024.



The demonstrations presented the National Guard's ability to rapidly acquire and field mature technologies within a year or two—utilizing the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account—to U.S. and Five Eye general officers and other distinguished visitors who were in attendance.

Formed after WWII to gather intelligence, the Five Eyes is an alliance composed of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.



ALWAYS READY TO RESPOND

Members of the Colorado National Guard, assigned to the National Guard Reaction Force, participated in a validation exercise at Buckley SFB, Aurora, Colorado, Sept. 15, 2024.

The NGRF is tasked as the first responding unit in the event of a state response focused on incidents requiring law enforcement or security support.

NGRF members specialize in civil disturbance response, crowd management, and de-escalation of force by non-lethal means.



NASA TRAINS WITH COARNG TO RETURN TO MOON AND BEYOND

The CONG's High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site hosted Charlie Duke, one of only 12 NASA astronauts to have walked on the moon, July 8, 2024.

Since 2021, HAATS has been building a partnership with NASA, training astronauts on power management and rotary wing operations at higher elevations. Duke's tour was as much an opportunity for him to see current NASA training as it was an opportunity for him to offer insights from his own experience.

"It was an incredible opportunity to learn from an astronaut who personally walked on the moon," said (then) U.S. Army Lt. Col. Scott Tucker, HAATS commander. "He described his experience to us which demonstrated how complex landing on the moon can be. He also validated our training program with NASA to prepare Artemis astronauts to return to the moon and how we can improve that training."



NASA's current mission, Artemis, is to return mankind to the moon and then set their sights on Mars. Although most NASA pilots come from a fixed-wing background, recent determinations from NASA have shown that lunar operations are more aligned with rotary-wing operations. NASA's goal in partnering with HAATS is to build a program that will give every astronaut a shared base of knowledge that covers some of the challenges associated with landing on the moon.

HAATS, based in Gypsum, Colorado, teaches military rotary-wing pilots from around the world the knowledge and confidence to safely operate their aircraft at maximum gross weights in any environment—especially at high altitudes.



HOLDING THE HIGH GROUND

U.S. Army Capt. Edwin Wiley, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 117th Space Battalion, planned and executed a unique three-day training exercise from Sep. 6-8, 2024, for his unit in the White River National Forest in Colorado to give the Soldiers of his company a training experience they'd never forget.

The training itself included air movement to the White River National Forest by CH-47 Chinook helicopters from the 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion 135th Regiment, several ascents of Shrine Mountain and Wringle Ridge, and training missions to rescue injured hikers allowing Soldiers to demonstrate casualty care, land navigation, and requesting medical evacuation support.

The Soldiers also conducted night operations to familiarize themselves with movement in no-light or low-light operations.

In addition to the 2-135th, the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association, rangers of the Eagle Holy Cross Ranger District, 100th Missile Defense Brigade, and the 928th Area Medical Support Company all played vital roles in ensuring the training was a success.



UNIT LOCATIONS

- Alamosa**
- D/1-157 Infantry Bn.
- Aurora**
- B/3-157 Field Artillery Bn.
 - 540 Network Support Co.
- Buckley Space Force Base**
- 2-135 General Support Aviation Bn. (HHC, Det 1/B, D, E)
 - 2-238 GSAB (A, Det 1/D, Det 1/E, Det 3/HHC)
 - 1-168 GSAB (Det 1/C, Det 4/D, Det 4/E)
 - Det 6/C/2-245 GSAB
 - Det 1/131 AVIM
 - D/3-140 Aviation Regiment
 - Medical Det.
 - Special Operations Det. - Korea
 - HHB/169 Field Artillery Bde.
 - 101 Army Band
 - 104 Public Affairs Det.
 - Det 33, OSA
 - Army Aviation Support Facility
 - CERF-P
 - TUAS/D/572nd BEB (MI)
 - 140 Wing
 - 120 Fighter Sq
 - 240 Civil Engineering Flt
 - USP&FO
 - 8th Civil Support Team - WMD
- Centennial**
- JFHQ - COARNG
 - Joint Staff - CONG
 - 891 Trial Defense
 - CPT 174
- Colorado Springs (Chestnut)**
- HHB/3-157 Field Artillery Bn.
 - Det. 1/HHB-169 Field Artillery Bde.
- Colorado Springs (Newport)**
- NORTHCOM Mobilization Element
 - 100 Missile Defense Bde.
- Denver**
- HHC/89 Troop Cmd
 - 193 Military Police Bn.
 - 220 Military Police Co.
 - Det 3/E/186 Fwd. Support Co.
 - D/572 BEB (MI)

- Fort Carson**
- HQ 168 Regional Training Institute
 - Centennial Training Site
 - Main Command Post-Operational Detachment (MCP-OD)
 - 928 Area Support Medical Co.
 - 140 Quartermaster
 - B Co./5-19 Special Forces Bn.
 - 117 Space Support Bn.
 - 217, 1158 Space Support Co.
- Fort Collins**
- HHC, 147 Brigade Support Bn.
- Fort Lupton**
- B/1-157 Infantry Reg.
 - Det 1/C/1-157 Infantry Reg.

- Grand Junction**
- C/1-157 Infantry Reg.
- Greeley**
- 233 Space Group (SCS, SFS, LRF)
 - 137 Space Warning Squadron
- Gypsum**
- High-Altitude ARNG Aviation Training Site (HAATS)
- Longmont**
- A/3-157 Field Artillery Bn.
- Montrose**
- 947 Engineer Co.
- North Colorado Springs**
- 1-157 Infantry Regiment - Mtn (HHC, A, Det 1/D)

- Peterson Air Force Base**
- 138 SPCS
- Pueblo**
- 188 Forward Support Co.
- Watkins**
- HQ/5-19 Special Forces Group Bn.
 - D Co./5-19 SFG(A)
 - E Co./5-19 SFG(A)
 - Augmentation Co./5-19 SFG(A)
- Windsor**
- I/186 Support Bn.



A new \$9.4 million construction project that expanded the Fort Lupton Readiness Center was unveiled on July 26, 2024. The 41,942-square-foot expansion includes a new training and maintenance building plus military & personal vehicle parking.



This new 21,600-square-foot unheated aircraft storage hangar was officially opened on Oct. 3, 2024, for the Army Aviation Support Facility.



A groundbreaking ceremony was held March 20, 2024, for the construction of a new homeland defense and civil support readiness center for the COARNG's 100th Missile Defense Brigade and U.S. Northern Command Mobilization Element.

Six Soldiers from Army Space Support Team 17, 117th Space Battalion, deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations in support of Operation Spartan Shield to maximize space-based capabilities of U.S. and Allied operations in support of overseas operations. The 117th stands out as a uniquely organized, resourced, and heavily requested capability of the COARNG and U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command. The battalion continues to develop and evolve its capabilities as the demand for Army space-based capabilities grows within conventional and special operations commands.



The COARNG hosted a departure ceremony for nearly 100 Soldiers of the 947th Engineer Vertical Construction Company at the Montrose Pavilion Event Center, Montrose, Colorado, May 22, 2024. The 947th EVCC deployed to the USCENTCOM area of responsibility for approximately one year as part of Task Force Spartan in support of Operation Spartan Shield. They provided general engineering capabilities to build partner nation capabilities and deter Iranian aggression in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility.

The COARNG 169th Field Artillery Brigade held a departure ceremony at the Southeast Christian Church, Parker, Colorado, April 4, 2024. More than 100 Citizen-Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 169th FAB deployed to the USCENTCOM area of responsibility as part of Task Force Spartan in support of Operation Spartan Shield. The unit sustained and protected Combined Land Component Forces, built partner nation capacity, deterred Iranian aggression, and provided artillery support to the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve.



Members of the 138th EWS deployed to in support of U.S. African Command to support space operations across four continents. The 138th EWS provides 24-hour survivable and endurable strategic missile warning and nuclear detection to the National Command Authority. Utilizing their wide range of military and civilian expertise, the members of the 138th EWS successfully navigated an 1,800% increase in taskings and completed a short notice retrograde of a Counter Communications System from the AFRICOM theater to Peterson SFB in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

CYBER PROTECTION

Governor Jared Polis issued an executive order for a CONG cyber team to provide defensive cyber support to the Colorado Secretary of State during the statewide election Nov. 5, 2024.

Six CONG cyber-trained professionals comprised Joint Task Force Cyber to provide network monitoring during the 2024 elections in order to prevent cyber-attacks and enhance integration across state agencies.

For the past 12 years, during state-wide elections, Colorado has led the way in the nation by providing CONG cyber teams to assist the SoS Office in monitoring key systems for possible malicious activity.



HURRICANE RESPONSE

The CONG, through an Emergency Management Assistance Compact request from the Florida National Guard, deployed one CH-47 Chinook helicopter and eight crew members from the 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion 135th Regiment to Florida in preparation for the Hurricane Milton response.

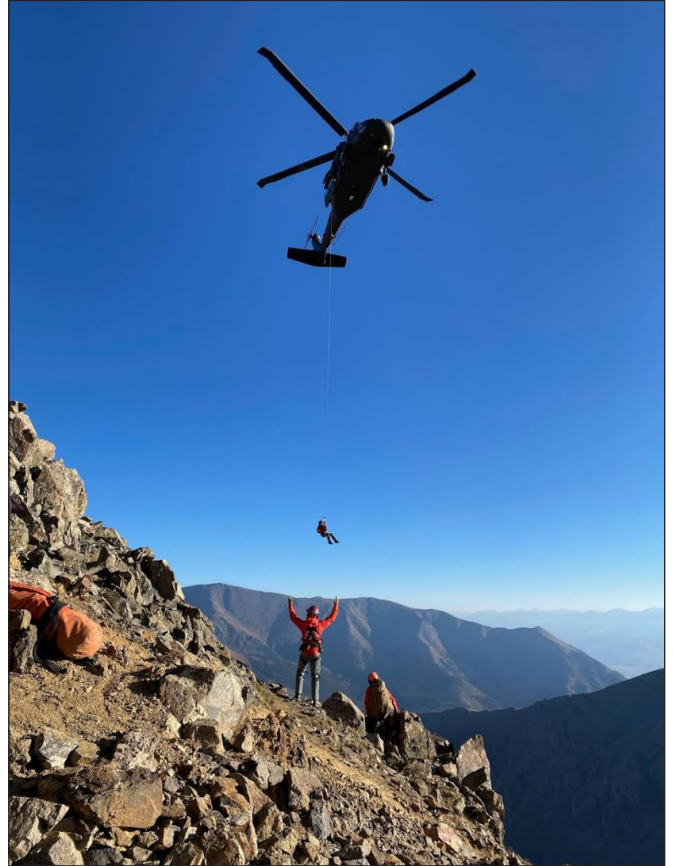
The team departed from the Chief Warrant Officer 5 David R. Carter Army Aviation Support Facility at Buckley SFB, Aurora, Colorado, the morning of Oct. 8, 2024. The CH-47 was equipped with a hoist in anticipation of search and recovery support. They joined with other National Guard units to form a larger task force, and they inserted rescue teams in hard-hit areas of the Florida coastline.





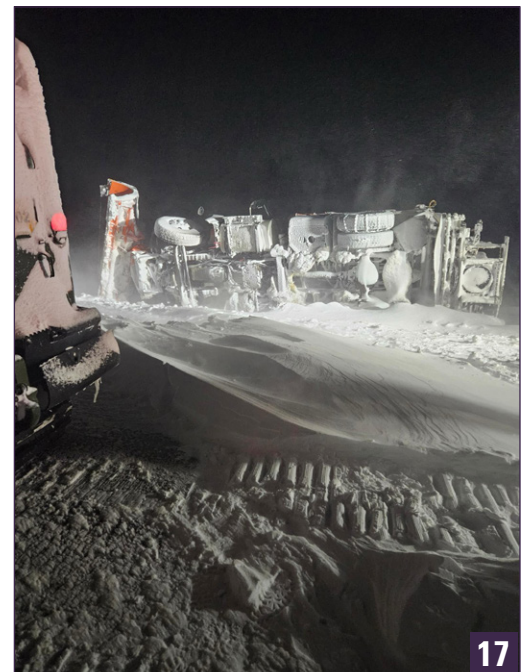
27 LIVES SAVED

In 2024, the CONG assisted our partners with 29 Search and Rescue (SAR) missions performed by the HAATS in Gypsum and the AASF at Buckley SFB. Air crews utilized 25 UH-60 Black Hawk sorties and four more using LUH-72 Lakotas, which resulted in 27 lives saved, flying a total of 87 flight hours.



FALL BLIZZARD

In response to November's historic winter storm, the Governor declared a state of emergency and activated the CONG. The CONG had teams of Soldiers with small unit support vehicles staged in Limon and Rocky Ford, Colorado. Soldiers helped rescue stranded civilians and transported essential supplies including life support, fuel, and water to those in need.



LIFESAVERS

COARNG Soldiers U.S. Army Pfc. Manuel Talamantes and Spc. Shane Valadez were on the way back to their duty station at the Chestnut Armory, Colorado Springs, Colorado, after rendering honors at a funeral service in full dress uniform, June 14, 2024.

To avoid traffic on Interstate 25, the Soldiers traveled a different route than they normally would have. This is where they witnessed a head-on collision between a sedan and a large truck not far from their final destination.

The incident happened close enough to them that Valadez had to avoid becoming part of the collision or another potential secondary accident. When the vehicles stopped, the two Soldiers sprang into action to assess the situation and to check on other motorists.

The Soldiers immediately jumped out of their car, started controlling the situation, directing civilians, and trying to get everybody safely out of the way.

Talamantes quickly ran to the sedan while Valadez went to find first aid materials. In the sedan, Talamantes found a conscious but severely injured female driver. He immediately searched for a way to reach the patient, whose vehicle was crushed around her, and control her bleeding.

Talamantes, a combat medic assigned to the COARNG's 928th Area Medical Support Company in Colorado Springs, also has civilian experience as an emergency medical technician. Both Soldiers remained on the scene until first responders arrived to relieve them.



JOINT ENHANCEMENT ENLISTMENT PROGRAM

Bjorn Piltingsrud became the first success story of the CONG's Joint Enlistment Enhancement Program, a recruitment initiative launched in 2023. Referred by his father, U.S. Army Maj. Rich Piltingsrud, Bjorn enlisted as a tactical aircraft maintenance specialist in the COANG's 140th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. JEEP incentivizes Guard members to recruit new enlistees by offering a \$500 reward for successful referrals. Referring members, known as JEEP assistants, mentor and guide prospects throughout the enlistment process, ensuring they receive encouragement and support from initial contact through training.

HONORING THEIR FOREFATHERS

In honor of those who fought and died at the Normandy invasion, U.S. Army Maj. Michael Frank and Col. Todd Stansbury, participated in a historic para-jump over Normandy to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day, June 5 and 7, 2024.

Frank serves as the executive officer and full-time administrative officer for the 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment at Buckley Space Force Base, Aurora, Colorado. He is also a UH-60 Black Hawk and LUH-72 Lakota helicopter aviator. He had never jumped prior to this commemoration event. He has 17 years of active military service in both the U.S. Marine Corps and the Army National Guard.

Frank has been a member of the COARNG since 2012. Among his motives for the jump, Frank wanted to honor his grandfather, Louis Frank, who served in the

Army in WWII.

Not only was Frank the first to jump that day, but his position historically also put him first into combat.

"I jumped out of the C-47 that led the D-Day invasion, *That's All Brother*," Frank said. "Not only were we jumping onto hallowed ground, but we were also jumping from some of the same airplanes that were in the D-Day invasion."

Frank and Stansbury both jumped again, this time from *Placid Lassie*, another restored WWII aircraft that had dropped troops during the invasion 80 years prior.



BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

Seventeen Colorado Army and Air National Guard members competed in the 2024 Best Warrior Competition at Fort Carson, Colorado Springs, Colorado, October 24-27, 2024.

This year's CONG competition featured two previous competitors and 15 first timers, all striving to finish at the top of the group.

In addition to the Army Combat Fitness Test, written essay, marksmanship skills, ruck march and land navigation, the competition featured the events of the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge which opened the door for each competitor to earn the award.

The GAFPB is a German military award similar to the U.S. Army's Expert Soldier Badge. It is one of several foreign awards U.S. military personnel can wear on their dress uniform.



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TRAINING

The 140th Emergency Management team from the 140th Civil Engineering Squadron, COANG, joined forces with the 157th Air Refueling Wing, New Hampshire National Guard, for an intense field training exercise in March. The training goal was to hone essential skills to ensure the emergency management team members are sharp and ready for rapid deployment.

COLORADO COLONEL CHOSEN FOR KEY POSITION



The COARNG made history when U.S. Army Col. Laura A. Thomas was selected to be the first ARNG nurse consultant to the surgeon general in June 2024, a top position in the Army medical profession.

Thomas has extensive knowledge in military medicine having served in the Active Duty Army, ARNG, and also the U.S. Air Force. She is currently the medical readiness detachment commander for the COARNG.

In her role as the Surgical Nursing Consultant to The Surgeon General, Thomas advises The Surgeon General on all matters related to the ARNG's Nurse Corps and attends meetings related to the Army medical profession as a whole.

"Looking to the future, I'm excited as I feel like this role is the culmination of all my experience," Thomas said. "I've learned a lot about how nurses are utilized across both services and components. As the Army National Guard 66H consultant, I can leverage those experiences and advise the surgeon general on ways to develop and operationalize ARNG nurses in unique ways. This will be very important when planning for a future conflict."



SOLDIER'S CAREER COMES FULL CIRCLE

In a rare occurrence, U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Erik Miller passed command of the 168th Regiment, Regional Training Institute, Basic Leader Course, Fort Carson, Colorado, to his wife, (then) U.S. Army Master Sgt. Sarah Miller, Sept. 8, 2024.

Sarah is no stranger to working at the 168th Regiment. She served as a unit administrator, an instructor in four different courses, the 168th Regional Training Institute S1 (administration), and an instructor to start the multi-component schoolhouse.

The BLC commandant is the senior non-commissioned officer who provides the initial institutional knowledge to younger Soldiers who are learning to become leaders. Sarah has since been promoted to sergeant major.



J9 RESILIENCY DIRECTORATE

In its second year since its inception, the J9 Resiliency Directorate made significant strides in supporting the well-being of service members and their families. Through their services, the J9 fostered over 13,500 connections, strengthening a sense of belonging and connectedness. The Yellow Ribbon Program further bolstered these efforts by hosting 11 events with 696 attendees, providing meaningful opportunities for reconnection before, during and after deployments while celebrating family achievements.

Financial readiness remained a cornerstone of the J9 mission, with Personal Financial Counselors assisting over 1,900 service members and families to improve financial literacy. The directorate also provided vital financial support through 35 CONG Foundation loans, nine grants, and 54 members receiving Military Family Relief Fund assistance.

For children and youth, J9 organized seven events with 312 participants, along with initiatives like backpack drives and Trunk or Treat events, fostering a sense of community and belonging for children navigating the challenges of military life. Large-scale events, including the Wing Family Day and Holiday Party, each drew 1,300 participants, while cherished traditions at the Governor's Mansion, such as the Easter Egg Roll and Gold Star Reception, brought families together to celebrate and honor shared values.



The Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce administered 84 Defense Organizational Climate Surveys, achieving strong participation from both Army and Air components at a combined 65% with a goal to improve culture and climate.

Within the J9 our Transition Assistance Advisors, Employment Specialist, Employer Support for Guard and Reserve, Substance Misuse, Suicide Prevention, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, Mental Health providers, Chaplains, State Equal Employment Manager, Legal assistance and ancillary staff, along with Joining Community Forces continued community-building initiatives and collaboration, highlighting our unwavering commitment to fostering resilience and readiness across the CONG, ensuring a connected and prepared force ready to meet future challenges.

STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Slovenia

In 2024, the CONG continued strengthening its enduring partnership with Slovenia, a relationship rooted in shared heritage and mutual interests that began in 1993. The partnership achieved significant milestones, completing 25 events reinforcing collaboration and expertise across key areas. The emphasis on medical lines of effort was a standout accomplishment, streamlining care to enhance readiness and interoperability. The partnership expanded its scope by participating in four multinational exercises focused on mountain infantry, medical, and cyber capabilities. As a founding member of the SPP, Slovenia continues to exemplify the success of this unique collaboration.



Jordan

The CONG proudly marked the 20th anniversary of its partnership with Jordan, a relationship that began May 24, 2004, as the first SPP established with a country in the Levant region of the Middle East. Over the past two decades, this collaboration has become a cornerstone of strategic partnership between the CONG and the Jordanian Armed Forces, significantly enhancing mutual readiness and interoperability. This year, the partnership achieved major milestones, completing 34 events, including a live-fire exercise between Colorado's 169th Field Artillery Brigade and Jordan's Royal High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) Battalion. Recognized as the most active SPP relationship in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, with over 500 military-to-military engagements since its inception, this enduring partnership reflects a shared commitment to military excellence, cultural exchange, and global security.



COLORADO JOINS LARGEST MILITARY MEDICAL EXERCISE

The CONG, in support of United States European Command, showcased military medical readiness at the NATO Vigorous Warrior 2024 and Clean Care 2024 exercises at the Bakonykút training area in Hungary, May 4-8, 2024.

This marked the first time that these two exercises occurred simultaneously.

Vigorous Warrior, led by Hungarian Col. Laszlo Fazekas, director of the NATO Centre of Excellence for Military Medicine, is regarded as the largest military medical exercise with 38 NATO and partner nations confirming participation. Clean Care, led by U.S. Army Lt. Col. Mark T. Williams, Clean Care exercise director, U.S. Army Office of the Surgeon General, focused on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear responses.

The CONG Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Enhanced Response Force Package was the first in the U.S. to showcase this combined package of CBRN decontamination and medical treatment for these exercises. CERFP is traditionally a domestic operations mission, however, the Colorado team attended this exercise at the request of allied nations to display a framework for an agile medical unit within CBRN decontamination capabilities. This model does not exist with partner nations where medical and decontamination responses are typically managed separately, potentially delaying trauma care at the point of injury.



NEW CONSTRUCTION Senior leaders of the Colorado National Guard break ground of the new 100th Missile Defense Brigade and the U.S. Northern Command Mobilization Element Readiness Center at Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado Springs, Colorado, March 22, 2024.

KEEPING THEM FLYING

COANG maintainers of the 140th Maintenance Group have cared for the 140th Wing's fleet of F-16 Falcons and now Vipers for the last 30 years. As the airframe has aged, its required these airmen to incorporate new and innovative maintenance practices to remain at the forefront of discovering new means of increasing airpower efficiency to ensure the fighter jets remain mission capable and ready to defend the nation 24/7.

Canopy sill longerons run the full length of the cockpit and support the structure between the frame and skin of the aircraft, preventing tension and bending of the fuselage. An aircraft is immediately grounded when the canopies crack and if both sides break, the whole nose of the fighter jet could break away. CSL cracking has already appeared in 90 aircraft across the U.S. Air Force inventory of F-16s within the past year. The F-16 can fly at twice the speed of sound, pulling up to 9-G turns (9 times the earth's gravitational force) to accomplish air-to-air and air-to-ground missions, applying significant strain to an aging aircraft. While structural concerns are not new, structural maintenance is usually done at a depot facility.

It is up to 140th Wing maintainers to complete the repairs. This team has over 20 years of combined experience with aircraft structural maintenance, and together they've worked as a team with F-16 Special Program Office engineers on developing and implementing more efficient means of repairing the aircraft. Without innovation and effective problem-solving skills, they would be expected to fix modern day issues with outdated maintenance practices and equipment.

Until the USAF assigns newer aircraft to the 140th, the maintenance squadron will continue to develop new and innovative ways to keep the F-16s airborne and ready to enter the war fight at a moment's notice.





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