



YEAR IN REVIEW 2025



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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STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

6848 South Revere Parkway
Centennial, Colorado 80112
Phone (720) 250-1500
Fax (720) 250-1509



My Fellow Coloradans,

It's the honor of a lifetime to serve as the 45th Adjutant General of Colorado and lead our extraordinary Soldiers, Airmen and civilians serving our communities, state and nation. These are their stories.

After being called up by the governor, your home guard rapidly responded to wildfires that threatened communities in Rio Blanco County. You can read about what our expert Army aviators did and how we prepare alongside our partners.

Also in this edition, the High-Altitude Army National Guard Training Site contributed to space exploration by adapting its world-class rotary wing

helicopter pilot training to teach NASA astronauts the skills that will help them to safely land on the moon.

An aircrew from the same unit helped conduct a search and rescue that set a new state record for the highest hoist SAR. Read about how high they flew and what they had to endure to save two people's lives.

One of our Aimen helped save the life of a victim of the Evergreen High School shooting. Read about his courageous life-saving action.

The Colorado Army and Air National Guard deployed more than 1,000 of our people to operations across the globe. Where they deployed and what they did are recorded here.

Last year, we added another State Partnership Program partner: the Confederation of Switzerland. We'll tell you about how this friendship took shape.

We retired the Mobile Ground System in Greeley last year, concluding a story 40 years in the making.

During 2025, we bid farewell to long-serving members in leadership roles. We also welcomed new leaders to the head of our formations. You can get to know them here.

Thank you to all who attended our inaugural State of the Guard, made possible by our supportive community partners. Hope you can join us in 2026 when we'll celebrate our nation's 250th and our state's 150th birthdays.

Respectfully,

Major General Robert B. Davis
The Adjutant General of Colorado

Jared Polis
Governor

Robert Davis
Major General, COARNG
The Adjutant General

Top priorities for the Colorado National Guard

- PEOPLE • WARFIGHTING READINESS
- MODERNIZATION & TRANSFORMATION
- PARTNERSHIPS



Hold the
High Ground



Origins of the Colorado National Guard

This year, 2026, marks the 150th anniversary of Colorado's statehood (August 1, 1876) and the 250th anniversary of America 100 years earlier.

The foundation of the Colorado National Guard traces back to January 1860 when the First General Assembly of the Territory of Jefferson met in Denver City. This Assembly passed an Act, "To Authorize the Formation of Military Companies". Under the authority of this Act, two companies, known as the "Jefferson Rangers" of Auraria, and the "Denver Guards" were organized. Auraria and Denver City shortened Denver in 1867, were small sister towns located at the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River near where Ball Arena and Denver reside today.

The "Rangers" were under the command of Capt. H. H. C. Harrison, and, two weeks after they were organized, they engaged with a lawless gang known as the "Bummers" in what became known as the "Turkey War" of 1860. The "Bummers" had robbed a rancher of a wagonload of turkeys which led to an armed conflict between the citizens and the gang. The "Bummers" were promptly run out of town by the overwhelming militia force of Rangers.

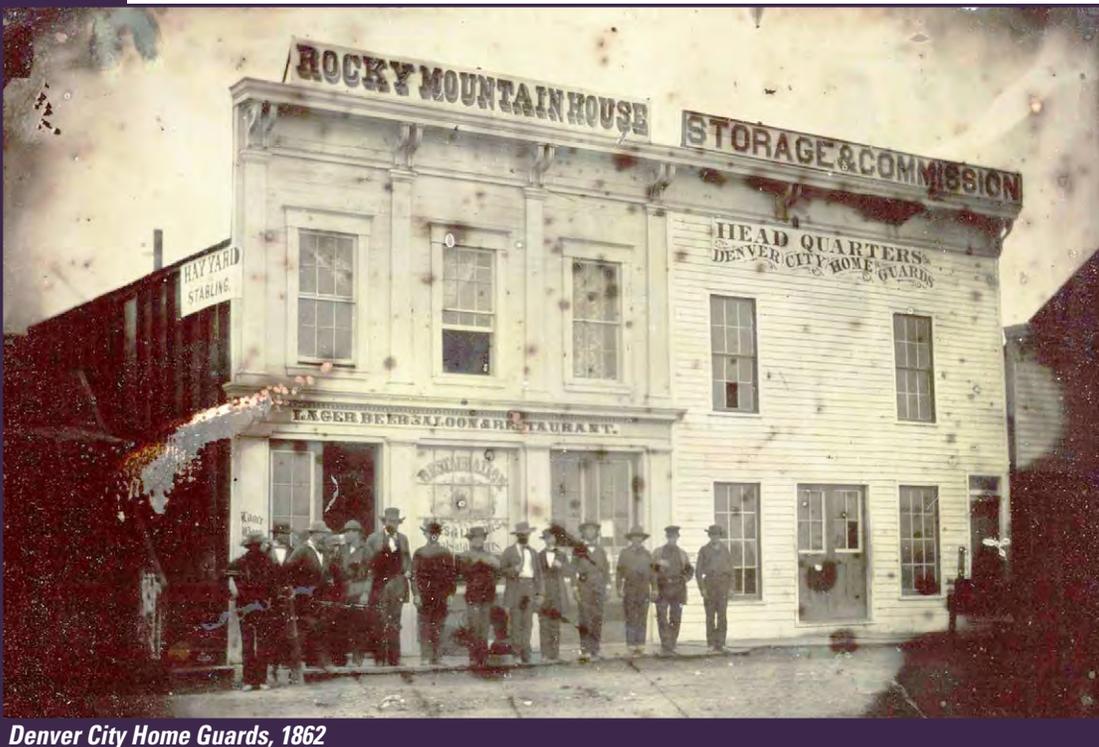
The "Denver Guards" were a mounted company under the command of Capt. W. P. McClure, a Southern sympathizer. McClure was a volatile character and he and R. E. Whitsitt, later Colorado's first adjutant general, had participated in a duel the previous October during which McClure was seriously wounded when Whitsitt's bullet struck him squarely in the groin. The

two companies disbanded late in the winter of 1860 and 1861 with a large portion of their members later enlisting in the regiments which were about to be organized by the territorial governor.

The Territory of Colorado came into being Feb. 26, 1861, and William Gilpin, the first Governor, undertook to form military companies that became the nucleus of the First Regiment Colorado Infantry Volunteers. He commissioned to have a fort built for the unit and named it Camp Weld, after Lewis Weld, first Secretary of the Territory, which was located just east of modern day I-25 and 8th Avenue – very close to where the new Denver Broncos stadium is to be emplaced.

In the fall of 1861, the "First Regiment Colorado Infantry Volunteers" was mustered into Federal service to serve during the Civil War. Numerous other volunteer organizations, such as Capt. Dodd's and Capt. Ford's Independent Infantry Companies, Capt. Backus' and Capt. Sexton's Independent "Dismounted" Cavalry companies became the "Third Regiment" Colorado Infantry, and the First Colorado Cavalry were formed during the period 1861-1863. Those Colorado volunteers participated in many skirmishes and battles during the war in Southern Colorado, Missouri, New Mexico, Kansas, Arkansas, and Wyoming, known as Dakota Territory. The first major battle, in which Colorado volunteers made up the majority of the Union force, was the battle of La Glorieta near Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 26-28, 1862, in which 1,200 Texas Confederates were defeated after their supply train was completely destroyed by Colorado troops that managed to get behind their main element. This battle forever dashed the Confederacy's hopes to establish a western front and their attempt to take the western seaboard in California.

Gilpin had acted quickly in forming and training the Colorado Volunteers but he did so without receiving authorization from the federal government. He issued \$375,000 in drafts, roughly \$12M in today's value, against the federal treasury, with the expectation that the federal government would honor them later. Despite the enormous success of the regiment, the territory was mired in financial problems caused by Gilpin's drafts. Eventually the federal treasury settled the drafts after being presented with itemized statements by their



Denver City Home Guards, 1862



Members of the Chaffee Light Artillery, first mustered into state service on March 7, 1878.

holders. The resolution came too late for Gilpin and on May 21, 1862, Lincoln removed him from the governorship of the territory, even though he had saved the West for the Union, and replaced him with John Evans, who, in turn, would also be fired for his handling of the debacle surrounding the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864.

Colorado's first artillery unit, officially known as "The Independent Battery of Colorado Volunteer Artillery," was formed in Denver on Dec. 15, 1862, and served against hostile Indians in Colorado and Kansas until the fall of 1864. It was then moved to Missouri to take part in the War against the Confederates. The battery was mustered out at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas on Aug. 31, 1865. It was not reconstituted in any subsequent unit, and its glorious history cannot be connected with that of the present artillery units of Colorado.

The Territorial Militia was reorganized in the fall of 1864 for service against the impending dangers created by hostile Ute, Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache Indians endangering settlers in the Colorado Territory. A list of the Volunteer Militia organizations of the Territory showed these eight companies were then in existence: "The Governor Guards"; "The Central City Light Guards"; "The Boulder County Mounted Rifles"; "The Buckskin Grays"; "The Empire Guards"; "The

Evans Guards"; "The Elbert Guards"; and "The Montgomery Guards". Two of the companies were designated as Cavalry, the rest Infantry.

The Indian uprising of this year forced Col. Moonlight, commanding the Colorado Military District, to ask for help. The report of 1865 shows eight additional companies were organized; "The Arvada Light Cavalry," "The Denver Guard," "The Colorado Rangers," "The Tyler Rangers," "The Weld County Cavalry," "The Boulder City Cavalry," "The Clear Creek Mounted Rifles," and "The Douglas County Guards." From these companies a Regiment of six mounted companies were called into service, Feb. 18, 1865, and known as the First Colorado Mounted Militia. At first the National Government refused to pay the expenses of the Regiment, but later Congress, by joint resolution, provided for the payment of the amounts legitimately expended in the campaign against the Indians.

With the closing of the Civil War a slump took place in military affairs, and the report of Adjutant-General Hal Sayer of 1867 states: "There never was a full and perfect organization of the militia in the Territory," and that of the 16 companies mentioned in the report of 1865, "there was but one company fully organized as required by law."

The military organization in the fall of 1876, just a few months after the

Territory of Colorado officially became a state, showed little change over the previous year. There were two Major Generals, and two Brigadier Generals for each division.

The State Legislature, Feb. 8, 1879, passed an Act which provided for the division of the State as the previous Acts had done, and the appointment of major generals and brigadier generals. The organized militia was to be known as the "Colorado National Guard" and was not to exceed 100 companies of Infantry, six batteries of Artillery, and 12 troops of Cavalry, except in cases of emergency. The companies were to have not less than 24, nor more than 70 men; the battalion was to have not less than two nor more than six companies; and the Regiment not less than eight nor more than 10 companies. The uniforms were to be furnished by the adjutant general, and to be similar to the uniforms of the United States Army.

In 1883, the Colorado Legislature abolished all major generals and all but one brigadier general, and provided that in time of peace there should not be more than three regiments of infantry, one regiment of cavalry, three battalions of artillery.

Twenty years later, the 1903 Dick Act (Militia Act of 1903) fundamentally transformed state militias into the modern National Guard by establishing federal standards for training, equipment and organization. Championed by Ohio Senator/National Guard Officer (and NGAUS President at the time) Charles Dick, it mandated aligning with the Regular Army, provided federal funding, and established the Guard as the primary reserve force.

Today's CONG units are continuously mobilized for on-going peacekeeping missions across the globe and frequently activated for state emergencies as well. The CONG is without fail constantly training and performing their sworn duty, proving they are Always Ready, Always There.



Battle of Glorieta Pass: Action at Apache Canyon - National Guard Heritage Series painting by Domenick d'Andrea.

Colorado National Guard celebrates 65 years at Buckley Base

As far back as 1938 when the city of Denver bought and donated land for a planned bombing range east of the city, the property known currently as Buckley Space Force Base, named in honor of Longmont, Colorado, veteran 1st Lt. John Harold Buckley, has left a lasting impact on the citizens of Colorado.

In April of 1942, the then Army Air Corps set aside 5,740 acres of the Buckley Field complex to serve as a schoolhouse for American military aviators. This plot of land was a big deal, operating as America's largest fighter aircraft armament school and one of the most important technical training schools in the Army Air Forces called AAF Technical Training Command, established in 1943.



The schoolhouse is now merely a blip in history, but its many transitions throughout the first 20 years led to one of the most notable nuggets in National Guard history. Sixty-Five years ago, on April 18, 1960, the parcel of land, known to most simply as Buckley, was redesignated by the U.S. Air Force as Buckley Air National Guard Base, the first stand-alone ANG base in the nation.



Gov. Jared Polis
Commander In Chief



Maj. Gen. Robert Davis
The Adjutant General



Command Sgt. Maj. Jon Crowe
Command Senior Enlisted Leader



Brig. Gen. Will DiProffio
Director of Joint Staff

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



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

Col. Carrie Worrell
Chief of Joint Staff

Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Cole
DJS Senior Enlisted Leader

Command Chief Master Sgt. Jeremy Jenkins
State Command Chief



Brig. Gen. Tod Fenner
Land Component Commander

Col. Jason Stuchlik
Chief of Staff, Army

**Chief Warrant Officer 5
Darren Freyer**
Command Chief Warrant Officer

Col. Ben Couchman
140th Wing Commander

**Command Chief Master Sgt.
Charles "Chuck" Powers**
140th Wing Command Chief

Airborne operation strengthens US, Jordan partnership and readiness

In a display of cooperation and capability, Soldiers from the Colorado Army National Guard and the Jordanian Armed Forces conducted a joint airborne operation in Watkins, Colorado, April 23, 2025.

The “Friendship Jump” brought together paratroopers from two nations to strengthen warfighting readiness and enhance interoperability under high-risk, realistic training conditions.

“Airborne operations bond people together,” said U.S. Army Master Sgt. Casey Finkbinder, jumpmaster, COARNG. “You place your lives in one another’s hands and trust that they will place your safety above all else. It shows real partnership when we are able to execute air ops with our foreign counterparts.”

The jump, initiated and organized by Finkbinder, showcased the commitment of both forces to operate as a



cohesive, capable team in demanding environments. The operation was particularly complex due to differences in equipment, language and procedures.

Jordanian paratroopers had never jumped from a CH-47 Chinook or used the U.S. MC-6 parachute system. Through detailed coordination and instruction from COARNG jumpmasters, the forces bridged those gaps and executed a successful joint mission.

Colorado’s Greeley Air National Guard station says farewell to Mobile Ground System mission

Colorado Air National Guard members of the 233rd Space Group hosted an official ceremony for the retirement of the Mobile Ground System at the Greeley Air National Guard Station, Aug. 2, 2025.

The ceremony celebrated over forty years of the MGS and its mission in missile defense. The unit employs nearly 400 Airmen consisting of dual status technicians, Active Guard and Reserve, and traditional guard members.

“The MGS is fundamentally a missile warning system that is mobile,” said U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Harry Smith, senior enlisted leader, 137th Space Warning Squadron. “It’s very unique in that regard.”

In May 2019, the 138th Electronic Warfare Squadron stood up under the 233rd SG at Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado Springs. The unit protects space assets and employs defensive capabilities.



U.S. Air Force Col. Stephanie Figueroa, commander, 233rd Space Group, recounts that when she joined the group in 2018 she was told they were going to decommission the MGS “any minute now.” “We employed it to the outer limits of its capabilities,” Figueroa said during her ceremony speech to the Airmen of the 233rd. “We had proven time and time again the mobility of that weapon system. We knew our role, and we were exceptional at it.”

NASA, Army National Guard Partner on Flight Training for Moon Landing

In the mountains of northern Colorado, NASA and the U.S. Army National Guard are using military helicopters to develop a foundational lunar landersimulated flight training course to help astronauts practice flight and landing procedures for the Moon.

For decades, military helicopter pilots have trained at the HAATS (High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site) in Gypsum, Colorado. In 2021, NASA and the Colorado Army National Guard began working together to develop a course specifically for the next generation of lunar explorers.

That NASA-specific course is scheduled to be finalized in August 2025, marking an important milestone for Artemis crewed landings training efforts.

“NASA is using a three-pronged approach with motion-based simulation, in-flight lunar landing analog training, and in-flight lunar simulation to build out its foundational training for Artemis Moon landings,” said NASA astronaut Doug Wheelock, who



helped coordinate the training program. “Helicopters at or above 10,000 feet are not really efficient in the thin air, forcing us into operating with very thin power margins similar to the Apollo astronauts having to manage energy and momentum to land safely. The operations along with the terrain at the HAATS course in Colorado’s Rocky Mountains provide a valuable, real-world opportunity for Artemis astronauts to practice flying and landing in conditions similar to maneuvering a lander in the lunar environment.”

140th Medical Group gets hands-on for a week of Tactical Combat Casualty Care

Members of the 140th Medical Group, Colorado Air National Guard, participated in Tactical Combat Casualty Care at Buckley Space Force Base, Aurora, Colorado, Jan. 28-31, 2025.

TCCC replaced Self-Aid and Buddy Care in 2022 as a more advanced form of training that is also more hands-on. TCCC is

designed to be a team-based approach to care, using the MARCH algorithm (massive bleeding, airway, respiration, circulation, hypothermia), and teaches service members how to stabilize trauma and provide life-saving care.

140th Wing TCCC program Coordinator U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Charles Guthrie said the TCCC curriculum is standardized across the military but that he adds civilian experience from his time working as a paramedic.



Guthrie also teaches a semester-long emergency medical technician course at Front Range Community College.

During the week of training the group learned Tier 3. Most service members only receive Tier 1 training.

“It’s the same concept, but medics are expected to do a whole lot more,” Guthrie said. “Each day of training is just a different aspect of the MARCH algorithm, focusing on the different pieces of your trauma assessment like control bleeding, make sure someone’s airway is good, and that they’re breathing.”

Field Artillery Readiness Center at Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport

Planning and design began in November 2025 for the Fiscal Year 29 federally funded Field Artillery Readiness Center, a \$41M investment in the future of COARNG infrastructure. The project will stand mission ready on 35 acres of state-owned land in Westminster, Colorado, a site distinguished by sweeping views of the Rocky Mountains and downtown Denver. The first phase will construct a 40,321 square-foot Readiness Center for the A and B Battery of the 3rd Battalion of the 157th Field Artillery, along with a 4,182 square-foot General Purpose Training Building.

Funded through a combination of 75% federal (\$31M) and 25% state (\$10M) dollars, this project places a strong emphasis on energy efficiency and sustainability. A Silver LEED certification through the United States Green Building Council is being pursued, with renewable energy options—including consideration of photovoltaic arrays and an underground geothermal system. The site's proximity to major transportation corridors (Hwy 36 and I-25) further enhances its strategic value. Future phases will expand the site to include Field Artillery HHB 3-157th, a Battery of the 3-157th, entering the force structure in FY30, and a Field Maintenance Shop—ensuring the Westminster site continues to evolve alongside the mission it supports.



UNIT LOCATIONS

Alamosa

- D/1-157 Infantry Btn.

Aurora

- B/3-157 Field Artillery Btn.
- 540 Network Support Co.

Buckley Space Force Base

- 2-135 General Support Aviation Btn. (Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 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 Aviation Intermediate Maintenance
- D/3-140 Aviation Regiment
- Medical Detachment
- Special Ops Det. - North
- Headquarters, Headquarters Battery/ 169 Field Artillery Bde.
- 101 Army Band
- 104 Public Affairs Det.
- Det 33, Operational Support Airlift
- Army Aviation Support Facility
- CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package
- Tactical Unmanned Aircraft, D/572nd Brigade Engineer Btn. (Military Intelligence)
- 140 Wing
- 120 Fighter Sq.
- 240 Civil Engineering Ft.
- US Property and Fiscal Office
- 8th Civil Support Team - Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Cyber Protection Team 174

Centennial

- Joint Force Headquarters - COARNG
- Joint Staff - CONG

Colorado Springs (Chestnut)

- HHB/3-157 Field Artillery Btn.
- Det. 1/HHB-169 Field Artillery Bde.

Colorado Springs (Newport)

- 100 Missile Defense Bde.

Denver

- HHC/89 Troop Cmd.
- 193 Military Police Btn.

- 220 Military Police Co.
- Det 3/E/186 Forward Support Co.
- D/572 BEB (MI)
- 891 Judge Advocate General Team

Fort Carson

- HQ 168 Regional Training Institute
- Centennial Training Site
- 928 Area Support Medical Co.
- 140 Quartermaster
- B Co./5-19 Special Forces Btn.
- 117 Space Support Btn.
- 217, 1158 Space Support Co.

Fort Collins

- HHC, 147 Brigade Support Btn.

Fort Lupton

- B/1-157 Infantry Reg.
- I Co./86 Support Btn.

Grand Junction

- Det. 1/C/1-157 Infantry Reg.
- 947 Engineer Co.

Greeley

- 233 Space Group (Space Control Squadron, Security Forces Squadron, Logistics Readiness Flight)

Gypsum

- High-Altitude ARNG Aviation Training Site (HAATS)

Longmont

- A/3-157 Field Artillery Btn.

North Colorado Springs

- 1-157 Infantry Regiment - Mtn. (HHC, A, Det 1/D)
- NORTHCOM Mobilization Element (*temporary*)

Peterson Air Force Base

- 138 Space Control Squadron

Pueblo

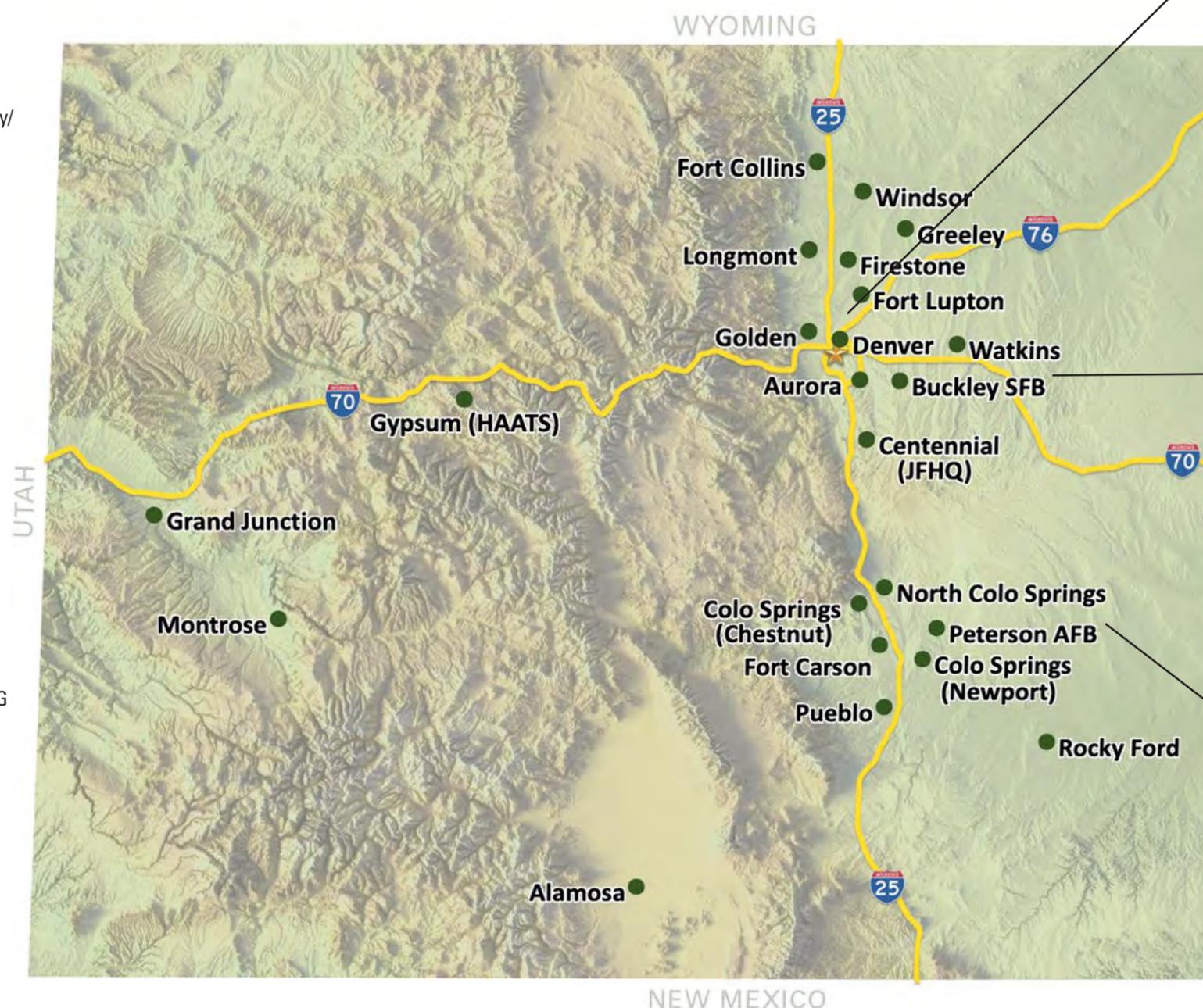
- 188 Forward Support Co.

Watkins

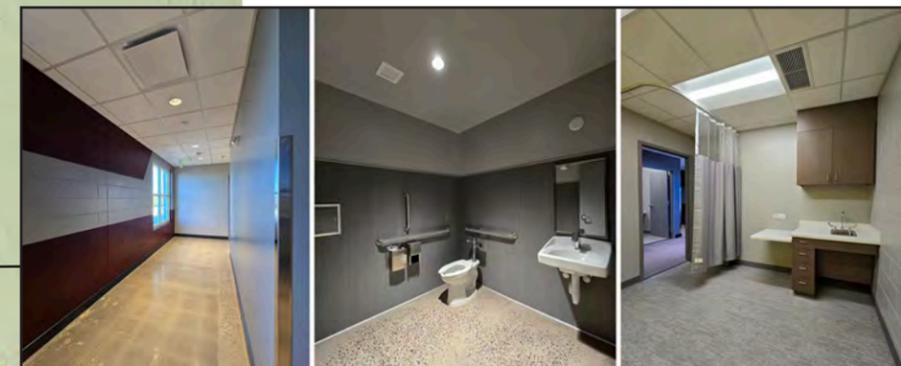
- HHD/5-19 Special Forces Group Btn.
- D Co./5-19 SFG(Airborne)
- E Co./5-19 SFG(Airborne)
- Augmentation Co./5-19 SFG(A) - Special Warfare Training Detachment

Windsor

- I/ID Main Command Post-Operational Detachment
- 3650 Maintenance Co.



Denver Readiness Center auditorium remodel - \$1.9M renovation transforms the space for modern briefings, instruction and collaboration. The result is an auditorium ready to support the next generation of training.



Bldg. 1000 Medical sq. ft. MED DET suite evaluations (Physic...)
\$1.7M project reshapes the current 4,775 sq. ft. MED DET suite. Annual mission: Soldier medical readiness



100th Ground-based Midcourse Defense readiness center - \$24.3M project will deliver a 38,338 sq. ft. readiness center for the 100th MDB and the U.S. Northern Command Mobilization Element. Includes a 2,000 sqft Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility, purpose-built to support national defense missions.

Aviation Battalion hosts departure ceremony



The Colorado National Guard hosted a departure ceremony for more than 100 Soldiers of the 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment Nov. 14, 2025.

GSAB deployed in support of Operation Joint Guardian to aid NATO forces protecting Kosovo's sovereignty and maintaining peace within the region. NATO has been leading the peace-support operation in Kosovo since June 1999.

"This deployment is the culmination of all our training," U.S. Army Lt. Col. Joe Bryant, commander, said. "This is where selfless service comes into play. Our Soldiers and their families are sacrificing a lot to go on this mission. I'm so proud of every Soldier on the task force."

GSAB will provide around-the-clock medical evacuation coverage, troop transport, and training support for allied forces.



120 Airmen deploy for first-ever Expeditionary Air Base mission



The Colorado Air National Guard deployed over 120 personnel from across all five groups of the 140th Wing, including headquarters staff, to serve as the lead wing for a critical deployment. This marked a significant milestone as

the COANG took on command and control, air staff leadership, and air base group responsibilities for an Expeditionary Air Base for the first time.

The XAB, a cornerstone of the Air Force Force Generation model, represents the foundational structure of force elements provided to combatant commanders to operate air bases worldwide. The AFFORGEN model is a system the U.S. Air Force uses to organize, train and deploy its forces in a predictable and sustainable way. For this deployment, COANG leadership is overseeing personnel from more than 30 other wings, uniting their efforts to execute operations in what is currently the most active area of responsibility for the U.S. Air Force.

"This deployment showcases the readiness and capability of the Colorado Air National Guard to lead under the Expeditionary Air Base model," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Elizabeth "Nikki" Gray, COANG director of operations. "Our team has trained extensively, both individually and alongside our counterparts, to ensure we are prepared to command and support this mission over the next six months."



169th Field Artillery Brigade returns from Middle East deployment



The Colorado National Guard welcomed home around 129 Soldiers of the Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 169th Field Artillery Brigade Jan. 24, 2025, at the Douglas County Events Center in Castle Rock. The unit deployed in support of U.S. Central Command as part of Operation Spartan Shield.

HQB sustained and protected Combined Land Component Forces, built partner nation capacity, deterred Iranian aggression in the USCENTCOM area of operations, and provided artillery support to the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve.

“We are happy to be home,” said U.S. Army Col. William DiProffio, 169th FAB commander. “A truly outstanding performance by the professional Soldiers of the 169th FAB. I couldn’t be more proud of their achievements in support of Operation Spartan Shield.”

This is the second time during the past 10 years that the 169th has deployed in support of OSS.



947th Engineer Company returns from Middle East



The Colorado National Guard hosted a welcome home ceremony for nearly 100 service members of 947th Engineer Vertical Construction Company, March 29, 2025.

The 947th EVCC deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility for approximately one year as part of Task Force Spartan in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

The 947th EVCC managed the planning, preparation and execution of over 60 construction projects, which totaled more than 55,000 hours of troop labor and \$21,000,000 worth of completed construction projects, enabling force protection, enhanced operational capability, and improved quality of life for U.S. forces. The company’s projects included preparing plans and executing critical infrastructure for a new theater gateway which greatly improves the strategic deterrence posture available to Department of Defense leaders.

“This deployment tested the 947th Engineer Vertical Construction Company,” said U.S. Army Capt. Evan Pitchford, 947th EVCC company commander. “We faced moments of exhaustion and monumental tasks. But moments where we were tested, we found strength, camaraderie and pride. We leave here knowing we made a difference, knowing that our efforts mattered.”



117th Space Battalion hosts departure ceremony

The Colorado National Guard hosted a departure ceremony for six service members of the Army Space Support Team 18, 117th Space Battalion, September 7, 2025. Army Space Support Team 18 deployed in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve, an operation designed in response to Russian operations in Ukraine.

“We’re very excited to send our first Army Space Support Team to support an operation in the United States European Command area of operations,” said Lt. Col. Scott R. Sharkey, the commander of the battalion. “The

117th Space Battalion is the most frequently deployed space battalion in Colorado Army National Guard history. This represents a chance for us to continue that proud tradition in an entirely new area of operations.”

The team of six Soldiers will maximize space-based capabilities of U.S. and Allied operations in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

Colorado National Guard assisted Rio Blanco County with aerial wildland fire suppression

Under executive authority, two Colorado Army National Guard helicopters and aircrews supported wildfire suppression efforts in Rio Blanco County, Colorado.

Governor Jared Polis authorized the use of Colorado National Guard assets which gives the incident commander access to additional resources if deemed necessary.

At the direction of the Incident Command and the State Emergency Operations Center, the CONG assisted wildland firefighters with aerial fire suppression efforts using Bambi buckets and CH-47 Chinook military heavy lift aircraft.

“The Colorado National Guard is Always Ready, Always There to assist the people of Colorado,” Director of the Joint Staff U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Myk Bruno said. “We have specialized training and capabilities to assist the incident command team with this response.”

For the past 10 years, the COARNG has partnered with the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control and other key partners to host an annual wildland fire training

exercise called the Colorado Fire Aviation Summit.

The summit is an opportunity to train and collaborate with partners to prepare to answer the call and increase effectiveness in communication and procedures when responding to wildfires.

The CONG is the first military responder during domestic emergencies, supporting the state of Colorado and local jurisdictions to help save lives, reduce suffering, and mitigate property damage.



Colorado National Guard high-altitude training site awarded for safety record

The Colorado National Guard’s High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation was awarded the Order of the Daedalians, Lt. Gen. Allen M. Burdett Jr. Army Flight Safety Award.

This recognition is awarded annually to the Army aviation training unit with the most effective aircraft accident prevention program as determined by the commanding general, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

“HAATS receiving the safety award from TRADOC is a strong indication of how Colorado leads the way in training at the edge of the envelope,” U.S. Army Lt. Col. Nicholas Tucker, COARNG director of aviation and safety, said.

An example of HAATS’ safety culture occurred during a recent training exercise where maintainers identified a critical issue involving loose idlers on a CH-47F Chinook helicopter’s tunnel flight controls. Their prompt corrective action prevented potential aircraft damage and averted a significant flight safety hazard.



37 lives saved

In 2025, the CONG assisted our partners with 36 Search and Rescue missions performed by the HAATS in Gypsum and the Army Aviation Support Facility at Buckley SFB. Air crews utilized 35 UH-60 Black Hawk sorties and one using a LUH-72 Lakota, flying a total of 96 flight hours, which resulted in 37 lives saved.



Colorado National Guard aircrew breaks record for hoist rescue

A Colorado Army National Guard Black Hawk aircrew tested their skill and pushed their helicopter's performance to its limits during a dangerous nighttime rescue that set the record for the highest hoist ever conducted by a military aircraft in Colorado.

The rescue required that the crew fly to approximately 14,200 feet above sea level, beating the previous record of around 13,700 feet.

On the evening of June 12, 2025, a team at the High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site, in Gypsum, Colorado, received an urgent request from the Colorado National Guard Joint Operations Center in Centennial, Colorado: two out-of-state hikers were stranded near the summit of Torreys Peak in the Arapaho National Forest.

While veering off route, the hikers became caught in a storm. After reaching the peak, both hikers were struck by lightning, leaving one unresponsive. Their phone battery was nearly dead.

A ground civilian rescue operation was impossible due to the storm. The only capable aircraft to rescue the hikers was a CONG UH-60.

"A lot of these points on the 14ers are very hard to access via the ground," State Army Aviation Officer for Colorado, Lt.



Col. Scott Tucker said. "The Colorado National Guard allocates helicopter assets to help the rescue technicians with rescues in the backcountry. Some of these rescues could take up to 36 hours to accomplish on the ground."

Every year, COARNG aviation elements perform more backcountry search and rescue missions than any other state's Army National Guard within the lower 48 states. Most years, the COARNG flies more than 60% of all SAR missions in the United States.

In 2024, the COARNG performed 29 SARs, logged over 87 flight hours, and saved 27 lives.

Colorado Air National Guard member responds to crisis at Evergreen High School

What began as a routine afternoon of physical therapy and a quick workout for U.S. Air Force Maj. Joshua Stevens, a civil engineer with the 240th Civil Engineer Flight, 140th Wing, turned into a life-altering moment when gunfire erupted at the high school next to the recreation center in Evergreen, Colorado, Sept. 10, 2025.

Stevens had just finished stretching when he heard commotion in the hallway. At first, it sounded like the usual noise of teenagers moving through the building. Then someone shouted that there was an active shooter.

He walked into the hallway to confirm what he'd heard, then moved toward the front office to ensure someone had called 911. As staff began locking down the building, students fleeing the high school streamed toward the recreation center seeking cover.

Outside the entrance, Stevens saw a teenager trying to move as quickly as possible while wearing a medical boot and using a crutch. The teen was alone and struggling to reach safety. Stevens ran toward him. He took the student's crutch, placed the teen's arm over his shoulder and helped him up the steps and into the building before returning to the entrance to monitor the situation.

Inside, as staff directed evacuees toward safer areas, Stevens noticed another student receiving first aid in a nearby room. The injuries were significant, and while staff were applying pressure to the wounds, Stevens

wasn't sure if anyone had formal medical training. Drawing on CPR and Tactical Combat Casualty Care skills from his military service, he assisted where he could.

The student was badly wounded and drifting in and out of consciousness. Stevens focused on keeping him alert and responsive.

"I held his hand," he said. "I asked him questions. I told him he was doing a great job. And every time his eyes started to roll back, I'd call his name until he came back."



Later, he washed the blood off his hands. He then helped staff gather the names of students sheltering inside and assisted with organizing information for parents desperate to locate their children.

"On that day, he wasn't just a civil engineer. He was a hero," said U.S. Air Force Col. Carrie Worrell, chief of joint staff, Colorado National Guard.

"He embodied everything we mean when we say 'Citizen Airman,' and he is one of our own. This is what we stand for. Behind every mission, every aircraft, and every uniform, there's a neighbor, a friend, and fellow Coloradan."

"When you're in the Air National Guard, you're constantly put in environments where you feel minimally prepared, but you go out there and do it anyway," he said. "I think being in that environment pushed me through the door to help that student."

140th Civil Engineer Squadron granted new corrosion control facility

The 140th Civil Engineer Squadron celebrated the construction for a new corrosion control facility at a groundbreaking ceremony May 20, 2025, as a number one Military Construction priority for the Colorado Air National Guard.

Retired U.S. Air Force Col. William Smith, senior project manager, National Guard Bureau A4IS (Logistics, Engineering & Force Protection Directorate) said the project has been in the works since 2013 when corrosion in the wing's fuels facility was recognized as problematic.

The facility will correct various health risk violations and deficiencies, as well as provide fire suppression, a decontamination area, a clean/dirty separation space, a hazardous materials area, paint storage and mixing areas, a non-destructive inspections area, and other corrosion-related features.



Dachau plaque dedication honors Liberators

The Dachau Concentration Camp, located in Bavaria, Germany, was liberated by U.S. Armed Forces of the U.S. 7th Army, 45th Infantry Division and Colorado Army National Guard members of the 157th Infantry Regiment, April 29, 1945.

On the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Dachau, the first concentration camp built by Nazi Germany during World War II, a memorial plaque was hung in the camp dedicated to the memory of the Liberators.

Colorado National Guard members joined with a group comprised of Oklahoma National Guard members, a Holocaust survivor, a World War II veteran, representatives from the 45th Infantry Division Association, members of the Bavarian Memorial



Foundation, and members of Comité International de Dachau, to unveil the memorial plaque at the concentration camp memorial site.

The plaque honors the brave Soldiers who participated in the liberation of the camp. The plaque serves as a reminder of the cost of freedom and the enduring responsibility to remember.

The plaque also serves as a reminder to carry their story forward with reverence and responsibility as we defend freedom, confront hatred, and value the worth of every human soul.



Forging the Future Fight: Inside the Colorado Army National Guard's Drone Warfare Cell

As the battlespace continues to evolve, so too must the tools and training of those who fight within it.

Among the quiet forces reshaping U.S. warfighting readiness is a specialized group called the Drone Warfare Cell, operating within the Multi-Domain Special Operations Cell at 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Colorado Army National Guard.

Though the individuals behind it remain unnamed by design, their impact is increasingly visible across training pipelines, during deployment readiness, and with the integration of drone technology into modern combat operations.

The DWC is a team of skilled advisors who train and deploy with U.S. forces to address drone-related threats and capabilities. Their mission is twofold: prepare units for the modern threat environment through the integration of sUAS and cUAS; and enable commanders to make better-informed decisions using the full spectrum of unmanned systems.

"Members of the DWC are not just instructors who can certify others to fly drone aircraft. They are technical integrators who understand the full scope of unmanned systems across air, land and sea,"



said the director. "The work they have done has directly increased the lethality and survivability of U.S. Soldiers."

Key capabilities offered by the DWC include sUAS/cUAS integration, technical innovation, hands-on advising, and red teaming which uses adversary tactics to identify vulnerabilities and strengthen defenses. Their holistic approach enables forces to move beyond simply using drones to fighting smarter with them.

Colorado National Guard hosts community leaders at inaugural State of the Guard

The Colorado National Guard will host the inaugural State of the Guard at Wings Over the Rockies, Exploration of Flight, 13005 Wings Way, Centennial, Colorado, Sept. 19, 2025.

This event is an opportunity for community leaders to network with each other and learn more about the CONG.

“This inaugural State of the Guard is made possible in partnership with the Buckley Regional Military Affairs Council and the Colorado Freedom Memorial,” said The Adjutant General of Colorado, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Laura Clellan, keynote speaker for the event. “Our strong

community connections support our military, veterans, and their families and, in particular, the readiness of our Colorado National Guard members who tirelessly dedicate themselves to accomplishing both state and federal missions.”

Guest speakers will include U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Bren Rogers, commander, Colorado Army National Guard, and U.S. Air Force Col. Carrie Worrell, commander, Colorado Air National Guard.

CONG aviation and ground equipment will be on display showcasing some of the capabilities that the CONG uses to support both federal and state missions.



Governor Polis announces that Switzerland and Colorado have become state partners

The Swiss Confederation and Colorado National Guard have officially become state partners under the National Guard State Partnership Program.

A signing ceremony with officials from Switzerland and Colorado occurred Sept. 15, 2025, at the Bellevue Palace in Bern, Switzerland.

“Our National Guard members play such an important role in protecting our state at home and supporting our partners abroad. I’m excited by this new partnership and our ability to support one another in strengthening key capabilities and security, as well as to build closer ties between Switzerland and Colorado.” said Governor Jared Polis. “I’m grateful for Former Ambassador Scott Miller’s work on bringing us closer together.”

“The Colorado National Guard is proud to partner with the Swiss Confederation,” said The Adjutant General of Colorado U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Laura Clellan. “This new SPP partnership strategically aligns with Switzerland’s defense priorities and advances key U.S. national security objectives in Europe.”



Switzerland and Colorado have in common not only geography and demographics but also cultural, economic, historical and technological bonds. The Swiss Armed Forces and the CONG share expertise in air defense, critical infrastructure protection, cyber, emergency response including search and rescue, high-altitude rotary wing and mountain operations, space, and medical support.

Colorado National Guard partners to conduct aviation training for 2025 wildfire season

The Colorado National Guard and Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control held the Colorado Fire Aviation Summit April 16-17, 2025.

The annual interagency wildland fire training exercise comprised of helicopter-based aerial fire suppression and classroom training was conducted with Boulder Fire-Rescue, the City of Longmont, the Longmont Fire Department, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.



The training exercises include targeted aerial water delivery practice at Chatfield State Park, Littleton, Colorado; Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Commerce City, Colorado; and Ralph Price Reservoir at Button Rock Preserve, Longmont, Colorado.

The training aims to improve coordinated response and airspace deconfliction for air- and ground-based response elements during emergencies between federal, state and local agencies.

“A significant portion of the Colorado Army National Guard’s mission is to support the citizens of Colorado,” said Colorado Army National Guard Director of Aviation and Safety U.S. Army Lt. Col. Scott Tucker. “Aerial firefighting training with

our civilian counterparts and neighboring state partners provides opportunities for our aircrews and ground personnel to be ready when called upon to protect our communities when threatened by wildland fires. This training is tough and realistic which enables us to safely execute aerial firefighting in the dynamic environments found in Colorado. The training also translates into our combat missions by enhancing our aviation skills and aviation planning acumen.”

In addition to aerial operations, the summit includes academic training at the Army Aviation Support Facility.

Colorado National Guard honors outgoing commander

The Colorado National Guard will bid farewell to the current Adjutant General of Colorado U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Laura Clellan during a change of the adjutant general ceremony Oct. 18, 2025, in Centennial, Colorado, followed by the retirement ceremony.

“I extend my, and the State of Colorado’s, sincere gratitude and congratulations to Major General Laura Clellan on her retirement and thank her for her many years of dedicated service to the state of Colorado, leadership of Colorado’s National Guard, and diligent efforts to support Colorado’s brave service members and military families. Through wildfires and floods, a pandemic and unprecedented times, General Clellan led the Colorado National Guard with dignity, supporting Coloradans and our communities through turbulent times. I am proud of our work to support our military and veterans’ families, ensuring those who sacrifice the most for our safety and security have the support needed to thrive in our beautiful state, and I am thankful for General Clellan’s pivotal efforts in that work. The State of Colorado is made immeasurably better by General Clellan’s years of service and I wish her the best in retirement,” said Governor Polis.

“Serving as The Adjutant General of Colorado has been the greatest honor of my career, a privilege beyond words, and the highlight of my time in uniform,” Clellan said. “Leading the Soldiers and Airmen of the Colorado

National Guard, the state employees of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and volunteers of the Civil Air Patrol, has been nothing short of extraordinary. Over the past five years, I have witnessed extraordinary accomplishments made possible only by the unwavering commitment to service demonstrated by every member of this remarkable organization. I could not be prouder of what we have achieved together, and I am deeply grateful for their trust, professionalism, and tireless dedication to the people of Colorado.”



Governor Jared Polis appoints 45th adjutant general of Colorado

Governor Jared Polis has appointed U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Robert Davis as 45th adjutant general of Colorado and executive director of the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Davis has 34 years of military service, spending most of his career in the Colorado National Guard and has worked at the executive level in the private sector in Colorado.

“Maj. Gen. Davis’s expertise and leadership, both here in Colorado and at the national level, make him a great fit for this critically important role,”



said Polis. “Colorado’s National Guard members have an important impact during our state’s most challenging situations, from supporting communities threatened by wildfires and other natural disasters to ensuring public

safety and national security across the state and abroad. As executive director of our state’s Department of Military and Veterans affairs, General Davis will continue the work to make Colorado the best state for active duty military and for veterans - building on efforts like the tuition waiver for National Guard members, recognizing Colorado schools that support military-connected students and their families, mental health support for military families, and ensuring children with disabilities in military families can choose the school that fits them best.

Finis flight sets the stage as former 140th Wing commander promotes to brigadier general

Few people have the honor of closing a chapter in their career by spending a morning flying a fighter jet over the state they serve in, as well as the state they were born in. Following in the footsteps of his father who flew the same aircraft decades prior, U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Jeremiah "Weed" Tucker, director of Air Staff for the Colorado Air National Guard, went out in style after relinquishing command of the 140th Wing in November 2024.

Tucker has been in the cockpit of the F-16 since pilot school in April 2001 and celebrated his finis flight Feb. 13, 2025. The finis flight is an Air Force tradition marking pilots' departure from a unit, or the last time they fly an aircraft. "It was a great day, but it was a sad day also," Tucker said. "I got to see the state of New Mexico, where I was born and where my



parents live. I got to see the state of Colorado and I flew with my best bro, [U.S. Air Force Col.] Chris "Kojack" Melka, whom I've flown the jet with now for two decades."

Having flown over every continent except Antarctica, Tucker said: "Flying around the Rockies, there's nothing else like it in the world. That was exactly the way that I wanted to go out, and frankly, not everyone gets an opportunity to do it on their terms."

Colorado National Guard chief of joint staff promotes to brigadier general

The Colorado National Guard Chief of Joint Staff U.S. Army Col. Isaac Martinez, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general during a formal ceremony on Sep. 6, 2025.

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Laura Clellan, the 44th adjutant general of Colorado and executive director of the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, served as the presiding official at the ceremony.

Martinez, a Colorado native, has been appointed as the next assistant director of the Army National Guard for aviation, intelligence, and information (AV/G-2/6).

"Col. Martinez's distinguished 25-year career as a dual status military technician has been marked by selfless service, operational excellence, and an unwavering commitment to both federal and state missions," Clellan said. "His leadership has left a lasting impact, from overseas deployments in support of Operations Joint Forge, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom, to critical domestic responses like Columbine, 9/11 airport security, Hurricane Katrina, and state cyber emergencies."



Colorado National Guard welcomes new, honors retiring, command senior enlisted leader

The Colorado National Guard bid farewell to the 4th Command Senior Enlisted Leader U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Lisa Perry during a change of responsibility ceremony on Nov. 1, 2025 at Joint Force Headquarter in Centennial, Colorado. The Adjutant General of Colorado U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Robert Davis presided over the CoR ceremony. U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Jon Crowe will assume the responsibilities of the CSEL from Perry.

“The Colorado National Guard is grateful to Chief Perry for her tireless commitment, trusted counsel, and invaluable leadership in service to the men and women of the Colorado National Guard,” said Davis. “CSM Crowe’s extensive background, leadership qualities, and deep commitment to the welfare of our Soldiers, Airmen and civilians make him the ideal choice to serve as the 5th Command Senior Enlisted Leader. I’m confident that he will continue to build upon the foundation established by Chief Perry and will lead our enlisted force with distinction.”

Crowe enlisted in the U.S. Army in January 1998. He joined the COARNG in 2001 as a military police officer. Crowe held several leadership positions including CSM for the 89th Troop Command, 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry Regiment (MTN), and 193rd Military Police Battalion. Crowe’s deployments include Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003-2004 and 2008 and at the U.S. Embassy, Amman, Jordan, where he served as the SEL for the Defense Attaché and Military Assistance Program, as well as a support mission to Haiti in 2011. He was activated in support of Operation Noble Eagle, Hurricane Katrina, the COVID-19 response mission, and for numerous other state emergencies. He holds a Bronze Star among other awards and decorations. Crowe has also been serving the Denver metro community as a police officer for more than 20 years.

As the principal enlisted advisor to TAG, the CSEL leads more than 4,200 Army and Air enlisted personnel in the CONG. In addition to leading the enlisted force, responsibilities include advising TAG on all matters affecting the readiness, training, professional development and effective utilization of assigned enlisted personnel and coordinating with the JFHQ staff, commanders, and senior personnel on administration and implementation of command policy.



Colorado National Guard Director of Joint Staff retires after four decades of military service

The Colorado National Guard bid farewell to current Director of Joint Staff U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Michael J. Bruno at a retirement ceremony at Buckley Space Force Base, Aurora, Colorado, on Dec. 6, 2025.

The 44th Adjutant General of Colorado U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Laura Clellan was the presiding official and was joined by Colorado National Guard senior leaders and dignitaries from the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

“Under General Bruno’s leadership, Colorado National Guard Soldiers and Airmen protected our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, blizzards, and large wildfires including the Marshall Fire, the most destructive in our state’s history,” The 45th Adjutant General of Colorado Maj. Gen. Robert Davis said. “He also strengthened our national security by growing and expanding our State Partnership Program. General Bruno leaves a legacy that will endure for many years to come.”

Best Warrior Competition 2025

Two Colorado Army National Guardsmen traveled to Flagstaff, Arizona, May 11, 2025, to compete in the Region VII Best Warrior competition.

U.S. Army Pfc. Erich Bendele and Sgt. Raden Chambers won the Colorado National Guard's state competition in October 2024, earning themselves the chance to be crowned the best Soldier and noncommissioned officer at the regional level.

"This was a lot tougher competition than the state level," Chambers said. "The events were more varied, and the elevation is higher than Colorado, which a lot of the competitors were feeling from day one."

U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Walter Ways, Arizona National Guard, operations sergeant major and 850th Military Police Battalion command sergeant major, said he wanted the competition to be focused on what the sergeant major of the Army described as four key tasks that NCOs should be able to accomplish: urgency, the ability to fight tonight; lethality, being able to close with and destroy the enemy; determination, carrying heavy loads over long distances; and, competency, being good with warrior tasks and drills.

Over the course of the 4-day event the competitors were pushed physically and mentally, sometimes for hours at a time. During the strength and endurance



event, for example, competitors would perform a series of seven different physical tasks such as sandbag throw, sled drag, burpees, and a power lift and carry, for a duration of 15 minutes each, completing the most reps with a half-mile run sandwiched between each task.

In addition to physical fitness challenges, common Soldier tasks were implemented to test the knowledge and endurance of each competitor. In addition to a standard M4 qualification, they faced unconventional shooting lanes, such as a pistol qualification that required competitors to perform burpees between each target, pushing the competitors to their limits.

Other events included land navigation, an 18-mile ruck march, a written exam, and a military board.

The competition's final event, the biathlon, was also unique in that competitors ran two miles to the range while carrying their M4, then firing their weapon at a series of targets, running to another range, firing again, then running three miles to the finish line.

When the events concluded and the scores were tallied, Chambers finished in the middle of the non-commissioned officer pack and Bendele finished second to Arizona's competitor in the lower enlisted group. As the runner up, Bendele could have the opportunity to compete at nationals if for any reason the winner is unable to attend.





Colorado National Guard, Joint Force Headquarters
6848 South Revere Parkway, Centennial, CO 80112
Visit us online at <https://co.ng.mil>

