



Command Message

COLORADO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

June 2021



As most of you are returning to 100 percent attendance for drill and annual training, remember to focus on readiness. Readiness starts with each and every one of our Soldiers, including you. If, and until, we hear new guidance regarding the ACFT requirements, it is critical that you take the time to adequately prepare to take the test. Not only to succeed but to prevent personal injury as well. Physical fitness is not the only thing that is holding us back from getting promoted: schools are as well. Whether it is AIT, ILE, or ALC, it is critical that you work with your leadership and readiness NCOs to get scheduled for schools so that you can **get the training you need to get promoted** and take on new responsibilities to excel through the COARNG.

In June, which is Army Heritage Month, we take pause to thank and honor all those who have served in our Army, and who have served our nation, over the past 246 years. This past year, COARNG Soldiers and civilians have been challenged like never before, fighting in support of hurricane, wildfire and COVID-19 relief efforts. Although the first National Guard unit was first formed in 1636, the National Guard as we know it was established on June 3, 1916 when Pres. Woodrow Wilson signed into law the National Defense Act. The act expanded the size and scope of the National Guard and guaranteed its status as the nation's permanent reserve force. A big factor in this decision came down to the Mexican rebel leader Pancho Villa's raids in the American Southwest. Three weeks later on June 19, the **Colorado Army National Guard mobilized** for Mexican border service to protect Americans on the border and to hunt for Pancho Villa and his bandits. COARNG Soldiers and civilians continue to have the courage to stay the course and work together as one team in support of our nation and Colorado.

During the month of June, we recognize **Pride Month**. The COARNG is open to all individuals who can meet the physical and mental fitness and world-wide deployability standards that qualify any applicant for military service. Throughout history, brave gay Soldiers and civilians have served and fought for our nation, and our state, from the lowest ranks to the highest military offices.

Because of the Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act, Guardsmen mobilized under Title 32 gain **VA loan eligibility** after serving 90 days of full-time duty, provided at least 30 of those days were consecutive. This means more than 50,000 Guardsmen will gain VA loan eligibility. This is a great opportunity for any Soldier that was activated for COVID response missions or fire seasons. Please share this information with any Soldier you know that has been looking to buy a house so that they can take advantage while mortgage rates are still low.

Now that summer is upon us, remember to be safe. If you're grilling, don't leave the barbeque unattended and keep it at least ten feet from your house. Likewise, fireworks and campfires are fun, but can be dangerous so make sure you use proper precautions to prevent any flames from getting out of hand. If you are going hiking or on training, make sure to bring water, food, and sunblock to prevent heat exhaustion. Don't drink and drive. If you buy a motorcycle, remember that Colorado Army National Guardsmen are eligible to take one or more free motorcycle safety courses. Please contact COARNG Safety Office (720-250-1776) for approval prior to signing up.

Mission First, Mountain Strong!



State employees along with Colorado National Guard Soldiers, Airmen, and their families march to fight hunger in our communities by carry rucksacks or backpacks full of non-perishable food and high demand personal products, such as toothpaste and shampoo, to a drop off point five miles away in Parker, Colorado, May 27, 2021.

(Colorado National Guard photo by 1st. Lt. Katherine Lee)