



## Command Message

# COLORADO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

September 2020



I hope everyone is beginning to enjoy the cooler weather as fall approaches and take a well-deserved rest. During September, I want to ensure we maintain our focus on readiness. We will continue to mitigate the risk posed by the COVID-19 environment to keep COARNG personnel and their families healthy and safe. We are accelerating strategic readiness efforts to make sure the COARNG can generate the forces that will be employed with our allies and partners across the globe. We are strengthening and refining our strategic readiness capabilities so we are ready to mobilize, deploy and sustain our forces rapidly on multi-domain battlefields. This includes **operationalizing** scalable training exercises in a COVID-19 environment to focus on developing highly trained, disciplined and fit teams with the skills and equipment to meet current operational requirements for readiness.

As we train for our federal wartime and homeland defense missions, I want everyone to remember to live by the warrior ethos. Especially, **I will never leave a fallen comrade**. We lost one of our own recently to suicide and everyone needs to be aware of the warning signs and have the skills to intervene. It is important for leaders, family members and friends to check in with each other and ensure that even though we are physically distancing, we are still connected. Every Soldier is a valued member of the COARNG team and is critical to its mission accomplishment.

Nearly 3,000 people lost their lives 19 years ago during the tragic events of 11 September 2001. We honor the memories of the souls we lost and pay tribute to all of the patriots and their families who have sacrificed their lives in defense of freedom. The threat posed by extremists throughout the world has not lessened since **September 11, 2001**, and the COARNG must have the training and equipment to successfully defeat the nation's enemies. The readiness of our force must remain our No. 1 priority as our continued commitment to protect the American people. Take time on **Patriot Day** to honor the lives of those who were lost and every warrior who has given their life since that day to protect our safety and freedom.



Soldiers assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery Regiment, Colorado Army National Guard conduct a live-fire exercise with High Mobility Rocket Systems (HIMARs) at Fort Carson, July 22, 2020. The 3-157th is headquartered in Colorado Springs and is augmented by 188th Forward Support Company in Pueblo. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Ashley Low)

The annual observance of National Hispanic Heritage Month from 15 September to 15 October gives us the chance to recognize the achievements and contributions of Hispanic Americans to the COARNG and to our nation. Embracing and celebrating diversity makes our force stronger, and we are dedicated to ensuring equality for all our Soldiers, civilians and family members. The theme for the 2020 **Hispanic Heritage Month** is "Hispanics: Be Proud of Your Past, Embrace the Future." I am confident that the talent, skills and abilities in our diverse force will help us to meet future defense challenges and win our nation's wars.

Lt. General Jensen assumed the role as the new director of the Army National Guard and aligned his top priorities with Secretary Esper's priorities on diversity and inclusiveness. I will ensure COARNG leaders are placing people first and developing professional, ethical and caring leaders while accomplishing our global and local missions. You leave your civilian employment and your families to support the country, protect your neighbors, and **defend The Constitution** of the United States, both at home and abroad. As General Milley said, "What matters is we are united as Americans. In the Constitution, all men and women are created free and equal. Those of us in uniform, we are dedicated to that principle and are willing to die for it. So if we're willing to die for it, we ought to be willing to live for it."

Remember to take personal pride in your **physical fitness** to set the example of being combat ready. This month your assigned task is to incorporate deadlifts into your workout routines. While the Army delayed the ACFT implementation date, it will help transform our fitness culture, reduce preventable injuries and attrition, and enhance mental toughness and stamina so we are ready to deploy, fight and win on any battlefield.

**Mission First, Mountain Strong!**