

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Spring 2023

# GUARDSMAN

MAGAZINE







**SIMPLY IRRESISTIBLE**

## NEW HAMPSHIRE NATIONAL GUARD LEADERSHIP



**The Honorable  
Chris Sununu**

Governor of  
New Hampshire



**Maj. Gen.  
David Mikolaities**

Adjutant General of  
the N.H. National Guard

**Brig. Gen. John LeBlanc**  
Commander of the N.H. Army National Guard

**Brig. Gen. John Pogorek**  
Commander of the N.H. Air National Guard

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N.H. Air National Guard
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N.H. National Guard

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**COVER PHOTO:** Airman 1st Class Megan Haley, an aerospace medic with the 157th Medical Group, 157th Air Refueling Wing, poses in a KC-46A Pegasus aerial refueler May 5 at Lajes Air Base, Portugal. Haley was part of a large readiness exercise that generated 19 sorties and gave airmen the opportunity to learn tasks outside their specific Air Force specialties.

*Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157 ARW Public Affairs.*



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## MESSAGE TO THE FORCE

To the Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilian Employees of the New Hampshire National Guard,

Juxtaposed against a holiday weekend and the unofficial start of summer, Memorial Day is a solemn reminder that the freedoms we enjoy come at a dear price.

Since the Revolutionary War, 1.1 million men and women have died in service to our nation. The Civil War accounts for nearly half the fallen, World War 2 for more than 400,000.

New Hampshire's losses number in the thousands.

Since 9/11, forty-four servicemen have been added to the state's roll. They were soldiers, airmen, and Marines fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. Four came from our own ranks: Sgt. Jeremiah Holmes of the 744th Transportation Company, Spc. Alan Burgess of 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment, Sgt. David Stelmat of the 237th Military Police Company, and Cpl. Scott Dimond of Charlie Company, 3rd of the 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain).

Staff Sgt. Jose Pequeno of the 237th MPs nearly died after he suffered a massive head wound in Iraq in 2006. At the time, he was one of the most severely wounded American servicemen to return home from either of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now residing in Florida, the former Sugar Hill police chief continues to make remarkable progress thanks to the devotion of his mother Nelida Bagley.

The collective spirit of our fallen brothers- and sisters-in-arms, that profound sense of selfless service passed from generation to generation, continues to thrive in the men and women of this organization. Last week, Lt. Col. Tori Searbo, an M-Day nurse with the 157th Medical Group, was among 15 Granite Staters who received the NH Hero Award for her lifesaving efforts at the scene of a car accident last year.

Earlier this month, Staff Sgt. Colin McGrail of the 237th MPs was recognized for performing his 1,000th funeral honors. He joins a select fraternity of NH guardsmen who've achieved the milestone that includes Sgt. Charles Biron, Sgt. 1st Class Cameron Holt-Corti, and Staff Sgts. Michael Avard, Patrick Combs, and Nicholas Fournier.

In February, we welcomed home the 197th Field Artillery Brigade after another successful tour as the field artillery headquarters for U.S. Army Central Command. A month later we bid farewell to a well-trained, well-led 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment as it prepared to deploy to the Middle East.

The 157th Air Refueling Wing and its active associate, the 64th Air Refueling Squadron, added to their impressive KC-46 training credentials, leading a large-scale, deployment readiness exercise earlier this month in support of NATO allies in the Azores, Portugal.

The 170 NHARNG soldiers of Task Force Southeast are hitting their stride as they pass the halfway point of a year deployment on the southern border in support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

In March, the NHNG Biathlon Team took third place in the National Guard Bureau's Biathlon Championship, placing just behind Vermont and Minnesota. Spc. Tom Echelberger was one of just 11 servicemembers -- all from the National Guard -- who qualified for the World Military Ski Championship. Coached by Maj. Rob Burnham, the team's performance was extraordinary, considering the program had been inactive for 16 of the last 20 years.

At the same time, the NHNG Marksmanship Team "came out of nowhere" to seize third place at the U.S. Army Small Arms Championship after a 10-year hiatus from the national competition. Most impressive was their first-place finish in team pistol against 54 squads. Two months later, Sgt. 1st Class David Musso of the 3643rd Brigade Support Battalion and Tech. Sgt. Conner Cunio of the 157th Air Refueling Wing earned the "Chief's 50" marksmanship badge for finishing eighth and 10th respectively out of 247 competitors at the 52nd Annual Winston P. Wilson Rifle and Pistol Championships.

The 12th Civil Support Team helped ensure the 149th running of the Kentucky Derby, that drew more than 100,000 spectators this month, was safe and secure. In Lincoln, Nebraska, the NHNG placed 14th in the annual National Guard Marathon. Two NHNG airmen, Tech. Sgts. Christopher Ager and Amber Martine, earned spots on the National Guard Marathon Team.

Closer to home, a contingent of 18 soldiers and airmen are nearing the end of a three-month activation in support of men's state prison in Concord, marking the third time in three years the NHNG has helped offset critical staffing shortages there.

Our state partnership program continues to flourish, marked by the 39th Army Band's return to the Ilopango Air Show in El Salvador and a successful series of small unit exchanges with the Cabo Verde armed forces. Soldiers from both countries traveled to New Hampshire in February to compete in our annual Best Warrior Competition. The winners, Staff Sgt. David Jollimore of Recruiting and Retention and Spc. Brendan Tuttle of 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment, earned NCO and Soldier of the Year honors.

We rekindled our cross-border training relationship with Canada, conducting field training exercises with our military police at Gagetown and Fort Devens. Two Mountain Company soldiers, Capt. Robert Matzelle and Staff Sgt. Michael Avard, were among a group of guardsmen from four states who volunteered for arctic training with the Canadian military during Guerrier Nordique 23, an annual exercise in Resolute Bay, Nunavut.

As we join our fellow citizens on the last Monday in May to honor our war dead, take time to reflect on your accomplishments and that unrelenting spirit that's in each of you and in those who fought and died before us. Stay safe and enjoy time with your family and friends.

Sincerely,

**Major General David Mikolaities**

Adjutant General

New Hampshire National Guard

## ON THE MOVE: NH GUARD IS FLYING TO MIDDLE EAST ONCE AGAIN

*By Ray Duckler, Concord Monitor columnist  
Reprinted courtesy of Concord Monitor*

A combination of Uncle William and Hurricane Maria led Specialist Abner Classen of Exeter down the right path.

He came to the Granite State after his homeland of Puerto Rico was destroyed by Maria in 2017. Amid the chaos, Uncle William lived here in the Granite State and invited his nephew to join him.

Searching for his destiny, Classen combined the devastation at home with the invitation to live in the States and found his way into the selfless world of the National Guard five years ago.

“After lots of damage (from Maria), I took that as maybe a time to start over and change my atmosphere,” said Classen, who’s 26. “The circumstances made the decision easier. What’s better than being with the uncle I have always looked up to?”

Stories were everywhere Friday, from family, friends, and Guard members themselves. They packed the Capitol Center for the Arts to bid farewell to the New Hampshire Guard’s 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment.

The destination and departure time were not released. The Battalion is expected to stay for at least nine months.

Guard members formed a 10-person band that included horns and drums. State officials made speeches, thanking people like SPC Classen.

The Battalion’s primary weapon, the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, can hit its target from 50 miles away. Classen will drive the trucks that place the rocket launchers in their proper spots.

He never saw this coming. At least not until he turned 21, after Uncle William had chosen to move to Texas, leaving Classen alone and unsure of his next step.

He wanted camaraderie. He wanted to help people suffering, like those in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. The Guard came calling, if only in his head.

“It wasn’t until (Uncle William) went back to Texas that I knew I needed a support system,” Classen said. “I joined the Guard to create camaraderie. We support each other, and for me, that was the priority, and it’s what I was looking for.”

Meanwhile, Kai King of Manchester is an IT specialist in the Battalion. Like Classen, he had no idea what he wanted to pursue in life. He graduated with a college degree in business and then worked as an admissions counselor at Southern New Hampshire University.

There, he worked with students who had joined the Guard. One suggested that the Guard might give King the fulfillment he seemed to be lacking just two years ago.

“It was an adventure,” King said. “I thought this would change my life for the better. I’m very logical, and this made sense, to sacrifice for a greater reward in the future. It was an easy decision on my end.”

This will be King’s first deployment. Once he joined the Guard, he realized he was following others in his family. His uncle served in Vietnam. His great-grandfather fought in World War I. There were others.

“I’m walking in my family footsteps, and I never thought of it that way,” King said. “For me, it’s very exciting. A year away in a different environment, a military culture. I have great superiors who are supportive. I’ll learn from those who have already deployed. This will be a grind. You’re not going to have regular comfortable living, but this is what we are trained for and we’ll face it head-on.”

And then there’s Sgt. Jeffrey Splaine of Derry, a motor transport operator. He’s been in the Guard for nearly 10 years, since he was 19. He spent one year in the Arab Emirates and was on active duty in South Korea. He spoke about leaving his comfort zone for the sake of others. That was a common theme Friday.

“I was just looking for a challenge and something completely out of my wheelhouse,” Splaine said. “I learned about the equipment I had never seen or heard about before. I wanted to step up and do something a little bigger than just worrying about myself.”



**Ava Nash, 4, hugs her grandfather, 1st Sgt. William Savage** of 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment, prior to the battalion’s departure ceremony March 31 at the Capitol Center for the Arts in Concord. *Photo by Geoff Forester, Concord Monitor.*



## NH NATIONAL GUARD REVIVES BIATHLON PROGRAM

*By Sgt. 1st Class Whitney Hughes, National Guard Bureau*

Four years ago, when Tom Echelberger, a former high school and college cross-country skier, was working in a New Hampshire ski shop, he never dreamed he would have a full-time job skiing, let alone be headed to Sweden to represent the U.S. military in international competition.

It wasn't until fate brought New Hampshire National Guard Maj. Rob Burnham into his shop in 2019 that the unlikely journey began. Burnham, at the time, aspired to revive the New Hampshire National Guard's biathlon program, which had been inactive for over 16 years.

Biathlon is an Olympic-level sport that combines cross-country skate skiing and rifle marksmanship. Within the National Guard, around 30 states maintain biathlon programs.

In 2023, the revitalized New Hampshire team took third place at the Chief of the National Guard Bureau's Biathlon Championships in Jericho, Vermont. They placed just behind teams from Vermont and Minnesota, whose programs have nearly a half-century of experience.

The New Hampshire team's success is aligned with the addition of Spc. Tom Echelberger, who enlisted in the NHNG in 2020. After a few years of work and determination, he is one of just 11 servicemembers — all from the National Guard — headed to represent the United States in the World Military Ski Championships in Boden, Sweden, at the end of this month.

"I thought to myself, skiing is in New Hampshire's DNA, and it should be part of the New Hampshire National Guard," said Burnham, the NHNG biathlon program director. "There's really a number of areas the National Guard benefits from in maintaining the biathlon training program. It's about the whole Guardsman concept. I feel that our athletes are the best we have to offer in the Guard. They are physically fit, mentally tough and dedicated to their craft and each other."

Burnham discovered his interest in biathlon competition while running at the Camp Ethan Allen Training Site in Jericho in the summer of 2019. From there, he took on the challenge of resurrecting New Hampshire's program, which had been inactive since 2004 when the demands of deployments for the Global War on Terror came to a head.

In late 2019, he was outfitting the team with equipment and frequenting Echelberger's shop.

"One day, the young man helping us in the shop stopped to thank me, and I had no idea why," said Burnham. Echelberger said he had been exploring his future and the interactions surrounding the development of the biathlon team led him to the New Hampshire National Guard.

Echelberger joined the National Guard's elite biathlon development team after his first biathlon season in 2021. That enabled him to train year-round, leading to his selection



The New Hampshire National Guard biathlon team poses for a photo after winning third place in the 2023 Chief of the National Guard Bureau's Biathlon Championships at the Camp Ethan Allen Training Site in Jericho, Vt., Feb. 22. From left, **Spc. Jimmy Small**, **2nd Lt. Bryce Murdick**, **Spc. Tom Echelberger**, **Staff Sgt. Christopher Parent**, **Maj. Rob Burnham**, **Staff Sgt. Jacob Englehardt** and **Capt. Pamela Donley**. *Courtesy photo.*





**Maj. Robert Burnham**, the New Hampshire National Guard biathlon coordinator, is coined by **NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities** on March 17 in Concord for the team's third place finish at the 47th Annual Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon at Camp Ethan Allen, Vt. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.*

**Staff Sgt. Chris Parent** of the 260th Air Traffic Control Squadron races downhill during a biathlon event March 14 at Fort Kent, Maine. *Courtesy photo by Fort Kent Outdoor Center.*



to represent the National Guard in national and international competitions.

But being a Guard member has always been about more than biathlon for Echelberger. He proudly views himself as a soldier-athlete. The day after he returns from competition in Sweden, he is headed to the Middle East for a deployment with the NHNG's 3rd Battalion of 197th Field Artillery Regiment. He will serve in his primary Military Occupational Specialty as a fire control specialist and looks forward to improving his military skills on a real-world mission.

While success has come quickly, the reactivation of the New Hampshire biathlon program was not without growing pains. After initial training and competitions began in 2019, COVID-19 restrictions significantly affected the program. But the team identified ways to stay ready for regional U.S. biathlon competitions.

After not scoring a single ranking point in 2022 at the Guard Championships in Little Falls, Minnesota, the team orchestrated

the unlikely top-three finish in 2023 in Jericho, where Burnham's dream began.

"I was most excited to experience this accomplishment truly as a team," Burnham said. "Everyone supported and contributed to the same goal, and we exceeded expectations together."

Echelberger said there is a unique kinship among the Guard biathlon community. He also noted that the opportunity to build camaraderie with service members from outside his state has been valuable. He especially looks forward to competing with international military members in Sweden.

"I never thought I'd be where I am today, especially not three years ago when I joined the Guard," said Echelberger. "It's going to be an amazing opportunity out there to compete against some of the best athletes in the world. It's also a celebration of skiing and the service and commitment that all of us from our respective countries have made to those nations."



**Peter St. James** dons standard traveling gear during his 2011 trip to Kuwait to report on the 197th Fires Brigade mission in support of Operation New Dawn. *NHNG archive photo.*



From left, **Peter St. James**, **Staff Sgt. Christopher Demain**, and **Jeanne Lester** chat live in studio April 15, 2021 on 99.7 WNTK in New London. Demain, a NHARNG recruiter, spoke about the opportunities to live, learn and serve in New Hampshire as a guardsman. Lester's son was one of his recent recruits. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*



**NH Adjutant Gen. David Mikolaities** talks to **Peter St. James** about "Army National Guard Hiring Days" during a June 30, 2020 appearance on "Good Morning New Hampshire" in Concord. Joined by co-host Pat Kelly, the 30-minute discussion covered a range of topics including the Guard's ongoing COVID-19 relief efforts. *NHNG archive photo.*

## MIC DROP

*By Lt. Col. Gregory Heilshorn, NHNG Public Affairs*

Peter St. James retired from radio last week after a 50-year run in the business. The New Hampshire National Guard was fortunate to be a part of it.

Over the last decade and half, St. James did more to keep the NHNG relevant than any other member of the media. His weekly call-in show with deployed guardsmen, unofficially dubbed "Tuesdays With Peter," was unprecedented. It accounted for hundreds of interviews with our citizen-soldiers and airmen.

On Christmas Eve mornings, he dedicated his entire four-hour broadcast from 6 to 10 a.m. to the Guard. With the adjutant general in studio, they would chat live with our deployed. The governor and a senator or two would call in. Family members would speak directly to their loved ones overseas. The holiday shows were spontaneous and genuine. It was St. James at his finest.

He embedded with the 197th Fires Brigade during Operation New Dawn in 2011 and Task Force Jaguar for Beyond The Horizon 2013 in El Salvador. He returned to our state partnership country several times, covering the 39th Army

Band's historical concerts at the Ilopango Air Show. He interviewed commanders and ambassadors, but always preferred talking with Joes.

St. James connected with our troops on a personal level, walking a mile in their boots on more than one, muddy occasion. Through his warm baritone, he was able to relate their experiences with a regular listenership of more than 25,000. Answering his questions on air was more like a conversation with a colleague.

Outside the booth, St. James volunteered as master of ceremony countless times for send-offs, welcome-homes, and five extraordinary gatherings in honor of our state's Vietnam veterans. Talk about going above and beyond. He even found time to record the personal stories of residents of the State Veterans Home for a special Memorial Day show.

The true measure of his impact is how many of our guardsmen consider St. James a good friend. He always had our back and for that we remain grateful.



## SAVING GRACE

*By Staff Sgt. Timothy Hayden, 157th ARW Public Affairs*

On a hot August day last summer, Lt. Col. Tori Searbo, chief nurse of the 157th Medical Group, was driving through Greenland on the way to meet a friend, when she encountered a motor vehicle accident.

"I just happened to look up and see a little old man in my rearview mirror driving really slow," Searbo said. "Then he started drifting into oncoming traffic."

"He hit another car head-on, fortunately at a low speed," she explained. "At that point I knew I had to stop."

Using her own car to block oncoming traffic, Searbo got out and went right to the elderly driver's vehicle to check on him. Observing that the man's condition was rapidly turning for the worse, Searbo pulled him out of the car with the help of a few bystanders.

"By the time he was on the ground, he didn't have a pulse," Searbo said. "I had someone call 911, and I started chest compressions."

"Anyone who has done chest compressions knows it's not easy," she explained. "It was 90 degrees out, there was sweat pouring off me, but I had to keep doing it until EMS arrived."

Moments after the man was transported to the hospital, Searbo, an ICU nurse at Portsmouth Regional Hospital, received a group text message from her own department that warned of an elderly man coming in with cardiac arrest. Searbo contacted her colleague and gave her a firsthand account of the incident.


"I really didn't do anything that any of us wouldn't do in that situation," Searbo said.

A Portsmouth resident, she has been a nurse with the N.H. Air Guard since May of 2011, after transferring from the Maine Air National Guard.

The day after the incident, Searbo went to the hospital and visited the man whose life she saved, finding him alert and in good spirits.

She was awarded a commendation medal for her actions.

"She's a hero, there's no doubt about it," said Brig. Gen. John Pogorek, the assistant adjutant general for Air, New Hampshire National Guard. "She came in at just the right time and saved this person's life."



**Lt. Col. Tori Searbo**, the chief flight nurse with the 157th Air Refueling Wing, supervises the nurses and medics at the Cherokee Nation Innovative Readiness Training June 5, 2022. *Photo by Col. Stephan Petranker, U.S. Army Reserve.*



# Early Risers

The 157th Security Forces Squadron conducted a four-day combat readiness exercise March 18 to 21 at Pease Air National Guard Base and the NHNG Regional Training Site in Center Strafford. The training included combatives, first aid, range shooting, land navigation, patrolling, and close quarters battle.



Defenders of the 157th Security Forces Squadron stand in formation March 20 at the training site in Center Strafford. Photo by Staff Sgt. Taylor Queen, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



Tech. Sgt. Ryan Welch and Senior Airman Christian Montembeau of 157th Security Forces Squadron clear a training village March 20 at the training site Center Strafford. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



Senior Airman Nicholas Patterson of the 157th Security Forces Squadron plots points on a map March 21 at the training site in Center Strafford. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.





**Staff Sgt. Jacob Kelly**, a defender with 157th Security Forces Squadron, rallies team members during patrol training March 21 in Center Strafford. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



Defenders of the 157th Security Forces Squadron practice ground fighting March 19 at Pease ANG Base. Photo by Staff Sgt. Taylor Queen, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



Defenders of the 157th Security Forces Squadron engage a simulated hostile environment March 21 at the training site in Center Strafford. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW Public Affairs.



## SNAPSHOTS

## IN A CINCH

From left, **Sargento Principal Anildo Varela** applies a tourniquet on **Subtenente Edmislon Carvalho**, both of the Cabo Verdean military, during a medical readiness exchange May 11 under the NHNG-Cabo Verde State Partnership Program in Praia, Santiago Island. Looking on is **Master Sgt. Patricia Covolo** of the 157th Medical Support Group. *Photos by 1st Lt. Kirsten Arends, bilateral affairs officer, U.S. Embassy Praia.*



## DUE EAST

Airmen with the 157th Air Refueling Wing learn about tires and brakes during a large-scale readiness exercise May 5 at Lajes Air Base, Portugal. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson, 157th ARW PA.*





## THEIR BEST SHOT

**Spc. Zachary Corliss** of 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment, Bravo Battery, stands in the doorway of a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System during a field training exercise April 14 at McGregor Base Camp in New Mexico. The unit conducted a HIMARS live fire in preparation for a Middle East deployment. *Photo by Spc. Devin Bard, 3-197th FAR Public Affairs.*



## NEW BEGINNING

From left, **Master Sgt. Phillip Fournier**, NH Adjutant Gen. **David Mikolaities** and **Kelly Ayotte**, former U.S. senator for New Hampshire, congratulate Fournier during his retirement ceremony April 2 at the state military reservation in Concord. Ayotte served as New Hampshire attorney general from 2004 to 2009 and as senator from 2011 - 2017 during a period of multiple NHARNG deployments to the Middle East. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*





## OH HAPPY DAY

**2nd Lt. Victoria Cantalupo** receives her new shoulder boards from retired NHNG chaplain, **Lt. Col. Steven Veinotte**, and her husband, **Giovanni**, during a commissioning ceremony April 1 at the state military reservation in Concord. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*



## DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT

**State Command Chief Warrant George Munson** fastens an Army Achievement Medal on his son's collar for being named the distinguished honor graduate of his Army Mountain Warfare class March 24 in Jericho, Vermont. **Pfc. George Munson** scored a perfect 1,000 points for the two-week mountaineering course. *Courtesy photo.*



## GRITTY PERFORMANCES

From Left, **Nathaniel Wright**, **Drill Sgt. Robin Rojek**, and **Natalie Longacre** cross the finish of a timed two-mile run during the Guardians of the Granite State fitness challenge May 20 at the Regional Training Site in Center Strafford. Cheering from the sideline is NH State Trooper, **Lt. Vincent Grieco**. **Nieve Boulter** and **Thomas Lacroix** of Pinkerton Academy bested a field of about 20 high school students from across the state. The six-event competition was co-sponsored by New Hampshire Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention, State Police and Interscholastic Athletic Association. Boulter was top point-getter for females, and Lacroix scored highest among male competitors. *Photo by Spc. Nicole Blake, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*



## POP GUN

**Pfc. Kyle Shattuck** of NHNG's Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), engages rifle targets in an Engagement Skills Trainer on April 1 at the training site in Center Strafford. The electronic simulator helps soldiers hone their skills before an official rifle qualification with live ammunition. *Photo by Sgt. Sean Ferry, 114th Public Affairs Detachment.*







## OFF THE MAP

**Staff Sgt. David Jollimore**, a training NCO with Recruiting and Retention, NHARNG, draws a range map as a part of his Army Warrior Task lanes during the Region 1 Best Warrior Competition at the Woodville Training Site in Woodville, Maine, on May 16. Jollimore represented New Hampshire at the Northeast Best Warrior Competition and was among 14 National Guard soldiers from seven states who competed for top NCO and soldier in Region 1. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Patrick Kirby, 603rd Public Affairs Detachment.*



## INTO DARKNESS

**Spc. Christopher Kiernan**, an interior electrician with Detachment 1, 185th Engineer Company, NHARNG, plots his points during a night land navigation course during the Region 1 Best Warrior Competition at the Woodville Training Site in Woodville, Maine, on May 16. Kiernan represented New Hampshire at the Northeast Best Warrior Competition and was among 14 National Guard soldiers from seven states who competed for top NCO and soldier in Region 1. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Patrick Kirby, 603rd Public Affairs Detachment.*



## BEAR HUG

**Staff Sgt. Elliot Boutin** of 157th ARW Public Affairs grapples with **Airman 1st Class Ethan Roberts** of 157th Security Forces Squadron during defensive tactics training Mar. 17 at the Edward Cross Training Complex in Pembroke. Eighteen NHNG soldiers and airmen were mobilized to the NH State Prison for Men in Concord to again help corrections officials deal with staffing shortages. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*



## ON THEIR MARK

More than 80 runners, walkers and ruckers participate in the New Hampshire National Guard's 7th Annual Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month 5K road race April 26 at the state military reservation in Concord. The event is held annually to promote sexual assault awareness and prevention, and support survivors. Photo by Lt. Col. Gregory Heilshorn, NHNG Public Affairs.



## DERBY DECON

Sgt. Nathan Dullea of NHNG's 12th Civil Support Team helps Staff Sgt. Ava Kielisch of Wisconsin's 54th CST remove contaminated protective garments during a training exercise March 14 in Louisville, Ky. National Guard Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams (WMD-CST) from around the country convened with local and federal law enforcement to conduct a field training exercise in preparation for the 149th Kentucky Derby. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Crane, Kentucky Army National Guard.





## OUT OF NOWHERE

From left, **Lt. Col. Brooks Hayward**, **Tech. Sgt. Connor Cunio**, **Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Wyner**, **Capt. Patrick Randall** and **Sgt. 1st Class David Musso** gather with their impressive haul of awards from the 2023 U.S. Army Small Arms Championship on March 18 at Fort Benning, Georgia. The squad placed third out of 54 teams. The team placed first in pistol, second in rifle and accounted for seven individual awards. *Courtesy photo.*



## SPECIAL OCCASION

From left, **Spc. Jillian Douzanis** of Joint Force Headquarters is congratulated by fellow human resources specialist, **Staff Sgt. Erin McPherson**, following Douzanis' promotion ceremony May 11 at the state military reservation in Concord. Douzanis was promoted to specialist after nearly two years of service. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*



## NH SHOOTERS EARN COVETED CHIEF'S 50

*By Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO*

Two New Hampshire guardsmen finished in the top 10 at the 52nd Annual Winston P. Wilson Rifle and Pistol Championships held in North Little Rock, Arkansas, from April 29 to May 5.

Sgt. 1st Class David Musso, a soldier with 3643d Brigade Support Battalion, and Tech. Sgt. Connor Cunio, an airman with 157th Air Refueling Wing, finished eighth and 10th, respectively, out of 247 competitors from around the world.

Both earned the “Chief’s 50” shooting badge, presented to the top 22 rifle and pistol shooters at this year’s match.

“This is a huge accomplishment,” said Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Wyner, team captain and state marksmanship coordinator. “They performed better than the vast majority of the best shooters from the Army, Air and across the nation.”

Cunio placed fourth in rifle, buoyed by impressive shooting at distances up to 600 yards. Musso demonstrated more all-around skill. He finished ninth in pistol and 22nd rifle, earning badges for both weapons.

“I am completely humbled and honored,” Musso said. “It’s something I will never forget.”

In the award’s 52-year history, the Chief’s 50 pantheon now comprises just eight New Hampshire guardsmen. Cunio is the lone airman.

Team New Hampshire, which included an Alpha and Bravo squad each consisting of four shooters, was precluded from comparable achievement. An unforeseen rules interpretation by match officials split the Granite State’s top guns between the two squads, forcing Musso and Cunio to compete separately.

The snafu also diluted other state teams. But the shake-up especially stung for a New Hampshire group on the rise since last month’s third-place finish at the “All Army” match in Fort Benning, Georgia.



**Tech. Sgt. Connor Cunio** of the 157th Air Refueling Wing and **Sgt. 1st Class David Musso** of 3643d Brigade Support Battalion display their “Chief’s 50” badges May 5 at the 52nd Annual Winston P. Wilson Rifle and Pistol Championships awards ceremony in North Little Rock, Ark. Cunio and Musso finished eighth and 10th, respectively, out of 247 competitors at the week-long match. The two have emerged as the marksmanship program’s best shooters. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*

**Sgt. 1st Class David Musso** of 3643d Brigade Support Battalion shows off his “Chief’s 50” badge. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State Public Affairs.*



“There was a lot of confusion this year regarding the individual classifications,” Wyner said. “The decision to require us to shoot a different Alpha Team cost us drastically this year.”

Led with strong performances by Wyner and Musso, Alpha Team still finished a respectable 17th out of 58 teams. And though secondary squads aren’t officially ranked, Bravo Team, led by Cunio and Capt. Patrick Randall of Recruiting and Retention Battalion, placed even higher.

“Although the team composition did not go as we had planned, as a leader with the program, I am still very proud of the individual competitors and the progress they have made over the last few years of training with me,” Wyner said.

Training that has helped some students, like Cunio, outshine the master on a national stage.

“I did not think I would have reached this level so quickly,” Cunio said. “There’s always a little internal competition, but very much a friendly one. Without the support of leadership and fellow team members, none of us would be shooting at the levels we are. I’m very grateful for that.”



**Capt. Patrick Randall** of NHARNG Recruiting and Retention Battalion fires his 9mm during the Rapid Pistol Close Quarter Battle event May 1 at the 52nd Annual Winston P. Wilson Rifle and Pistol Championships in North Little Rock, Ark. Randall, one of marksmanship program’s top marksmen, placed 35th out of 247 competitors on NH Team Bravo at the week-long match. *Courtesy photo.*



From top, **Tech. Sgt. Michael Strempler** of 157th Air Refueling Wing and **Capt. Patrick Randall** of Recruiting and Retention Battalion practice their firing positions prior to the “Know Your Limits” team rifle match at the 52nd Annual Winston P. Wilson Rifle and Pistol Championships in North Little Rock, Ark. *Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.*



## ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PROMOTIONS

### Private (PV2)

Kyle Ayers  
Johann Badaoui  
Anabel Bobadilla  
Benjamin Bouchard  
Kacia Campbell  
Tyler Campbell  
Cooper Carlson  
Jaslyn Coldwell  
Macenzi Connors  
Madalyn Delotto  
Carlos Dow  
Alex Dyer  
Matthew Feole  
Harrison Gamache  
Nendoe Gleekia  
Ethen Hall  
Dennis Harris  
Matthew Higginbotham  
Reilly Howard  
Ji Hwang  
Colt Janes  
Jezelle Josef  
Samuel Kfoury  
Shant Koyounian  
Peter Kratovil  
Cameron Lumbard  
Veronica Madore  
Taylor Markwith  
Pyrrhon Mugenga  
Shereen Munir  
Tristan Patten  
Patrick Phillips  
Jordan Post  
Luciano Quezada  
Corey Santana  
Tanyan Scott  
Jonathan Slankard  
Matthew Slover  
Laurent St. Laurent  
Dominic Stengle  
Rozalia Vajda  
Cody Vongsa  
Cameron Watts  
Aaron Weatherbee  
Richard White

### Private First Class

Parker Adams  
Ayune Bernardo da Silva  
Fernandes  
Nicole Bradley  
Christopher Brown  
Joseph Costa  
Patrick Elder  
Tomas Garcia  
Acevedo Gomez  
Mary Gubitose  
Kylie Hamilton

Dominic Lacasse  
Christian Lavalley  
Amelia Magay  
Connor Manning  
Robert Marquis  
Tyler Maviki  
Tristan Mayville  
Skyler Mikolaities  
George Munson  
Christian Naugler  
Christian Nepa  
Dillan Norcross  
Andrea Obando  
Kennedy Odero  
Khim Oli  
Michelle Otgonbaatar  
Mintiney Pham  
Waleed Shahin  
Robert Sheahan  
Jake St. Cyr  
Ashley Stephens  
Declan Ulricson  
Bao Vo

### Specialist

Mildred Alamur  
Jay Alicea  
Zack Allen  
Claire Brough  
Peter Cameron  
Joseph Carvalho  
Joshua Chandler  
Brett Cherbonneau  
Maria Cioto  
Jazmine Colby  
Zachary Corliss  
Austin Davis  
Jillian Douzanis  
Maddox Duquette  
Kayli Gilman  
Molly Gingras  
Rao Gollakoti  
Joshua Gravallese  
Huu Ha  
Zander Humphrey  
Erik Jerome  
Stephen Jones  
Moses Kapungu  
Zel Kerkel  
Sushan Koirala  
Joshua LaFleur  
Connor Lagace  
Hannah Lajoie  
Alison Lambert  
Ryan Lavin  
Kyle Lebel  
Tucker Leitch  
Zackari Lepicier  
Tara Lohar

Branden Loura  
Moises Marquez  
Ruben Moreno  
Michael Morissette  
Matthew Nicholls  
Santiago Ospina  
Alexander Otova  
Paige Palmer  
Bryant Perez  
Christian Peterson  
Mathew Pettine  
Tyler Pischinger  
Anastasia Pothier  
Bethany Ralph  
Joexly Sanchez Rodriguez  
Alexis Savoy  
Logan Scaggs  
James Smith  
James Spencer  
Derek Strom  
Konrad Sytko  
Enrico Thebaud  
Calen Thomas  
Theo Ward  
Jenelle Welenc

### Sergeant

Jacob Climan  
Joscalyn Gallo  
Alexander Hodosi  
Zachary Ingraham  
Alexandra Labraney  
Nathan MacDonald  
Ethan McAllister  
Devin Merchant  
Abigail Rossino  
Jesse Rothery  
Brendan Sica  
Esteban Torres  
Isaac Wells

### Staff Sergeant

Travis Abbott  
David Broome  
Patrick Egan  
Mahbubul Hassan  
Mark Hayward  
Jordan Horine  
Brendan Johnson  
John Lally  
Courtney Larabee  
Brett Lima  
Matthew Long  
Austin Mahoney  
Colin McGrail  
Keven Miller  
Andy Morgan  
Caleb Pride  
Jeffrey Splaine  
Adam Wong

### Sergeant First Class

Angel Dominguez  
David Fostier  
Cameron Holtcorti  
Michael Kay  
Len Larrabee  
Christopher Mason  
Benjamin Russell

### Master Sergeant

Steven Ainsworth

### Warrant Officer

Jordan Ford

### Chief Warrant Officer 2

Conner Vest

### Chief Warrant Officer 3

Mark Styles

### Second Lieutenant

Victoria Cantalupo  
Jacob Rolfe

### First Lieutenant

Liana Perez

### Captain

Corey Collins  
Nicholas Digaetano  
Courtney Dimon  
Garrett Dupre  
Jacob Hatch  
Jeffrey Jordan  
Olivia Lacroix  
Taylor Mitchell  
Viet Nguyen  
Parker Normand  
Carley Remick  
Beau Robinson  
Ryan Smith  
Joseph Tessier

### Major

Richard Arguien  
Sean Connolly  
Braden Hunter  
Mario Rey  
Jeremy Saunders



## AIR NATIONAL GUARD PROMOTIONS

### Airman

Richard Ochoa  
Shawn Pierre

### Airman First Class

Kohl Abt  
Connor Bourbon  
Michael Corrigan  
Shelby Demingway  
Sokthearith Dong  
John Harris  
Kendall Lawrence  
Mylee Little  
Sarah Souliere

### Senior Airman

Kirsten Bornkessel  
Nicholas Barnes  
Rebekka Bloser  
Christian Bortnick  
Caitlyn Cassille  
Daniel Denney

Jack Forster  
Tucker Fredricksen  
Dominic Fusco  
Nathan Grant  
Jillian Gusciora  
Phengnia Mao  
Andrew Pincince  
Nathaniel Wiggin  
Zachary Wittbrodt

### Staff Sergeant

Thais Ricci  
Aidan Anderson  
Heather Doloroso  
William Gribauskas  
Brendon James  
Joel Mbungu  
Troy Meyer  
Joshua Morrison  
Seth Porter  
Alex Sann  
Ashtin Steen

### Technical Sergeant

Jesse Gillis  
Nicole Hayes  
Austin Grant  
Corey Miller  
Kyle Noel  
Alexandria Stroup

### Master Sergeant

Kevin Banks  
Joseph DiPalma  
Charles Johnston  
David Paquet  
Gary Roy  
Todd Van Zandt

### Senior Master Sergeant

Brian DeAngelis

### Chief Master Sergeant

Scott Dodge  
Michael Girouard

### Second Lieutenant

Nicole Case  
Elise MacLaughlin  
Andrew Savidge

### Captain

Sadie DiPierro

### Major

Benjamin Johnson  
Christopher Jones



Attendees applaud at a promotion ceremony held for **Maj. Mario Rey** on April 14 at the state military reservation in Concord. Rey, a Ranger and artilleryman, serves as the NHNG State Partnership Program Coordinator. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Johnston, NHNG Deputy State PAO.



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