Cowboy Guard

2016 Year in Review
Prop upgrades coming to the 153rd AW

Camp Guernsey receives partnership award

Static aircraft receives needed makeover

Cowboy Challenge mentor program key to success

Cowboy Guard
Wyoming’s Adjutant General

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On the cover
Tech. Sgt. Daniel DeWitt, assigned to the Wyoming Air National Guard’s 153rd Maintenance Squadron as a non-destructive inspections technician, conducts a follow-up inspection on an aircraft part in the NDI Lab in Cheyenne. The shop uses fluorescent penetrates to detect cracks, scratches and crevices. The shop supports not only Air Guard, but F.E. Warren Air Force Base and Wyoming Army National Guard aircraft. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire

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Brig. Gen. Tammy Maas, Wyoming Army National Guard commander and Command Sgt. Maj. Harold Pafford, Army Guard command sergeant major, took part in several on-field recognitions at War Memorial Stadium in Laramie, Oct. 8, 2016. They even delivered the game ball, and maybe a little luck to the Wyoming Cowboys, who defeated Air Force, 35-26. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire
Looking through pictures of Wyoming Air National Guard aircraft over the last ten years, one picture stands out. It is an eight year old image of a single C-130H Hercules aircraft with eight-bladed propellers parked on the ramp at dusk, foretelling the modernization of the C-130 fleet.

The wing assisted with developmental testing by providing a dedicated aircraft and additional crew members for testing with the Electronic Propeller Control System (EPCS) and NP2000 eight-bladed propellers in June 2008. This test represented an option for the Air Force and Air National Guard to modernize the C-130H fleet through a comprehensive propulsion upgrade allowing for increased performance, efficiency and reliability.

The electronic propeller control modification has provided at least a 50 percent increase in reliability due to the replacement of the hydraulic valve housing with an electronic version. Along with the increased reliability, it has greatly improved acceleration response when the throttles are rapidly advanced. The NP2000, when it was installed, reduced propeller maintenance hours, greatly reduced sound and vibrations on the C-130 flight deck, and shortened takeoff distances by nearly ten percent.

Fast forward to 2016, three separate engine upgrades are underway to increase aircraft performance, fuel efficiency and reliability. First, modernizing the T-56A-15 with the Rolls Royce 3.5 engine enhancement program. Second, and most visible, involves replacing the current four bladed metal propellers with a modular and composite eight-bladed, digitally controlled propeller system.

The final modification involves modernizing the 1950s technology with an advanced electronic propeller control system which will increase propeller acceleration response and an in-flight propeller balancing system which will decrease maintenance down time.

By early 2017, the advanced NP2000 propellers will be installed on a separate Wyoming Air National Guard aircraft with the 3.5 modified engine and will undergo a concurrent operational use evaluation test program.

“As both a maintenance officer and a pilot, I am excited for the propulsion system improvements we are undertaking at the Wyoming Air Guard,” said Lt. Col. Todd Davis, 153rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander. “The amount of maintenance manpower reductions will greatly increase our mission capability rate and offer a more reliable aircraft to our flight crews operating in demanding environments at deployed locations and during our domestic support missions such as aerial fire fighting. We have worked with National Guard Bureau for many years on these projects and to finally see them come to fruition is a welcome sight.”

“From a maintainers perspective, the upgraded engine will give us the advantage of cooler starting temperature, cooler turbine inlet temperatures, as well as more performance at lower power settings,” said Senior Master Sgt. Max Duran, 153rd Maintenance Squadron propulsion supervisor. “These upgrades will extend the life of the T56 engine. It equates to longer time on wing, less major overhaul maintenance, and extended life of the engine module, as well as increased efficiency.”
Sgt. Shelby Atkins is the first. Infantry units have existed since the birth of the Army in 1775 and National Guard in 1636. Every soldier that has served in that job field has been a man. Until Atkins. Now, women serve in the infantry. And she is the first.

Atkins, a Wyoming Army National Guard soldier, recently completed an infantry transition course at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center. She was the first woman to be qualified as an infantry soldier in the United States military.

“The fact that it has never been open to females before, the opportunity came and I didn’t think it was one I could pass up,” Atkins said after her graduation. “I didn’t know what it will be like for females in combat or in the infantry, but what better way to find out than by doing it.”

With a recent addition of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry in the western part of the state, a need arose for soldiers to fill the slots.

The opportunity for Atkins came when the Department of Defense mandated all combat positions in the U.S. military, such as infantry and tank crewmen positions, be made available to women across the county.

“It didn’t really start out as something I thought of doing,” she said. However, after she returned from a mission with her former unit, the 133rd Engineer Company, to Tunisia, her team members brought up the idea of volunteering with the new infantry company. Knowing her interest, several leaders in her unit asked if she would consider going infantry.

“They needed an NCO female. The call had gone around the state. I thought I’d sign up and I said yes.” Several days later she had her first drill with the unit. Then a professional obstacle arose. After her first drill, she was notified a new staff sergeant position was available back in the 133rd. That would be a promotion for her.

“Initially I did pick the promotion because that is what I was working towards. With the promotion system, I didn’t know what it would be like, I knew (the infantry company) had a lot of (staff sergeants).” Careful counseling with senior leaders led her back to the infantry decision. A week and a half away from the start of the course, Atkins was in, ready for the challenge, but more importantly, the experience.

“I just wanted the experience really,” she said. “Being able to see what I can do with the infantry and help with the integration process.”

Changing mindsets or stereotypes helped keep her motivated during the two weeks of training.

“I thought I’d be an asset to help with the change. I wanted to show it’s not going to be so bad with a female next to you in the field. It doesn’t have to be a big deal as some people would say.”

With blue infantry cord in hand, Atkins may have been the first, but she isn’t focused on that. It is time to help the unit stand up and start training.

“I just want to keep rolling,” she said. “I don’t think I’m the only one that could have done it. I was just in the right place at the right time. I’m looking forward to see what women can do in the infantry, change stereotypes. I don’t know where it is going from here, just glad to be a part of it.”

Wyoming Army National Guard Sgt. Shelby Atkins hits the ground during the High Physical Demands Tasks test at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center, May 14. Upon graduation from the transitional course, Atkins became the U.S. Army’s first female 11B noncommissioned officer. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire
All eight of the C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft assigned to the 153rd Airlift Wing, Wyoming Air National Guard, took to the air for a historic event May 14. The mission was designed to validate the standards tactical airlift units are required to maintain for mass airdrop capabilities. The timing of the event was also important.

“We only have all of our (aircraft) here from temporary duty and deployments for about two weeks out of the year,” said Col. Paul Lyman, 153rd Airlift Wing commander. “Every member of the 153rd Airlift Wing played a part.”

Aside from the obvious participants, due to the sheer numbers of aircrew and maintenance personnel required to complete the mission, there was additional planning involved.

“Planning began months prior to execution,” said Lt. Col. Ryan Scofield, mission commander and lead pilot.

Planning a large formation requires careful coordination with multiple parties, he said. This involved meetings with Air Traffic Control to clear air space, working with the Small Air Terminal for the loading and recovery of 16 airdrop platforms and parachutes and coordinating with Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants for 224,000 pounds of fuel.

“Having buy-in from maintenance and their tireless efforts was the lynchpin in this operation,” said Scofield. Lt. Col. Todd Davis, 153rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander, said maintenance crews played a crucial part in the event, staying late into the evening prior to the exercise to ensure a flawless execution.

“Several factors went into making this a commendable feat,” he said. “We recently transitioned from an active associate to a guard-only unit, which meant losing some critical maintenance manning.”

“Couple that with the fact that we started planning this over two months ago, the aircraft are 25 years old, all heavy maintenance inspections had to be completed prior to the event and our operational tempo being through the roof. It’s easy to see why getting all aircraft in the air is such a rare occurrence and a huge accomplishment for all involved personnel.”

“Scheduling enough current and qualified aircrews - many of them DSGs - required months of planning and de-confliction with not only military obligations, but civilian life and employment as well,” said Scofield.

At the end of the day there were many tired people around the base, but also many smiles.

“As mission commander for this historic event, I can say without reservation that this operation highlighted the absolute highest caliber of teamwork, cohesion, effort and professionalism in the 153rd Airlift Wing,” said Scofield.
U.S. Air Force airmen with the 153rd Security Forces Squadron, perform room clearing exercises as part of annual close quarters battle drills at the Cheyenne regional fire training building, Cheyenne Wyoming, Oct. 23, 2016. Airmen were conducting annual shoot, move, communicate and close quarter battle training. Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Galvin
Levee strengthened in Saratoga

By Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire
State Public Affairs Office

Incident command team members feel confident reinforcement for a failed head gate and levee that threatened Saratoga will help the town. Technical assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided personnel from various agencies, including the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security, the Wyoming National Guard’s Army aviation assets and upward of 80 soldiers and airmen on the ground and in the air May 22-24, 2016 with information necessary to help avert a potential severe flood event.

Wyoming Office of Homeland Security Director Guy Cameron said he and Maj. Gen. Luke Reiner, Wyoming’s adjutant general, along with other state agencies, began discussing the state’s flood season strategy several months ago.

“The Guard is our horsepower, our muscle,” Cameron said. “We’ve had two events already this season. We were in a good position to assist communities with the potential for high snow melt.”

The plan for Saratoga was to assist with sandbagging efforts, reinforcing walls around the town from previous flood events and bring the river’s banks up to 10 feet high around the town.

What wasn’t planned and what was reported on May 20 was a failing head gate on Boozer Creek that could create a risk of redirection of the North Platte River into Saratoga.

The problem then became what to do about it.

The river was so swollen in the area it was deemed inaccessible from the ground. The idea to airlift heavy sandbags and drop them on the levee was born, and for the first time in Wyoming, executed.

“I didn’t even know we had this ability,” UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot Chief Warrant Officer 2 Steve Atencio said, referring to the 110-foot cable and remote cargo hook used to pick up and deliver tons of sandbags to the levee via helicopter. “We do long lines with buckets, but never with sling loads,” he added, referring to the 80-foot-long cable used to drop buckets of water on wild fires and the 10-foot cable normally used for sling loading operations.

Nevertheless, it was estimated that by the third day of air operations, 100,000 sandbags had been delivered and strategically placed on the levee to bolster its effectiveness and to limit its potential for disaster until it is permanently reconstructed.

May 24 was the last day of air operations in Saratoga and two National Guard teams that have been on the ground filling and placing sandbags since May 19 were also deactivated. Homeland security personnel and others remained on site for close out procedures, said Lt. Col. Paul Phillips, the guard’s joint task force commander for the mission.

“We’ve got everything around town built up to 10 feet,” he said. “But June is expected to be the high water mark. We don’t anticipate it, but worst case scenario, if the river goes to 10 1/2, we may be back.”

Cameron added the work done during the mission has been fruitful. “We’ll be in a good position to come back and support communities in crisis.”
Lt. Gen. Gwen Bingham, the assistant Army chief of staff for installation management, Bruce Heimbuck, Joint Economic Development Coordinator, Col. John Papile, Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center garrison commander, Lt. Col. Joseph Huss, CJTTC operations manager, and Under Secretary of the Army Patrick Murphy pose Dec. 6, as the Wyoming Army National Guard was one of five states recognized at the Army Community Partnership Recognition Ceremony at the Pentagon, Hall of Heroes, for success in partnering with the town of Guernsey. Courtesy photo

Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center was among five Army installations honored Dec. 6, during the inaugural Army Community Partnership Recognition Ceremony at the Pentagon.

“Across the Army, we are becoming more efficient and effective,” said Under Secretary of the Army Patrick Murphy. “Partnerships are an important way America’s varsity team is doing more with less, to ensure our resources support soldiers maintaining their tactical and technical advantage.”

Fighting forest fires and bringing in economic development to the local area are the undertakings behind Camp Guernsey’s partnerships in Wyoming.

The Army installation takes part in a fire management plan with Platte, Goshen, Converse and Natrona counties for reciprocal support in wildland fire fighting operations, which has significantly decreased response time and increased support and resources, according to Col. John Papile, the camp’s garrison commander.

“This partnership addresses cooperation, interagency working relationships and protocols, financial arrangements, and joint activities across 39 federal, state and local fire agencies, which have signed to provide mutual support,” Papile said.

“The ability to leverage finite fire suppression assets across these organizations is fiscally responsible and represents a fine example of stewardship,” he said.

The Wyoming Military Department, in conjunction with the town of Guernsey and the Guernsey Economic Development Board, has also hired an economic development coordinator to implement community development projects and activities.

The coordinator serves as a liaison between the principal partners to spur local economic growth.

“His efforts have born significant fruit as he secured approximately $6.2 million in grants and special tax levies to fund infrastructure and quality of life projects that support the community, installation employees, and visiting units,” Papile said.

In the future, the installation plans to build on its collaborative efforts with the local area.

“These relationships have absolutely had a positive effect on community relations,” he said. “We look forward to continuing, expanding, and fostering these partnerships to enhance relations and conserve resources.”

WyoGuard, Camp Guernsey win partnership awards

Courtesy Story
During the 1950’s and early 60’s, the skies over Cheyenne would rumble with the sounds of T-33 Shooting Star jet trainer aircraft.

Above the open prairies, rocky outcroppings and rising mountains, the silver streaks of speed were handled by Wyoming Air National Guard pilots on missions to improve their flying and tactical capabilities.

Today that is no longer the case. The C-130 Hercules soars through the skies now. But sitting in a corner of the Wyoming Air Guard’s airfield is a T-33, no longer flying, instead used for static displays at events. Wyoming’s weather had worn the aircraft’s once pristine appearance down. There is no engine in it. No electronic controls. Just a shell with hail damage, faded paint and a silver skin that lost its shimmer decades ago.

Until now.

Recently, Master Sgt. Michael Konegni of the Aircraft

By Maj. Tom Blackburn
State Public Affairs Office

Wyo. Air Guard restores a piece of unit history
Structural Maintenance section, 153rd Maintenance Squadron, 153rd Airlift Wing put his team on the job of restoring the T-33’s appearance.

“We dressed it up and restored it,” Konegni said. “We brightened her up, buffed the oxidation out. Did a lot of work to make it shine.”

Sitting in Building 16’s hangar, the T-33 almost glowed, with a fresh coat of paint and polish on its sheet metal. A mixed team of full-time maintenance and drill status guardsmen put over two weeks of time and effort to make the aircraft look new. Fiberglass had to be replaced and wheels found to replace dry rotted tires.

“We spent a week cleaning, sanding and painting, then another week to buff the whole aircraft,” Konegni said. “The last time this aircraft was restored was 1990, so there was a lot to buff.”

Some of the cleaning involved removing animal infestations that were in the aircraft, which weren’t discovered until after the aircraft rolled into the hangar.

“We had a bees nest on the tail of the aircraft,” said Staff Sgt. Jacob Sauls. “I was up on the tail buffing and they just started flying out.” The team had to halt the restoring project while the pests were neutralized. But that wasn’t the only close call with nature. “We found a raccoon’s nest underneath too,” Sauls said. Luckily there was no animal.

Once the pests were controlled, Sauls was able to put in the time to polish the sheet metal.

“It took a week polishing with three guys, all by hand,” he said. “We tried a polish wheel, but it left marks, so we went to doing it with our own hands. There was a lot to polish.” Most of the aircraft is silver sheet metal, so that team polished almost the entire body of the aircraft.

The final touches was printing stickers that could be applied for the Wyoming bucking horse logo. A member of the team researched the design on the T-33 in old photos, then designed a similar logo and printed it for application. Once placed, it was the last step in buffing the beautiful training jet to its former elegance.
Wyoming Army aviation, which is highly utilized across the state, nation and abroad, is growing. The Wyoming Army National Guard is standing up a second helicopter unit.

A command aviation company will reside alongside the “Charlie Med” medical evacuation unit at the Army Aviation Support Facility and will execute missions that were previously impossible due to legal or operational limitations, said Lt. Col. Stacy Roth, state army aviation officer.

“Wyoming has always been a medevac only unit and there are restrictions on medevac aircraft imposed by the Army, so (there have been) many missions we have been unable to do or must ask special permission to do,” Roth said. “Since we are picking up a CAC unit, none of those intricacies will apply which will better enable us to support domestic operations missions.”

The new 30-person unit will receive its four UH-60 Black Hawks courtesy of Los Alamitos Armed Force Reserve Training Base in Los Alamitos, California, and federal budgeting and military policies.

Army National Guard aviation has been a staple in Wyoming since the 1970s. In 1975 the 1022nd Medical Detachment was federally recognized. It later became the 1022nd Medical Company, and was finally transformed into C Company, 5th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment in 2007.

“Charlie Med,” also known as “Cowboy Dustoff,” is the most deployed unit in the Wyoming Army National Guard. Its missions include aeromedical evacuation, movement of patients, medical personnel, equipment and supplies to include blood products, combat search and rescue, and air crash rescue support.

When in Wyoming “Charlie Med’s” missions include assisting with Domestic Support to Civil Authorities taskers. Those missions may be fire fighting or, like one of its more recent tasks, search and rescue of lost snowmobilers.

“If we want to put sheriffs on our aircraft to help with a search mission (now), we can’t do that – not with our red-cross aircraft,” said Roth. “Since we are picking up a CAC unit, none of those intricacies will apply which will better enable us to support domestic operations missions.”

The new unit comes to Wyoming thanks to guidance set forth in the February 2014 Aviation Realign-ment Initiative. ARI required the Army conduct a reorganization of aviation units in order to modernize the fleet and make it more capable and efficient. This guidance came as a result of budget cuts mandated by the 2011 Budget Control Act.

“We were one of two or three states in which the National Guard gained aircraft. One of the major determining factors for who would receive UH-60 aircraft was whether each state was a medevac only unit or not, which Wyoming was,” Roth said. In order to acquire the unit, the Wyoming Army National Guard had to do some creative restructuring with units and personnel, which was also a result of personnel cuts mandated in the BCA.

“We lost one platoon out of our ‘Charlie Med’ medevac unit, but then we gain 30-some soldiers to support this new company,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Rich Burger, Wyoming Army National Guard force integration officer. The addition of aircraft, personnel and missions will only aide in expanding the already impressive mission set that is characteristic of Wyoming Army National Guard aviation. It will better allow the organization to closely serve and support local and statewide missions that better assist Wyoming communities while also carrying out an important federal mission.\n
By Capt Megan Hoffmann
State Public Affairs Office
Wyoming Air National Guard airmen along with former unit members celebrated the 153rd Airlift Wing’s 70th anniversary this weekend. About 100 retirees attended the event.

Col. Paul Lyman, wing commander, told the audience that this drill is his favorite day of the year because Guard members get to relax a little with family and friends.

While the mission and equipment have changed over the years, making and maintaining the Guard friendships seems to be an enduring theme for guard members.

“I miss the friendships and the camaraderie,” said retired Lt. Col. Verdella “Delle” Bauer, a flight nurse who was assigned to the 187th Aerial Evacuation Squadron from March 1968 to October 1988, adding that aside from patriotism and the mission, friendships were her favorite part.

“I’m always proud when I see a C-130 and wonder if it’s the Wyoming Air National Guard,” Bauer said, “I love this unit. It’s the ultimate.”

While it was a special experience for retirees to attend the event and see how the unit has changed it was just as special for current members to meet with retirees.

“You remember things when you see their faces,” said Lt. Col. Gary Monroe, wing flight safety officer. “I wanted to see who was there who would remember me, and who I would remember. Being reconnected to the past reminds you of how things used to be. It’s nice to see where you came from, and where you are today.”

Bauer and Monroe both agree the unit has changed a great deal over their respective periods of service. Before either of them served there were already traditions that are only known through historical records and through events like the picnic.

The theme of the 70th anniversary event was “Mustangs and $2 Bills,” which paid homage to the wing’s history dating back to the 187th Fighter Squadron, established in November 1946 when P-51 Mustangs were flown. During that time the growing unit sought to validate its importance to the local community. One idea was to pay military members in $2 bills so local businesses would notice the importance of the guard to its economy.

Since its inception the wing has evolved from a few dozen members in a small hangar on the southwest side of Cheyenne Municipal Airport to 10 squadrons and nearly 1,200 members today. As a result of its growth it remains an important economic contributor, and without the need to use $2 bills to make it known.

“Our history is rich and our present is just as busy as we’ve ever been,” said Lyman, “We’ve been in conflict for a better part of our history, throughout it all we’ve had the Wyoming Air National Guard serving and defending freedom.”

The Wyoming Military Department employs 2,932 people in various statuses.
The chart below illustrates the breakdown.
Air FY16 end-strength: 1, 210 personnel
Army FY16 end-strength: 1, 521 personnel

WYMD Funds for FY 2016
Army O&M Funds – $45.4 million
Army Personnel Funds – $15.5 million
Air O&M Funds – $13.5 million
Air Personnel Funds – $16.6 million
State Funds – $10.5 million
Governor Matt Mead, commander in chief of the Wyoming Army National Guard, stands at attention with his troops July 16, 2016 at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center. Mead and his soldiers mustered for the Wyoming Army National Guard Day Ceremony that included the first pass in review since the early 1990s, a change of responsibility ceremony for state command sergeant major, unit activation and deactivation ceremonies and an award ceremony for several soldiers. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire
Wyoming National Guard soldiers have had a dog in the fight on the Korean Peninsula since 1951’s arrival in Pusan.

After 805 days of combat, the 300th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, out of Sheridan at the time, fired 514,036 105 mm howitzer rounds and played a crucial role in the armistice that makes it possible for South Koreans to live in peace, according to Army historian Matthew Seelinger from the Army Historical Foundation.

The soldiers of the 300th earned 12 Silver Stars, 63 Bronze Stars, and numerous other medals. The unit itself was awarded two Presidential Unit Citations, a Meritorious Unit Citation and two Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations. Eight soldiers from the 300th were killed in action and 175 wounded.

Wyoming soldiers still play a role here, just in a virtual training environment, such as in the recently completed international exercise Key Resolve.

For three years, Brig. Gen. Steven Mount has worn two hats in the Army. He is the Wyoming Army National Guard commander, and for a few weeks a year, the wartime deputy chief of staff of operations for the United States Eighth Army, in South Korea. His first trip there came in 1987 as a second lieutenant. He’s taken part in seven exercises in Korea, including four Key Resolves.

“I’m very proud of Wyoming’s connection here starting with the 300th AFA and the stellar job they did fighting. And, I’m very proud I was kind of able to reconnect with Korea and now seeing all of you (Wyoming soldiers) here,” Mount said. “This is one of the most important and most volatile areas of the world right now. Deterrence is what’s keeping him in check, and what we do when we’re here helps maintain that deterrence.”

The general alluded to a situation last year when North Korea fired two missiles into the South and later two South Korean soldiers by the Demilitarized Zone lost legs to land mines.

“It’s a big deal, and it pays dividends,” Mount said of the annual exercises. “You look at the tension and what happened last August when it heated up, and then you look at what we rehearsed and how it played into it; it really is a big deal.”

Maj. Robert LeJeune also continued the legacy of Wyoming artillerymen in Korea. The operations officer from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery was part of Key Resolve’s Combined Joint Fires Element that coordinated virtual missile fire from air, sea and land for the exercise.

“That included Korean military and all of our components too,” LeJeune said. “It’s a lot of coordination, but we’d have final chop if support was needed in this area or that area.”

It has been 65 years since the first Wyoming Guard soldier set foot on the Korean peninsula. The combat may have stopped but Wyoming continues to play key roles training alongside a long-time ally.
Wyoming Army National Guard soldiers and vehicles incur an IED attack during a training event at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center March 2, 2016. In this scenario, the three Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery crew members in this vehicle sustained injuries and had to be airlifted by a WYARNG medevac crew. Bravo is conducting pre-mobilization training at the training center. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire
The melee that ensues during community support visits by local and statewide civilian groups can only be described as organized chaos.

Observers would see one person in charge of 30 or more, confusion on where to go or what to do, excited chatter, and safety concerns among various military equipment.

Despite this, the Wyoming Military Department hosts civic leader groups annually, exposing Wyoming residents to Wyoming National Guard missions, personnel and equipment to see, hear and experience agency capabilities while building mutual partnerships.

“I think it is important for the citizens to understand what the Guard does and how they operate,” said Gail Lofing, finance director at the Gillette Chamber of Commerce, who visited National Guard facilities Feb. 11 and 12 as a member of Gillette Area Leadership Institute. “I don’t know if most people know that in the face of disaster, it is usually the guard who responds and helps communities recover.”

Department of Defense policies determine what is permissible in the realm of the National Guard community relations programs. But within those guidelines the Wyoming National Guard has continued to host a plethora of community groups, allowing them to learn about the missions and people and experience training activities, like UH-60 Black Hawk flights and virtual combat trainers.

The unique partnership has evolved, educated and benefited everyone involved.

The Wyoming National Guard also hosted civic leaders from Sheridan and Johnson counties in February.

“Partnerships require the skills and efforts of all involved, and the relationship between the guard and the communities isn’t any different,” said Kristen Jennings, operations officer at Sheridan Community Federal Credit Union and first-time member of the Sheridan Country Leadership group who visited the Wyoming Air National Guard Feb. 23. “I think that the guard offers tremendous support for the citizens of Wyoming. The part I enjoyed the most was meeting the men and women who put their lives on the line to protect us. Everyone was so friendly and ready to explain any questions we had and I truly appreciated the time everyone took to make our experience so amazing.”

Annually the Wyoming National Guard directly hosts, or indirectly supports, more than 40 community groups. Among them the Red Cross; elementary, middle and high schools; Rotary clubs; senior centers; Boy and Girl Scouts; legislators; various civic leaders and tourists visiting Cheyenne.

Activities ranged from inviting thousands of people to the Air National Guard base for the annual open house showcasing various aircraft and equipment, to supporting parades, touring facilities, and speaking at local schools.

Historically, February marks one of the busiest months on the calendar for community support events and this year proved to be no exception. Hundreds of community members from groups such as Gillette Area Leadership Institute, Leadership Wyoming, Sheridan and Johnson County Leadership, and Fort Casper Academy visited the Air National Guard, Army Aviation Support Facility and Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center.

The mutual benefits of this partnership aren’t forgotten by guard members either as they quickly recall the friendships, community ties and networking that this program provides.

“Without a doubt, we couldn’t execute our mission if it wasn’t for the great people in our state who support us day-in and day-out,” said Maj. Gen. Luke Reiner, Wyoming’s adjutant general. “We feel extremely fortunate to receive the support we do from communities around Wyoming and enjoy hosting them. It is, and always has been, a great partnership.”
Where in the world did we go?

The Wyoming Army National Guard units currently deployed are B Battery, 2-300th Field Artillery (Afghanistan) and Detachment 3, 777th Aviation Battalion (Kuwait). A Battery, 2-300th and “Charlie Med” are the two ARNG units that deployed in 2015 and returned home in 2016.

Deployed Air Guard members are from various ANG squadrons including the 153rd Operations Support Squadron, 153rd Logistics Squadron, 153rd Maintenance Squadron and the 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

The map shows the number of Wyoming National Guard personnel currently deployed to each location. The number in parentheses reflects the personnel who were deployed to that location during 2016 but have returned home.

Korean War veterans recognized with peace medal

The Wyoming Veterans Commission coordinated the application process and presentation of the Republic of Korea Ambassador for Peace Medals for Wyoming Korean War veterans.

The commemorative medal represents an expression of appreciation from the Republic of Korea government. Initially presented to those Korean War veterans who returned to South Korea through the Revisit Program, the honor has since expanded to veterans who can no longer travel to Korea.

The Republic of Korea Consular General Shin Chae-Hyun and Gov. Matthew H. Mead held the first recognition ceremony for the state’s Korean War veterans in Cheyenne, in June.

Veterans service organization representatives and the command team from the Wyoming National Guard attended the kick-off ceremony, gifting medals to more than 70 veterans or their family members at that event, held at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6.

Additional ceremonies took place around Wyoming based upon where the Korean War veterans reside.

In some cases, special events were held for single veterans, including a Dec. 3 ceremony hosted by Tech. Sgt. Bryce Bishop, a member of the Wyoming Air National Guard, who surprised his grandfather, Kenneth Murphy, with the medal.

Murphy served in the U.S. Navy as a gunners mate during the Korean War.
U.S. Navy Leap Frogs perform the parabatic maneuver “bringing up a downplane” during their approach to the Cheyenne Frontier Days arena July 25, 2016. The Navy parachute team received air support from Wyoming Air National Guard C-130 Hercules aircraft and crews while in Cheyenne. Top photo by Master Sgt. Charles Delano, bottom photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire.
Mentorship is vital phase of ChalleNGe program

By Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire
State Public Affairs Office

While the spotlight shines bright on the 5 ½ month residential phase of the Wyoming Cowboy ChalleNGe Academy’s program for at-risk youth, an often overlooked component provides just as much value.

The mentorship program provides an accountability partner and role model for cadets before, during and for a year after the residential phase of the program.

“It’s a thankless job,” said Theresa Smith, admissions, placement and mentors coordinator at WCCA. “It’s all volunteer; they don’t get a dime, but they basically take the place of the staff.”

Smith said each cadet is supposed to have two potential mentors chosen before reporting to the academy at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center. From there, the mentor candidates must undergo a background check, and if they are cleared receive training for their new role.

Smith conducts mentor training sessions five times per class, starting at week four. After some classroom instruction and open discussion, the mentors get to visit with their cadet, go to lunch together and do some paperwork. The team is expected to maintain weekly phone contact after that.

While immediate family members are prohibited from mentoring cadets, Katherine Inskeep from Johnstown, Colorado accepted the request to mentor her niece, Sierra, a cadet from Eaton, Colorado who was in her fourth week at WCCA at the time. The two shared an emotional reunion at the mentor training session.

“I was crying because I missed her so much,” Sierra said, following a lengthy and tearful hug.

“She was actually living with me for a couple of weeks leading up to this,” Katherine said of her niece. “I’ve known her since she was born, so it’s really tough watching someone you love struggle.”

“I hope I can show her she can have self-confidence and I hope I can be a positive influence,” she continued.

Some mentors are educators or guidance counselors, while others may be a friend or family member. In the case of Brooks Cotton, assistant court services coordinator with Youth Alternatives in Cheyenne, he came to know all of his mentees through his job.

Cotton said he’s mentored several cadets during the past five years, but considers himself “successful” with just the last three.

“I still talk to my last match once or twice a month, even though we were done with our commitment in July,” Cotton said. “I’ve helped them find employment and helped get college scholarships for two of them.

“It’s always a great experience, and I definitely encourage others to do it. I call it intense mentoring.”

Brooks Cotton

Katherine Inskeep from Johnstown, Colorado, greets her niece, Sierra at a training session for Wyoming Cowboy ChalleNGe Academy mentor volunteers at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center. The two hope for a bright future with the tools learned at the residential phase and the follow-on mentoring phase. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire

“Some get it right away, and some after a few months, you’ll see them on Facebook with a big marijuana leaf on their t-shirt. We tell the mentors to stick with them, even when they don’t want to. That’s when they’re needed the most, that’s when we need them to ask ‘come on man, what are you doing?’ They tend to come back to it, eventually, and do something good, like join the military.”

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please call the academy at 307-836-7517. The academy’s website is www.wycowboychallenge.org.
There are a few firsts involved with standing up Wyoming’s new infantry unit, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry, among them—the first female non-commissioned officer to become a U.S. Army infantryman, the first infantry unit in Wyoming in more than 100 years, and one of the first National Guard classes to undergo High Physical Demands Tasks testing.

Thirty-three infantrymen, from an initial 46 soldiers, graduated the two transitional classes, 11B Military Occupational Specialty Transition, for ranks specialist and below, and 11B Infantry Transition Course, for ranks sergeant through sergeant first class. The courses were conducted by training staff from the 233rd Regional Training Institute, Camp Robinson, Arkansas, and from the Alaska Army National Guard, and held at the Wyoming National Guard’s 213th RTI, in Guernsey.

The infantry unit is stationed in Evanston and Afton, and replaces the deactivated 1041st Multi-role Bridge Company. Most of the soldiers reclassifying their MOS, were in that unit, in addition to volunteers from others. “We all came from different units and at first it was a little bit awkward because we’re all leaving the Army families we’re used to and that we’ve been with for years,” said Sgt. Travis Scharosch. “But in this training we had to rely on each other a lot to do this job and it really built us together. We’re a whole new family now. The brotherhood here in the infantry is very strong and it’s going to be a great unit.”


“It’s not lost on me that this wasn’t something you signed up for when you first put on the uniform. It’s a result of things happening at a national level, and now we’ve lost an engineer unit and gained an infantry unit,” Reiner said. “What strikes me as so significant about today, is each one of you volunteered to change your MOS; you all stepped to the plate and said ‘yeah, I’ll be a combat infantryman,’ and then you met the standard.”

That standard, according to 1st Sgt. Brian Smoke, chief instructor for infantry specialties from the RTI at Camp Robinson, was only slightly different from any of the classes he’s taught in the 18 months he’s been in the lead role. His nine-instructor team included four trainers from Alaska where Wyoming’s new infantry company’s lineage resides.

“One difference between this and any other class we teach, is it was the first time we had a mobile training team,” Smoke said. “Our program of instruction doesn’t change anywhere we go or in any of the places this is taught. The only thing that has changed is, as of April 1, we integrated the High Physical Demands Tasks testing.” The HPDT is a nine-event evaluation that tests physical and mental strength early in the training cycle.

Smoke said this was the first class he and his battalion have put through the graded test that forced a handful of Wyoming soldiers out after a couple of days when they did not pass. The first sergeant made it clear the re-class courses were intended to teach the basics.

“They finish with a very basic knowledge of being an infantryman,” Smoke said. “They will start building on that knowledge when they get back to their unit.”

Honor grad Staff Sgt. Jesus Aguilara, said he re-classed from his artillery MOS and is pleased to know “both worlds” now.

“Infantry used to call us for rounds, and now we’ll be the ones calling for rounds,” he said. “It will be a different side of the world.”

Capt. Joshua Marshall is the commander of the new company. He observed his troops during the training and is impressed with his new formation.

“I think they are going to be a great asset to the state. They’re motivated, dedicated, good troops,” he said. “I don’t think the average citizen could comprehend what they just went through.”

Spc. Gentry Chakmakian and Jared Langi learn and practice urban operations at the infantry qualification course at 213th Regional Training Institute. The initial phases of training prepared them for the culminating field exercise.
WyMD volunteers step in to give time to help with Cheyenne Frontier Days

“The first time Journey came, there was an issue in the crowd during the encore. So I sent the guys in to get the guy out. He was fairly big, but my guys were pretty big, too. It was in the center of the party zone. He was so whacked out there was a security guy on each of his legs and arms. And then the confetti cannon went off. The guys were covered with paper trying to wrangle the guy. The beer vendors were covering their beer. All I could do was laugh. So every so often when a Journey song comes on, I just laugh.”

Lori Cole, Wyoming Military Department senior human resources associate, 24 years of volunteering for CFD.

“I’m basically a liaison between the acts that come in and Cheyenne Frontier Days to ensure that the show goes off with out any hitches. A few years back, Larry the Cable Guy was here. He was here the last night. So for us, because of who he is, his stage setup was next to nothing. Because he’s a comedian, he doesn’t have all the pomp and circumstance. So he showed up the night before, came in early actually and watched the end of the show. He hung out and we played cards with Larry the Cable Guy until the sun was coming up the following morning.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Shawn Fisher, Wyoming Army NG personnel sergeant major, 18 years of volunteering for CFD.

“When one of the Army volunteers, Lt. Col. Troy Goetsch, deployed he handed over the banner position to me and I’ve done that ever since. It works well with my schedule since they all get hung the week before show and I take them down on finals day. We hang banners on the fence lines and east side stands, and along Carey Ave. It takes a full week, I do it in the evenings or take half days of leave from work. I have one volunteer assigned to me – my husband. Every year he tells me he wants to quit but he can’t quit.”

Senior Master Sgt. Trudy Woodcock, Wyoming Air NG finance superintendent, 19 years of volunteering for CFD.

“We do a lot of sponsor host type stuff, we help our sponsors when they come to the park, to the event, we escort them around and give them any help they need. We do a lot of hosting, host sponsors, committee members, other people that help support the event. I was invited by a friend and that’s how my wife and I got started. To me, people always say we should have a sense of community service, and I know the benefit this event has on the community, and the local economy. I feel by supporting it and volunteering, I feel a sense of community service helping out.”

Capt. Cory Castle, Wyoming Army NG deputy director of information management, six years of volunteering for CFD.
Fifth graders from Arp Elementary School in Cheyenne were among the first to take part in a new lesson plan at the STARBASE Academy in Cheyenne. The lesson is based on a scenario where various containers of liquids that had lost their labels while transporting them to the “DOD Satellite Station,” had to be identified solely by the volume listed on an inventory record. Each container had premeasured liquids such as Laser Oil, Galactic Glue and Zoom Juice. Learning to measure liquids and increasing knowledge of the metric system are among the objectives. The National Guard-sponsored program augments science, technology, engineering and math curriculum for all Cheyenne fifth graders. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire
After years in the National Guard, soldiers sometimes will receive reminders on why to continue to serve. That is what the Wyoming Army National Guard was hoping to accomplish with their inaugural ‘Guard Wyoming’s Future’ event.

Approximately 65 members of the Guard and their spouses met at the Joint Forces Readiness Center Sept. 10-11, 2016 for the two day retention event. They took part in various briefings and one-on-one meetings detailing the benefits of remaining in the service.

“It allows families to see the long term benefits of their loved one remaining in the Guard,” said Maj. William D. Patton of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion.

A soldier leaving the military affects unit cohesion and leadership, costs money to train up a replacement and affects unit readiness. According to Maj. Patton, it costs approximately $70,000 to train a brand new soldier to replace a soldier getting out.

“Why not try to keep them in,” he said.

The event included numerous round-robin briefings on medical and educational benefits, retirement counseling, and employment opportunities within the National Guard and on the civilian side. The idea for this retention event came from the North Dakota National Guard as a concentrated effort by senior leadership in their state to keep soldiers in uniform.

Brigadier General Tammy J. Maas, the Commander of the Wyoming Army National Guard, decided it would be good to bring this idea to Wyoming, since it was so successful in North Dakota. With a state attrition rate of 13.5%, events like this are all the more important.

At the end of the day, soldiers who would like to reenlist will have the opportunity to do so with their families in attendance. Brig. Gen. Maas would even like to expand the ‘Guard Wyoming’s Future’ event to take place yearly.

“We value everybody’s service,” Maas said.

Retention efforts are on-going in WyNG units. If it is time to reenlist, contact your local retention NCO or visit the Wyoming Military Departments Contact Us page (http://wyomilitary.wyo.gov/contact/) to contact a recruiter.

Col. Steve Alkire, Wyo. Army National Guard chief of staff, swears in five Guard members at a reenlistment ceremony during the inaugural ‘Guard Your Future’ event in Cheyenne. Photo by Sgt. Justin Gosling

Sgt. Zachery Moore meets with full time staff to discuss a possible reenlistment during the Wyoming Army National Guard’s inaugural ‘Guard Your Future’ event. The event, which focused on the retention of soldiers, took place at the Joint Force Headquarters in Cheyenne Wyoming. Photo by Staff Sgt. Eric Moore
Wyoming National Guard leaders

Wyoming Army National Guard

197th Public Affairs Detachment – Capt. Sabrina Kirkpatrick, Sgt. 1st Class Frank Marquez
Medical Detachment – Maj. Amy Henry; Sgt. Maj. Steve Stoughton
Training Center – Col. John Papile; Command Sgt. Maj. John Woolery
84th Civil Support Team – Lt. Col. Holly Shenefelt; Senior Master Sgt. Douglas Bare
213th Regiment Regional Training Institute – Col. Mike Jones; Command Sgt. Maj. Jayson Walford
1st Battalion, 213th Regional Training Institute – Lt. Col. Jason Salsgiver
HHC 94th Troop Command – Capt. Melissa Smith; Master Sgt. Juston Jenkins
G Company, 2nd Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment – Capt. Jason Miller, 1st Sgt. Matthew Harmon
133rd Engineer Company – Capt. Benjamin Nemec; 1st Sgt. Eugene Gosselin
67th Army Band – Chief Warrant Officer 3 Rob Phillips; 1st Sgt. Katherine Zwiefel
Detachment 53, Operational Support Airlift Command – Chief Warrant Officer 5 Randy Sindelir
115th Field Artillery Brigade – Col. Greg Pipps; Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Laird
Headquarters, Headquarters Battery, 115th Field Artillery Brigade – Capt. Cory Castle; 1st Sgt. Vern Jones
148th Signal Company – Capt. Derksen; 1st Sgt. Adam Ross
2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – Lt. Col. Terry Jenkins; Command Sgt. Maj. Thad Ehde
HHC, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – Capt. Josh Talcott; 1st Sgt. Jeffrey Miller
A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – 1st Lt. Zachary Jerry; 1st Sgt. Scott Dillon
B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – Capt. Marcus Neiman; 1st Sgt. Spencer Jolley
920th Forward Support Company – Capt. Christopher Wilson; 1st Sgt. Robert Hanoln
Headquarters and Service Company, 960th BSB – Capt. Jeremy Wagner; 1st Sgt. Chris Hickman

Wyoming Air National Guard

Wyoming Air National Guard headquarters – Col. Pat Moffett; Chief Master Sgt. Alan Stoinski; Chief Master Sgt. Leslie Raney
153rd Airlift Wing – Col. Paul Lyman; Chief Master Sgt. Michael Abbott; Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Turner
153rd Maintenance Group – Col. Pete Linde; Chief Master Sgt. Douglas Frankolin; Senior Master Sgt. Rob Miller
153rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron – Lt. Col. Todd Davis; Senior Master Sgt. Paul Parsons
153rd Maintenance Squadron – Maj. Carl Johansen; Chief Master Sgt. John Moritz; Chief Master Sgt. Scott Wagner
153rd Maintenance Operations Flight – Maj. Elizabeth Evans; Senior Master Sgt. Charles Tarter; Master Sgt. David Banner
153rd Medical Group – Col. Daniel Peralta; Chief Master Sgt. Jeremy Nash; Master Sgt. Thor Rasmussen
153rd Mission Support Group – Col. Shelley Campbell; Master Sgt. Mark Ramler
153rd Communications Flight – Maj. Jason Allen; Senior Master Sgt. Jennifer Lovering
153rd Security Forces Squadron – Maj. Wendy Allison; Chief Master Sgt. Doug Rhodes
153rd Force Support Squadron – Maj. Conrad Evans; Chief Master Sgt. Milissa Fowler
153rd Command and Control Squadron – Lt. Col. Christopher Howard; Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Moore; Senior Master Sgt. Travis Opsal; Master Sgt. Heather Schaffer
153rd Civil Engineer Squadron – Lt. Col. Bret Trippel; Chief Master Sgt. Lee Horstman; Chief Master Sgt. Erik Smith; Senior Master Sgt. Michael Killebrew
153rd Operations Group – Col. Justin Walrath; Chief Master Sgt. Darren Nogle
187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron – Lt. Col. Michelle Mulberry; Chief Master Sgt. Teresa Sheehan; Master Sgt. Tiffany Sinner
Wyoming Military Department State Agency Leaders

**Wyoming Veterans Commission** - Director Larry Barttelbort

**Starbase Academy** - Director Germaletta Brown

**Wyoming Cowboy Challenge Academy** - Interim Director Doug Hensla

**Wyoming Civil Air Patrol** - Col. Ken Johnson