Wyoming National Guard leadership team

**Joint Force Headquarters**


Air Guard Headquarters – Col. Paul Lyman, Assistant Adjutant General – Air; Command Chief Master Sgt. Josh Moore

Joint Staff - Brig. Gen. Greg Porter, Director of the Joint Staff, Chief Master Sgt. Cameron Williams

**Wyoming Army National Guard**


197th Public Affairs Detachment – Capt. Gabe Brauere

Medical Detachment – Col. Marshall Kehr, 1st Sgt. Peter Slinde


Training Center Command – Maj. Michael Fields, 1st Sgt. Devin Worman


84th Civil Support Team – Lt. Col. Holly Shenefelt, 1st Sgt. Michael Upton

213th Regiment Regional Training Institute – Col. Mike Jones, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Laird

1st Battalion, 213th Regional Training Institute – Lt. Col. Leanne Brennan, 1st Sgt. Timothy Smith

94th Troop Command – Lt. Col. Toby Allaire, Command Sgt. Maj. Lindsay Schmidt

G Company, 2nd Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment – Capt. Eric Becker, 1st Sgt. Matthew Harmon

153rd Engineer Company – Capt. Terrence Bell, 1st Sgt. Joseph Buckold

67th Army Band – Chief Warrant Officer 4 Rob Phillips, 1st Sgt. Katherine Zwerfel

C Co., 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment – Capt. Eli Varney, 1st Sgt. Curtis Jacobs

Detachment 6, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 243rd Air Support Operations Group – Capt. Brandon Wooten, 1st Sgt. Amy Zohar

115th Field Artillery Brigade – Col. Kent Porter, Command Sgt. Maj. Thad Edele

Headquarters, Headquarters Battery, 115th Field Artillery Brigade – Capt. Cory Castle, 1st Sgt. Joshua Phillips

148th Signal Company – Capt. Frank Derksen, 1st Sgt. Adam Ross


Headquarters, Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – Capt. Ivo Wambeke, 1st Sgt. Michael Clancy

A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – 1st Lt. Leslie Brazil, 1st Sgt. Eric Hanson

B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery – Capt. Jacob Arnold, 1st Sgt. Paul Bennick

920th Forward Support Company – Capt. Peter Cross, 1st Sgt. James Swingham


Headquarters and Service Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion – Capt. Joel Grandfield, 1st Sgt. David Reynolds

**Wyoming Air National Guard**

153rd Airlift Wing – Col. Justin Walrath, Chief Master Sgt. Darren Nogle, Master Sgt. Tiffany Sinner

153rd Comptroller Flight – Capt. Klint Holcher


153rd Maintenance Operations Flight – vacant

153rd Medical Group – Col. Daniel Penala, Chief Master Sgt. Jeremy Nash


153rd Command and Control Squadron – Lt. Col. Christopher Howard, Master Sgt. Richard Halverson

153rd Civil Engineer Squadron – Maj. Gabriel Herrera, Chief Master Sgt. Erik Smith, Master Sgt. Amy Espedal


187th Airlift Squadron – Lt. Col. Todd Davis


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Wyoming’s Adjutant General


State Public Affairs Officer

Deidre Forster

Public Affairs Staff

Maj. Tyler Schiele

Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy McGuire

Master Sgt. Rob Trubia

Contributing

Senior Master Sgt. Charles Delano

Staff Sgt. Eric Moore

Sgt. Ashley Smith

Sgt. Jock Eden

Spec. Amanda Fry

Senior Airman Autumn Velez

Wyoming Guard photo by

Staff Sgt. Seneca Luzero, a member of the Wyoming Air National Guard’s 153rd Security Forces Squadron, is one of the many employees who make up our diverse workforce.

Find out more about us in We Are the Wyoming Military Department on page 12. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Rob Trubia)
June 2018: Camp Guernsey’s busiest month on record

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

June 2018 will go down in the record books as Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center’s busiest month since providing training space for its first summer camp 80 years ago.

With two major exercises conducted by out-of-state units, several Wyoming units fulfilling their two-week annual training commitment, as well as U.S. Marines and Air Force personnel honing their skills, the average number of personnel on the ground in Guernsey was more than 2,300 troops on any given day during the month.

The camp’s mission is not to train military members, but rather to provide relevant and ready maneuver space, ranges, support facilities and services in order to enable training.

With that said, it was all hands on deck for the center’s relatively small staff.

Weapons ranges were mowed and manned, food and ice were shipped in daily by the truckload, vehicles were stored and maintained and everyone had a place to sleep.

The 142nd Field Artillery Brigade, based in Arkansas - complete with units from two other states - arrived first for Operation Western Strike, June 1-22.

Guernsey’s unique layout with a north training area and a south training area allowed the Arkansas brigade the opportunity to further its mission in Wyoming.

In addition to deploying four artillery battalions for live fires, their primary goal was to move their nearly 1,000 pieces of equipment—trucks, Humvees, and assorted artillery from home station—to a place they hadn’t been, via railroad-then to stage that equipment and move it into a simulated combat zone.

Arkansas Army National Guard Lt. Col. Bryan Shipman said his soldiers could take that a step further by staging support elements, like his 217th Brigade Support Battalion in the south while the artillery battalions were in the north, much like they might do in combat.

During Western Strike, the 142nd units camped around in the North Training Area, about 51,000 acres, more than half of Camp Guernsey’s 78,000 acres, setting up firing missions while countering the opposition force from the 29th Infantry Division. A Wyoming unit had a hand in keeping rockets and artillery shells on target and tracked for the operation.

During the planning process in the spring, it was noted the Arkansas radar unit might be shorthanded, and the fairly new Wyoming unit is not equipped yet.

Subsequently, Camp Guernsey staff suggested Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jeff Cromwell, the 115th Field Artillery Brigade’s Target Acquisition Platoon commander, get in touch with his Arkansas counterpart, Warrant Officer Tanner Jones.

“They have two radar systems and they said our personnel could run one during the exercise,” Cromwell said.

“They’re helping us and we’re helping them,” Jones said. “It is absolutely helpful having two teams, so we have checks and balances.”

Overlapping Western Strike’s operations, four battalions from the South Dakota National Guard, which included aviators, engineers, military police, and logisticians, arrived on June 15 for Golden Coyote.

And soldiers of the Wyoming Army National Guard’s 133rd Engineer Company were on site June 16-29 to get a real-world feel for their job.

The unit’s 94 soldiers worked on projects around the camp and its training areas.

“We’re doing real-world work, which allows us to maximize our training,” said 1st Lt. Jeffrey Saelens, the unit’s executive officer.
Tunisian partnership still flies high

The National Guard State Partnership Program relationship forged between Wyoming and its partner nation, Tunisia, has been flourishing for more than 10 years. The partnership began in 2004.

In that time, soldiers and airmen from the Wyoming National Guard have shared their training and skills with counterparts in the Tunisian military, in Wyoming and in the Northern Africa nation.

This year, the program coordinated two visits in Wyoming, where military members shared information and techniques on medical evacuation procedures utilizing aviation assets.

In July medical officers from the Tunisian army were in Cheyenne to pick up pointers on UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter medical evacuation procedures from the Wyoming Army National Guard's G Company, 2nd Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment's personnel.

In a November exercise, additional Tunisian medical officers visited the Wyoming Air National Guard to hone their skills on fixed-wing aviation medical evacuation techniques.

For that event, they spent time with the 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

Learning to honor the fallen

"On behalf of the President of the United States, the United States Army, and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of appreciation for your loved one's honorable and faithful service" Those words are not taken lightly by the small percentage of Wyoming Army National Guard personnel who join the Military Funeral Honors team and utter them, while kneeling and handing a carefully-folded American flag to the loved one of a fallen service member.

In order to perform the solemn ritual, a soldier must learn, practice and perfect all the disciplines involved in a military funeral, in addition to looking sharp and staying focused.

Self-proclaimed Guard groupie hangs up his hat

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead left office at the end of 2018 and had the chance to express how he felt about his experiences as commander in chief of the Wyoming National Guard at a recent farewell reception and interview.

"It's a rare thing today to get to see the work of such extraordinary people," Mead said at his final address to the Guard.

"I'm inspired and encouraged. I know in my heart, as long as men and women like you, who serve in the Wyoming Guard, take the oath to defend against enemies, foreign and domestic, Old Glory will continue to fly—our liberties and way of life will always be protected."

During Mead's eight years as governor, he visited Wyoming troops in Cuba, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Bahrain, and Qatar.

He remarked on the bonds, service and sacrifice.

There are different reasons for joining the Guard, and whether it's noticed or not, there's DNA in each of you which has an appreciation for service. Maybe not before you start, but once you get in there, you see the brotherhood and the sisterhood, you see the teamwork, and then you see what as a team you can accomplish," he said.

At Ramstein Air Base in Germany in October 2015, Mead observed medical missions conducted by the 10th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron which included 12 Wyoming airmen. "They were like a medical SWAT team ready to go at a moment’s notice. If I was in a natural disaster or wounded in a foreign land, and if I could say who came for me, I’d say, send in the Yellowjackets (insignia for the 187th Airlift Squadron). That’s who you want," Mead said.

He recalled visiting Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo in 2011, and being told in "closed door conversations" how the Wyoming Guard measured up.

"That is really cool, and as a commander in chief, you’re swelling with pride," he said. "That's a sort of a pound-your-chest moment when they're expressing how the Wyoming Guard is a notch above. That's great stuff."

Mead said his best memories revolved around homecomings.

"They get off the plane. They shake my hand. They shake the general's hand. They go through the official greeting. You can tell they're tired because of that long plane ride. The special part is turning around to see their families with their signs, the hugs from the kids and the parents, and the grandparents. We often talk about joy, but when you see that, it's real. That'll be forever captured in my mind's eye."

In the Guard's service to community during natural disasters, Mead told a story about floods in the Saratoga area, and "being able to pick up the phone, to say, 'Hey we need help here,' and then it just happens."

"About the troops' service to the people of Wyoming, he added, "the Guard has always kept me an optimist about our future."

In the twilight of his governorship, and in relinquishing the title of commander in chief, he said he "gained something that I will have until the end of my days, and that is these memories you have given me. I received letters of people from all over the state, thanking you, for saving their property or their life."

As part of his legacy, Mead said he wants to be known for having a great passion for the Guard. "They will always know they have a No. 1 fan in me. I'm a groupie."
Upgraded C-130 returns to 153rd AW
By Senior Master Sgt. Charles Delano
153rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

On Jan. 6 the Wyoming Air National Guard’s 153rd Airlift Wing welcomed home the Air Force’s first fully-upgraded C-130H.

This aircraft is the first C-130H to receive extensive upgrades allowing the Air National Guard to remain competitive with the C-130J found primarily at active-duty wings.

Over the past 18 months, this specific aircraft has been at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, receiving three separate engine-related modifications aiming to make the legacy aircraft more efficient.

These modifications include upgrading to an eight-bladed NP2000 propeller, replacing the original four metal propellers; switching to an electronic propeller controlled system; and equipping the aircraft with a Rolls-Royce T56 series 3.5 engine.

“We are very excited to be getting the NP2000 props, the electronic propeller control system, and the 3.5 series engine upgrades,” said Maj. Leanna Thomas, 153rd Airlift Wing chief of safety and C-130H pilot.

“These modifications, we’ll see significant improvements that have been needed to ensure longevity and mission flexibility.”

While there are various wings across the Air National Guard that have C-130H’s, the Wyoming Air National Guard was chosen specifically because of its involvement in the initial testing with the EPSC and NP2000 back in 2008, when the Air Force was first exploring the idea of upgrading the H model.

Collectively, these upgrades will increase performance, fuel efficiency, and reliability of the aircraft, which will sustain the life and relevance of the H model.

Additionally, they will allow Air National Guard units to cut costs by not having to upgrade to its successor, the C-130J.

“When we add these modifications to all of our aircraft, we will greatly increase the reliability and performance of the C-130H, and the overall lethality of the United States Air Force,” said Col. Justin Walrath, 153rd Airlift Wing commander.

Further testing on the modified C-130s continues at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, before the remainder of 153rd’s fleet and C-130H’s across the Air Force are upgraded.

Now, as of December, the Wyoming Air National Guard now has two of its eight aircraft replete with the modifications.

Hopes are high, Walrath said, all of Wyoming’s C-130s will be upgraded before fiscal year 2020.

Army prepares for Army Combat Fitness Test
By Sgt. Ashley Smith and Spc. Amanda Fry
197th Public Affairs Detachment

U.S. Army units across the world are preparing for changes to physical fitness testing, and Wyoming Army National Guard senior leaders discussed and practiced the new evaluation during an October conference and training exercise, in Cheyenne.

The current Army Physical Fitness Test consists of three events: pushups, situps, and a two-mile run. The new Army Combat Fitness Test, scheduled to replace the APFT in October 2020, contains six events, all geared toward analyzing a soldier’s ability to meet the physical challenges often met in combat situations.

The ACFT is currently undergoing a pilot program in 60 National Guard battalions in six states, according to Nevada National Guardsman Maj. Michael Spaulding, the senior enlisted advisor to the deputy commanding general at the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command, who spoke to Wyoming’s leaders about the ACFT.

He said an exact timeline of how it will be introduced to current and incoming soldiers is still under discussion.

“We are going to pull that data and see what it is that gives us the best indicator of overall readiness,” Spaulding said.

The six events in the ACFT are the strength deadlift; standing power throw; hand-raised pushups; 250-meter sprint, drag, and carry; leg truck, and 2-mile run. He added, for half of the test groups, soldiers are required to meet physical standards based on their overall unit requirements. The other half is tested to meet standards based on their individual military occupational specialty.

“I think for us, we go about our business by getting ready,” Maj. Gen. Luke Reiner, Wyoming’s adjutant general, said, “Keep questions in the back of our minds, and remember that there are other states out there testing this.”

Meanwhile, the WYARNG is proactively preparing for the new test and has recently trained and hired a master fitness trainer, Staff Sgt. Kari J. Brabford, who emphasized the importance of embracing the changes during a Sunday morning showcase of the ACFT for the state’s senior leaders, at which, they performed the six-event test.

“Please remain positive and proactive during this transition,” she said. “Change is always scary, but it is doable. It is important because we want the soldier to go do what we need done in combat, and come back strong and healthy.”

Although it will take time to fully integrate the new evaluation plan, Brabford intends to provide units and their soldiers with resources to start preparing.

She said she will start pushing out the top three exercises that will help soldiers prepare for the six events so that units may start incorporating them into their unit training assemblies and soldiers can build them into their individual workouts.

Brabford encourages soldiers to figure out where their weaknesses may be with the ACFT and focus on strengthening them.

“Soldiers should start working on their weaknesses now so when we transition, we are a year or two ahead because we have been incorporating those workouts.”

Enforcement is an important role in preparing for the new evaluation, Brabford expressed that nutrition and rest are just as vital to being physically fit.

“It’s all about rest, nutrition and activity,” said Brabford.

“What you feed your body is almost more important than the actual activity and then allowing your body rest.”

Spaulding said the scoring system for the new test, which requires soldiers to meet a minimum score requirement, will eliminate the advantage that high scores gave soldiers in the past. Soldiers will now be scored “pass or fail.”

“If we use that to assess promotion ability, two soldiers that meet the minimum standards regardless of gender or age probably should both be equally considered,” he said.
Wreaths honor fallen

Camp Guernsey celebrates 80 years

There was a lot of enthusiasm in Guernsey leading up to the first summer camp at Camp Guernsey 80 years ago. After years of training in poor conditions at Pole Mountain, the Wyoming National Guard decided to establish a training camp in Guernsey in 1938. Wyoming Adjutant General Col. Rhudolph L. Esmay, after years of negotiation, worked out a deal to swap Pole Mountain land with 120-acres near Guernsey. The Cavalry is Camped at Guernsey,” read the headline in the weekly Guernsey Gazette in June 1938. “For the first time in nearly half a century, cavalry troops are again silhouetted against the skyline on the hills near Old Fort Laramie,” the writer reported. “Riding the trails and traversing the terrain where so many years ago the cavalry carved its way while the nearby hills resounded to the warring beat of tom-toms.”

Members of the Wyoming Wing of the Civil Air Patrol spent a week at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center for its annual encampment event. The event has been held at the training center annually for all but one year of the last 12. Cadets from around the state come together to increase their knowledge of aerospace, practice military discipline and skills, and fly in Wyoming National Guard aircraft. Operationally, the Wyoming CAP falls under the Wyoming Military Department.

CST hustles on exercise

Members of a Wyoming National Guard’s 84th Civil Support Team survey team deployed to a residence north of Cheyenne for a training exercise, test an unknown white powder at the scene. Soldiers and airmen assigned to the unit responded to three notional events in Laramie County. Oct. 16, testing the team’s ability to deploy small strike teams and to respond with back up when needed. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class James McGuire)

Supporting Wyoming in 2018

The National Guard is unique among the U.S. military’s branches because of its dual mission. The Wyoming National Guard supports national operations but is also called upon by the governor for natural disasters and state emergencies, local agencies ask for help with search and rescue missions, grass fires, analyzing strange powders, and supporting law enforcement. In 2018 the Wyoming National Guard provided assistance in missions like those 50 times when asked. Among the events with which soldiers and airmen assisted first responders were 12 search and rescue missions, including a couple daring hoist rescues of climbers and hunters injured in areas ground-based emergency response crews were unable to reach.

The Camp Guernsey and Wyoming Air Guard fire departments responded to more than 25 requests to assist with grass fires, structure fires, and vehicle accidents. Left: A Wyo. Air National Guard firefighter practices sawing into a vehicle. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Charles Delano)
Reiner reflects on time as Wyoming’s Adjutant General

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

After eight years, Maj. Gen. Luke Reiner will be leaving his governor-appointed position as Wyoming’s adjutant general and moving onto the life of a retired soldier. Reiner reflects on his time as TAG, a time that tipped the 1-to-10 scale favorably.

“I would rate my time as the TAG as a 10,” Reiner said. “It has been the privilege of my life to serve with the men and women of this organization and to work for Gov. Mead. I love the focus, the drive and the shared values of the organization. It was also a true pleasure to serve on several senior Guard and national-level committees.”

When asked about his key achievements as the commander of the Wyoming National Guard, Reiner said there are four areas of focus.

“1. I am really proud of what this organization has accomplished over our time together,” he said. “I would probably lump the accomplishments into four categories; warfight, homeland, partnerships and people.”

“In terms of warfight, we have deployed an incredible number of men and women who have been exceptionally trained, equipped with the best equipment this nation can buy and extremely well led. Every time the governor and I talked to combat commanders they told us that our units were leading the way and setting the standards. More than once we heard the message, ‘Send in the Yellowtails!’ Accomplishments such as ‘The Dustoff of the Year Award’ and the first Wyoming artillery fire in combat since the Korean War will stay with me forever,” he said.

“In terms of homeland,” Reiner explained, “our response within the state was really good and we never let the residents of Wyoming down. Our search and rescue platforms saved multiple lives and conducted some incredible rescues. Families in Carbon, Fremont, Albany and other counties did not lose their homes to floods because of the swift response and hard work of our forces. We met the expectation of the governor in terms of getting ahead of the issue, when we could, and that is a good thing.”

Regarding partnerships, I have to thank a lot of people for working Youth Challenge hard,” Reiner said. “That program is key to the future of our state, because it helps at-risk youth who are in trouble. Our efforts to keep that program viable have been significant. The other partnership I am really proud of is our partnership with Tunisia. As a nation, they decided to become a democracy shortly before I was appointed TAG and it has been the opportunity of a lifetime to work with, and watch them work through, the tough issues of becoming a modern day Islamic democracy. Their country and our state and nation are better because of the partnership.”

Regarding the people that make all this happen, I think we have collectively worked hard at to improve the climate in which they work,” Reiner said. “We asked members from all levels of the organization to tackle the issues raised by surveys. Each successive survey we took showed improvement and that is a result of empowering those in the organization to suggest, and then implement, realistic solutions. I am also very happy with S-FERST and what that brings to the organization. As I watch how we take care of soldiers, airmen and families; we do it better now because we are synchronized, coordinated and working together, and that is a good thing.”

Reiner said he hopes he will be remembered fondly.

“I hope that I am remembered as a fair and considerate leader who served and looked out for those who manned the organization and one who left the organization a little better than he found it,” he said.

The new governor will make his selection for a new adjutant general soon, and Reiner hopes to impart some of his lessons learned to the next agency director.

“I look forward to sitting down with my successor and talking through the many projects and initiatives this organization is working on,” he said.

“My general advice will be to listen to those in the organization, give them room to run, watch their back, be involved, work hard and have fun.”
31-year veteran named WyARNG commander

By Staff Sgt. Eric Moore
1514th Public Affairs Detachment

Accountability to soldiers is something Wyoming’s newest general said was important to him, at a promotion and change of command ceremony April 6, in front of a packed auditorium at the Joint Forces Readiness Center. In receiving his promotion, Brig. Gen. Brian R. Nesvik was named the state’s assistant adjutant general-Army, taking command of more than 1,500 National Guard troops.

Nesvik follows Brig. Gen. Tammy Raya, is a former Army band veteran myself, and under- standing what they can do was really helpful in coordinating the program,” Raya said.

After being pinned by his family, his brother, Chief Warrant Officer Candidate Daniel Nesvik, rendered the general his first salute, making the occasion a family affair.

Nesvik will support the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Luke Reiner, in advancing the future of the Guard by managing and training Army units through planning and coordination.

“One of our top priorities is readiness,” Nesvik said. “I see the Army Guard being an adaptable force ready to meet the needs of our nation and world.”

Nesvik emphasized the organiza- tion’s readiness, stressing the importance of both short-term and long-term planning.

The new general also mentioned the importance of expanding and developing Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center.

Nesvik brings a wealth of experience to his new role. Overall, he has served for 31 years in the Wyoming Army National Guard, deploying twice, both times to Iraq.

As a traditional soldier, he continues to work full time at the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish.

Snow can’t stop the music on UW Mil Appreciation Day

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

Much like the fourth-quarter flurry of effort by the University of Wyoming Cowboys to defeat the Air Force Academy’s Falcons, the Wyoming Army National Guard’s 67th Army Band and UW’s Western Thunder Marching Band took to the snow-covered field at War Memorial Stadium Nov. 17, to provide an intense spectac- le of teamwork.

The bands had performed together a few years ago. But this year they marched onto the field together and performed a detailed and vibrant show for the University’s Military Appreciation Day.

UW’s band director, Dr. Bryan Raya, is a former Army bandsman, and in his sec- ond year at the school. He had been working with the 67th for more than a year to coordinate the perfor- mance.

“He was very organized and sent us material months ago so we could practice, and when we got here for rehearsal, it was boom, boom, boom-ready to go,” said Sgt. 1st Class Rich Cole, the Army Band’s training noncommissioned officer in charge. “It’s a pleasure to have them here. They have been really flexible with my crazy halftime ideas. Being an old Army band veteran myself, and under- standing what they can do was really helpful in coordinating the program,” Raya said.

While frozen valves on the horns, and fingers on the hands provided some occasional discomfort and missed notes, the 67th enjoyed the chance to share a big stage.

“It’s fun playing with a band like this,” said Sgt. Taylor Coleman, who went to a military college, and has only played in military bands. “They are so much bigger than us.”

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Rob Phillips, commander of the 67th, hopes to continue building the relationship with the university.

“I think this is a great idea and I hope it’s not the last time we do this,” Phillips said.

Wyo. Army Guard plans for 2019 deployments

About 300 soldiers from six Wyoming Army National Guard units are set to deploy throughout next year.

Efforts are already underway to ensure soldiers, their families and their employers have the support they need before, during, and after mobilization.

It’s been almost a decade since Wyoming sent about 700 soldiers overseas. The majority of that brigade-sized element performed non-routine jobs such as convoy sup- port into Iraq, or mayor cell duties on the various military bases in Kuwait.

According to Lt. Col. Charles Thompson, the state’s mobilization readiness officer, the plan for the 2019 deployment is for all the units to deploy to the Central Command area of responsibility, all for around nine months.

“The could be Kuwait, Iraq, Af- ghanistan or United Arab Emirates,” said Thompson. “The units are set to perform their standard missions.”

The Wyoming Military Depart- ment’s Service Member, Family, Employer, Readiness Support Team, or S-FERST, offers 14 programs to Guard members and those who sup- port them and has been ramping up for this cycle of deployments since February.

“It’s like a buffet of services you can pick and choose from,” said S-FERST Director Bill Breckenridge. “Some will never use any of them, but some will use all them.”

Among the menu items are person- al financial counselors, psychological services, employer support, sub- stance abuse counseling, and a child and youth program, to name a few.

Air Guard welcomes home 100

The Wyoming Air National Guard welcomed home 100 airmen in March from deployments to the Middle East.

Members of the 153rd Airlift Wing’s operations, maintenance and mission support groups left Wyoming in October and December 2017 for three-to-six months supporting con- tingency operations in the U.S. Cen- tral Command area of operations.

Families, senior command and members of the public welcomed C-130s full of airmen home to Wy- ong’s snowy spring.

Although one group of airmen came home in time for the Christmas 2017 holiday, their replacements, who left after Christmas, and about 60 other airmen remained on orders for the duration of the deployment.

“It’s always a good day when we can welcome our men and women home safely from overseas,” said Col. Dave Herder, 153rd Airlift Wing vice commander.


Left: An airmen holds his daughter after returning from deploy- ment. Above left: Families wave at a Wyoming C-130, with the US flag flying from the crew hatch, at a March homecoming event. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class James McGuire)

In addition to the main offices in Cheyenne, S-FERST has five regional Family Assistance Centers around the state that provide a link for fami- lies, service members and veterans, in or near their communities.

“Most of our soldiers are dispersed around the state,” Breckenridge said. “A lot of the aviators are in the southeastern area, but the battalions are all over.”

Thompson said the soldiers from the units set to head out the door do cover a lot of Wyoming’s open spaces.

“The 2-300 minus, is the larg- est group. They are primarily out of Casper, Gillette and Lander,” Thomp- son said. “We have volunteers who are reclassifying to fill some vacan- cies also, so it will be pretty spread out.”
Wyoming’s infantry soldiers feel the February freeze

By Staff Sgt. Eric Moore
197th Public Affairs Detachment

Temperatures dipped below minus 30 at the end of February, in Fort Greely, Alaska, but that didn’t stop Wyoming cowboy troops from training in extreme weather.

Soldiers from the Wyoming Army National Guard’s Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, based in Afton and Evanston, found out how cold it could get in the Alaska interior during their annual training.

Making first contact with their sister companies and parent unit, 71 Wyoming soldiers traveled to Alaska for Arctic Eagle 2018, Feb. 20 through March 8.

“How everyone was really motivated,” said Charlie Company Executive Officer 1st Lt. Luke Meyer, who felt his soldiers did a great job. “No matter the environment, no matter what we threw at them, they were ready.

Joint training exercise Arctic Eagle consisted of National Guard service members from around the nation and a contingent of Canadian reserves. In one of their training scenarios, the Canadian forces practiced patrolling the Alaska oil pipeline with Wyoming troops.

Aside from the host state, Charlie Company GIs were joined by fellow Guard members from Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, and Washington. The Alaska State Defense Force provided additional training.

On top of live-fire exercises, Wyoming soldiers immersed themselves in arctic weather practices, small-group tactics with the battalion, and military operations in urban terrain.

Because of variable freezing temperatures, soldiers learned how to evacuate a hypothermic casualty, which included planning a small-unit movement over snow-covered terrain, while occupying a patrol base in cold regions.

In these photos, soldiers from Wyoming’s C Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, perform arctic training at Fort Greely, Alaska, on March 3, 2018, as part of Arctic Eagle. (U.S. Army National Guard photos by Sgt. Jack Eden)

The soldiers demonstrated effectiveness in arctic skills by preventing weather-related and environmental injuries. They managed risks in cold-region operations successfully protecting themselves and fellow service members.

And new to most Wyoming soldiers, they walked in snowshoes, lived in arctic tents, constructed improvised shelters, and performed weapons maintenance in the frigid conditions.

This year’s annual training for the unit ended with live-fire exercises and applying small group tactics, which provided an initial test of their overall proficiency in infantry tasks.

Arctic Eagle 2018 was a big step in the history of the unit according to battalion commander Lt. Col. Jeffrey Roberts. “We loved having them here.” It marks the unit’s initial training with the battalion since being stood up in June 2016.

Wyo. MAFFS activated in July

The Wyoming Air National Guard activated one crew and one C-130 in July to assist the U.S. Forest Service with aerial firefighting.

Wyoming crew members flew the missions with support from the Nevada Air National Guard’s 152nd Airlift Wing. Crews flew Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System missions using each other’s airframes.

MAFFS is a self-contained aerial firefighting system, owned by the U.S. Forest Service. MAFFS is operated by three Air National Guard and one Air Force Reserve Component unit, through a Department of Defense and forest service partnership.

This year the MAFFS mission aircrews dropped more than 643,000 gallons of retardant on fires in the Western United States.

Wyo. Skier earns biathlon medal

Wyoming Army National Guard sergeant Chelsea Dellinger earned a silver medal at the Chief National Guard Bureau Championships, in March.

The biathlete placed second in the sprint. She also placed third in pursuit, and added points to the team score in relay and patrol, helping earn the women’s team a silver.

Dellinger is a University of Wyoming ROTC cadet. Biathlon combines cross-country skiing and rifle marksmanship.

Band music erupts at Old Faithful

The Wyoming Army National Guard’s 67th Army Band serenaded tourists at Yellowstone National Park in June.

The group, who made a stop at the park as part of their annual training, played on the boardwalk while the Old Faithful geyser erupted.

Tourists from around the country, and the world, appreciated the musical addition to the natural wonder.

“We were planning to come out here today and just watch the geyser, but when I came around and saw the guys at the visitor’s center, I said this is perfect,” said Nancy Stenger, a tourist from Hastings, Neb. “It’s absolutely perfect for them singing here and to be here when the geyser goes off,” she added.

Members of the Wyoming Army National Guard’s Warrior Bard Celtic and Bluegrass ensemble perform at Yellowtoone National Park with Old Faithful erupting in the background, June 14. (U.S. Army National Guard photo Maj. Tyler Schiele)
Recipe for a full life

By Master Sgt. Rob Trubia
State Public Affairs Office

For Wyoming Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 2 Lauren Gurney every day is about pursuing her two passions. One is a passion for flying UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters for the 2nd Battalion, 211 Aviation Regiment. The other is running a bakery in Jackson, Wyoming.

“Lauren is especially inspiring because she has two unique skill sets and she’s incredible at both of them, and the two skill sets have nothing to do with the other,” said Lyndsey Johnson, Gurney’s bakery business partner. “She really is a symbol of the ultimate woman who can be whatever she wants.”

It was while working part time jobs in Denver and Albuquerque as a teenager that Gurney discovered her love for baking and all things chocolate.

While attending college in New Mexico she discovered her love for aviation. “After my first flight in a Black Hawk there wasn’t anything else I wanted to do more than to fly,” she said.

Now as the only female pilot currently with the Wyoming Army National Guard, Gurney’s focus is to continue to train and be the best.

“There’s no delineation between being a female pilot and being a good pilot,” she said. “That’s my job here, to be a good pilot.”

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Derek Fisbeck, a test pilot with the Wyoming National Guard, can attest to Gurney’s ability. “I actually got some feedback when she went to the maintenance test pilot course, which is very demanding course, saying she was one of the top students in her class.”

When Gurney trades her flight suit for an apron, she enlists a whole other skill set and passion.

“That’s the other side of my brain. I’m a master chocolatier and a baker,” she said, standing amid the massive ovens and mixers in her Jackson kitchen where she makes more than 900 cookies on some days.

“I have the creative side of me that does the baking and creating and everything with chocolate and I have the very technical side of my life as a maintenance test pilot on the Black Hawk,” said Gurney.

Johnson said Gurney’s passions give her partner a unique edge.

“I love telling people that she’s a helicopter pilot because she’s tough. I mean she’s just this powerhouse in the kitchen but then you just imagine her being this powerhouse flying through the air, like saving people’s lives and being so strong. It’s a very impressive and empowering thing” she said.

Gurney said she hopes never to choose one passion over the other, but “I’m the happiest when I’m flying and when I’m with my flight crew doing our job” she said.

Disaster exercise tests inter-agency cooperation

By Master Sgt. Rob Trubia
State Public Affairs Office

When Chinook and Black Hawk helicopters land on the practice baseball field in a small town in eastern Colorado, townspeople take notice.

That’s exactly what happened in April when rotary aircraft from the Wyoming and Colorado National Guards landed in Fort Morgan for Operation Alpine Guard.

The exercise simulated an EF5 tornado coming through the small town causing civilian first responders to be overtasked and in need of help.

This is a mission that is all about coordination between civilian resources and military resources. People trying to work together to deal with a mass casualty situation.” said Capt. Andrew Canterbury, a nurse with the Wyoming Air National Guard critical care team.

“We are a VFR program which means we fly by visual flight rules. They are an IFR program. They can do hoist missions. So their capabilities are definitely different than our capabilities.”

Tight coordination between the Guard, first responders and hospitals is important, Canterbury said.

“Take the real-world missions on top of a tornado event, and you’ve totally saturated all the civilian resources. That’s what brings the National Guard into play. Having a system that’s rehearsed and quick to respond to meet that need is what this exercise is all about.”

Air Guard leadership team visits 153rd

The Air National Guard command team made a stop at the Wyoming Air National Guard’s 153rd Airlift Wing in July.

Lt. Gen. Scott Rice, director of the Air National Guard, and Chief Master Sgt. Ronald Anderson, Air National Guard command chief, were guests of the wing and Cheyenne Frontier Days.

While here, they spent time listening to airmen’s input on the future of the Air Guard, toured the facility and met with command to discuss future missions and projects.
We are the Wyoming Military Department

With close to 3,000 soldiers, airmen and civilians in its workforce, the Wyoming Military Department is a vibrant, diverse, and motivated group committed to “Ride for the Brand” and provide ready forces to safeguard Wyoming and protect the nation while adding value to our communities.

The agency has 2,969 employees in various employee groups. There are 1,494 soldiers and 1,202 airmen ready to answer the call of the president or governor. Of those troops, 903 wear their uniform to work Monday - Friday as full-time employees.

To highlight the amazing employees of the Wyoming Military Department, we showcase a few here.

The men and women pictured are from every employee group and perform a variety of duties.

One is a squadron commander. Another helps soldiers and airmen with education funding. Another is a lawyer. One ensures our facilities are kept in tip top shape.

We are the Wyoming Military Department.

Did you know?

- 69% of our force is comprised of part-time soldiers and airmen
- 20% of the Wyoming National Guard is female
- 1,096 cadets have graduated from the Wyoming Cowboy Challenge Academy in its 12-year history
- 12% of our $102.4 million budget came from state funds
- 228 state government employees work in the agency
- 4,000+ individual Wyo. Air Guard and Army Guard members have deployed since September 2001
- 4,162 veterans and their spouses are interred at the Oregon Trail State Veterans Cemetery in Evansville

Where in the world did we go in 2018?

This map highlights the countries where our soldiers and airmen have deployed, or are currently deployed. The number in parentheses reflects the personnel who were deployed to that location in 2018 but have returned home.

Columbia: (2) ANG
Tunisia: 1 ARNG
Qatar: (3) ANG
Germany: (33) ANG
Kuwait: 5 ANG, (70) ANG
Antarctica: (1) ANG

We are the Wyoming Military Department.

Maj. Karolyn Braun
Tech. Sgt. Ronald Mills
Cpl. Samantha Stanfill
Mrs. Jenna Chapin
Master Sgt. Daryl Jackson
Lt. Col. Jeremy Sparks
1st Lt. Kendra Winslow
Mr. Stacy Riedel
Chief Warrant Officer 3 David Bye
Ms. Amy Espedido
The WyMD’s contributions to Wyoming’s 23 counties

Our soldiers, airmen, and civilian employees live in every Wyoming county - in more than 80 of its communities. We also have soldiers and airmen - more than 680 - living in 39 other states who choose to be members of the Wyoming Army or Air National Guard.

In the map above, each county shows the amount of payroll and taxes contributed (in 2017 figures) by the soldiers (A), airmen (B) and civilians (C) who live there.

C-130 pilot lives dream and pursues passion

Story and photo by Senior Airman Autumn Velez
153rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

One of the greatest perks of the Air National Guard is the ability to chase dreams while still pursuing passions.

Pursuing the dream of becoming a pilot only deepened 1st Lt. Mitch Hoke’s passion of cyclocross in an unexpected way.

In this physically challenging sport, known as the steeple chase of cycling, participants face courses with hills and obstacles that require riders to dismount, carry the bike while navigating the obstruction, and remount.

Despite being competitive in this sport, cyclocross took a backseat in Hoke’s life when he was given the opportunity to chase his dream of becoming a C-130 pilot with the Wyoming Air National Guard’s 153rd Airlift Wing.

Becoming a pilot was something Hoke, a Colorado native, had wanted to do since he was a child. He said he chose the Wyoming Air Guard because of its C-130 mission.

He said growing up in Colorado and seeing wildfires made the Wyoming Guard’s aerial firefighting mission especially appealing to him and his dream of being a pilot.

“It’s amazing to be able to fly an airplane as a job and still get to do the things I love,” said Hoke.

During pilot training, Hoke gave up cyclocross was back on his radar, but in a different way.

This season Hoke is racing with friends to honor and raise awareness of veterans around the country.

Wyo. Air National Guard pilot 1st Lt. Mitch Hoke competes at a cyclocross race in October. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Autumn Velez)

A: 30, B: 6, C: 2

Laramie
A: 365, B: 637, C: 110

Sheridan
A: 45, B: 6, C: 2

Sweetwater
A: 35, B: 6, C: 2

Uinta
A: 30, B: 1, C: 2

Carbon
A: 76K

Fremont
A: 695K

Johnson
A: 10, B: 2, C: 3

Campbell
A: 69, B: 7

Converse
A: 39, B: 7, C: 2

Albany
A: 4.2M

Natrona
A: 2.6M

Wyoming Air National Guard’s 153rd

Airlift Wing. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Autumn Velez)

Hoke competes at a cyclocross race in October. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Autumn Velez)