COWBOY GUARD

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW
Cowboy Guard is a news publication published annually to provide command and public information about Wyoming National Guard Soldiers and Airmen throughout the state. Cowboy Guard is produced by the Wyoming National Guard Public Affairs Office, Cheyenne, Wyo., in accordance with AR 360-1 and AFI 35-101.

Views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official view of and it is not endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Departments of the Army and the Air Force.
Dear Readers,

It is important for us to look forward but we must also remember where we came from. The Wyoming Military Department has been and is a quality organization staffed with committed professionals working together to execute lethal combat operations across domains, protect our nation, and provide responsive assistance to Wyoming residents during times of need.

Cowboy Guard highlights the 2019 accomplishments of the soldiers, airmen, and civilians working together to ensure we succeed at those tasks. I, like the 26 Adjutants General before me, have the honor of leading these men and women as they continue to be the Sword and the Shield of our state and nation.

These men and women are our strength. Without strength, our Sword will break and our Shield will buckle. Together we will work to ensure that will not happen. The strength of this organization is my priority.

Our men and women remain heavily engaged in the warfight. In 2019, the Wyoming Army National Guard sent roughly 20% of its force structure out the door in its largest deployment in a decade. The Wyoming Air National Guard continued to send individual airmen and units – including the most deployed unit in Wyoming, the 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron – to support our overseas missions. We do not intend to slow down in 2020.

While deployments will continue, so will our relationships with federal, state, local, and international partners. Partnerships = success. The National Guard is, by its nature, an organization built on partnerships. We operationally support our active duty brothers and sisters. We provide a ready reserve to our first responders. We support our communities by being dedicated Citizen Soldiers/Airmen. My goal as Adjutant General is to ensure the 3,000 men and women employed, enlisted and committed to the Wyoming Military Department remain a professional, equipped, ready force. To be lethal. To be responsive. To sustain partnerships. To be the Sword and Shield.

Sincerely,

MG Gregory C. Porter
Adjutant General
Wyoming National Guard
LETHALITY
The Wyoming National Guard continues to build its lethality by updating and modernizing facilities and ranges at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center, and across the state.

Camp Guernsey’s 81st year brought important construction upgrades to its facilities.

The northern side of the camp’s cantonment area was a flurry of activity as contractors finished building a new Regional Training Institute complex.

The three-building $34.7 million project, which broke ground in 2017, added a 72,166 square foot General Instruction Building, a dining facility that can feed up to 400 people and new billeting adding 150 additional beds.


The complex is undergoing final touches in preparation for a March 2020 ribbon cutting.

Twenty-four miles up the road, in the camp’s North Training Area, the tactical landing strip also received much needed renovations.

The dirt landing strip, a necessary training area for the Wyoming Air National Guard’s C-130 fleet, received a makeover from the Montana Air National Guard’s 129th RED HORSE Squadron in August.

South Dakota National Guard engineers also provided improvements to the North Training Area.

Their nearly two-week stint at the training center involved installing new culverts, replacing degraded culverts and culminated in the finishing of an entry control point.

Guernsey wasn’t the only location to get upgrades in 2019.

The Wyoming Air National Guard’s Cheyenne base got some much-needed rehab done to its 38,000 square-foot supply building.

The building, housing members of the 153rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, received interior and exterior makeovers totaling more than $6.7 million.

The Wyoming Army National Guard also completed its $26 million construction project in Laramie.

The Laramie Readiness Center officially opened its doors in June with a ribbon-cutting event.

The building replaces the old Laramie armory, constructed in 1959, located on the corner of 30th Street and Armory Road.

The University of Wyoming and Wyoming Military Department swapped that location for land near the Laramie airport for the new 101,000 square foot facility.
WHERE IN THE WORLD DID WE GO?
2019 DEPLOYMENTS AND EXERCISES

399 SOLDIERS DEPLOYED
86 AIRMEN DEPLOYED

NORTHCOM
Soldiers and airmen deployed within U.S. Northern Command supported Hurricane Dorian relief efforts and a variety of training exercises

EUCOM
While deployed to U.S. European Command, airmen and soldiers supported the nation, mainly in Germany and Kosovo, providing airlift and peacekeeping security

AFRICOM
The majority of the Wyoming National Guard’s U.S. Africa Command activities were in Tunisia, our partner country. One Wyoming soldier is stationed permanently there

CENTCOM
The Wyoming Guard members deployed to U.S. Central Command are deployed to support the nation’s warfight in countries all over the area of operations

PACOM
U.S. Pacific Command regularly hosts at least one Wyoming Air National Guard airman a year. 2019 was no exception with one airman spending time at McMurdo Station
DEPLOYMENTS

Pictured on the left: A number of deployed soldiers are being promoted and reenlisting while in theater, like this member of Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment, who reenlisted while deployed.

“G Med,” as the aviation battalion is called, left Wyoming in January 2019 for their deployment. The soldiers returned home in time for Thanksgiving with their families and friends.

Courtesy photo

Pictured above: Members of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment pose in a group photo with Wyoming’s U.S. Sen. John Barrasso during his visit to their deployed location, in Kosovo, in October.

Pictured to the right: Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery Regiment fly their guidon making their deployed location feel more like home. Every Wyo. Army Guard unit deployed since the Korean War has taken an “Entering Wyoming” highway sign with them.

Courtesy Photos

Pictured on the right: Command Sgt. Maj. Harold Pafford, Wyoming Army National Guard command sergeant major, hugs 1st Sgt. Durward Jones of the 115th Field Artillery Brigade, in July, as the unit boards a charter aircraft at the Wyoming Air National Guard base.

The brigade’s soldiers are stationed at a number of Middle East locations. They will be home before Spring 2020.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Alderman

Pictured on the left: Jennie Gordon, Wyoming’s first lady, visits with female soldiers deployed with the 115th Field Artillery Brigade, in November. She joined her husband, Gov. Mark Gordon, while visiting deployed soldiers.

Photo by 1st Lt Ally Jeran

Pictured on the right: Sgt. 1st Class Terry Cruckson, works on a truck in the desert in November 2019.

Courtesy photo

Pictured to the left: (L-R) 1st Lt. Hunter Hinckley, Staff Sgt. Brody Staman, Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Barnhardt, Staff Sgt. Anthony Lopez, and Staff Sgt. Jesus Aguilara, of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, conduct a mission with an Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit and aviation units to secure safe landing zones for aviation assets, in Kosovo.

Photo by 1st Lt. Andrew Viray, Alaska National Guard
Responsiveness is more than a buzzword in the Wyoming National Guard. It’s a way of life. Airmen and soldiers train every day to be ready to answer the call, whether it comes as an order to deploy overseas, a call to battle wildfires or raging waters, a request to pull an injured hiker from a mountaintop, or analyze a suspicious substance.

Wyoming Army National Guard UH-60 crews spent 78 flying hours responding to assist first responders in 2019. Those responses included crews pulling injured men from perilous perches high in Wyoming’s mountains.

Sgt. Corey Bates, a UH-60 flight medic, said that performing search and rescue operations in Wyoming is an important skill refresher for his combat mission.

Bates participated in a rescue in July when an injured hiker near the top of Gannett Peak, Wyoming’s highest mountain, fell, breaking bones and making a normal descent impossible.

“Search and rescue goes beyond training,” he said. “Being able to go to an area that is unfamiliar to us adds more difficulty (to a training exercise). Helping people anywhere whether overseas or stateside, as long as you’re doing something to help someone else out, it’s a good feeling,” he said.

The Guard’s dual mission of responding to the needs of state and nation is what annually drives the Wyoming Air National Guard’s 153rd Airlift Wing to train in aerial firefighting.

The wing is one of four military units that, when requested by the U.S. Forest Service, responds to wildfires around the country.

The mission, known as MAFFS, which stands for the removable Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System rolled into the belly of two of Wyoming’s C-130H3’s, is among the toughest mission the unit performs.

“This mission is especially challenging,” said C-130 instructor pilot, Lt. Col. Alan Brown, who has flown MAFFS missions for 23 years. “When we do our MAFFS mission we get all those elements that limit performance because of the heat and elevation, and then, add that to the airplane being heavily loaded, and we fly at 150 feet about the ground in limited visibility with other aircraft around.”
Heroes Among Us

Gov. Mark Gordon and Maj. Gen. Greg Porter distributed Hero Among Us awards Nov. 2, during the annual Governor’s Reception, in Cheyenne. The Heroes Among Us Award recognizes heroic efforts of Wyoming Military Department personnel who assist fellow citizens outside the scope of their military duties.

Left: A member of the Wyoming Air National Guard’s 153rd Security Forces Squadron responds to an active shooter threat in an October exercise. As the Air Guard’s law enforcement arm, the defenders have to be prepared for anything - even a disgruntled employee with a weapon on base threatening other airmen.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Alderman

Above: Sustaining the fight, Army food service specialists from the 960th Brigade Support Battalion, headquartered in Sheridan, get cooking in the CKT (Containerized Kitchen Trailer) at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center during Annual Training in June.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Frank Marquez

Left: Army National Guard combat medics brush up on lifesaving skills during training hosted by the 213th Regional Training Institute, in Guernsey.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class James McGuire

84TH CIVIL SUPPORT TEAM

First responders around Wyoming also take advantage of the skillsets available in the Wyoming National Guard’s 84th Civil Support Team. The 22-person unit is well versed in all things chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear.

“They can come in and support law enforcement, emergency management, any number of our response entities. That’s really what’s important is the civil support team’s availability to us,” said Terry Stevenson, Platte County’s emergency management director.

In February of 2019, the Civil Support team held an exercise in the Platte and Goshen counties area, involving law enforcement and emergency management teams from the region.

Photos by Tyler Schiele
PARTNERSHIPS
Partnerships are inherent in the Wyoming National Guard. Whether they be with the civilian employers of more than 70% of our dual-status force, with families juggling military deployments and training requirements, or with governments and businesses, the Wyoming National Guard can’t be successful without them.

Unique to the Wyoming National Guard’s partnerships, is the 15-year one with Tunisia through the National Guard’s State Partnership Program. That partnership between Wyoming’s National Guard and Tunisian military has resulted in numerous military-to-military exchanges capitalizing on mutual capabilities in aviation (C-130 and UH-60), medical (ground and aeromedical evacuation), engineer and infantry training, among others.

In fact, aeromedical evacuation exchanges took place twice in 2019.

In the early part of the year, Tunisian medical officers visited Wyoming to learn more about the United States aeromedical procedures.

In the spring, Wyoming Guard aviators and flight medics went to Tunisia to discuss capabilities and competencies.

In August, Tunisian infantry soldiers trained with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment soldiers at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center. Although the two-week training was rigorous, the groups found time to bond over dinners and football games.

In May Wyoming hosted the 33rd Joint Military Commission – the first time this high-level meeting was held outside of one of the national capitals – between the United States and Tunisia.

Among the dignitaries in attendance were the Tunisian Minister of Defense, the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, the US Ambassador to Tunisia, and the Tunisian Ambassador to the United States.

However, the Wyoming-Tunisia partnership is more than just a military one. The University of Wyoming is developing an extensive engagement strategy with Tunisia, to include student and faculty exchanges and academic programs.

Wyoming’s only 4-year university sent its first summer work-study student to Tunis in 2019. That student also happens to be a Wyoming Army National Guard member.

The North Africa American Cemetery is located in Carthage, outside of the country’s capital, Tunis. More than 2,800 American military members, including 11 from Wyoming, are buried there.

Southern Tunisia was where scenes from “Star Wars” was filmed. It served as Luke Skywalker’s home planet, Tatooine.

Wyoming is 1.56 times larger than Tunisia.
The Wyoming Air National Guard’s Wild West Airshow, held July 24, brought more than 7,000 people to the 153rd Airlift Wing’s ramp.

Aerial demonstrations made their way back into the annual open house lineup. Cheyenne’s mayor opened the event by tandem jumping out of a plane high above the runway. Later in the afternoon, the U.S. Navy’s Leap Frog parachute team jumped into the crowd. Biplanes flipped and whirled high in the sky. Children and their parents crawled around and in military aircraft and vehicles. Veterans were honored for their service. Food vendors kept everyone sated as the crowds watched and waved at the performers.

Col. Justin Walrath, 153rd Airlift Wing commander, said he enjoys having the community on the base for the annual event. “We are very much a community-based organization. Our airmen live and work in Cheyenne and it’s important Cheyenne’s residents, tourists and businesses can come onto the base to learn more about our organization and our missions. The support we receive from the community can’t be discounted.”
Pictured right and below: Cadets took time out of their day at STARBASE Academy to visit the Wyoming Air National Guard’s fire department and the Wyoming Army National Guard’s Army Aviation Support Facility. The STARBASE program teaches science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills to Cheyenne fifth graders.

Courtesy photos

Pictured right:
Members from the Wyoming Air National Guard and F.E. Warren Air Force Base move a T-33 Shooting Star aircraft to be put on permanent display at the Wyoming National Guard Museum, in Cheyenne.

The historic aircraft that had previously been on display at the base, was moved across the runway system, airport property, and three fences, in October, to find its new home.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Alderman

Pictured left:

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Alderman

Pictured right:
Tech. Sgt. Andrew Crips, 153rd Airlift Wing flight engineer, chats with members of the American Society of Safety Professionals, Rocky Mountain Chapter, during a tour hosted by Senior Master Sgt. Bradley Mercil, of the Wyoming Air National Guard, in October.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Alderman

Pictured left:
Wyoming Youth Challenge Academy cadets pick up trash during their 5 1/2 month stay at Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center. The cadets perform service to the community as part of the program.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Frank Marquez
The Wyoming Military Department’s priority is strength. The number of men and women ready and able to deploy to serve the dual mission of the National Guard is the No.1 item of concern for Maj. Gen. Greg Porter.

“Strength is my top priority. The number of soldiers and airmen in our ranks is important to ensure lethality in all our tasks,” he said.

“Our goal is to have 2,875 soldiers and airmen in the Wyoming National Guard by the end of fiscal year 20.”

The recruiting teams in the Wyoming Air National Guard and Wyoming Army National Guard are leading the charge for the agency. Both services’ recruiters are finding creative ways to get information to potential recruits about the benefits of military service.

Recruiters take their message to high schools and colleges, businesses and organizations, spreading the benefits of military membership far and wide. They pepper social media with information and make use of virtual reality to allow recruits to “do” the job they are interested in performing in the military.

To ensure success from the beginning, the 153rd Airlift Wing’s Student Flight and the Wyoming Army National Guard’s Recruit Sustainment Program focus new enlistees on the skills to be successful at basic training and beyond.

Command teams across the state actively engage with their soldiers and airmen on retention within their units. Annually the Wyoming Air National Guard excels at retention, losing only about 10% of its force to resignation or retirement.

STRENGTH IS OUR PRIORITY

Pictured top left:
Col. Dave Herder, 153rd Airlift Wing vice commander, swears in Chief Master Sgt. Darren Nogle, wing command chief, for an additional tour, in October.
Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Rob Trubia

Pictured below:
Members of the 153rd Airlift Wing’s Student Flight and the Wyoming Army National Guard’s Recruit Sustainment Program pose for a picture at the end of a RSP “Branding” ceremony, in September.
Photos by Spc. Kristina Kranz

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