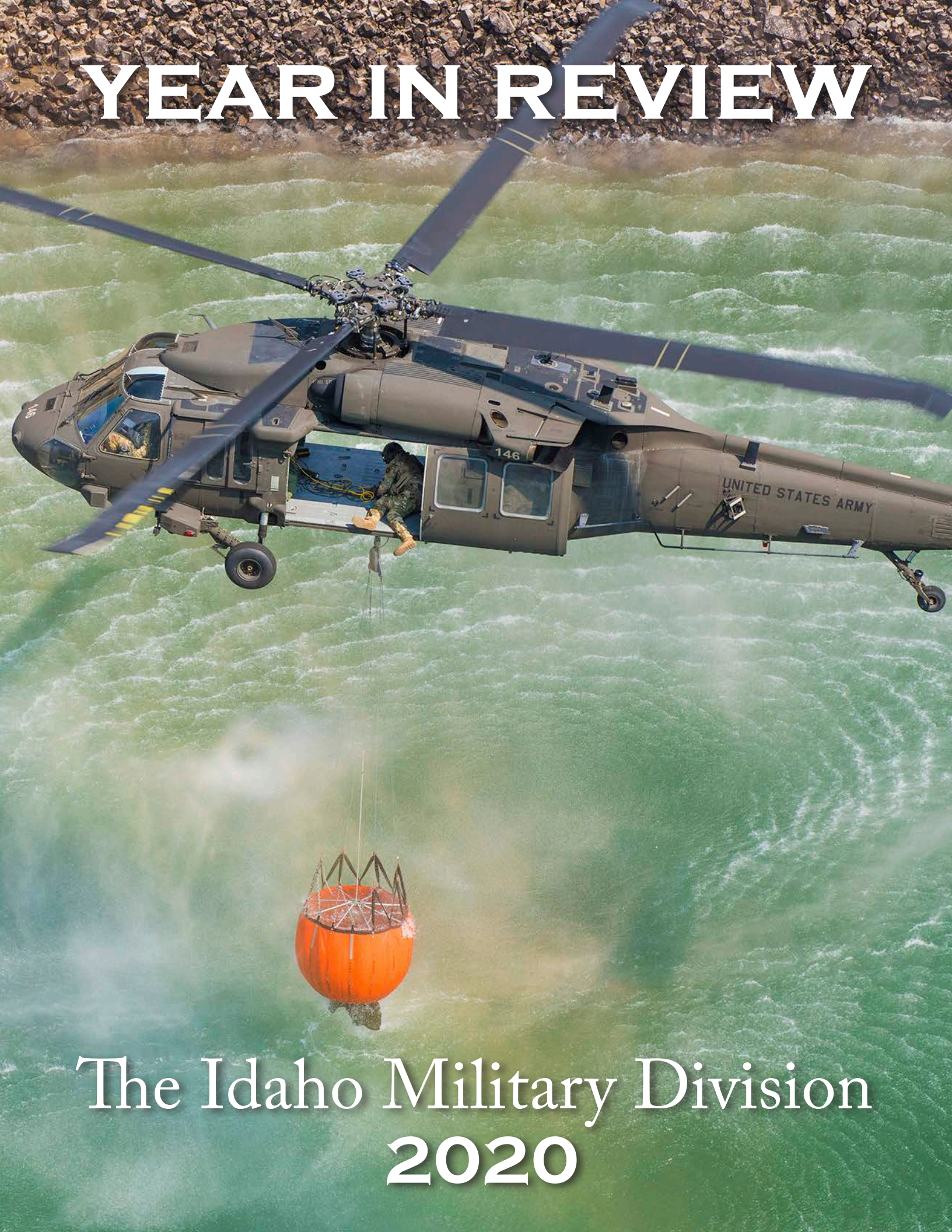
YEAR IN REVIEW



The Idaho Military Division
2020



THE ADJUTANT GENERAL, IDAHO
COMMANDER, IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD
GOWEN FIELD - BOISE, IDAHO

Governor Little,

While 2020 presented unprecedented challenges, the Idaho Military Division's ability to respond throughout the state, the nation and the world remained as robust as ever.

The Idaho Office of Emergency Management has responded to every request the state has asked of them. Since February, IOEM has been engaged in a marathon response to the current pandemic. From serving on your technical working group and vaccine advisory committee to distributing PPE across the state, through establishing a crisis counseling care line and by connecting volunteer agencies with groups in need, your emergency managers have worked tirelessly to protect the public.

When called upon, our citizen-Soldiers and Airmen stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our communities, fulfilling all assigned missions. Our members proudly served by providing additional personnel support to local hospitals and health care facilities, food banks, rescue missions, public health districts and our tribal partners/communities. We supported the Idaho Department of Corrections in helping keep inmates safe by providing facilities, which allowed them to physically distance their populations.

At the same time, our Guardsmen displayed the incredible versatility that makes our organization a valuable asset to the state and nation. With just 48 hours of notice, more than 400 Guardsmen deployed to Washington, D.C. in June to assist local law enforcement with guarding federal monuments, buildings and other property. In August, more than two dozen Soldiers and multiple UH-60 Black Hawks deployed to California to assist with record wildfires.

While our citizen-Soldiers were busy from coast-to-coast, our citizen-Airmen were busy throughout the world. The 124th Fighter Wing deployed to 13 locations to support combat operations throughout Southwest Asia. Additionally, Airmen of the 266th Range Squadron traveled to Scotland to train with the Royal Air Force, providing our allies with a unique experience using some of the most advanced training systems within the Air Force inventory.

Despite the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, our educational outreach programs continued to positively impact Idaho's brightest resource: our youth. More than 130 students graduated from the Idaho Youth ChalleNGe Academy this year. Those students returned home ready to contribute to their own schools and communities. Our STARBASE-Idaho program transferred its STEM-based curriculum from Gowen Field to their teachers' classrooms across the Treasure Valley, providing additional "hands-on, minds-on" training and experiences for students who might otherwise miss such opportunities.

In August, the Idaho National Guard formed a Joint Defensive Cyber Operations Team to work with the Secretary of State's IT department to enhance voting system security. By providing risk assessments while recommending action plans for an even stronger cyber defense of Idaho's voting system, the success of this engagement has established a foundation for a long and effective relationship to increase the state's ability to defend against cyberattacks.

Regardless of what challenges 2021 may bring, the Idaho Military Division will continue to be Idaho's premier public service organization, attracting our leading citizens, promoting a safe and secure environment for our state and nation.
Always Ready. Always There.

Michael J. Garshak
Major General

CONTENTS



4-5 REAL-WORLD HEROES, CITIZEN-LEADERS
FOUR GUARDSMEN EARN IDAHO CROSS, WASHINGTON AND BROCK MAKE HISTORY

6-7 IDAHO YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY
ACADEMY GETS NEW HELIPAD, CADETS GET NEW GYM EQUIPMENT

8-9 STARBASE PROGRAM, HONORING VETERANS
STARBASE BRINGS STEM TO STUDENTS, IDNG CONNECTS WITH VETERANS

10-11 RESCUE MISSIONS, OFD FIRE RESPONSE
STATE AVIATION GROUP AND OFD RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES

12-13 124TH FIGHTER WING DEPLOYS
IDANG DEPLOYS TO 17 BASES AND 13 COUNTRIES, DEDICATES FLAG TO TRIBES

14-15 MARINES GO GUARD, CYBER OPERATIONS
MARINES ENLIST INTO IDAHO GUARD, CYBER OPS ENHANCES VOTING SECURITY

16-17 CENTER PHOTOS

18-19 IDAHO GUARD HELPS WITH PANDEMIC
IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD CALLED TO ASSIST COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

20-21 IOEM ACTIVATES, IDNG FIGHTS FIRES
IOEM MANAGES COVID-19 EFFORTS, BLACK HAWK CREWS HELP IN CALIFORNIA

22-23 AIRMEN TRAIN RAF, IDNG HELPS IN D.C.
AIR GUARD TRAINS IN SCOTLAND, IDAHO ASSISTS WITH CIVIL UNREST IN D.C.

24-25 116TH COMMAND CHANGE, CAMBODIA
116TH CBCT GETS NEW COMMAND TEAM, SOLDIERS SEE THE WORLD

26-27 READY FOR ANYTHING, ESGR HONORS BOSSES
ASOS AIRMEN ARE TRAINED AND READY, TOP EMPLOYERS RECOGNIZED

28-29 TRIBE PARTNERSHIP, PROGRAMS FOR FAMILY
TAKING CARE OF OUR LAND, TRIBE RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILIES

30-31 VISIT THE IDNG, MEET KEY LEADERS
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS TOUR IDNG FACILITIES, MEET IDNG KEY LEADERS

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Editor's Note: The Year in Review is an Idaho Military Division publication comprised of stories published throughout 2020. Some positions and ranks may have changed during the year. Views expressed may not be those of the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

On the cover: Idaho National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk crews train on bucket operations before deploying to California in August to fight wildfires, page 21.

Citizen-Heroes: Four Guardsmen earn Idaho Cross medal for saving lives



Gov. Brad Little and Maj. Gen. Michael Garshak presented the Idaho Cross to 124th Fighter Wing Staff Sgt. Kyle Perkins in January, one of four Idaho National Guardsmen to be awarded the state's highest award this year to a member of the Idaho Military Division.

Perkins received the award in January for his significant act of heroism on the evening of June 14, 2019. That night he quickly responded to a man sitting next to him in distress. Perkins and his wife, Allia, assessed and secured the scene and performed CPR until the paramedics arrived. His actions saved the man's life.

In addition, three Idaho Army National Guard Soldiers were awarded the Idaho Cross for their own heroic actions. However, the ceremony to present them their award was postponed in 2020 due to COVID-19 concerns.

Sgt. 1st Class Kelsey Vanderwiel was recognized for her efforts in saving an infant's life in September 2018. Vanderwiel, a trained medic with more than a decade of experience, came across a mother with a baby in distress. Vanderwiel was able to find and clear a blockage in the infant's airway and massaged the baby back to consciousness, likely saving her life.

Sgt. Nicole Huston received the award for assisting a neighbor in cardiac arrest in November 2018. Using her military training, Huston began CPR until first responders could arrive. The neighbor was transferred to a local emergency room and survived due to Huston's quick actions.

In November 2019, Spc. Wesley McHenry observed a minivan veer off I-84 near Mountain Home and roll over several times. McHenry pulled over and administrated first aid on a female passenger, applying a proper tourniquet below her shoulder to stop the bleeding. He then remained on scene until first responders arrived.

Brock named best Air Guard Senior NCO

Master Sgt. Douglas Brock, a special warfare tactical air control party Airman from the 124th Air Support Operations Squadron, was selected as the Air National Guard's Outstanding Senior NCO. He was also selected as one of the U.S. Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year.



Photo courtesy U.S. Army Ranger School

In 2019, Brock became the 124th Fighter Wing's first Airman to complete the U.S. Army's Ranger School. The course is one of the Army's hardest schools with a 66 percent failure rate. Brock was recognized as the class's honor graduate.

Brock also participated in the 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team's National Training Center rotation at Fort Irwin, California, in June 2019. A few weeks later he participated in Exercise Northern Strike in Michigan, a National Guard-sponsored exercise involving 6,000 service members from 20 states and multiple countries. Brock was also part of the squadron's 2020 combat deployment.

Locally, Brock attended 20 hours of Habitat for Humanity classes and helped repair homes for three families. He also volunteered more than 100 hours with a national-level disabled youth athletes program.

"When you graduate Ranger School, there's a motto that states, 'I didn't earn my tab, others earned my tab for me,' meaning that I'm successful because everyone worked together," said Brock. "The same applies to this award. I didn't earn this alone. Saying thank you to everyone who helped me get here doesn't feel like enough, but I am so honored to be here and represent the Air National Guard."

Washington makes Idaho aviation history



Lt. Col. Nicole Washington became the first female Soldier to take command of the Idaho Army National Guard's 1st of the 183rd Assault Helicopter Battalion in October.

She follows Lt. Col. Christian O'Leary and will continue the unit's transition to the UH-60M model, the Army's most advanced Black Hawk, which began earlier in the year.

Washington has deployed to both Afghanistan and Bosnia. In 2012, she became the first female in the state's history to lead a National Guard unit in combat as its senior ranking officer when she deployed as the commander of Alpha Company, 1st of the 168th General Support Aviation Battalion to Afghanistan. She is qualified to fly both the Apache and Black Hawk helicopters.

Idaho Youth ChalleNGe Academy grows despite challenging year

Approximately 130 cadets overcame unique challenges to graduate from the Idaho Youth ChalleNGe Academy in 2020. The program offers Idaho students who are at risk of not graduating high school an opportunity to obtain enough credits to graduate with their peers, or earn a diploma or GED.

In March, 116 students had to return home due to COVID-19 concerns. Of those students, 30 completed the program requirements remotely and were able to participate in a drive-through commencement ceremony on Gowen Field in June.

In July, 128 students started the second class in Pierce, Idaho. Throughout the semester, the campus remained closed with strict safety protocols instituted and the course was shortened by four weeks. More than 100 cadets graduated from the accelerated program and participated in a virtual graduation ceremony in November.

The academy was started in January 2014 and has graduated more than 1,300 students from 43 of Idaho's 44 counties. The program is free to Idaho high school students who are struggling in the traditional high school setting and who are at risk of dropping out of high school or already have. The program offers two 22-week residential classes a year.





IDYCA gets a new helipad near schoolhouse

In August, Soldiers from Bravo Company, 116th Brigade Engineer Battalion completed reconstruction of a helipad on the IDYCA campus in Pierce. Previously, Idaho Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawks had to land on the town's baseball fields and visitors were transported across town to the school.

Soldiers completed the project during their annual training, allowing horizontal engineers to improve their real-world mission capabilities. A local gravel and construction company donated supplies.

Troy McClain, Bedros Keuilian donate new gym equipment

In November, the academy received thousands of dollars' worth of donated gym equipment. Reality TV personality and Idaho businessman Troy McClain teamed up with serial entrepreneur Bedros Keuilian to donate the equipment to the school's gym. Keuilian is the founder and CEO of Fit Body Boot Camp.

McClain, a business consultant and motivational speaker, visited the program in October. On his visit, he asked how he could help the program.

Cadets told him they needed better exercise equipment and staff members said they wanted more inspirational and motivational leaders to engage the cadets.

McClain delivered by placing a call to Keuilian, who donated the equipment and made the trip to the academy in Pierce.

He brought former Marine Steve Eckert and former Navy SEAL, CIA contractor and TV actor Ray "Cash" Care to talk to the students and train them in a special workout session designed to prove to the cadets that they can endure and overcome difficult challenges.









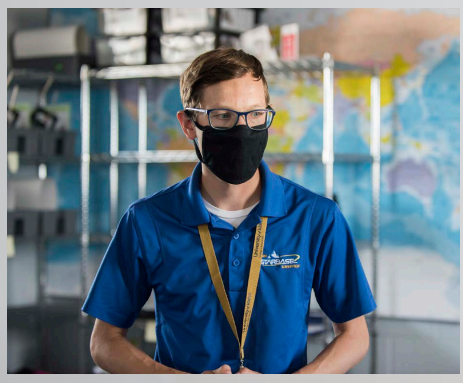




STARBASE brings STEM to local students

In its third year, STARBASE-Idaho expanded its STEM-based curriculum from Gowen Field to schools throughout the Treasure Valley as restrictions prevented students from traveling to Gowen Field.

The program, sponsored by the Department of Defense, provides Title I fifth grade students with 25 hours of "hands-on, minds-on" STEM education on Gowen Field.





In the spring, instructors worked with teachers and administrators from the Boise, Caldwell, Kuna and Nampa school districts to produce seven earth science lessons over a multitude of online and digital platforms to meet each district's needs as schools quickly adjusted to teaching their students online.

Over the summer, several local teachers attended a three-day interactive workshop to learn more about teaching STEM concepts at their own schools.

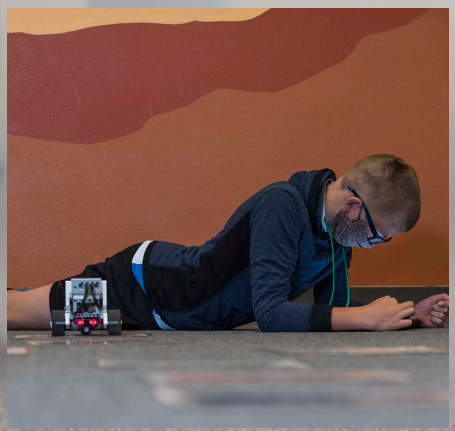
When schools resumed in the fall, STARBASE instructors used remote teaching to reach students in their classrooms, maximizing attendance without the need for students to travel to Gowen Field.

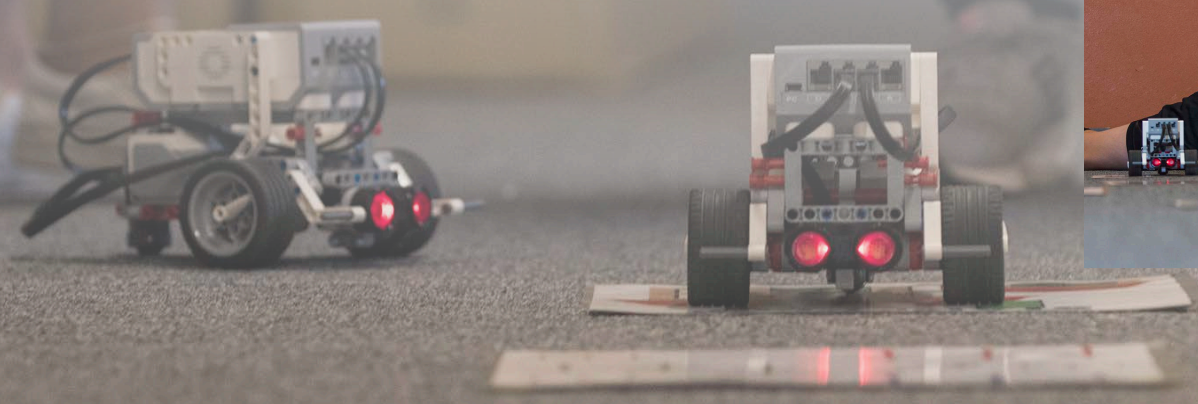
The 124th Fighter Wing's Family Support Program partnered with STARBASE and the University of Idaho's 4-H group to sponsor its first Mars Base Camp for family members over drill weekend in October.

IDAHO DoD STARBASE
A Department of Defense Youth Program
GOWEN FIELD

In November, the program launched STARBASE 2.0, an after-school robotics program, piloted in Middleton. Once a week, an instructor joins students at the school to provide instructions on building and testing robots.







Ensuring our veterans are not forgotten

COVID-19's social distancing requirements forced the Idaho National Guard to pause its quarterly visit to the Idaho State Veterans Home in Boise for a cup of coffee with Idaho's veterans. Videos and cards replaced in-person visits.

The pandemic ended trips to the veterans home, but it didn't end the organization's commitment to the Soldiers and Airmen who made their own commitments to our nation.

In February, Maj. Gen. Michael Garshak presented Spc. Richard Linger the Purple Heart he earned while serving in Vietnam, but had never received until the small ceremony held in Idaho Falls. Linger, from Idaho Falls, also received the Vietnam Service Medal with four bronze service stars, the National Defense Service Medal and the Army Commendation Medal.



In August, Brig. Gen. Russ Johnson joined 29 Soldiers who deployed with the 116th Brigade Engineer Battalion to Korea in 1950 to acknowledge the 70th anniversary of the unit's deployment to Korea. More than 220 Soldiers, mostly from Eastern Idaho, participated in that deployment. The unit was one of the largest units to remain intact once deployed and was the only National Guard unit to participate in both the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

Also during August, Garshak was among the small group of attendees to witness the dedication ceremony for the Snake River Canyon National Cemetery in Buhl. The cemetery is Idaho's first national veterans cemetery.





State Aviation Group to the rescue

The Idaho Army National Guard's state aviation group assisted multiple counties with at least six search and rescue missions throughout 2020, providing Soldiers with approximately 18 hours of flight time in real-world missions.

Soldiers worked closely with officials from Blaine, Boise, Custer and Elmore counties to assist in the rescue of six individuals.



In June, crews rescued three stranded rafters from the south fork of the Boise River in Elmore County after their raft capsized. The flight crew found all three rafters and transported them to first responders on the ground.

In August, crews assisted with three separate search efforts in mountainous terrain in Boise, Custer and Elmore counties. Soldiers transported a man who had collapsed while hiking around 10,000 feet altitude in Custer County after Life Flight was unable to land due to the terrain. The patient was transferred to the Friedman Memorial Airport in Hailey, where an ambulance transported him to receive care at a civilian hospital.

Later in the month, crews located another hiker who had collapsed near Lake Ingeborg in the Sawtooth Range and transported him to a nearby airport. Near Idaho City, crews hoisted a man involved in an ATV accident to safety and transported him to first responders waiting at the Idaho City airstrip.

In October, crews participated in the search for two missing individuals in separate incidents near Thunder Mountain and the Prairie Creek Trail Head. Crews were unable to locate either of the individuals during their search. However, the 82-year-old man hunting near Thunder Mountain was later found in good health by a ground search party.



Several Idaho Army National Guard helicopters are equipped with a hoist, which provides the community with a unique rescue capability civilian helicopters do not typically have. The hoists allow rescue crews to reach individuals on the ground when adverse conditions prevent the civilian helicopters from landing.



Soldiers train routinely with the Boise Fire Department to help with swift water rescue missions using this capability.



Photo courtesy State Aviation Group

Orchard Fire Department's response helps beyond training center

Members of the Orchard Fire Department responded to approximately 50 calls along I-84 and multiple fires that threatened the Orchard Combat Training Center throughout 2020.

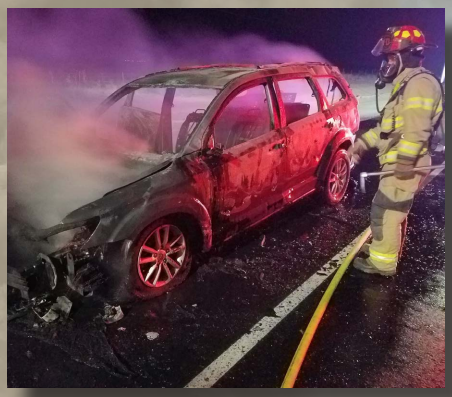
The department was established in 2015 to provide emergency medical services to service members training on the OCTC and to assist community members in the area during times of need or emergencies.

The department has the capacity to respond to emergencies along I-84 between mile posts 64 and 72.5, the Ada County/Elmore County line. Firefighters were the first to respond to nearly 50 requests for assistance, including multiple car fires or accidents along the highway. In July, the Boise Fire Department, Ada County Sheriff's Office and National Guard firefighters responded to a structure fire at a residence near the OCTC protecting two occupied homes and surrounding wildland.

In August, wildland firefighters were able to effectively control and contain a wildland fire that was started along the Union Pacific Railroad, preventing damage to the Orchard Combat Training Center.

The Orchard Fire Department received a new fleet of vehicles throughout the year to maintain its mission readiness.

The fire department is currently being renovated to double in size, which will enhance its capacity for firefighters to handle increased operations.

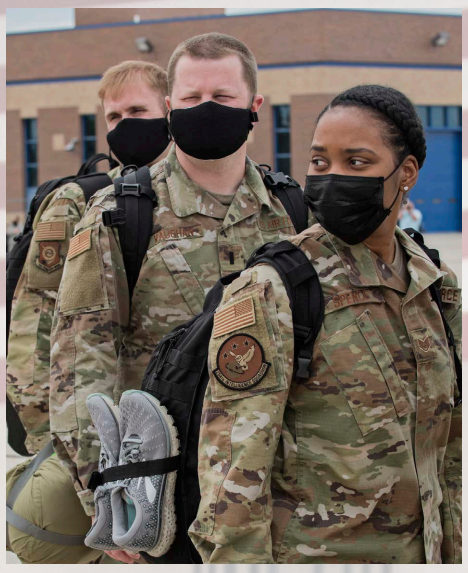






Photos courtesy Orchard Fire Department

124th Fighter Wing deploys to 13 countries in 2020



Nearly 450 Airmen from the 124th Fighter Wing deployed to 17 bases in 13 countries in 2020, completing the wing's most diverse deployment in its history.

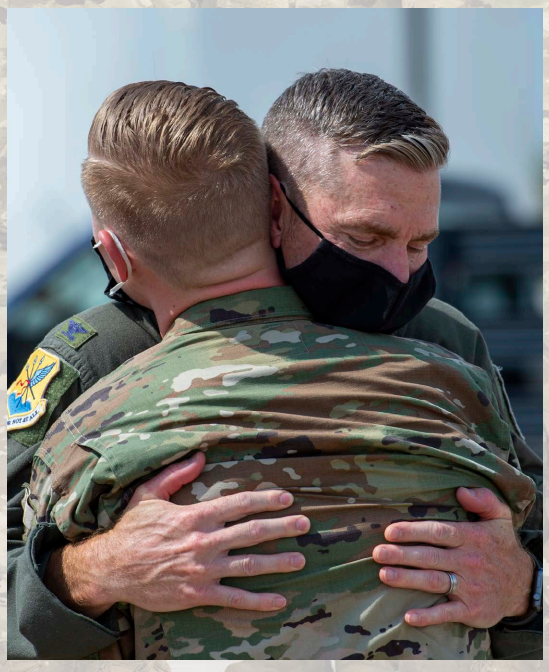
Citizen-Airmen supported four named operations in Southwest Asia, including Operation New Normal, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Spartan Shield.

The deployment included pilots, security forces, maintenance personnel, medical and other support personnel in addition to multiple A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft. Airmen deployed to military bases in the U.S., Afghanistan, Djibouti, Germany, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Niger, Tunisia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Airmen began deploying in May, but were delayed due to movement restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Airmen began returning home in August and continued to do so throughout the rest of the year.

The recent deployment was the unit's first large scale deployment since 2016, its largest deployment in support of operations against ISIS.









'Warrior Spirit' flag dedicated to tribes

In 2016, the 124th Fighter Wing dedicated an A-10 Thunderbolt II, the "Warrior Spirit," in honor of Idaho's tribes. During the wing's 2020 deployment, Capt. Mike Shufeldt flew a mission over Afghanistan with a flag near him in the cockpit of the aircraft. After returning home, Shufeldt dedicated the flag to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

Shufeldt said he saw a giant explosion while wearing night vision goggles and realized a friendly check point on the ground was under attack. The check point was on top of a hill and he could see rockets and grenades hitting it from all sides. Shufeldt spent the next three hours suppressing the enemy and assisting ground forces to fight off the attack. Although he received fire several times throughout the fight, the enemy was unsuccessful in hitting the aircraft.





"The 'Warrior Spirit' kept me safe and granted me the ability to protect the friendlies," said Shufeldt. "Be it luck or fate, the 'Warrior Spirit' and I were at the right place at the right time that night to save lives and affect the fight."

'Marines make excellent Soldiers'



In September, more than three dozen former Marine reservists enlisted into the Idaho Army National Guard after their former unit, Charlie Company, 4th Tank Battalion, was deactivated in August as part of the Marines' efforts to divest its armor battalions.

"Marines make excellent Soldiers," Brig. Gen. Farin Schwartz, commander of the Idaho Army National Guard said. "They each have the potential to make an immediate impact to their new unit and have already proven to be successful in the military."

Marine 1st Sgt. Craig Wilcox said more than a third of the company's Marines transferred into the Idaho Army National Guard for one of two reasons: to continue to serve their country locally or to continue to work on or in tanks. Charlie Company operated the M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank while the 116th Brigade Combat Team of the Idaho Army National Guard operates the updated M1A2 SEP V2 tanks.

"I looked at all of my options and I knew I wanted to stay in Idaho because my family is here," said Staff Sgt. Kyle Dycus, one of the Marines who transferred to the Idaho Army National Guard.

The majority of the Marines who enlisted into the Idaho Army National Guard are tankers, maintainers and other support individuals.

"We tried to match their Marine skill sets to an Army military occupational specialty as much as possible," Schwartz said. "And we'll continue to pay them special attention for the foreseeable future to ensure their transition is as smooth as possible."

Wilcox said that a small number of Marines will remain on Gowen Field to maintain the Marines' connection to the Treasure Valley until a decision is made regarding future units being assigned to Gowen Field.

In the meantime, the Marines will continue to engage in community relations events, host their annual Toys for Tots program and conduct funerals and honors for Idaho's Marine veterans.

Guard enhances voting security

The Idaho Army National Guard's Defensive Cyber Operations Element and the Idaho Air National Guard's 224th Cyber Operations Squadron combined in August to form the Idaho National Guard Joint Defensive Cyber Operations Team.

In September, the team completed a joint Innovative Readiness Training event with the Idaho Secretary of State's office. The purpose of the IRT was to enhance the Secretary of State's voting system security posture by providing risk assessments while recommending courses of action for an even stronger cyber defense.

The IRT mission tested technical and soft skills of Guardsmen by providing an effective and useful training opportunity. The cyber protection team mission requires defensive cyberspace teams to interact and build relationships of trust with mission partners before focusing on technical operations. The joint team performed a risk assessment of the public-facing footprint of the Idaho Secretary of State's election system, Tenex.

The success of this engagement has established a foundation for a long and effective relationship to increase the state's ability to defend against future cyberattacks.

The success also led to the Secretary of State's Information Technology security department becoming a mission partner of the team. As a partner, National Guard assets can be requested and activated in the future to defend against cyberattacks and allow for an enduring sustainment of cyberspace capability.

While the security of the Idaho Secretary of State's voting system is strong, this new partnership will undoubtedly help ensure Idaho is prepared to address emerging threats throughout cyberspace as our adversaries evolve.

In September, members of the IDARNG's DCOE trained with the Secretary of State's office again while participating in the National Guard's Cyber Shield 20 exercise. Nearly 600 Soldiers from more than 40 states participated in the two-week defensively focused tactical annual cyber exercise, which was hosted virtually this year.

Soldiers trained on cyber threat analysis, systems analysis, information control systems and information operations.



Idaho's DCOE was established in 2016 with the intent to train with community partners and respond to any cyber emergencies within the state, similar to other emergency missions the Idaho National Guard performs.




ACHANA


PYFER










IDAHO AIR NATIONAL GUARD






MCDONOUGH



Guard responds to COVID-19

In 2020, the Idaho National Guard activated two task forces to conduct multiple missions throughout the state in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



"When the Idaho National Guard is called upon, it's your friends, family and neighbors coming together to support our communities," said Maj. Gen. Michael Garshak, adjutant general of Idaho. "We are all citizens of Idaho, working toward the same goal."

In April, more than 50 citizen-Soldiers and Airmen were activated to state active duty for a month to assist food banks across the state. Guardsmen assisted staff with loading and unloading trucks, boxing and sorting donated food and making deliveries to community-based partners.

Soldiers and Airmen assisted at The Idaho Foodbank's Boise, Lewiston and Pocatello locations. In addition, Guardsmen also assisted at the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry in Boise and helped community



members and volunteers build food boxes for Idaho students at the Boise Centre.

"We are so delighted to have this support from the Idaho National Guard," said Karen Vauk, president and CEO of The Idaho Foodbank, in April. "We are experiencing some very unusual times for The Idaho Foodbank and we have seen a significant increase of need in our

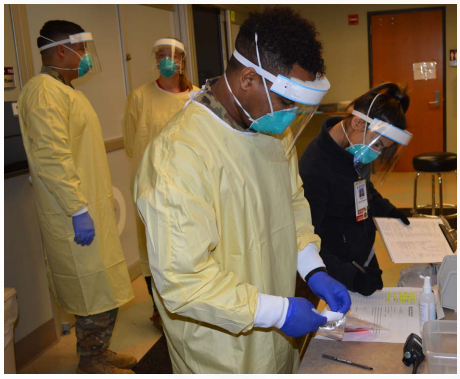




We Are Stronger Together.

food support. That means our operations are stretched thin. We have to get more food in and more food out to support our communities across the state. We needed more manpower, so we called upon the National Guard."

Gov. Brad Little activated 100 members of the Idaho National Guard Nov. 13 as COVID-19 cases increased throughout the state. That number was increased to 150 before President Donald Trump approved the governor's request to activate the Idaho National Guard pursuant to 23 U.S.C. Section 502(f) in December.



Gov. Little increased the authorization of National Guardsmen to 250 under that authorization, which uses a mixture of state and federal resources to fund personnel. Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen are expected to remain on duty until March 2021.

National Guardsmen are currently assisting local hospitals, medical facilities and public health districts in more than seven cities with mobile testing support, medical facility decontamination, COVID-19 screenings, logistical support and more.



The Idaho National Guard also partnered with the Shoshone-Bannock tribes in order to enhance the local capacity to screen and test as many tribal members as possible.





IOEM manages state's pandamic response

The Idaho Office of Emergency Management's Emergency Operations Center was activated March 13 and continues to operate 16 Emergency Support Functions to coordinate the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Staff members have served on the governor's Coronavirus Technical Working Group and Vaccine Advisory Committee, established a crisis counseling care line, and are continuing to connect volunteer agencies with groups in need. More than 100,000 Idahoans have utilized the crisis hotline.

In addition, staff members have managed more than 250,000 donations of personal protective equipment and distributed it across the entire state to health care providers and first responders.

Flyover honors Idaho's essential workers

In May, 124th Fighter Wing pilots teamed up with F-15E pilots from Mountain Home Air Force Base to conduct a special flyover in honor of Idaho's medical workers, first responders and all essential workers.

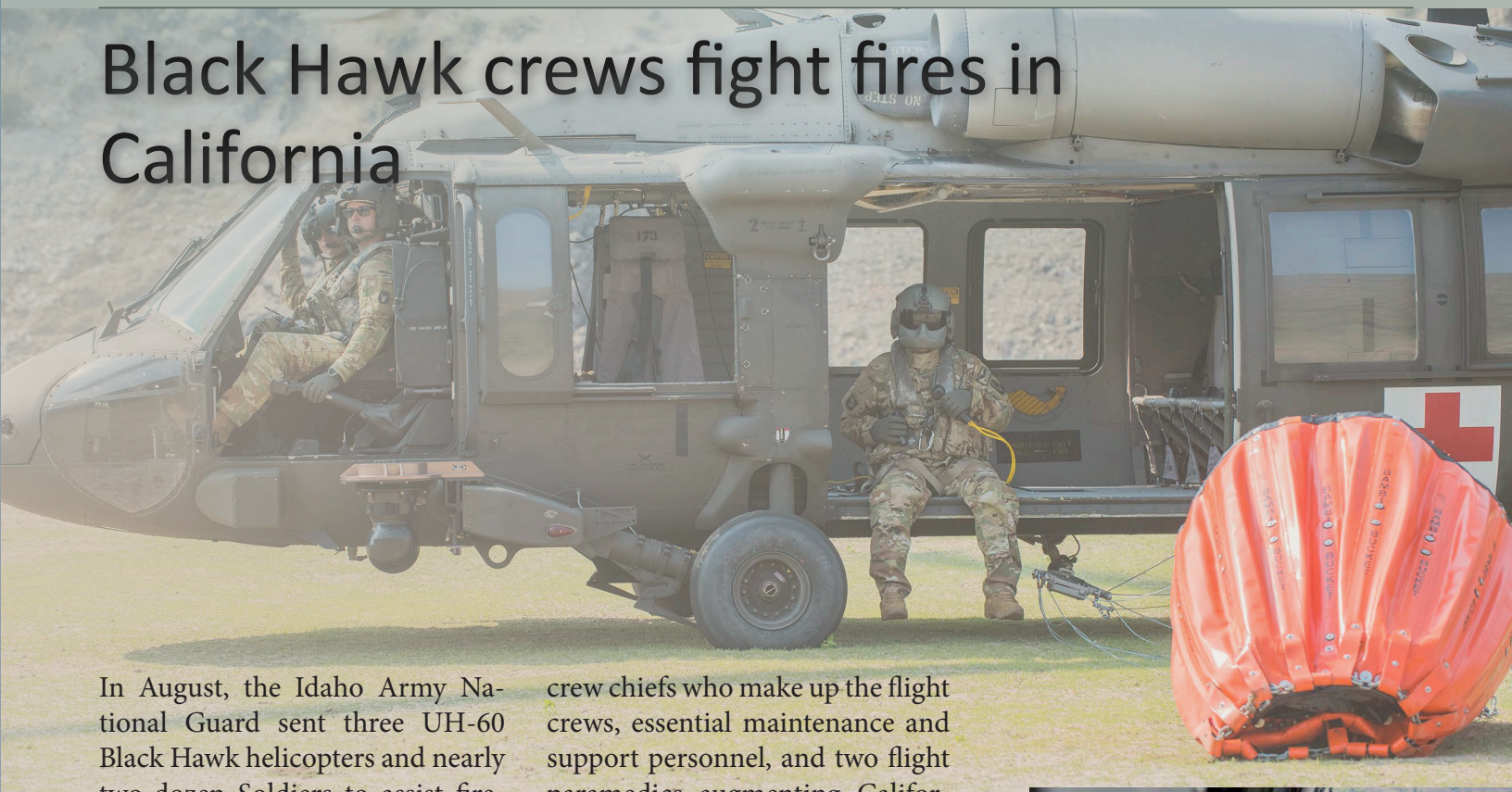
The joint flight team flew over 15 locations in 11 Idaho cities in the Treasure Valley, Magic Valley and Eastern Idaho.



The flight path was selected to say thank you to a large number of the essential workers who kept Idaho running during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the mission provided the chance for active duty and National Guard pilots to fly together, demonstrating the close total force relationships the Idaho military community shares.

Black Hawk crews fight fires in California



In August, the Idaho Army National Guard sent three UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and nearly two-dozen Soldiers to assist firefighters in California as the state battled record wildfires.

A dozen Soldiers and two UH-60s returned in September to continue their efforts as conditions worsened in California.

The teams included pilots and crew chiefs who make up the flight crews, essential maintenance and support personnel, and two flight paramedics augmenting California National Guard UH-60 medevac crews.

Between the two missions, crews logged more than 100 flight hours and dumped more than 80,000 gallons of water, mostly on the LNU Lighting Complex Fire in northern California.







Photo courtesy State Aviation Group

Idaho Airmen train RAF in Scotland

In September, eight Airmen from the Idaho Air National Guard's 266th Range Squadron and their specialized Joint Threat Emitter equipment deployed to Scotland to support the No. 11 Group Royal Air Force's Carrier Strike Group deployment. The squadron was specifically requested by the Royal Air Force unit because of their capabilities and equipment.

"This is just another example of the capability and flexibility of today's Idaho National Guard Airmen," said Brig. Gen. Tim Donnellan, commander of the Idaho Air National Guard. "The expertise of what these Airmen are able to provide with their knowledge of the emitter equipment is directly in line with our National Defense Strategy in preparing for future conflicts, and truly shows their commitment and professionalism."

Idaho's 266th RANS possesses highly sought-after electronic warfare training capabilities due to the specialized Threat Emitter Units. Two teams and two Joint Threat Emitters participated in the exercise and returned to Idaho in early November.

"We are one of the only military units that has the Joint Threat Emitter equipment," said Tech. Sgt. Phillip Mason from the 266th RANS. "We have the most experience operating and maintaining this equipment, therefore, we get a lot of requests to bring the emitters to a number of exercises around the world."



The equipment emits radar signals, acting as opposing forces, to alert pilots flying aircraft in the sky above.

"That's what makes this training great for pilots," said Mason. "In the real-world they will be able to recognize that signal after training with this equipment and avoid being shot down."

The equipment simulates threats pilots may face in real-world situations.

"I am incredibly proud to serve with the Airmen of the IDANG," said Donnellan. "They always answer the call, even if it takes them near the top of the world to Scotland, our Airmen are ready to go. It's humbling and awe inspiring."







Photos courtesy Royal Air Force

Guardsmen support civil authorities in D.C.

The Idaho National Guard sent approximately 400 Soldiers to Washington, D.C. in June to assist with guarding federal monuments, buildings and other property in response to civil unrest in the nation's capitol.

"Everything we encountered was very peaceful," said Lt. Col. Ben Cook, task force commander. "Our posture was soft so we didn't carry weapons, wear helmets or body armor, just our basic uniform. Coming here to not only protect monuments and sites, but protestors as well, was historic and gave each one of us something to reflect upon."

Soldiers departed from Gowen Field, Pocatello and Spokane less than 25 hours after the mission was approved by Gov. Brad Little. Idaho was one of 11 states to send additional support to the nation's capitol. The Soldiers augmented the Washington, D.C. National Guard and served in support of the United States Park Police and Metropolitan Police Department for five days before returning to Idaho.



Soldiers ready to fight wildland fires

More than 40 Idaho Army National Guard Soldiers earned an Incident Qualification Card, commonly known as a Red Card certification, in June.



The training, administrated by the Idaho Department of Lands, provided Soldiers with the knowledge and training to fight wildland fires as a civilian or to assist state firefighting efforts in the event the governor declares a state emergency in the future.

"The Idaho National Guard is proud to offer our Soldiers the opportunity to participate in this entry-level firefighter course," said Brig. Gen. Russ Johnson, director of the joint staff. "It enables us to enhance our capability to respond to local, state and federal calls with trained and qualified wildland firefighters."



116th CBCT gets new command team

Lt. Col. Dennis Stitt took command of the state's largest unit, the 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, in August. Stitt assumed command following the conclusion of Col. Scott Sheridan's 30-month command tour.

Under Sheridan's command, the 116th CBCT completed a rotation at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, an eXportable Combat Training Capability exercise, and a brigade warfighter exercise while also participating in multiple missions in Cambodia, Canada, Thailand and Tunisia.

"Having the opportunity to work alongside the great Soldiers of the 116th CBCT has been one of the greatest honors of my career," Sheridan said. "I cannot thank them enough for their professionalism, sacrifice and dedication to duty. The Soldiers of this brigade have my deepest gratitude and respect."

Stitt has served in the Army since 1985 and earned his commission as an officer in 2000. Prior to taking command of the brigade, he served as the garrison deputy commander and director of the Orchard Combat Training Center.

He has previously served as a battalion and company commander in the 116th CBCT and deployed with the unit in 2004 and 2010.

In November, Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Terrio relinquished responsibility of the brigade to Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Mora as the brigade's senior enlisted leader.

The 116th CBCT is located throughout the state in nearly two-dozen communities with subordinate units in Montana, Nevada and Oregon.





Warrant Officer class creates new museum exhibit

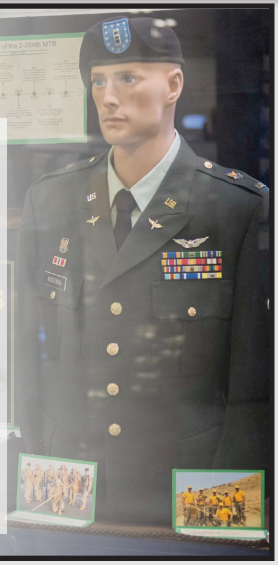
In September, Warrant Officer Candidate School Class 20-001 created a display highlighting the warrant officer cohort's contributions to the U.S. Army.

The exhibit is on display at the Idaho Military History Museum and is located outside of Gowen Field and accessible to the public.

Museum hours:
12-4 p.m.
Tuesday-Saturday

4692 W. Harvard St.,
Boise

Open to the public. Free admission.



State Partnership Program gives Soldiers chance to see world, train with allies

Sgt. Kylee Price enlisted into the Idaho Army National Guard five years ago, bored with her normal life of working and going to school. Looking for an adventure, she volunteered to deploy to Cambodia in February as part of the Idaho National Guard's State Partnership Program.



Price was one of 12 Soldiers who participated in a subject-matter expert exchange at the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations center with members of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces.

"This is definitely something I wouldn't do in my civilian life," she said. "I got to learn about their culture and experience another country firsthand. It was fun."

The exchange was Price's first trip out of the country. The Arco native serves as a combat medic and is a licensed practical nurse currently studying to become a registered nurse.

During the exchange, she worked alongside fellow medic Sgt. Paige Fritz to explore basic first aid and CPR techniques with members of Cambodia's peacekeeping directorate who were preparing to deploy to several countries as part of the National Center for Peacekeeping, Mines, and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance program.

Fritz said she was inspired by her sister to enlist in the Idaho Army National Guard, who was also a combat medic in the organization. Fritz is studying health care at Boise State University and works for the Idaho State Police.

"I enjoy being able to have two separate careers," she said.

In addition to the medical subject-matter expert exchanges, teams also conducted counter-IED and leadership exchanges focusing on troop leading procedures, land navigation and basic leadership skills with more than 70 NPMEC soldiers.

Idaho has participated in the National Guard's State Partnership Program with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces since 2009 and 2020 marks the 70th year of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cambodia. The state partnership program facilitates the exchange of ideas, capabilities, training and experience between a host country and a state's National Guard. Idaho Soldiers and Airmen typically make four to six trips to Cambodia annually to participate in the program, but only completed one trip in 2020.

"This is definitely something I wouldn't do in my civilian life," said Price. "I got to learn about their culture and experience another country firsthand. It was fun."

Tactical Airmen ready for anything

To remain ready to deploy in any environment, special warfare tactical air control party Airmen from the 124th Fighter Wing trained with Soldiers, Sailors and horses in 2020.

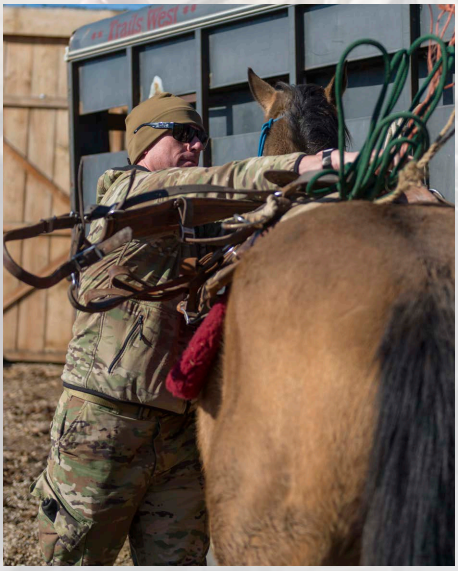
In February, TACP Airmen learned how to wrangle, saddle, pack, ride and care for horses during a training event in Emmet.

"We're learning how to properly pack people and equipment onto horses so that if we're ever in a situation where we can't use normal methods of transportation, we can use the animals to assist," said Staff



Sgt. Neil Mooney, a special warfare TACP Airman and the NCO in charge of weapons and tactics from the 124th Air Support Operations Squadron.

Special warfare units may use horses, mules and donkeys as substitutes for motorized vehicles in high mountainous terrain, dense jungles, deserts, the backcountry or other environments that require units to move exclusively on foot. Horses can carry significant cargo loads to sustain the unit for an extended period of time, such as food, water, first aid, radios and batteries.



"TACP units are joint providers of precision strike capabilities, and as the premier precision strike provider, we have to be able to get in and get out of anywhere in the world at any time," said Mooney. "We never know where we're going to be until we're there, and we never know how we need to move until we're in that situation."

In August, TACP Airmen trained with the U.S. Navy's Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron Four to complete non-combatant evacuation operation training in Emmett and Horseshoe Bend. NEOs are conducted when civilians must be evacuated from a dangerous environment, typically during civil unrest, war or a natural disaster.



Chief Master Sgt. Mike Furman, 124th ASOS chief enlisted manager, said this type of high-visibility federal mission is easily transferrable to smaller, domestic situations, particularly within the state of Idaho.

"Picture a small, rural town in Idaho surrounded by wildfire or floods," he said. "In those situations, we need to get people and their belongings out quickly, and just sending a few helicopters in alone won't work. There's logistically much more that comes into play."



Guardsmen, Reserve members recognize employers

In 2020, more than 50 Idaho employers were recognized for their support of a National Guard or Reserve service member by the Idaho Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. The ESGR is a Department of Defense program that promotes cooperation and understanding between the reserve component service members and their employees.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to show our appreciation for employers of Idaho's citizen-Soldiers and Airmen," said Maj. Gen. Michael Garshak, adjutant general of Idaho. "Employer support is critical to our success as an organization and we are fortunate to have such tremendous employers here and throughout Idaho."



In March, Gov. Brad Little signed a Statement of Support for the National Guard and Reserve on behalf of the ESGR, recognizing the Idaho National Guard and Reserve are essential to the strength of our nation and the well-being of our communities.



Ednetics and the J.R. Simplot Company received the Pro Patria Award, presented annually to one small, one large and one public sector employer in the state for the greatest amount of support demonstrated to Guard and Reserve employees. The J.R. Simplot Company and the City of Meridian received the Above and Beyond Award, recognizing employers who have gone above and beyond the legal requirements of employing Guard and Reserve members by offering additional benefits to support their dual careers.

Kootenai Health, Ada County Paramedics and the J.R. Simplot Company received the Seven Seals Award in recognition of significant individual or organizational achievement, in supporting the ESGR mission.

Service Member Patriot Awards are presented to individual supervisors and bosses who provide direct support to a service member.

Service members from the organizations below recognized their supervisor or boss with a Patriot Award for their individual support.

Ada County Sheriff's Office*
Agri-Lines Irrigation, Inc.*
Bank of America
Bannock County Public Works
Battelle Energy Alliance
Canyon County Sheriff's Office
Custom Services, LLC
Ednetics, Inc.*
Fresenius Kidney Care
Gem State Doors & Millwork, LLC
H2 Surveying, LLC
Hooligans Pub
Idaho Central Credit Union*
Idaho Elks Hearing & Balance Center
Idaho National Laboratory
Idaho Office of the Attorney General*
Jerome County Sheriff's Office
J.R. Simplot Company*
KM Engineering, LLP
Kootenai Health*
Local Wire Nutz, LLC
Melba Junior-Senior High School
Marshall Industries
Portneuf Medical Center
R & M Steel Company*
Raft River Sod, LLC
Southeast Idaho Council of Governments
Small Business Administration
St. Luke's Health System*
Talking Rain Beverage Company
Tri-Pro Forest Products, Inc.
University of Idaho Dept. of Soil & Water Systems
The Welcomemat
West Valley Medical Associates, Inc.
Wells Dental
Wells Fargo
Wright Brothers, The Building Company, LLC*

* designates multiple awards per company.

Idaho National Guard preserves land, tribal relationship



Maj. Gen. Michael Garshak signed a Memorandum of Understanding with members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes in November, signifying a strong commitment from both organizations to work together to preserve cultural and natural resources on the Orchard Combat Training Center and other training sites throughout the state.



The MOU continues an agreement retired Maj. Gen. Gary Sayler signed in 2015. That agreement was also five years in length and was the first between the Idaho National Guard and a tribe. Sayler served as the adjutant general from 2010 to 2017.

The memorandum is one symbol of the Idaho Military Division's commitment to forming a strong partnership with Idaho's tribes. The Idaho National Guard is also a member of the Idaho Council on Indian Affairs and helps host the Return of the Boise Valley People event every year.

Cultural resources management team wins first place award



The Idaho National Guard's cultural resources program received first place in the National Guard Bureau's Environmental Security Award for 2020.

The award recognizes the efforts of teams and individuals who promote the management of cultural resources, such as historical buildings, archaeological sites and Native American sites, as well as those who build and enhance relationships with local tribes.

Over the past two years, the Idaho National Guard cultural resources team has worked with numerous partners to implement a huge site protection program supported by technologically advanced survey and monitoring techniques.

The team has augmented its preservation efforts by expanding tribal relationships and educational opportunities for students from grade school to graduate school throughout the region.

Conservation program helps restore park

In 2020, the Idaho National Guard's conservation program worked with the Boise City Parks and Recreation Department and the tribes of the Boise Valley to restore five acres of the Chief Eagle Eye Reserve.

The reserve, previously known as Quarry View Park, was renamed in 2019 to honor the area's indigenous people.



Photo courtesy Boise City Parks and Rec. Dept.

The project reduced invasive and noxious weed species and reestablished native vegetation to the site, such as sagebrush, bitterbrush and various native grasses and forb species.

These native plant species are critical components of the natural ecosystem and provide habitat for local wildlife species. In addition, they hold significant cultural value for the indigenous people of the Boise Valley.

The project consisted of two phases. During the first phase, areas with invasive species were sprayed with a herbicide or mowed to reduce competition with native species. These areas were then seeded with a native species mixture of grasses and forbs.

The second phase reintroduced 2,700 live, native plant materials. The Idaho National Guard provided 2,000 bitterbrush and 300 sagebrush plants with plant protectors. City of Boise provided 400 sagebrush plants and additional plant protectors.

The Idaho National Guard coordinated with a local conservation firm, Hawkeye Landscape and Conservation, to plant all 2,700 plants, completed on Veterans Day.

Service member and family support

At the beginning of the year, the Child and Youth Programs hosted its annual Snow Bash event. More than 128 military youth from around the state came together in a relaxed environment to learn resiliency techniques.

In October, CYP provided a safe and healthy alternative to trick-or-treating with a drive-in Trunk-or-Treat event that involved over 400 participants and volunteers.





In November and December, service member and family readiness specialists provided more than 500 food boxes and $8,000 dollars in grants and gifts through the Holiday Assistance Program.

To continue to assist service and family members, mental health services were offered electronically in 2020. In addition, the Idaho Guard and Reserve Support Fund provided more than $60,000 in grants and interest-free loans to help families experiencing a tough year.

The Idaho National Guard's Service Member and Family Support Division provides services to thousands of veterans, service members and military families across the state.



Distinguished visitors from across state, nation tour Idaho National Guard facilities

The Idaho Military Division welcomed elected and civic leaders, as well as members of the public, throughout the year to visit Gowen Field, the Orchard Combat Training Center and its armories in nearly two dozen communities.

The visits gave our fellow citizens the opportunity to learn more about our organization, assets and capabilities, and people. Visits ranged from an information brief with a tour of Gowen Field and the Orchard Combat Training Center, to a Boy Scout unit experiencing what it's like to be a Soldier for a day in one of our simulators that provides realistic training to our members.

In addition, the public can request Idaho Military Division assets to participate in their community or educational events. Throughout the year, these events help educate the public about our organization and allow us to build meaningful connections within our communities.















Idaho National Guard Key Leaders



The Adjutant General/ Commanding General: Maj. Gen. Michael J. Garshak

The adjutant general is appointed by the governor and serves as the director of the Idaho Military Division and commander of the Idaho National Guard.



State Command Chief Warrant Officer: Chief Warrant Officer 5 Michelle Hartley

The command chief warrant officer is responsible for advising the adjutant general and command group on matters pertaining to policies and actions affecting the warrant officer cohort.



Senior Enlisted Leader: Command Chief Master Sgt. Harold J. Bongiovi

The senior enlisted leader is responsible for advising the adjutant general and command group on matters pertaining to policies and actions affecting enlisted Soldiers and Airmen.



Assistant Adjutant General-Army: Brig. Gen. Farin D. Schwartz

The assistant adjutant general - Army serves as the commander of the Idaho Army National Guard and is directly responsible for the strength, training, readiness and management of all Army National Guard units in Idaho.



Chief of Staff-Army: Col. James C. Packwood

The chief of staff serves as the principle advisor to the assistant adjutant general - Army on a broad range of matters concerning the United States Army and Army National Guard.



State Command Sergeant Major: Command Sgt. Maj. Scott White

The state command sergeant major serves as the senior enlisted advisor to the assistant adjutant general - Army on matters pertaining to Army National Guard policies and actions affecting enlisted Soldiers.



Assistant Adjutant General-Air: Brig. Gen. Timothy J. Donnellan

The assistant adjutant general – Air serves as the commander of the Idaho Air National Guard and is directly responsible for the strength, training, readiness and management of all Air National Guard units in Idaho.



Director of Staff-Air: Col. Kyle E. Carpenter

The director of staff serves as the principle advisor to the assistant adjutant general - Air on a broad range of matters concerning the United States Air Force and Air National Guard.



State Command Chief: Command Chief Master Sgt. Kelly Bongiovi

The state command chief serves as the senior enlisted advisor to the assistant adjutant general - Air on matters pertaining to Air National Guard policies and actions affecting enlisted Airmen.



Director of the Joint Staff: Brig. Gen. Russell Johnson

The director of the joint staff serves as advisor to the adjutant general on joint military and domestic operations matters concerning the DoD, the Air and Army National Guard and the Idaho Military Division.



Chief of the Joint Staff – JFHQ: Col. Britt C. Vanshur

The chief of the joint staff serves as advisor to the director of the joint staff and adjutant general on joint military and domestic operations matters concerning the DoD, the Air and Army National Guard and the Idaho Military Division.



Command Sergeant Major – JFHQ: Command Sgt. Maj. Linda Burkhart

The command sergeant major to the joint staff is responsible for advising the director of the joint staff, Idaho, on all matters impacting the enlisted force and to assess morale, welfare, and training of the enlisted force within the joint staff.



The Idaho Military Division's commitment to the community is codified in our adjutant general's three strategic imperatives: to maintain combat readiness to fight and win our nation's wars when called upon; to continue developing and strengthening our homeland security and emergency response readiness; and to continue building and fostering partnerships throughout Idaho, the nation and the world.

Our Mission: to maintain combat and domestic emergency response readiness in the Idaho National Guard; and guide the state, through the Office of Emergency Management, in effectively preparing for, responding to and recovering from all hazards. The division also provides a fully accredited residential high school with the Idaho Youth ChalleNGe Academy, in order to intervene in and reclaim the lives of at-risk Idaho youth.

Our Vision: to be Idaho's premier public service organization; attracting our leading citizens, promoting a safe and secure environment for our state and nation.