Rescue workers retrieve a simulated earthquake victim during a heavy lifting operation of the Pacific Partnership 2019 Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise in Tacloban, Philippines, March 21, 2019. The goal of the Pacific Partnership is to improve interoperability of the region's military forces, governments, and humanitarian organizations during disaster relief operations, while providing humanitarian, medical, dental, and engineering assistance to nations of the Pacific all while strengthening relationships and security ties between the partner nations. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

Hawaii National Guard State Partnership Program assists U.S. Navy

Hawaii National Guard State Partnership Program assists U.S. Navy Seabees in two Engineering Civic Action Program projects (ENCAP). The first of the two projects took nearly two months to complete. The first project was a disaster evacuation, multipurpose building in Santa Elena. The second project was a complete renovation of a birthing center that had been severely damaged in a recent typhoon and required work from the roof to the plumbing.

“We renovated the V & G Health and Birthing Center,” said Sgt. Mary Rose Reiner, Hawaii Army National Guard 230th Engineer Company. “There was some reconstruction of the roofing. We installed the light fixtures too. We also laid cement in some of the rooms. The whole building was repainted and re plumed. Our electricians also rewired a few systems.”.

Both of these projects will enhance the regions ability to care for their residents day to day needs as well as enhancing the regions disaster preparedness posture.

The Hawaii National Guard’s search and rescue Soldiers, who regularly engage with their counterparts of the Armed Forces of the Philippines as apart of the National Guard State Partnership Program, were on hand to assist in facilitating the largest Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise.

Continued, on Page 2.
The Hawaii National Guard State Partnership Program recently sent its own military disaster managers along with civilian disaster managers from the state, and county levels to Quezon City to help facilitate a large scale disaster exercise that included the Batazan Hills Barangay. A barangay is the smallest administrative division in the Philippines and is the native Filipino term for a village, district or ward. In metropolitan areas, the term often refers to an inner city neighborhood, a suburb or a suburban neighborhood.

“Right now from Hawaii we brought the Hawaii National Guard Joint Staff, our Hawaii Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high-yield explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, and the Search and Rescue Element,” Col. James Barros, Hawaii Army National Guard Disaster Manager. “We also brought representatives from the Honolulu County, Maui County and the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency. We are additional eyes for the administrators to look and see if their processes are working.”

The exercise was held at a “command post” level and field training level and included the Quezon City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (QCDRRMC) and the Batasan Hills Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (DRRMO).

The Hawaii National Guard State Partnership Program brought civilian disaster management professionals from state and county levels to evaluate the Philippine municipality response to a simulated earthquake a first for the state of Hawaii and major expansion of the State Partnership Program.

“We'll be working specifically with one of their high risk barangays, to see how exercise that has ever been held on the island of Panay.

“We're here to assist and help any type of training that they need to help oversee and expand their knowledge in the instructor portion of the training,” Staff Sgt. Cory Ito, Hawaii Army National Guard CERFP Team. “This has made us stronger in, as in, everybody getting together, knowledge that went out to the students, and we actually gained a lot of knowledge ourselves. From the local styles of rescue that they do to the actual mission of Yolanda. Overall, everything went well and safe, and the mission was completed.”

The HADR exercise involved participants from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine Coast Guard and many different local government and non-government agencies. The participants were responding to a simulated earthquake scenario where a large structure had collapsed. Structures had to be shored up, while victims needed debris lifted off them and some areas required breaching to reach disaster victims. The Philippine Air Force also performed an aerial rescue off a roof top.

“Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, but working together for the last two weeks is success,” said Mr. Jerry Yaokasin, Vice Mayor of Tacloban. “In doing the mission has fostered friendship among us. Trust and cooperation between our country and our partner nations. Mutual cooperation is vital. Humanitarian assistance and disaster preparedness, management and response. Especially of the people of this region.”

The goal of the Pacific Partnership is to improve interoperability of the region’s military forces, governments, and humanitarian organizations during disaster relief operations, while providing humanitarian, medical, dental, and engineering assistance to nations of the Pacific, strengthening relationships and security ties between the partner nations.

A Youth Challenge Academy Cadet rests during a donation of a blood drive for the Blood Bank of Hawaii, March 15, 2019. The Hawaii Youth Challenge Academy holds two cycle blood drives a year accounting for around 100 units donated annually. The donations also earn each Cadet credit towards their mandatory community service hours in the program. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

A Youth Challenge Academy Cadet reviews his answers to a government quiz during a civics lesson, March 15, 2019. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

A Youth Challenge Academy Cadet rests during a donation of a blood drive for the Blood Bank of Hawaii, March 15, 2019. The Hawaii Youth Challenge Academy holds two cycle blood drives a year accounting for around 100 units donated annually. The donations also earn each Cadet credit towards their mandatory community service hours in the program. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

A Youth Challenge Academy Cadet reviews his answers to a government quiz during a civics lesson, March 15, 2019. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

Hawaii National Guard disaster response Soldiers Maj. Wayne Anno, a long with Hawaii Emergency Management representative David Lopez look on as Batasan Hill Manager, Capt. Jojo Abad prepares directs his staff in the initial response to an earthquake drill at the beginning of the field training exercise phase of the Community Disaster Readiness Exercise, Batasan Hills, March 27, 2019. . (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Lee Jackson)

The exercise started with a day long seminar focused on Hawaii’s and Quezon City’s approach on disaster and risk management. The Hawaii Civilian disaster management professionals each presented their respective response plans and methodology followed by a series of presentations from the Quezon City and Batasan Hills disaster managers.

“There’s always benefits to having exercises,” Herman Andya, Maui County Emergency Management Agency Administrator. “Even for us here at Maui County. So by doing these exercises, we can determine and identify operational gaps, what kind of things perhaps you can improve on; processes, procedures... and then based on that, we can make those improvements.”

Teams of Hawaii National Guard disaster managers and search and rescue Soldiers also worked directly with their Batasan Hills Barangay counterparts in process development and hands on rescue techniques.

The exercise transitioned into a full scale mass casualty earthquake response drill after the academic portion was accomplished. The drill was designed to test Quezon City’s ability to communicate with a Barangay and to test the Barangay’s ability to prioritize it efforts and to know when it needed to request assistance.

“Our state partnership has been just with the Philippines’ Army, and we started, back in about 2009, with the 525th, Engineer Battalion,” said Barros. “As we’re growing, we’re looking at in the cities, in the barangay, expanding that first responder. So, as we continue to train, as we continue to socialize, we saw an opportunity here to partner with Quezon City and their disaster management folks, and that’s how this kind of evolved into a this type of exercise; for our folks to come in to help evaluate their processes and give them a good look at what’s working, maybe some areas that we can improve on.”

This is the first time a joint exercise from both a city and barangay level has been held in the Philippines. The final phase of the exercise had first responders from Quezon City and the Batazan Hills Barangay clearing rubble, retrieving survivors and victims from a collapsed structure, responding to a structure fire, and aerial evacuations.

YCA LIONS @ The PYLON Tournament getting ready for gametime! PYLON is a 7 on 7 team sport that mixes rules for rugby and American Football. this is the first year YCA participated in this event.
Members of the Hawaii Air National Guard held airlift operations Jan. 13 through 25 during a large-scale joint and multinational exercise in Gulfport, Miss.

The exercise, Southern Strike 19, is hosted by the Mississippi Air National Guard at Gulfport’s Combat Readiness Training Center – Battlefield Airmen Center. It provides participants the opportunity to build partnerships and maintain combat readiness for future missions.

“It’s nice to bring other units in, such as the Hawaii Air National Guard, and have their perspective on what we’re doing here,” said Col. Joseph E. Reid, CRTC base commander, “it’s a value added to them and a value added to us. We can also expose them to different units which come from different parts of the country.”

Approximately 2,000 service members from both the active and reserve components in every branch of U.S. military service participated in the combat exercise. The Hawaii participants are from the 204th Airlift Squadron, 154th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and a team of active-duty Airmen from the 15th Wing.

Capt. Evan Kurosu, 204th AS pilot and mission planner, said the exercise exposes his unit to challenges which are not easy to come by while stationed in Oahu. Southern Strike tested the Airmen’s readiness through a variety of obstacles, such as shorter runways, larger variations of cargo, low-level flying and staged threats to work around.

Over the two weeks of training, the Hawaii guardsmen airlifted members from several units on a C-17 Globemaster III to complete a series of wartime tasks, to include U.S. Army special forces and a team of distinguished visitors from the Chilean Army. Other activities entailed multiple cross-country flights to transport personnel and equipment from Fargo, N.D., air-refueling operations in the dark, high-altitude low-opening jumps, airdrop coordination and more.

After a year of planning and coordination, Kurosu said it was rewarding to watch his crew members complete the back-to-back training objectives. Southern Strike also served to help improve the HIANG’s ability to respond to natural disasters.

“Ultimately, one of the things that makes me proud to be a Hawaii Air National Guardsman is that we do have specific mission sets. For example, humanitarian relief. So, when we execute our assault landings and other wartime scenarios, these proficiencies are still relevant when we get to do things like hurricane evac or relief missions, like when we responded to Hurricane Maria [in 2017].”

The 204th AS’s emergency-response capabilities can be called upon at any time, and their mission set is growing. The squadron is now extending its search and rescue skills with NASA and posted to rescue astronauts from downed spacecraft virtually anywhere in the Pacific.

Regardless of the call-to-duty, aircrew and maintenance personnel will always rely on their ongoing training to fight battles and save lives - especially when it comes to working with their joint and international partners.

“Today’s military is all about working together in a joint environment, and that’s what we’re all about – whether it’s here or back at home,” said Brig. Gen. Barry Blanchard, Mississippi Air National Guard chief of staff. “The more exposure you get to it, the better off we’re all prepared for the next event.”
The Hawaii National Guard’s State Partnership Program recently facilitated an exchange between officer candidates from the Indonesian Military the University of Hawaii’s Reserve Officers’ Training Corps and the Hawaii Army National Guard’s Officer Candidate School. The State partnership program is a department of defense program that is managed by the National Guard. The program’s goal is to cultivate enduring relationships that enhance regional stability and influence. The program partners up one state’s National Guard program with an allied U.S. country to facilitate growth in military and civilian operations. Hawaii has had a partnership with Indonesia since 2006.

“One the goals for today’s exercise was to evaluate the leadership potential of officer candidates for ROTC, OCS and the Indonesia Army,” said Hawaii Army National Guard Officer Candidate Chastity Abad. “In OCS and ROTC, we’re taught differently, so it was good to see different ways how you can approach a lane when you are doing your operational orders, and briefs.”

Officer Cadets from the University of Hawaii Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, the Hawaii Army National Guard Officer Candidate School and the Indonesian Military practice offloading from a Blackhawk helicopter during an recent joint field training exercise, April 15, 2019. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

Officer Candidates Train Together
HIDOD HQ | Tech. Sgt. Andrew Jackson | April 12 2019

Officer Cadets from the University of Hawaii Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, the Hawaii Army National Guard Officer Candidate School and the Indonesian Military practice offloading from a Blackhawk helicopter during an recent joint field training exercise, April 15, 2019. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Jackson)
Hawaii Governor David Ige places the State Medal of Valor around the neck of Staff Sergeant Gregory A.Y. Lum Ho, Jr. at a ceremony held on February 9, 2019, at Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Martens)

Hawaii Army National Guard Soldier Awarded the State Medal of Valor
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment (Hawaii) | Story by Staff Sgt. Christopher Martens | Sunday, February 10, 2019

WHEELER ARMY AIRFIELD, Hawaii - “A series of very difficult decisions . . . that would save the lives of a family of six, and one family pet.” These are the words used by Hawaii Governor David Ige just prior to presenting Staff Sergeant Gregory A.Y. Lum Ho, Bravo Company, 777th Aviation Support Battalion, with the State Medal of Valor during a ceremony held at Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii on February 9, 2019.

The Medal of Valor is awarded by the Governor to individuals who distinguish themselves through performance of an uncommon act of personal heroism involving the voluntary risk of his/her own life. Governor Ige presented this medal to Lum Ho in recognition of his life saving actions while serving as part of the Hawaii National Guard’s emergency response to Hurricane Lane.

On August 23, 2018, Lum Ho was assigned to the Lava Support Mission and as a member of Task Force Hawaii, which was established in response to the Kilauea Volcano eruption on the island of Hawaii. However, with Hurricane Lane closing in, Task Force Hawaii’s mission quickly changed from lava support, to hurricane support. That evening Lum Ho, along with Pvt. Justin Dejesus, was assigned as a roving security patrol, but when Task Force Hawaii received a request for assistance from the Hawaii County Fire Department, Lum Ho was redirected to assist.

When Lum Ho arrived, he learned that a family of six was stranded in an area where all ingress and egress routes were cut off by high flooding waters and their house was in danger of potential collapse. The road to their home was flooded, eroded on one side with large pieces of debris floating, limiting the type of vehicle that could traverse through. This included first responders, who had already exhausted their capabilities. Equipped with a firm understanding of the capabilities of his assigned Humvee, as well as his knowledge of the local terrain, Lum Ho quickly worked with first responders to formulate an innovative plan of action. Once the plan was in place, he placed himself in grave danger as he maneuvered the Humvee under extremely dangerous conditions, ferrying Hawaii County firefighter across the flood waters to allow safe rescue of the stranded family.

Speaking at the ceremony, Governor Ige impressed upon those in attendance, the gravity of the situation faced by Hawaii Island-based Lum Ho.

“The hip high water, the pouring rain, the rushed element of time, the number of first responders, your own security team, your own family, all were taken into consideration when you decided to use your Humvee to ferry the firefighters across swiftly moving water,” the governor said, highlighting the weight of the decisions made by Lum Ho. “You displayed self-sacrifice and indisputably contributed to the alleviation of public tragedy.”

Finally, before presenting the Medal of Valor to Lum Ho, Governor Ige concluded, “You epitomize the Citizen Soldier and are a shining example of what Valor is.”

Although overwhelmed and greatly appreciative of this honor, Lum Ho believes the credit is best placed elsewhere.

“I think the leadership training we get in the National Guard prepares us for the situation where we need to make on the spot decisions,” Lum Ho said. More importantly, he attributes the successful rescue to those by his side that night, and the other members of Task Force Hawaii.

“Like the general and the Governor said, this is a team effort,” said Lum Ho during his speech. “From my co-driver who helped me navigate through the debris, to the mechanics that actually got my Humvee ready every night and kept it safe for me, without those guys, none of this would be possible.”

Ultimately, Staff Sgt. Lum Ho graciously accepted the Medal of Valor, but was sure to emphasize that he was doing so on behalf of the Soldiers and Airmen of Task Force Hawaii, as well as his comrades in Bravo Company.

Hawaii State Department of Defense

Warrior: Continued

“It’s about being in an uncomfortable position to grow as an NCO,” said Naples. “I’m here to make an impact for the junior enlisted.”

For Tran, the competition is about becoming a better Soldier.

“This competition strengthened my confidence in warrior tasks,” said Tran. “It was a test of skills.” Ultimately though, Tran’s fondest memory of this competition is meeting and competing with other Hawaii Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers.

Napoles and Tran now move on to the Army National Guard regional level competition which will be held May 20-24, 2019 in Hawthorne, Nevada. If victorious in Nevada, they move on to participate in the national competition.
More than 120 Airmen and Soldiers from the Hawaii National Guard applied their life-saving skills during a mass-casualty, evaluation exercise March 9, at Kalaeloa.

The training entailed a series of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosive scenarios under the observance of federal evaluators, who validates the response mission every three years. Upon completion, members of the National Guard Bureau Joint Interagency Training and Education Center presented the validation to the Hawaii National Guard Adjutant General.

In the event of a domestic crisis, the joint forces can be activated and combined at a moment’s notice to support civilian authorities as an enhanced-response-force-package team, also known as CERFP.

According to, Lt. Col. James Faumuina, 154th Medical Group’s Detachment 1 commander, teamwork is paramount in every step of the way.

“My focus is all about establishing the team concept before anything else,” said Faumuina. “In CERFP, we have doctors, nurses, EMTs, pharmacists, rescue/triage operators and [logistics specialists]. But all those titles go away when we respond, because we have to work together absolutely seamlessly. We don’t necessarily see ourselves as units or ranks – we are first and forefront a team.”

As part of the exercise, the CERFP first responders were alerted of a staged nuclear scenario before daybreak, followed by a rapid mobilization to the incident scene. Soldiers and Airmen donned hazmat suits to monitor contaminated areas while a near-hundred others set up their work stations. Within the hour, the flat and empty training grounds transformed into a bustling recovery center.

Members of the Hawaii Air National Guard primarily focused on CBRNE and rescue medicine, expeditionary communications and mass field mortuary operations, while their soldier counterparts largely provided search-and-extraction and decontamination support.

Exercise planners carefully designed the training to be as lifelike as possible to gauge how adequate and appropriate operators responded. At the far end of the decontamination zone, a crowd of voices could be heard screaming in agonizing pain. Volunteers with simulated injuries, such as graphic skin burns and missing limbs, were scattered throughout the contaminated area and crying for help.

An All-Hazards-Triage-Response team was dispatched, protected by gas masks and hazmat suits, to measure the initial impact. The niche of the HTR teams is to conduct mass-casualty triage in all domains of CBRNE, each operator is trained to the civilian certification of hazmat operator. The HTR specialists face the unique challenge of quickly assessing the medical status of each injured victim to maximize care with CERFP’s finite resources.

“The amount of trauma and unknowns can be overwhelming when you arrive on scene,” said Capt. Jeremy Wong, Det. 1 HTR Team chief. “People are dealing
with a lot of pain. They can be missing their babies, their limbs or their lives can be in danger. We have to practice under all these variables. When it happens for real, the emotions are going to be even higher. We have to overcome these heavy emotions, so we can focus on the medical and get them to where they need to be safely.”

Waves of triaged victims were processed through a decontamination zone at non-stop rate, to include a flow of patients who needed to be carried in. Patients were treated for their individual injuries by a trauma and treatment team, comprised of doctors, nurses and physicians in a mobile-emergency room.

As front line operators are exposed to high-risk environments, their vitals were continuously being monitored by a Medical Countermeasures team. The team is comprised of bioenvironmental engineers, a task force surgeon and a clinical nurse. Together, they ensure personnel can maximize their relief efforts while avoiding internal risks associated with an exposure to CBRNE.

According to Faumuina, training is the lifeblood for members of CERFP. In comparison to most drill status Airmen, who maintain full-time jobs outside of the military, members of Detachment 1 spend an average of one month of additional on-the-job training on top of their annual training. Another added aspect is the high number of drill status airmen who work in their civilian employment as either first responders or emergency rooms.

Hawaii’s CERFP operates within the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Region 9, referred to as the RIX, and is partnered with other guard units in California and Nevada. Their area of responsibility includes Guam, America Samoa, Hawaii, Arizona, Nevada and California.

Members of RIX are constantly intertwined with one another’s training to learn from one another and discover how to best operate together. This was the case for Capt. Chance Pasley, 144th Fighter Wing medical plans officer from California Air National Guard, who observed the evaluation exercise.

“This is a great opportunity to come out, observe, and apply what I’ve learned to my own unit in California, so we can share the best practices and continue to evolve,” said Pasley. “We also had team from Hawaii come out and see how we were activated during the 2019 California fire activation. They could see exactly what we were doing on ground and how we were incorporated with the civilian response.”

Over the past year, Hawaii’s CERFP supported civilian agencies in several real-world hazards. The unit mobilized and reacted to mudslides, floods and hurricanes. During the Big Island’s volcanic outbreak, 75 percent were directly tasked to support operations with more than half of its members deployed in rotations that lasted four months. Faumuina said every response involved extensive amounts teamwork and coordination between the joint services and civilian responders. In contrast to most military units, CERFP relies on its close ties in with civilian community to serve the local populace.

“Det. 1 Hawaii is poised in the middle of the pacific, where we train to respond quickly with a team made up of professional responders. “Some of our Airmen are already in the local fire department, police and EMS departments,” said Faumuina. “It makes it easy to just sync right in. There’s a credibility that we worry less about catching up to the civilian standards, because we come trained, equipped and interoperable with our civilian response partners. We have a small, close knit community in Hawaii, but at the same time, it’s also like we’re one big, extended family always find ways to provide kokua.”

Team Hickam ushered in a new era of air defense during a groundbreaking ceremony for the new F-22 Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) Facility on Feb 14, 2019 at Joint Base Pearl-Harbor Hickam, Hawaii.

Representatives from Pacific Air Forces, 154th Wing and 15th Wing, Air Force Civil Engineer Center, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers gathered for a traditional Hawaiian blessing performed by Kahu Kelekona Bishaw. Included were seven groundbreaking o’o sticks used in traditional Hawaiian ceremonies.

“The milo wood bowl and the o’o sticks keeps us connected to the aina (land),” said Bishaw. “In old Hawaii, the o’o stick was the multi-purpose tool for farmers. It was used to dig, harvest and to protect.”

The current building was built in 1958 and it will be torn down once the new facility comes online. The new facility will continue to support the ACA mission which is carried out by pilots, maintainers, and weapons crews. They are on call 24/7, ready to respond at a moment’s notice against air threats to the Hawaiian Islands.

“The new alert shack has been a long time coming,” said Brig. Gen. Gregory S. Woodrow, Commander, 154th Wing. “The old alert shack hasn’t been updated much from 1958. We owe it to our service members to build something worthy for the mission Team Hickam is going to perform.”

Team Hickam consists of Hawaii Air National Guard units that are ready to respond to the challenges of the 21st Century, which comes with a new mission: the National Guard is responsible for preparing the nation’s combat aircraft to defend and protect our nation’s airspace.
The Hawaii Air National Guard's top-performing Airmen and units were cheered on by a roaring audience on February 10, 2019, during the 2018 Launa'ole Award ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Dignitaries, family members and friends packed into the Hickam Officer's Club to show support for the nominees and congratulate the winners for their exceptional achievements over the past year.

During the opening remarks, Brig. Gen. Gregory S. Woodrow, 154th Wing commander, shared his appreciation for the accomplishments of the nominees and the wing-at-large. He also introduced the audience to the perpetual Kaleo Nui Award, which is presented to the unit which demonstrates the most spirit at the event. Kaleo Nui means “the loud voice”.

While the ceremony has been held annually for the past 43 years, it was officially renamed to Launa'ole in 2001, meaning “beyond comparison” or “without peer.”

Prior to the announcements of the award winners, David Ige, Hawaii State Governor, stepped onto stage to express his gratitude as their commander and chief.

“I cannot tell you how proud you all make me feel every single day,” said Ige, “for all that you have done for our state and our country. This is one of the best events that I get to attend and I am really honored and privileged just to be here.”

The awards were presented to the following:

**Airman of the Year:**
1. Fulltime; Senior Airman Reid Suzuki, 154th Comptroller Flight
2. Traditional; Airman 1st Class Noel Tadeo, 169th Air Defense Squadron

**NCO of the Year:**
3. Fulltime; Tech. Sgt. Michael Guzman, 201st Combat Operations Squadron
4. Traditional; Staff Sgt. Tara Macion, 201st Intel Squadron

**Senior NCO of the Year**
5. Fulltime; Senior Master Sgt. Alfred Brunn, 154th Communications Squadron
6. Traditional; Master Sgt. Jake Ross, 154th Communications Squadron

**First Sergeant of the Year:**
7. Master Sgt. John Kim 201st Air Operations Group

**Company grade officer of Year:**
8. Fulltime; 1st Lt. Sy Cullen 169th Air Defense Squadron
9. Traditional; Maj. Blythjeanne Itoman, 204th Airlift Squadron

**Winning team Award:**
297th Air Traffic Control Squadron

**Service Team Award:**
154th Maintenance Operations Flight

**Outstanding Unit Wward:**
154th Communications Squadron

**Kaleo Nui Award:**
154th Medical Group

Winning team Award:
297th Air Traffic Control Squadron

Service Team Award:
154th Maintenance Operations Flight

Outstanding Unit Wward:
154th Communications Squadron

Kaleo Nui Award:
154th Medical Group
Take care of your relationships so that you can take care of the mission.

That was the underlying theme of a weekend retreat held March 22-24, where 25 Hawaii Air National Guard [HIANG] married couples gathered at a Waikiki hotel for a weekend of learning, bonding, and re-energizing.

The weekend workshop was part of the Strong Bonds initiative, a National Guard funded, Chaplain-led program whose core mission of increasing readiness through relationship education has been helping service members develop important relationship skills for close to two decades.

HIANG Chaplains, chaplain assistants and a cadre of volunteers led the couples through exercises, mentoring sessions, and hands-on activities - all with the singular goal of imparting relationship enhancing skills.

“Strong Bonds is important to the mission because what we’re teaching couples and the airmen is to build resiliency…to build skills, and to have better, healthy marriages,” said Lt. Col. Leah Boling, Chaplain, 154th Wing. “If our airmen and our families are healthy and they’re happy, they’ll be fit to fight.”

While a wide range of ranks were represented, so to was the range of years that couples had been married. One couple had been married close to 40 years while another had just recently tied the knot.

Senior Airman Benjamin Suiso, 154th Medical Group medic and his wife Pomaika’i, were wed just a month prior and have a nine-month old baby together. They took the time to recharge their batteries.

“This is the first time in a while that we’ve had quality time together as a couple,” Suiso said. “We’ve been together for a while, but we still learned a lot about each other and how we can communicate better.”

HIANG Strong Bonds events are held two to three times per year. This iteration involved married couples; other events can focus on the family or single airmen.

Per Boling, the Strong Bonds of today began as a relationship enhancing program at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. With high deployment tempos, officials there saw the need for a formal program to help deploying troops and their families increase their relationship resiliency. The program was accepted Army wide and has since been adopted by both the Army and Air National Guard.

“To spend one weekend from Friday evening to Sunday noon with the couples and they open-up their lives to you, that’s just a joy to me and a blessing,” Boling said.

The HIANG’s first Strong Bonds event was held in 2005.
Employee of the Year
1- DeAnn Ferreira, Cemetery Operations Assistant, Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery;

Manager of the Year
2- Mr. Dennis Agbisit.

Team of the Year Award
3 - Environmental Office
The members of this team are Ryan Auyong, Kristine Barker, Kevin Boehning, Craig Blaisdell, Wendy Broxson; Ian Cevallos; Leslie Chau; Pamela Divine; Wendell Hatami; Charles Huihui; Alexa Jacroux-Biggs; Arthur Javier; Yam Yi Lee; Karl Motoyama; Lynne Nakamoto; Clint Soares; Mario Tabaquin.
Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 487th Field Artillery Regiment, hold a deployment ceremony at the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Readiness Center on March 17, 2019. This will be the unit's third deployment.

Major General Arthur J. Logan gives remarks during a deployment ceremony at the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Readiness Center in Kalaeloa, HI on March 17, 2019.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 487th Field Artillery Regiment, hold a deployment ceremony at the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Readiness Center in Kalaeloa, HI on March 17, 2019. This will be the unit's third deployment.
In Egypt, Gen. Lengyel finds National Guard troops supporting key U.S. partner

Men and women who have been to war stand watch here in the hope others won’t have to.

Some members of the Multinational Force and Observers – including some of the Hawaii National Guard troops currently contributing to the mission – have served in war zones.

But the MFO mission is about avoiding conflict, by supporting a peace that has held for more than 40 years, since Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin signed the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1979.

“You are filling a vital role,” Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau, told troops with the 1st Squadron, 299th Cavalry Regiment, Hawaii National Guard, during a visit to the region this week. “The National Guard stands ready to support the MFO whenever we are needed; We love the mission, and our troops are highly motivated to deploy to exciting and important missions.”

Since 1981, the MFO has observed, verified and reported potential violations of the Egyptian–Israeli Treaty of Peace and facilitated military dialog between the signatories to build trust, enhance transparency and ensure an enduring peace. An international force, it is currently led by Australian army Maj. Gen. Simon Stuart. A dozen nations provide the troops and money to sustain the MFO.

The mission is conducted in the challenging, dynamic environment of Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula – a mountainous, thinly populated desert about the size of West Virginia, with Israel and the Gaza Strip on its eastern border.

The Hawaii National Guard is currently the MFO’s largest single force provider. Over the years, the Guard has frequently provided troops. More than 500 troops have come to the MFO from National Guard State Partnership Program nations.

“That so many of our SPP partners have transitioned from being security consumers to security providers shows how the SPP builds partner capacity,” Lengyel said. “Our partnership activities provide the Defense Department with a highly cost-effective means of strengthening alliances and attracting new partners.”

The SPP joins the National Guard in the states or territories with foreign countries for cooperative security training. More than one-third of the world’s nations – 83 of them – now have such partnerships.

During his visit, Lengyel met with Egyptian military leaders, including Maj. Gen. Mohammed Abbas Helmy, Egyptian Air Force commander.

“Our enduring strategic defense relationship with Egypt is one of our nation’s most valued partnerships,” Lengyel said.

Topics discussed with Egyptian leaders included border security, a challenge shared by both countries and a mission that both the Egyptian military and the National Guard have boots-on-the-ground and eyes-in-the-sky experience.

Throughout his visit, Lengyel saw the National Guard woven into the fabric of Joint Force overseas operations in obvious ways – like the several hundred Hawaii troops assigned to the MFO – and in more subtle ways.

Army Maj. Gen. Ralph Groover is the United States’ senior defense official assigned to Egypt, based at the embassy in Cairo. He leads a team of officers and noncommissioned officers representing each of the services who supervise the details of the longstanding military relationship between the USA and Egypt.

Groover’s background? He’s a deployed member of the Florida National Guard.

“It never ceases to amaze me how much contribution Guard members are making in every kind of partnership at every level, whether local, state, federal or – as in this case – international,” Lengyel said. “Guard members should take great pride in the roles we fill at home and around the world.”

Lengyel’s wife, Sally, met with troops to discuss family readiness and spouse support.

“Our service members can’t do what they do without the support of their families, communities and employers,” Sally Lengyel said. “We must ensure we are, in turn, supporting families, especially when their loved ones are deployed.”

How the pre-mobilization process can be improved to better prepare family members, and access to medical services, were among topics Sally Lengyel discussed with troops.

About a dozen troops also took part in a re-enlistment ceremony led by Gen. Lengyel.

“You are hard to find and hard to keep, and your service is deeply appreciated by our nation,” Lengyel said.

Egypt – one of the birthplaces of civilization and now home to 97 million people with a median age of 24.7 – holds...
Lengyel: Continued

a special place in Lengyel’s heart: He counts his time as the United States’ senior defense official in the country as one of his favorite non-flying assignments.

“It was invaluable in increasing my understanding of complex geopolitical issues and the practical realities on the ground,” he said. “It’s one of the reasons I strongly encourage diversity of assignments, to strengthen and broaden our emerging leaders.”

Examples of such assignments available in the National Guard include serving as bilateral affairs officers in State Partnership Program nations.

“Building partnerships is one of the National Guard’s most important missions and directly supports our nation’s National Defense Strategy,” Lengyel said. “Trust cannot be surged in time of crisis – every day, at every level, we must build confidence and reliance with all our partners.”

Lengyel is the 28th Chief of the National Guard Bureau and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He ensures the 453,000 Army and Air National Guard Soldiers and Airman are accessible, capable and ready to protect the homeland and to provide combat forces to the Army and the Air Force.

“We are an operational reserve of the world’s best fighting force,” Lengyel said. “The National Guard is an essential part of our Total Force, providing ready forces and strategic depth.”

Public Affairs Awards

The Hawaii Army National Guard Public Affairs won some 2018 Army Media Contest Awards

1st Place- Operational Videography: CPL Aven Santiago (Above)
1st Place- Training Videography: CPL Aven Santiago (Above)

The Hawaii Air National Guard Public Affairs Team won four 2018 National Guard Bureau Public Affairs Media

1st Place- Communicator of the Year: TSgt Andrew Jackson (Above)

1st Place- Information Story: SrA John Linzmeier (Above, no mask)
2nd Place- Military Writer of the Year: SrA John Linzmeier
2nd Place- Feature Story: SrA John Linzmeier
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