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New York Air National Guard

Two promoted at New York Air National Guard

Rome Sentinel, May 21, 2025 :

LATHAM — A pair of local airmen have received promotions with the New York Air National Guard, according to an announcement by Air Force Major Gen. Michael Bank, commander of the New York Air National Guard, in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership.

Tyler Kulesa, of Holland Patent, assigned to the Eastern Air Defense Sector, promoted to technical sergeant; and

Mostafa Salim, of Rome, assigned to the 174th Attack Wing, also promoted to technical sergeant.

Air National Guard promotions are based on an airman's overall performance, demonstrated leadership abilities, professionalism and future development potential.

"The New York Air National Guard is built on a foundation of talented and motivated airmen, and this month's promotions are a shining example of that excellence," Bank said. "I am honored to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our Airmen, and I look forward to seeing their continued growth and contributions to our organization."

For more information about the New York Air National Guard or to contact a recruiter, go online to <https://dmna.ny.gov/ang/>.

https://www.romesentinel.com/entertainment-life/notices/advancements/two-promoted-at-new-york-air-national-guard/article_ddab0880-64e2-43e6-a0c2-8e21dedbabcd.html

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Thunderbirds to headline FourLeaf Air Show at Jones Beach Long Island Press, May 19, 2025 :

Long Island Press, May 19, 2025 ::

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds will return to Long Island this Memorial Day weekend to headline the newly rebranded FourLeaf Air Show at Jones Beach, one of the country's largest and most anticipated military air shows.

The 2025 show runs Saturday, May 24, and Sunday, May 25, and marks the elite demonstration squadron's 10th appearance as headliners.

Bethpage Federal Credit Union has been the title sponsor of our local air show since its inception in 2004, building on its history as the credit union founded by employees of Grumman Aerospace, who built many of the aircraft flown in the show over the years. Bethpage recently rebranded to become FourLeaf Federal Credit Union, making this year's show the FourLeaf Air Show at Jones Beach.

"We are proud to continue to support and help produce this extraordinary show as the FourLeaf Air Show at Jones Beach," said Linda Armyn, president and CEO of FourLeaf Federal Credit Union. "Aviation has always been the foundation of FourLeaf and Long Island and we look forward to honoring that Memorial Day weekend. Our thanks to NYS Parks and all the organizations that make this a spectacular show for Long Island to enjoy each year."

Additional military performers for the 2025 show include: the United States Army Golden Knights Parachute Team, the United States Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II, the United States Navy F-35C Demo Team, the United State Navy Rhino Demo Team, the United States Navy EA-18G Growler Demo Team, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the 106th Rescue Wing NY Air National Guard; and the 105th Airlift Wing unit of the New York Air National Guard.

Civilian teams set to perform include the American Airpower Museum Warbirds, the current reigning Air Masters Cup Series champion and current Sky Grand Prix Champion Aarron Deliu, Warbird Thunder featuring the North American SNJ Texan, a former WWII Navy Advanced Training Aircraft, the Farmingdale State College Flying Rams, and Long Island's own David Windmiller.

“We are thrilled to welcome the United States Air Force Thunderbirds as this year’s headliners and look forward to an amazing show by all our performers,” said George Gorman, regional director of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation. “Every year, more and more people come to our show, which has over the past 20 years become one of the most well-respected and well-attended air shows in the country. It has become a great tradition for Long Island to honor our military and veterans and kick off the summer at Jones Beach.”

This year’s show will be the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds’ 10th appearance as headliners. Last year, more than 459,000 people attended the 20th Anniversary Show over the three days, making it the most highly attended air show to date.

Returning for the 2025 show is the FourLeaf Air Show Mobile App. Fans can text ‘Airshow’ to 516-842-4400 to download the app for performer and sponsor information, a site map, helpful FAQs to help prepare you for the show and more to come. The mobile app is available on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

The FourLeaf Air Show at Jones Beach is sponsored by FourLeaf Federal Credit Union; New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Natural Heritage Trust; The Foundation for Long Island State Parks; Newsday; WABC-TV Channel 7; Connoisseur Media Long Island; News 12 Long Island; Catholic Health; PSEG Long Island; Optimum; Pinelawn Memorial Park and Arboretum; the New York Islanders; and Jones Beach Brewery. The show can be heard in its entirety on WHLI 1100 a.m. and 104.7 FM.

The FourLeaf Air Show is free to the public, but the standard \$10 vehicle use fee will be collected each day upon entry to the State Park. For 2025 NYS Empire Pass Cardholders, there is no vehicle use fee charge.

For up-to-date information about this year’s show, visit www.fourleafairshow.com or on Facebook and Instagram @FourLeafAirShow or contact the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Regional Office, Recreation Department at 631-321-3510.

<https://www.longislandpress.com/2025/05/19/thunderbirds-air-show-2025/>

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New York Army National Guard

The Army takes steps so its 250th birthday parade won’t destroy DC streets

Task and Purpose, May 17, 2025 ::

Note: this item is being provided for your information. NYARNG Soldiers will take part in the parade.

Previous attempts at a military parade in the nation's capital have been met with concern that heavy Abrams tanks would tear up Washington, D.C.'s roads.

The U.S. Army plans to line Washington, D.C. streets with metal sheets to prevent tanks and other vehicles from damaging the roads during its parade next month.

The Associated Press, citing a U.S. official, reports that the Army will install several heavy metal plates at specific points in Washington, D.C. to avoid tearing up the pavement. As it currently stands, the Army is expected to field 25 M1 Abrams tanks as part of the wider parade, which will honor the Army's involvement in every American conflict. Given that each tank can weigh 60 tons and its treads rely on heavy traction against the ground to move them along, concerns about how they could damage widely used roads have been ongoing, even before plans for this specific event were made.

The Army will hold its 250th birthday parade on June 14, with thousands of troops, 150 vehicles including the tanks and 50 aircraft involved. The current plan, according to permits and public statements by defense officials, calls for troops and vehicles to start at the Pentagon, cross the Potomac River at the Memorial Bridge, and continue down Constitution Avenue on the edge of the National Mall. The route ends at 15th Street.

Each metal plate is said to weigh several hundred pounds itself and will be placed along the parade route where armor pieces will be making turns. Per the route, those would likely be concentrated near the Lincoln Memorial, which the parade will pass by before turning onto Constitution Avenue. These are the spots where the tanks' treads would otherwise cause the most damage to pavement.

During President Donald Trump's first term he repeatedly attempted to have a military parade through Washington, D.C., including on the 4th of July in 2018. Those plans were postponed and eventually canceled, but local officials in Washington, D.C. and some defense officials repeatedly expressed concern over potential damage to city infrastructure by tanks. The City Council had previously said that it would bill the federal government over any harm to the roads. This spring, as plans for the 250th Army birthday parade were coming together, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser issued a similar statement, although did not outright oppose the event.

"If military tanks were used, they should be accompanied with many millions of dollars to repair the roads," Bowser said in April.

The parade is expected to cost between \$30 million-\$45 million, however that does not include costs such as road repair or trash collection, according to Reuters.

The vehicles themselves, as is often the case when armor is transported, will be brought to the District of Columbia area by rail, and then moved into place via truck. Other vehicles set to be in the parade include Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles and Strykers, according to plans obtained by the Associated Press.

The weight of American tanks and armored personnel carriers has been an issue for infrastructure in recent conflicts. During the invasion of Iraq in 2003, American armor and vehicles allowed U.S. forces to quickly sweep through the country, but soon left many of the streets and roads in Baghdad torn up or crushed. Although tanks were not heavily deployed in the early years of the war in Afghanistan, they began to encounter similar problems to property and roads when they arrived around 2010.

Roughly 7,000 troops will participate in the parade. Some will be dressed in era-specific Army uniforms from conflicts such as the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, while most will wear modern uniforms. Current plans call for housing the soldiers in the Department of Agriculture building and a government warehouse inside Washington, D.C.

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/army-tanks-dc-streets-parade/>

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Duty Calls: 10 Army National Guard soldiers receive Purple Hearts

Times Union, May 19, 2025 ::

Ten New York Army National Guard soldiers who were wounded during an Iranian-backed militia attack on their base in Jordan have received a Purple Heart.

Lt. Col. Darren Ketchem, commander of the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, presented the medals as Maj. Gen. Raymond Shield, state adjutant general, participated in the ceremony last Tuesday at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, 374 Temple Hill Road, New Windsor, Orange County.

Ketchem praised the soldiers for their brave actions during the Jan. 28, 2024 attack.

“This decoration is not sought, and it is not given lightly,” Ketchem said during the ceremony. “It is earned through courage in the face of danger. Today we are recognizing those who stood firm when faced with the harshest realities of combat.

The soldiers endured injury from hostile actions resulting from the enemy attack at Tower 22 and continued the highest standards of duty, courage, and resilience.”

“I am honored to have received the medal, but it’s an award we never wanted to get,” said Sgt. Ryan Kissoon of Richmond Hill, after he received his medal.

The other Purple Heart recipients are Staff Sgt. Daice Barrientos, Zebulon, N.C.; Sgt. Anthony Gist, Floral Park; Sgt. Guillermo Renderos, Yonkers; Sgt. Jarvis Ho So, Brooklyn; Spc. Christian Tiburcio, Manhattan; Spc. Matthew Crespo, Brooklyn; Spc. Domingo Perez, Brooklyn; Spc. Junior Clarke, Brooklyn, and Spc. Michael Branch, Brooklyn.

The Purple Heart Hall of Honor, now a state park site, is located on Gen. George Washington’s New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site. The hall was created to preserve the stories of more than 1.2 million Purple Heart recipients from the Civil War through to the present.

The cantonment site is where the Medal of Merit was created and awarded. Washington had 7,500 Continental Army soldiers encamped there in 1782 and ready to deal with British forces in New York City before a treaty was finally signed. That treaty marked the end of the eight-year War of Independence.

The Charlie Company, 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion soldiers were wounded during the attack on Tower 22, a U.S. logistical base in Jordan that is used to support efforts to contain ISIS activities in Syria.

Three U.S. Army Reserve soldiers were killed, and 50 others were wounded when a drone flown by an Iranian-backed militia group hit Tower 22, a base on the Jordanian border with Syria, which had been operating since 2014, according to Lt. Col. Jean Marie Kratzer, a New York Army National Guard spokeswoman.

Approximately 350 personnel were assigned to the base, including 14 New York Army National Guard soldiers assigned to C Company of the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, which is based in Yonkers and Orangeburg, said Capt. Paul Kramarz, Charlie Company commander.

The battalion, which specializes in theater-wide satellite communications, was assigned to Task Force Spartan operating in the Middle East. A platoon from the battalion’s Charlie Company was assigned to Tower 22 to provide communications support.

The drone hit a section of the base where soldiers lived. The New York soldiers suffered concussions and other injuries because of the blast, according to Kratzer.

Despite their wounds, Charlie Company soldiers, who could, worked together to restore communications from the outpost to the outside world as quickly as possible.

The combat lifesavers in the unit grabbed their aid kits and went to help treat other wounded soldiers, despite their own wounds. Other New York National Guard soldiers who were uninjured lined up to donate blood to save the lives of badly injured airmen and soldiers.

According to 1st Lt. Ian Gallagher, their platoon leader, the Containerized Housing Unit of the New York National Guard soldiers was "crinkled like a soda can" as a result of the blast.

Gallagher said he is proud of his men, and proud they were honored with Purple Hearts.

"The Purple Heart is not an award to be celebrated," he said. "Rather the Purple Heart is a reminder of an event that we witnessed, a date that goes down in history written in blood, as a reminder to those who were killed that day, and to our brothers and sisters, military, civilian, and allied forces who suffered that day alongside with us. It is a reminder, to me, of the bravery and sacrifice that my team of incredible soldiers displayed that day and throughout our deployment to Tower 22."

Purple Heart history

The Purple Heart was originally conceived back in 1782 while the Continental Army was camped in New Windsor watching the British Army in New York City.

Washington wanted to recognize enlisted soldiers, so he devised a Badge of Military Merit, which was a purple heart — representing courage — that was to be sewn onto a soldier's uniform above the left breast.

As far as historians know, only three were awarded before the British pulled out of New York and the Continental Army went home in 1783.

In 1927, the Army investigated reviving George Washington's purple heart medal. But the proposal went nowhere until Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who commanded 42nd Division, picked up the idea in 1931. MacArthur wanted a medal with the bust of George Washington on it and he wanted it to be unveiled in 1932, the 200th anniversary of Washington's birth.

It was to be awarded for military merit, to people who had been recognized for their service during the Great War. It could also be given to former soldiers who had been awarded a chevron for wounds or to any future soldiers wounded in action.

As time went by the medal began to be associated with being wounded and regulation changes reflected that.

Originally, the award was only for Army soldiers, but in December 1942 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued an executive order making it for Marines, sailors,

and Coast Guardsmen, as well and making it clear the award was for wounds suffered in action.

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor is a state museum under the jurisdiction of the New York-New Jersey Palisades Interstate Park Commission and honors those military personnel who made sacrifices for our nation as they were wounded or killed in action.

Hall visitors can journey through basic and other training, conflicts, wars, medical care, and recovery while walking through the museum. Visitors can journey through interactive videos, exhibits and artifacts as well as a database via computers where Purple Heart recipients from the Civil War through the present tell their stories of how they earned the medal.

The National Purple Heart of Honor is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and from 1 to 5 p.m. Sundays. For information, call 845-561-1765.

News of your troops and units can be sent to Times Union, Duty Calls, Terry Brown, Box 15000, Albany, NY 12212 or brownt@timesunion.com.

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/duty-calls-10-army-national-guard-soldiers-20332759.php>

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Ten Soldiers Awarded Purple Heart for Drone Attack in Jordan

SOFREP, May 20,2025:

On May 10, 2025, ten soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion were awarded the Purple Heart at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor, New York. These honors were bestowed in recognition of injuries sustained during a drone attack on January 28, 2024, at Tower 22, a U.S. military outpost in Jordan.

The Mission at Tower 22

Tower 22 isn't the sort of place that shows up on a tourist brochure. Perched in the far northeastern corner of Jordan, it sits quietly but tensely near the intersection of three volatile nations—Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. The base is about six miles from the Iraqi border and nestled in the Rukban region, a harsh stretch of desert that's more known for its strategic headaches than scenic vistas. You'd need to squint hard at a satellite map to find it, but make no mistake—Tower 22 is a nerve center in the ongoing shadow war in the Middle East.

So, what's Uncle Sam doing out there in the sandblasted backlands? For starters, Tower 22 was born out of necessity—part of the larger U.S.-led campaign to grind the Islamic State into dust. Since ISIS kicked off its brutal caliphate dreams in 2014, Tower 22 has played a supporting role in keeping those dreams dead. It's a linchpin for U.S. special operations and coalition efforts just across the border in Syria, where the fight against terror isn't so much over as it is evolving.

One of its main jobs is backing up the Al-Tanf garrison—a lonely U.S. outpost just 15 to 20 clicks north in Syria. Al-Tanf is like a splinter in Iran's side, planted along a key highway connecting Tehran to Damascus. That highway doubles as a smuggling route for weapons heading to Hezbollah and other Iranian proxy goons. Tower 22 provides Al-Tanf with logistical and air support, making sure supplies, reinforcements, and eyeballs in the sky keep flowing.

But it's not all about Syria. Tower 22 also helps bolster Jordan's border security. The U.S. has spent the better part of a decade beefing up Jordan's defenses to keep militants from slipping across the Syrian and Iraqi borders. Our troops help watch the wire, provide training, and keep the region's chaos from spilling into one of our most reliable Middle Eastern allies. The Jordanians may not openly broadcast that they're hosting us, but make no mistake—they value the stability our presence brings.

Roughly 350 American personnel call Tower 22 home, including both Army and Air Force units. They're not there kicking in doors or hunting insurgents in the night—they're engineers, logistics crews, aviation teams, and security forces. Think of them as the scaffolding that holds the whole regional mission together. Without their work, outposts like Al-Tanf would be left twisting in the wind.

Zoom out, and you'll see Tower 22 for what it really is: a vital cog in America's broader Middle Eastern machinery. Jordan hosts around 3,000 U.S. troops in total, quietly supporting operations that the public rarely hears about. These aren't headline-grabbing deployments, but they matter. They're the unseen backbone of missions that keep terror cells from reconstituting and push back against the ambitions of Iranian proxy networks.

In plain terms, Tower 22 exists because the job isn't done. ISIS might not control territory anymore, but their fighters are still lurking, and Iran's shadow war isn't taking any days off. Tower 22 keeps the lights on, the fuel flowing, and the good guys in the fight. It's quiet, it's dangerous, and it's about as far from comfortable as you can get—but it's necessary. And for the troops stationed there, every sunrise is a reminder that stability in the region doesn't come easy. It's earned, one watch shift at a time.

The Attack Unfolds

On the cold desert morning of January 28, 2024, hell arrived slow and low over the sand. Tower 22 was caught flat-footed. A drone packed with explosives, flown in by

the Islamic Resistance in Iraq (an Iranian-backed Shia militia with a grudge and some GPS know-how), crept toward the base under the radar. It slipped in right as a U.S. reconnaissance drone was returning to base, making the perfect smokescreen for disaster.

In a twist of tragic irony, the base's air defense system had its automatic response features shut off to avoid shooting down our own drone. That left Tower 22 wide open. Despite warnings from both intel reports and militia chatter online about a potential strike, the base stayed on cruise control.

At about 5:30 a.m., while most of the 350 troops stationed there were still racked out in their bunks, the drone punched through the morning calm and slammed into a six-person housing unit. The explosion was devastating. Three Army National Guard soldiers—young men who didn't expect their last breath would come in that godforsaken corner of the world—were killed instantly. As many as 47 others were wounded, some reports putting the number of injured north of 100. It was the deadliest attack on U.S. forces in the region since the Gaza war reignited in October 2023.

The reaction from Washington came quickly. President Joe Biden called the attack “despicable” and promised swift retaliation. On February 2, the U.S. military answered with a barrage of airstrikes against Iranian proxy sites in Syria and Iraq. But while the bombs dropped and press releases flowed, the glaring holes in our defense setup at Tower 22 became impossible to ignore.

Investigations into the attack laid bare a laundry list of failures. The base was undermanned. Leadership was disorganized, and no one seemed to be holding the reins tight. Worse yet, Tower 22 didn't have kinetic defenses—no guns, no missiles, nothing to shoot a drone out of the sky. They were leaning on electronic warfare systems to jam or mislead incoming drones, but against a determined attacker flying low and quiet, it just wasn't enough.

This was more than just a lucky shot by some ragtag militia. It was part of a broader, coordinated campaign by Iranian-backed groups to bleed U.S. forces in the region. And with America backing Israel in its fight against Hamas, the gloves came off. Groups like the Islamic Resistance in Iraq saw an opportunity to strike while we were spread thin and distracted. They took it—and we paid for it.

The Tower 22 attack was a gut punch, a wake-up call wrapped in shrapnel. It showed how cheap tech and asymmetric tactics can punch through a U.S. outpost if the defenses aren't sharp, alert, and ready to go. It also proved that in modern warfare, the enemy doesn't need an air force—they just need a drone, some explosives, and an opening.

In the end, this wasn't just about one drone or one militia. It was about complacency, overstretch, and underestimation. Tower 22 was left exposed, and three American

lives were lost as a result. If there's any justice to be squeezed from the rubble, it's that the Pentagon is now reevaluating how we defend our forward operating bases, especially in places where the enemy is invisible until it's too late.

Honoring the Brave

The recent Purple Heart ceremony was attended by military leaders, including Lt. Col. Darren Ketchum, commander of the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, and Major General Raymond Shields, the adjutant general of New York. Lt. Col. Ketchum praised the soldiers for their courage and resilience, stating, "This decoration is not sought, and it's not given lightly. It is earned through courage in the face of danger."

Among the honored was Sgt. Guillermo Renderos of Yonkers, who reflected on the bond formed through shared adversity, recalling the words of Chaplain (Major) Chase Wilhelm: "We are all from different parts of the country, but we will forever be bonded by blood."

Aftermath and Accountability

The attack on Tower 22 highlighted vulnerabilities in base defense protocols. Subsequent investigations identified failures in command decisions, inadequate training, and deficiencies in defensive equipment. Disciplinary actions were taken against four officers, and measures have been implemented to enhance training and counter-drone readiness.

The U.S. responded to the attack with retaliatory strikes against Iranian-backed militia sites, aiming to deter further aggression and protect U.S. personnel in the region.

A Legacy of Valor

The recognized soldiers didn't ask for medals. They were doing their jobs in a quiet corner of the world most Americans will never hear about—until things go wrong. The Purple Hearts are a recognition of what they endured, but they also stand as a reminder that these missions come with real risk, even in places that rarely make the news.

Their sacrifice is part of a larger story—one of vigilance, commitment, and the hard truth that even support roles in today's military can become front lines in an instant.

<https://sofrep.com/army/ten-soldiers-awarded-purple-heart-for-drone-attack-in-jordan/>

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NY Maintainers Runner-ups for Best in Army Guard Medium Units in 2025

Army.mil, By Richard Goldenberg, New York National Guard, May 20, 2025 :

NEW YORK – The New York Army National Guard's 145th Maintenance Company has been named runner-up for the title of best medium sized Army Guard maintenance unit for 2025.

The company, which is based at the Manor Road Armory on Staten Island, was recognized by the Army's Chief of Ordnance during the Award for Maintenance Excellence virtual ceremony conducted online on May 6.

"I'm proud that the Soldiers of the 145th are receiving well-deserved recognition for their dedication," said New York Army National Guard Capt. Shaunita Allicock, the 145th Maintenance Company Commander. "Their passion and commitment to mission success are what earned this honor."

The Army Chief of Staff conducts the award program annually. The Army

Chief of Ordnance, the chief proponent for the Ordnance Branch, recognizes Army units for excellence in maintenance operations.

"Your selection reflects your position as leaders in maintenance excellence across the Army," said Col. Rob Montgomery, the Army's Chief of Ordnance, in his awardee selection announcement on April 29.

"The exceptional logistics programs within your organizations have demonstrably improved the Army's overall readiness," Montgomery wrote in his April 29 announcement.

Preparations for the unit award submission took six months, Allicock said.

The submission packet reviewed unit effectiveness in maintaining equipment, vehicles and weapons, ensuring Soldier maintenance and safety skills. The unit's standard operating procedures, known as SOPs, were also evaluated.

"From May to August 2024, platoons and sections across the unit collaborated to refine operations, update SOPs, and submit the final packet in August 2024," Allicock said.

The evaluation included both a packet submission and on-site evaluation April 17 from a team from the U.S. Army Ordnance School, based in Virginia.

“The on-site evaluation covered 18 distinct maintenance programs and lasted seven hours, from 0800 to 1500,” Allicock said.

“Sections leaders guided evaluators through detailed SOPs and physical walk-throughs of their maintenance areas throughout the armory, and examining paperwork, validating each area of responsibility,” she added.

The efforts to prepare a packet and host an evaluation team paid dividends for the Soldiers of the 145th, Allicock said.

“The Army Award for Maintenance Excellence offers our Soldiers tangible recognition for the countless hours they dedicate to maintenance operations,” she said. “It reinforces pride in their craftsmanship and motivates continued excellence.”

Feedback from the evaluation team gave insight to the company to improve for both their unit readiness and the 2026 competition, Allicock said.

“The submission and evaluation process gave us a clear opportunity to identify areas for improvement in maintenance operations and SOPs. It sharpened our readiness posture and helped us pinpoint actionable steps we can implement to compete even stronger next year,” she said.

The Soldiers appreciated the recognition by the Army’s Ordnance Center, Allicock said.

The company came in behind the 1244th Transportation Company, part of the Illinois Army National Guard.

The runner-up award is “meaningful recognition of the long hours and hard work they dedicate to supporting the unit’s maintenance mission,” she said.

The 145th Maintenance Company serves as part of the 369th Sustainment Brigade, based in Harlem.

The brigade provides mission command for a full range of sustainment operations, supporting deployed troops, managing materiel, and optimizing theater distribution of all types of supply.\

https://www.army.mil/article/285685/ny_maintainers_runner_ups_for_best_in_army_guard_medium_units_in_2025

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Cohoes resident promoted to colonel in New York Army National Guard takes command of Aviation Brigade

Glens Falls Post Star, May 21, 2025 :

LATHAM—Paul Bailie, a Cohoes resident, was promoted to colonel in the New York Army National Guard and took command of the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade during a May 17, 2025, ceremony at the U.S. Army flight facility in Latham.

Bailie replaced Col. Jason Lefton, a Niskayuna resident, who has commanded the brigade since 2021.

Lefton will continue to serve as the New York Army National Guard's state army aviation officer.

The 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade — with a strength of 1,050 Soldiers — includes the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion and the 642nd Aviation Support Battalion. It also provides administrative command for a medical evacuation helicopter company and a heavy-lift helicopter company.

Major General Jack James, the commander of the 42nd Infantry Division and a former commander of the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade, praised Bailie as a capable officer and leader.

"You've done all the tough jobs and consistently demonstrated excellence and success. Paul, you are more than ready and deserving of this huge promotion," James said. "Success as a colonel requires you to maintain the skills that got you here. Take care of soldiers, manage risks, accomplish the mission, and develop leaders."

In his remarks, Bailie said he was humbled to be leading the New York National Guard's aviation brigade.

"Nearly 20 years ago, I stood on this hangar floor for my first promotion. I never imagined that I'd be standing here today," Bailie said.

https://poststar.com/news/state-regional/article_02c58cd0-d1b6-4c92-9f8e-c935b824a6fa.html

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New York National Guard headquarters marks Memorial Day with short ceremony

Army.mil, May 22, 2025 :

LATHAM, New York —The Soldiers, Airmen and civilians of the New York National Guard's Latham. New York headquarters marked Memorial Day on Thursday, May 22, with a short ceremony.

Rainy weather resulted in the ceremony being held in the building's lobby instead of outside at the agency's fallen warrior memorial.

The ceremony recognized those who have given their life in battle, as well as New York National Guard members who passed away in the last year.

Major General Michael Natali, the assistant adjutant general Army, spoke about the importance of the day and New York's role in creating the holiday in the wake of the Civil War.

"As a nation which commemorates the sacrifices of those that have come before us, the traditions associated with Memorial Day observances are rooted in the days following the Civil War," Natali said.

"Nearly 53,000 New Yorkers died in the conflict which would decide the fate of our nation. New York led the Union in Soldiers and Sailors in uniform, and also in losses," he added.

The first Memorial Day was celebrated in Waterloo, New York, on April 5, 1866, when it was known as Decoration Day.

"The Decoration Day traditions would not only commemorate military sacrifice but also promote the healing of a divided nation," Natali said.

He also noted that this year marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

In that war as well, Natali said, more New Yorkers served than did people from any other state, and more New Yorkers died.

A total of 37,485 New Yorkers were killed in the Pacific and European Theaters, he told his audience.

The New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Division, which fought in the Pacific, buried 1,512 of its own during World War II, Natali said.

The 42nd Infantry Division, which is now a part of the New York National Guard, lost 655 Soldiers during its advance through Europe, Natali added.

During the ceremony New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Major Edwin Garriss read the names of 22 active and retired members of the New York Army and Air National Guard, and the New York Naval Militia, who died in the past year.

The New York National Guard is "a very small organization" , Natali said afterwards. "The loss of one of these people impacts us all."

"Remember them and all our fallen on this Memorial Day," Natali told his audience.

"Let us also keep in our thoughts the brave men and women of all our services and the families that continue to support them," he added.

Natali also took time during the ceremony to thank both the military and civilian personnel of New York National Guard headquarters for the work they do for the force.

"Our people—Our Soldiers, families, and civilian workforce are at the centerpiece of everything," Natali said.

"They—you—are the most important component enabling us to continue writing future chapters in our collective history," Natali said.

While Memorial Day originally started as a commemoration of the Civil War dead, the holiday's meaning has expanded to honor all those killed during America's conflicts.

Since 1971, the day has been officially commemorated on Monday following the last weekend in May.

Between the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and the end of combat operations in Afghanistan, 39 New York Army and Air National Guard Soldiers and Airmen -7 Airmen and 32 Soldiers- lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The most recent New York National Guard combat casualties occurred in 2018 when an HH-60 Pave Hawk rescue helicopter flown by the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing based at Westhampton Beach, New York, crashed in Iraq, killing four members of the wing.

In March 2024, Chief Warrant Officers 2 Casey Frankoski and John Grassia, New York Army National Guard helicopter pilots, were killed while supporting the Border Patrol in a helicopter crash in Texas.

https://www.army.mil/article/285751/new_york_national_guard_headquarters_marks_memorial_day_with_short_ceremony

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NY Army National Guard holds Memorial Day ceremony (video)

WTEN, May 22, 2025 :

LATHAM, N.Y. (NEWS10) — The New York Army National Guard held a ceremony on Thursday in honor of fallen members of the Army and Air National Guard. There was a reading of names, a moment of silence, and the playing of taps.

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“We are a very tight knit group, so to remember their sacrifices or their loss, it impacts all of us,” Maj. Gen. Michel Natali said. “Although we’re part of the greater military, we’re very small here in New York.”

Two New York Army National Guard members, Casey Frankoski and John Grassia III, who died in March 2024 in a helicopter crash on U.S./Mexico border, will be honored during the Albany Memorial Day Parade.

<https://www.news10.com/community/veterans-voices/ny-army-national-guard-holds-memorial-day-ceremony/>

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Ten New York soldiers receive Purple Heart for injuries in Tower 22 attack

Task and Purpose, May 19, 2025 ::

Three soldiers died and nearly 50 were wounded in the attack, many with traumatic brain injuries and concussions, when an Iranian drone destroyed a housing unit at the Jordan outpost.

Ten New York National Guard soldiers received Purple Hearts for injuries sustained in a 2024 Iranian-backed militia drone attack on a U.S. outpost known as Tower 22 in Jordan.

On Jan. 28, 2024, a drone struck the housing unit at Tower 22 as soldiers slept. The attack killed three Army Reserve soldiers and injured dozens of other service members, including the 10 New York guardsmen.

The Pentagon has released little information about the attack but the Purple Heart awards give some insight into the soldiers assigned to the base and the size and scope of the attack.

Some of the New York guardsmen suffered traumatic brain injuries and concussions, according to Eric Durr, a spokesperson for the New York National Guard.

According to an Army press release on the award, 14 New York soldiers were stationed at Tower 22 to maintain communications equipment for the base. In all, the Jordan outpost was manned by 350 service members who were focused on reconnaissance and special forces operations as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, the U.S. campaign against ISIS.

Company commander Capt. Paul Kramarz said his soldiers were part of a “hand-selected team” who “would operate at the far reaches of our area of responsibility.”

After the drone hit, NY National Guard platoon leader 1st Lt. Ian Gallagher said the housing unit looked “crinkled like a soda can.” Soldiers who came out of the attack unscathed lined up to donate blood for airmen and soldiers who were badly injured.

Army Maj. Gen. Joel “JB” Vowell, former commander of Operation Inherent Resolve, told Task & Purpose that one of the major lessons learned from the attack was the need for one-way drone defenses for smaller U.S. and partner nation military installations.

An Army report of the attack first reported by Business Insider found that the soldiers tasked with monitoring for potential drone attacks faced insufficient staffing, inadequate battle drills and confusion over leadership roles. They had also been focused on the recovery of a Scan Eagle drone and did not see the drone coming from the south. The report found the soldiers failed to pick up the drone because it was too far away, moved too slow or seemed like a bird or debris. The Pentagon originally said the attack injured nearly 40 service members but the Army report indicated that more than 100 were injured.

Purple Hearts from Tower 22

The ten guardsmen joined another reserve soldier and three airmen among service members assigned to Tower 22 who received Purple Hearts after the attack.

In October 2024, three airmen who were assigned to the 129th Rescue Wing received the Purple Heart for their injuries. The airmen had all lost consciousness after the drone hit. When they awoke, they began banging on the bedroom doors of fellow troops in case another attack was on the way. They ran to the bunker, extinguished fires that broke out, searched for fellow service members trapped in the rubble and helped to evacuate casualties. They were treated for their injuries and continued with their deployment until May 2024.

The Air Force did not explicitly say what injuries the three airmen suffered but Defense Department officials have described the majority of injuries from the attack as traumatic brain injuries and concussions.

Sgt. Aneska S. Holness was awarded the Purple Heart in December 2024 prior to leaving the military due to injuries from the attack. Holness, a wheeled vehicle mechanic for the Arizona National Guard, woke up buried under the rubble of her containerized housing unit and began pulling other soldiers out. She was medically evacuated to Germany and continued TBI treatment at Fort Bliss until her separation.

In October 2024, Army Reserve chaplain Maj. Chase Wilhelm was awarded four military honors "highlighting his service in Jordan." Wilhelm received the Bronze Star with Valor, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Four Chaplains' Medal.

The New York National Guard soldiers received their awards May 10 at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor, New York. The soldiers were originally scheduled to receive the awards in March, but were delayed by state mobilization orders, Durr said. In February, Gov. Kathy Hochul called in nearly 8,200 New York National Guard soldiers and airmen to fill in for correction officers at more than 40 prisons across the state who went on strike.

The ceremony was also delayed, Durr said, by the logistics of getting all 10 guardsmen together in one place at one time.

"I am honored to have received the medal, but it's never an award we wanted to get," Sgt. Ryan Kissoon told the Army in a release. "It's a sad relief we made it home that day, and others didn't."

The soldiers who received the award were:

Staff Sgt. David Barrientos, from Zebulon, North Carolina

Sgt. Anthony Gist, from Floral Park

Sgt. Ryan Kissoon, from Richmond Hill

Sgt. Guillermo Renderos, from Yonkers

Sgt. Jarvis Ho So, from Brooklyn

Spc. Christian Tiburcio, from Manhattan

Spc. Matthew Crespo, from Brooklyn

Spc. Domingo Perez, from Brooklyn

Spc. Junior Clarke, from Brooklyn

Spc. Michael Branch, from Brooklyn

The Purple Heart was originally created by George Washington in 1782 to honor military merit. In the 1930s, it was given to soldiers who served in World War I and then awarded to World War II troops who were wounded or killed during combat. These awards currently give retired or separated troops certain medical benefits at Veterans Administration hospitals, federal hiring preferences and access to the Forever GI Bill.

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/tower-22-ny-guard-purple-hearts/>

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<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/tower-22-ny-guard-purple-hearts/>

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10 soldiers receive Purple Heart for 2024 drone attack at Tower 22

Army Times, May 19, 2025 ::

The Army has awarded 10 New York Army National Guard soldiers the Purple Heart for injuries they sustained in a January 2024 drone attack while they were assigned to a U.S. military base in Jordan.

The soldiers were wounded during a Jan. 28, 2024 drone attack on Tower 22 that resulted in the deaths of three Army reservists, Army Times previously reported. At least 40 troops were injured in total.

The 10 soldiers, who are assigned to the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, received their medals on May 10 from unit commander Lt. Col. Darren Ketchum.

“This decoration is not sought, and it’s not given lightly,” Ketchum said. “It is earned through courage in the face of danger. Today, we recognize those who stood firm when faced with the harshest realities of combat.”

The soldiers honored during the ceremony were:

- Staff Sgt. David Barrientos, from Zebulon, North Carolina
- Sgt. Anthony Gist, from Floral Park, New York
- Sgt. Ryan Kissoon, from Richmond Hill, New York
- Sgt. Guillermo Renderos, from Yonkers, New York
- Sgt. Jarvis Ho So, from Brooklyn, New York
- Spc. Christian Tiburcio, from Manhattan, New York
- Spc. Matthew Crespo, from Brooklyn, New York
- Spc. Domingo Perez, from Brooklyn, New York

- Spc. Junior Clarke, from Brooklyn, New York
- Spc. Michael Branch, from Brooklyn, New York

“I am honored to have received the medal, but it’s never an award we wanted to get,” Sgt. Ryan Kissoon said. “It’s a sad relief we made it home that day, and others didn’t.”

Kissoon added that the chaplain assigned to Tower 22, Maj. Chase Wilhelm, told him something he would never forget about that day.

“We are all from different parts of the country, but we will forever be bonded by blood,” he recalled Wilhelm saying.

When the attack unfolded, 14 soldiers from the battalion’s Charlie Company were at the outpost to help maintain communications, according to a release announcing the Purple Heart recipients.

The drone struck a section of the base where soldiers lived. Soldiers suffered concussions and other injuries due to the blast.

Platoon leader 1st Lt. Ian Gallagher said the containerized housing unit “crinkled like a soda can” from the blast.

Soldiers who were not severely injured worked to rapidly restore communications from the outpost while combat lifesaver-trained troops in the unit used aid kits to help treat other injured soldiers. Other uninjured soldiers donated blood.

Charlie Company commander Capt. Paul Kramarz said the soldiers assigned to the Tower 22 base were chosen especially for the mission.

“These soldiers from Charlie Company, located at Tower 22, were a hand-selected team,” Kramarz said. “We knew they would operate at the far reaches of our area of responsibility.”

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2025/05/19/10-soldiers-receive-purple-heart-after-tower-22-drone-attack-in-2024/>

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Long Overdue Purple Heart Delivered with Help from NY National Guard

Army.mil, May 19, 2025 ::

Former U.S. Army Pfc. Justin Oaks, a former military police officer and current Glenville, Pennsylvania resident, was presented the Purple Heart nearly 20 years after he earned it during combat in Iraq.

With help from New York National Guardsmen, Oaks was formally presented the medal during a ceremony in Buffalo's historic Connecticut Street Armory – an honor he never received during his time in uniform.

Oaks, a Jamestown, New York native, enlisted into the active-duty Army in 2004 and was stationed at then-Fort Hood, Texas. He served in various law enforcement roles with the 110th and 410th military police companies under the 720th Military Police Battalion, 89th Military Police Brigade.

In late June 2006, Oaks deployed with the 410th to Camp Stryker in Baghdad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On November 3 that year, the company was conducting combat operations in Abu Amer in the Wasit province of the country. Oaks was the lead gunner in a convoy when his Humvee was struck by an improvised explosive device.

The force of the blast knocked him unconscious, and his skull was cracked when his head hit the Humvee's turret.

Oaks was moved to another vehicle and evacuated.

"I woke up at the [troop medical clinic] at Camp Stryker. I had blood in my eyes. I couldn't hear anything. Confused, I didn't know what was going on," Oaks recalled.

Three days later, he was back on duty.

Oaks' injuries during the explosion had earned him the Purple Heart but the medal wasn't added to his military record.

Oaks waited a long time to get his military record amended and dealt with personal challenges in the meantime – namely losing his brother Todd, who joined the Army in 2003 and mentored Oaks during his time in uniform. Todd died just months before Oaks was honorably discharged in 2008.

"I had to get through the battle in my mind first, and that was the roughest part," he said. "For years, I hadn't been able to figure out the piece that was missing. I felt like I couldn't rest."

Oaks said he eventually got up enough courage to request his record to be amended.

He received a letter of approval from the Army in April 2024 and a certificate was mailed to him.

“It felt like this weight was lifted off my shoulders. I mean, I could breathe again. I could think straight,” Oaks said.

But the letter also told Oaks that awards and decorations such as the Purple Heart should be “presented with an appropriate degree of formality in a fitting ceremony.”

The request to do just that made its way to the New York National Guard’s Buffalo-based 153rd Troop Command, and a ceremony was planned at the unit’s headquarters in the historic Connecticut Street Armory.

“While the award we’re presenting may be late, it’s no less important than if you were to receive it in Iraq in front of your brothers in arms,” Col. William Snyder, the 153rd’s executive officer, told Oaks before calling him to stand in front Soldiers from the brigade and Oaks’ family and friends, and pinning the medal to his collar.

“The Purple Heart is unlike any other medal we wear. It isn’t sought out. It’s not given for achievement, merit, or skill,” Snyder said. “It is earned through great personal sacrifice and risk to one’s life that few citizens in American can understand.”

The Purple Heart dates to the earliest days of the United States.

Gen. George Washington established the medal in 1782 during the Revolutionary War – then calling it the “Badge of Military Merit” – with the intent of recognizing courage and dedication among enlisted ranks that often went unnoticed.

The badge was awarded to just three sergeants for “singularly meritorious action,” and then faded into obscurity for the 150 years after the war.

In 1932, on the 200th anniversary of Washington’s birth, the U.S. War Department revived and reimagined the decoration. The modern Purple Heart was born, featuring a profile of Washington on a heart-shaped medal, draped in royal purple and edged with gold.

Since then, it has been awarded to an estimated 1.8 million servicemembers wounded or killed in combat.

“It’s just a great honor,” Oaks said.

The 153rd’s Soldiers lined up to shake Oaks’ hand, congratulate him, and thank him following the ceremony. Being surrounded by them felt like being at home again, Oaks said.

Besides the brother he'd lost, Oaks said it was with the Soldiers that he'd found his missing piece.

"It was the Army – believe it or not – the Army that I'd missed most," he said.

The record of Oaks' Purple Heart and how he earned it, along with many others, is now part of the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New York's Hudson River Valley. The hall is a New York State Parks Site with the mission to collect, preserve and share the stories of all Purple Heart recipients.

Oaks' other awards and decorations include the Combat Action Badge, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and Overseas Service Ribbon.

https://www.army.mil/article/285627/long_overdue_purple_heart_delivered_with_help_from_ny_national_guard

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NY National Guard Aircrews prepare for wildfires with training alongside Forest Rangers

Fire and Safety Journal Americas, May 19, 2025 ::

New York Army National Guard helicopter crews partnered with state Department of Environmental Conservation Forest Rangers to hone their firefighting skills along the Hudson River near Schuylerville on 8 May 2025.

The dozen Army aircrew members included Soldiers assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment, flying two UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters from the Army Aviation Support Facility in Latham.

The helicopters practiced lifting water from the river and then dumping it on simulated targets. The Rangers were on board training in crew coordination and communication techniques to provide greater precision and safety in water drops.

Forest Ranger, Hamilton County, Michael Thompson's statement

Forest Ranger Michael Thompson, who supports Hamilton County in the heart of the Adirondacks said: "Just solving comms (communications) before a wildfire can make all the difference.

"Training like this gives us a head start for when it's really needed."

During firefighting operations, the Army National Guard aircrews work in support of Rangers on the ground and often place a Ranger in the aircraft. The team works together to guide the Army Guard pilots onto the target.

The helicopter crews and Rangers practiced dropping water from 660-gallon Bambi Buckets. The collapsible buckets are slung underneath the helicopters.

Army National Guard helicopter crews conduct training every spring to qualify new pilots and refresh crews for employing the buckets, practicing water pickup and drops.

The training is necessary because a bucket full of water weighs two tons and helicopter pilots need to practice flying with that additional weight under their aircraft to fly safely in an emergency.

Pilot and Operations Officer, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation's Headquarters Company, Alyssa Griffith's statement

The training is an important first step in preparing crews for actual wildfires, said Capt. Alyssa Griffith, a pilot and Operations Officer assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation's Headquarters Company.

Griffith said: "The familiarization training is important because it gets you ready for the unique demands of the water bucket as an external load.

"Things like power management and crew coordination are really just the first hurdles. When you get a bucket out over a real fire, that's when it gets interesting.

Prior employment of helicopter firefighting equipment

The New York Army National Guard employs helicopter firefighting equipment when local agencies request support through the New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

New York State Police helicopters typically provide initial aerial firefighting for the state. The Army National Guard helicopters, which carry a bigger bucket and are called in for heavier fires.

The most recent deployment was on 8 March 2025. Three UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters from Ronkonkoma worked together with a New York Air National Guard HH-60W Jolly Green II rescue helicopter assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing to extinguish fires in the Long Island Pine Barrens.

Last fall, New York Army National Guard aviators dropped 550,160 gallons of water on the 5,200-acre Jennings Creek fire in Delaware County along the border with New Jersey between November 11 and 20, 2024, to bring the blaze under control.

Griffith said that experience last fall gave her a new perspective on battling wildfires.

She added: “We learned quickly how to maneuver among other aircraft, account for the variations in winds due to the heat of the fires and make drops where the Rangers needed them.”

Assistant Operations Officer, Latham Aviation Support Facility, David Lackey’s statement

The familiarization training is the first step in preparing crews for aerial firefighting, building confidence and teamwork between the aircrews and Forest Rangers, said 1st Lt. David Mackey, an Assistant Operations Officer at the Latham Aviation Support Facility.

Mackey was going through the firefighting qualification training for the first time.

He shared: “It was exciting to do my first water bucket, working with a good team.

“I was expecting to struggle with my first pick, trying to hold a position over the water buckets with the moving current and spray of the water with the rotor wash.

The water bucket training was also Mackey’s first time flying an external load as an aircraft pilot and according to him it had its own unique challenges.

Mackey went on to say: “The most challenging for me was all the synchronization happening at the same time between the forest rangers, crew chiefs and pilots all trying to communicate where and what was going on below the aircraft.”

“But that ended up being the most fun part, when everyone was synced up and we were operating as a team to accomplish the mission.”

Forest Rangers prepare for wildfires with training alongside NY National Guard Aircrews: Summary

New York Army National Guard helicopter crews partnered with state Department of Environmental Conservation Forest Rangers to hone their firefighting skills along the Hudson River near Schuylerville on May 8.

<https://fireandsafetyjournalamericas.com/ny-national-guard-aircrews-prepare-for-wildfires-with-training-alongside-forest-rangers/>

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Yonkers Hero-Sgt. Guillermo Renderos Honored with Purple Heart

Yonkers Times, May 19, 2025 ::

On January 28, 2024, a drone attack carried out by an Iranian-backed militia struck Tower 22, a U.S. military outpost situated along the Jordan-Syria border. The surprise assault resulted in the tragic deaths of three U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers and left over 50 others wounded. Among those affected were 14 soldiers from C Company of the New York Army National Guard's 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion—based in Yonkers and Orangeburg.

One of those soldiers is Sgt. Guillermo Renderos, a proud Yonkers resident and 2012 graduate of Gorton High School. A product of the Yonkers Public School system, Sgt. Renderos began his academic journey at Eugenio Maria de Hostos, continued through Commerce Middle School (now the Barack Obama School for Social Justice).

On Saturday, May 10, 2025, Sgt. Renderos was honored with the Purple Heart for the injuries he sustained during the Tower 22 attack. A son of Salvadoran immigrants, Sgt. Renderos will receive this honor surrounded by his wife, children, mother, siblings, and nieces and nephews, reflecting his role as a devoted husband, father, brother, and uncle—as well as a symbol of strength within both his family and his community.

The attack at Tower 22 struck the area of the base where soldiers lived. Though wounded, Sgt. Renderos and his fellow Charlie Company soldiers acted immediately. Those able worked to restore critical communications with the outside world, while others, including combat lifesavers, administered aid to the injured—often while suffering injuries of their own. Those who remained unscathed lined up to donate blood for their wounded comrades.

“The Purple Heart is not an award to be celebrated. Rather, it is a reminder of an event that we witnessed—a date that goes down in history written in blood... It is a reminder of the bravery and sacrifice that my team of incredible Soldiers displayed that day and throughout our deployment to Tower 22.” said 1st Lt. Ian Gallagher, the platoon leader of the group.

<https://yonkerstimes.com/yonkers-hero-sgt-guillermo-renderos-honored-with-purple-heart/>

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New York National Guard

New York National Guard boosts EMS workforce with 150 newly certified EMTs

WRGB, May 21, 2025 :

Albany, NY (WRGB) — In a significant boost to New York's emergency medical services workforce, approximately 150 New York National Guard service members have successfully obtained Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification through a new training initiative. Announced by the New York State Department of Health during Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week, the program aims to support the National Guard's missions and create essential career pathways for service members transitioning to civilian roles.

State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald emphasized the dual impact of the program, stating,

The impact of this innovative training program goes beyond strengthening the EMS workforce. It is also about creating a bridge for these service members as they transition from military service to civilian roles, utilizing the skills and discipline they've gained to serve their communities. We are thankful to the National Guard and the many instructors and training partners whose dedication has made this mission possible.

The training, which ran from January to February 2025, involved intensive, full-time classes in an academy-style environment, covering essential EMT skills and clinical simulations. Conducted at multiple locations in the New York City metropolitan area, the program followed a successful model used during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ryan Greenberg, Director of the Division of State EMS, highlighted the program's significance during EMS Week, saying,

EMS Week is a time to honor the dedication of EMS providers who serve our communities every day. This initiative not only equips service members with critical life-saving skills that may be used in their roles as National Guard members, but also provides them with valuable career pathways in the EMS field. With many EMS agencies actively hiring in New York City, these newly certified EMTs are well-positioned to join the workforce and address ongoing staffing demands when not on active duty with the National Guard.

To assist with career transitions, the Division of State EMS partnered with agencies such as the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) EMS and SeniorCare EMS to offer site visits, agency tours, and hands-on training experiences. Greenberg said,

We are immensely grateful to our partners for their commitment to this initiative. Their willingness to host our trainees, provide guidance, and share career opportunities has been instrumental in making this program a success.

Brigadier General Isabel Smith, Director of Joint Staff for the New York National Guard, noted the program's ongoing benefits, stating,

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the New York National Guard worked with the Department of Health to certify over 320 service members as EMTs. These Soldiers and Airmen worked in nursing homes and designated facilities during the pandemic. More recently, DOH certified 150 New York National Service Members as new EMTs. During the Department of Correction officer strikes in February of this year-- when over 8,000 National Guard service members were called to support that mission—many of these new EMTs assisted the Department of Correctional and Community Services in providing medical support in the facilities. This collaboration has already paid, and will continue to pay, big dividends for the state

<https://cbs6albany.com/news/local/new-york-national-guard-boosts-ems-workforce-with-150-newly-certified-emts>

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Veterans

Alliance to host Memorial Day Ceremony in Battlefield Park

Lake George Examiner, May 19, 2025 ::

The Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance will hold its annual Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony on Monday, May 26, at the burial site of the four unknown soldiers in Battlefield Park, Fort George Road, Lake George. The event is a tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of freedom. The ceremony begins at 10:30 a.m.

The remains of the four unknown soldiers were uncovered in 1931 during a road construction project on State Route 9. Analysis of the remains determined that the men were provincial soldiers who fell in the Bloody Morning Scout, one of three engagements collectively known as the Sept. 8, 1755, Battle of Lake George. Their grave, on a hill overlooking Lake George, is the earliest recognized unknown soldiers' burial site in the United States.

Command Sergeant Major Robert W. Van Pelt, US Army (retired), will give the Keynote Address.

Command Sergeant Major Robert W. Van Pelt, US Army (retired), will give the Keynote Address. Van Pelt's military career spans more than 42 years. He was drafted into the US Army in 1969 and served with the 1st Signal Brigade at Phu Lam, Vietnam.

In 1974, Van Pelt enlisted in the New York National Guard and was selected as a Command Sergeant Major in 1991. He served as the CSM of 2 battalion and 2 brigade-sized units until 1998, when he was tapped as the CSM, 42nd Infantry Division (RAINBOW).

Van Pelt was offered the full-time position as the State Command Sergeant Major of the New York National Guard in June 2001 and served in that role until his retirement in June 2011. He continues his service doing volunteer work with military and veterans' organizations.

"Having Bob Van Pelt, a Command Sergeant Major — the highest noncommissioned rank in the US Army — provide our keynote address makes this year's program very special," says Alliance President John DiNuzzo. "It reminds us that, throughout America's history, the selflessness of our military personnel has cut across all ranks and all branches of service."

The ceremony will also include a presentation by Historian and Alliance Trustee Bruce Venter titled, "The Importance of the Battle of Lake George." The Reverend Laura Miller of St. James Church will give the invocation, and the Lake George Volunteer Fire Department and American Legion Post 374 will make ceremonial presentations at the unknown soldiers' burial site.

The commemoration will close with a 21-gun salute by Fort William Henry reenactors and the playing of taps by Amy Baker, Music Director at Lake George Junior/Senior High School.

Memorial Day Weekend also marks the 2025 season opening of the Lake George Battlefield Park Visitor Center. The Center will operate on Friday, Saturday and Sunday (and on the Memorial Day holiday) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through June 29, and then will be open Thursdays through Mondays beginning July 3.

The Visitor Center is located on Fort George Road. Admission is free. The Battlefield Park Alliance resumes its weekly free guided tours of the historic site each Saturday starting at 11 a.m. Tours begin at the Visitor Center.

<https://www.lakegeorgeexaminer.com/alliance-to-host-memorial-day-ceremony-in-battlefield-park/>

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