

Civil Support Teams

[N.Y. Guard Specialized Team Masters Evaluation Challenge:](#)

NationalGuard.mil, By Stephanie Butler, New York National Guard, June 17, 2026

DOCCS Support

[2 N.Y. corrections officers injured in stabbing with weapon made from tablet:](#)

Corrections 1.com, June 15, 2026

For Information

[State Department backs \\$1.5 billion helicopter, weapons sale to New Zealand By Seth Robson:](#)

Stars and Stripe, June 15, 2026

[Veterans disability bill could cut tinnitus compensation to fund other benefits:](#)

Task And Purpose, June 16, 2026

[New law could simplify Reserve and Guard orders that affect pay, benefits:](#)

Task and Purpose, June 17, 2026

New York Air National Guard

[Air Force generals: MQ-9 aircraft called 'MVP' of the air war against Iran; similar aircraft flown remotely out of NF Airbase:](#)

WGRZ, June 10, 2026

[What to know about the FourLeaf Air Show at Jones Beach on Fourth of July weekend:](#)

Newsday, June 15, 2026

New York Army National Guard

['I've Never Seen Anything Like It': Soldier Reports UFO Encounter in Troy:](#)

Q105.7, June 12, 2026

[Early voting opens in Suffolk County congressional primary race:](#)

Prism News, June 16, 2026

[Gov. Hochul gives free World Cup tickets to NY National Guard members:](#)

WPIX, June 16, 2026

[Cornwall resident takes command of NY Army Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team:](#)

Mid-Hudson News.com, June 17, 2026

New York National Guard

[Duty Calls: Danish, American military personnel respond to injured soldier:](#)
Times Union, June 15, 2026

Civil Support Teams

N.Y. Guard Specialized Team Masters Evaluation Challenge

NationalGuard.mil, By Stephanie Butler, New York National Guard, June 17, 2026 :

AMSTERDAM, N.Y. – Airmen and Soldiers of the New York National Guard's 2nd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team demonstrated proficiency in various tasks during a recent evaluation, including locating and identifying a radiation source and establishing a lab to analyze hazardous materials.

The two-day evaluation, held June 9 and June 11 and conducted by the National Guard's Civil Support Training Activity, began with simulated local police and fire reports of radioactive material at Amsterdam, New York's Shuttleworth Park. The 21 Airmen and Soldiers participating in the exercise were tasked with finding the radiation source and identifying it for local first responders and state agencies.

Survey team members Air Guard Tech Sgt. Karlie Foster and Army Guard Sgt. Jacob Crocetta each put on a breathing apparatus and hazmat suit before boarding a utility vehicle loaded with gear and entering the park to find the radiation source. They identified the radiation source, but the exercise then called for Crocetta to hit his head and go down, simulating a man-down event. The team also was charged with extracting him.

There are 11 collective tasks a Civil Support Team, or CST, must show proficiency in during an evaluation every 18 months, explained Willie Coleman, the head of the evaluation team.

Civil Support Teams were established to provide expertise in identifying chemical, biological and radiological hazards to local governments in each state. Additionally, they assess the hazard, advise local incident commanders and assist with requests for additional support. Some states, such as New York, have two Civil Support Teams.

The 2nd CST is based at Stratton Air Base in Scotia, N.Y. It handles missions in upstate New York and is prepared to travel anywhere in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Region II. The 24th CST, based at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, is responsible for handling missions in New York City and on Long Island.

For the recent evaluation, members of the 2nd CST began the day unsure when the emergency call would come in or where they would go. Once they arrived at the location with their vehicles, they deployed just as they would in a real-world situation.

The complication was the simulated head injury, said Sgt. Evan Cunningham, a 2nd CST survey team member. Cunningham's survey team was sent in to retrieve Crocetta and take him back to the decontamination station. Another team then took over and put Crocetta through the decontamination process so he could be safely moved for further care.

That process went smoothly, Cunningham said.

"My partner was super helpful. We were able to communicate well," he said.

Lt. Col. Andrew McClure, the commander of the 2nd CST, said he was pleased with the Soldiers and Airmen.

"I saw a flawless extraction of the man down, there was zero hesitation, which is what we're talking about, when saving a life, we can't hesitate," McClure said.

He wasn't surprised because the CST trains regularly, McClure said.

"As always, the military is always improving our processes and how we do things. The more we do it, the more confident we are and we will find out whether something's working the way we wanted to," said McClure.

The 2nd CST trains regularly with local fire departments and police, as well as state and federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, McClure said.

The second part of the two-day evaluation took place June 11 at a hotel in Schenectady, New York. That training scenario focused on working inside a building. The CST members found simulated dangerous material and set up a lab to analyze it.

At the end of both days, evaluators determined the CST members had met the standard, said Air Guard Lt. Col. James McCauley, the training officer for the New York National Guard's joint operations directorate.

The 2nd CST's evaluation also was observed by five members of the Swedish Army, who were there as part of the New York National Guard's training partnership with Sweden's military. Sweden and New York have been paired through the Department of War National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program since 2024.

Sgt. Sanna Johansson, a Swedish Army decontamination specialist, noted some differences between how her Army does things and how the National Guard does. She said the Swedish Army usually trains for mass decontamination of up to 100

people rather than smaller numbers, and the decontamination line is from 10 meters to 300 meters long.

“The most significant difference between how we do this in Sweden, is that you throw everything away afterwards,” she said.

“In Sweden, we try to take everything back and reuse,” she said.

Also, the Swedish Army focuses more on the wartime aspects of a Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear, or CBRN, attack, so its members “are equipped to do warfare, so we go in armed,” said Capt. Anton Palmgren, who is assigned to Sweden’s CBRN Defence Center.

<https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article-View/Article/4519622/ny-guard-specialized-team-masters-evaluation-challenge/>

[Return to top](#)

DOCCS Support

2 N.Y. corrections officers injured in stabbing with weapon made from tablet

Corrections 1.com, June 15, 2026 :

MARCY, N.Y. — Two corrections officers were injured after an inmate armed with a homemade weapon attacked staff during a wellness check at Mid-State Correctional Facility, according to the New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA).

The incident happened on May 29 at the medium-security prison when an officer conducting routine rounds noticed an inmate had covered his cell window with a towel, preventing staff from seeing inside the cell, NYSCOPBA said in a news release.

After multiple attempts to communicate with the inmate were unsuccessful, a response team consisting of three correction officers and a National Guard member entered the cell to conduct a welfare check.

According to NYSCOPBA, staff discovered the inmate hiding in an attached recreation pen. The inmate then charged at responding personnel while wielding a homemade weapon.

A National Guard member used a shield to push the inmate back as he repeatedly attempted to stab staff, the union said.

During the struggle, the inmate allegedly stabbed one correction officer in the forearm and another officer in the knee before staff were able to gain control. The inmate continued resisting while on the ground but was eventually restrained, handcuffed and escorted to a holding cell.

Both injured officers received initial treatment at the facility before being transported to a local urgent care center, where they received sutures for their injuries. Both officers are expected to recover.

Following the incident, staff recovered a sharpened, 6-inch weapon from the inmate's cell. A preliminary investigation determined the weapon had been fashioned from a piece of plastic broken from the inmate's electronic tablet, according to NYSCOPBA.

The inmate was later transferred to Auburn Correctional Facility.

Bryan Hluska, NYSCOPBA's Central Region vice president, said incidents involving inmates who deliberately obstruct staff's view of a cell can quickly become dangerous.

"Entering a cell where an inmate has deliberately blocked staff's view can be an extremely dangerous situation for correction officers. Unfortunately, that danger became a reality in this case," Hluska said. "Armed with a homemade weapon, the inmate clearly intended to attack staff and succeeded in stabbing two officers before being subdued."

Hluska credited the responding officers and National Guard member with quickly controlling the situation and preventing additional injuries.

He also raised concerns about disciplinary options available under New York's HALT Act, which limits the use of segregated confinement.

"While the inmate has been transferred to a maximum-security facility, the internal disciplinary measures available because of the HALT Act are limited," Hluska said. "Until the State Legislature implements the HALT Committee recommendations, the most meaningful accountability in situations like this may come through criminal prosecution."

Hluska added that pursuing felony assault charges and securing additional incarceration time could help deter future attacks on correctional staff.

<https://www.corrections1.com/Officer-Safety/2-n-y-corrections-officers-injured-in-stabbing-with-weapon-made-from-tablet>

[Return to top](#)

For Information

State Department backs \$1.5 billion helicopter, weapons sale to New Zealand By Seth Robson

Stars and Stripe, June 15, 2026 :

Note: This article is included for your information.

The State Department has greenlit a \$1.5 billion sale of five MH-60R Seahawk anti-submarine helicopters to New Zealand.

Along with the helicopters, the country is seeking 225 Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System missiles, 65 AGM-114R Hellfire missiles and five M240D 7.62 mm machine guns, according to a June 5 announcement by the department.

The sale will include crew-served guns, guided-missile launchers, digital rocket launchers, radios and missile warning systems, according to the notice.

In a separate announcement that day, the department approved a \$69 million sale of 20 MK 54 anti-submarine torpedoes to New Zealand. The Seahawk can launch the MK 54.

Foreign military sales must be approved by Congress before they are final.

“This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security of the United States by improving the security of a major ally that is a force for political stability and economic progress in the Asia-Pacific region,” the notice said. “New Zealand will use the enhanced capability to strengthen its homeland defense.”

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told reporters at the recent Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore that New Zealand was “freeloading” off the American military.

New Zealand defense spending has increased in recent years but has yet to hit 2% of GDP.

The country fought alongside the United States in every major conflict of the 20th century and sent troops to Iraq and Afghanistan.

It effectively withdrew from the ANZUS mutual defense treaty with the U.S. and Australia in the mid-1980s after passing anti-nuclear legislation barring port calls by American aircraft carriers.

New Zealand remains part of the Five Eyes intelligence sharing group that includes the U.S., Canada, United Kingdom and Australia.

Nuclear-powered submarines, due to start operations from Western Australia next year under the AUKUS agreement, are also banned from New Zealand waters, according to the country's government.

New Zealand already operates four Boeing P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft with anti-submarine capabilities.

The Seahawk has been deployed by the U.S. Navy since 2006, according to the service's website.

"The MH-60R Seahawk is the U.S. Navy's primary anti-submarine and surface warfare helicopter specially designed for all aspects of land or maritime operations from any aviation ship or air-capable vessel," the site states.

The 64-foot-long helicopter has a crew of three and is capable of electromagnetic warfare, command and control, non-combat operations, naval surface fire support, medical evacuation, search and rescue, logistics, special warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, according to the service.

https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia_pacific/2026-06-16/new-zealand-helicopter-torpedoes-sale-21980851.html

[Return to top](#)

Veterans disability bill could cut tinnitus compensation to fund other benefits

Task And Purpose, June 16, 2026 :

Note: This item is included for your information

Congress is considering a proposal that would grant full retirement and disability benefits to combat veterans, while slashing future disability checks for veterans with tinnitus and sleep apnea.

The Take Care of America's Veterans Act is a package with dozens of legislative proposals for veterans, caregivers, and survivors. Among the bundled bills is the Major Richard Star Act, which allows veterans with fewer than 20 years of service to collect both disability compensation and retirement pay at the same time. Over the last year, the Richard Star Act has been sidelined over debates of how it would be funded and whether the Department of Veterans Affairs can afford the estimated \$10 billion in costs. To pay for it, Congress is considering an "offset" by cutting into future disability ratings for sleep apnea and tinnitus.

The legislative package would implement a previously proposed 2022 rule change for how the VA assesses sleep apnea and tinnitus disability ratings. It would replace the standalone 30% disability rating for sleep apnea and instead base it “on the effectiveness of medical treatment and intervention” and use a new scale of 0 to 100%. Tinnitus, which is currently rated as 10%, would be treated as a symptom of an underlying condition like hearing loss or a traumatic brain injury.

The proposal drew quick criticism from veteran service organization officials who warned that it would grant disability benefits to one group of veterans while taking away from another.

Officials with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, or VFW, said in a statement last week that they “[refuse] to accept the idea that one group of veterans must lose so another group of veterans can win.”

Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) said during a June 9 speech on the Senate floor that the Major Richard Star Act has been “unable to pass either House or the Senate, in significant part due to the inability to offset the cost of the legislation.” Only by addressing that issue can the bill become signed into law, said Moran, who is the chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.

But Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) argued in a recent statement that combat veterans should get their full benefits without “depriving” other veterans. He said that the offset is “unnecessary” and “resources to pay for these wounds of war could come from the Department of Defense, not other disabled veterans.”

VA Press secretary Quinn Slaven said the VA learned of the proposal last week and “continues its discussions with Congress on the costs and impact of the bill’s various provisions.”

In regards to the VA’s 2022 proposed rule, Slaven said, “No changes are planned or imminent,” and that after receiving significant public comment, “it would need to undergo significant changes prior to being finalized.”

But some veterans organizations have expressed concern about how the legislation could affect future sleep apnea and tinnitus claims. VA analysis for the 2022 rule found that those changes could reduce disability compensation payments by \$57 billion over the next 10 years.

“We see this proposed cut as another way to try to get after something that some people think is rated too high,” said Ryan Gallucci, executive director of the VFW. “Anybody who’s on active duty now, anybody who was injured in Kuwait from Iranian drones, anyone working on a flight line or on an aircraft carrier right now would be subject to it when they get out of the military.”

The Congressional proposal would change how the VA does disability ratings for sleep apnea and tinnitus. Army photo by Robert Timmons.

One reason why veterans frequently file disability claims for tinnitus is that troops inherently operate in loud environments, Gallucci told Task & Purpose. He also said that sleep apnea and tinnitus are comorbid conditions — meaning they often occur alongside — other combat injuries like mild TBI, post-traumatic stress disorder or limb loss.

Disabled American Veterans National Commander Coleman Nee said that the proposal means that veterans with service-connected tinnitus would not receive disability compensation and that veterans who use a medical device while sleeping to treat their sleep apnea would see reduced disability checks. Coleman said the bill could lead to VA benefit cuts for up to 1.5 million veterans.

“These changes would apply to all new claims as well as any reassessments or reevaluations of existing claims. Eliminating compensation for sleep apnea and tinnitus is not a reflection of improved outcomes for veterans — it is a budget-driven decision that shifts the burden onto those who have already sacrificed in service to our nation,” Coleman said.

In a statement, the head of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America warned that the legislative proposal could set a precedent.

“Today it’s tinnitus and sleep apnea. Tomorrow it could be PTSD, migraines, toxic exposure conditions, or any other disability that becomes a tempting budget target,” Kyleanne Hunter, the CEO of IAVA, said in a press release. “Congress should not set the precedent that earned disability compensation can be reduced whenever lawmakers need an offset.”

The Take Care of America’s Veterans Act was introduced into both the House and Senate last week. House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Mike Bost (R-Ill.) is working to bring the bill to a floor vote soon, said Kathleen McCarthy, a spokesperson for the committee. As of Tuesday, a vote on the bill before the full Senate has not yet been scheduled.

UPDATE: 6/17/2026; This article has been updated with a statement from the VA about the recent Congressional policy and the agency’s 2022 proposed rule change for sleep apnea and tinnitus disability ratings.

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/veterans-bill-tinnitus-sleep-apnea/>

[Return to top](#)

New law could simplify Reserve and Guard orders that affect pay, benefits

Task and Purpose, June 17, 2026 :

Note: This item is included for your information.

A new bill introduced in the Senate aims to clean up the convoluted process that governs what benefits and pay National Guard and Reserve troops are eligible for when they're called up.

When National Guardsmen were mobilized to cities across the U.S., many took to social media joking that they would be given 29-day orders on purpose. For the average civilian, it might not mean much. But for part-time troops, the type of mission they are assigned to can impact their paycheck and other benefits.

"If you're a guardsman and you're on orders for less than 30 days, you do not receive health care or housing benefits," said Julian Plamann, deputy director government affairs at the National Guard Association of the U.S. "Once your orders go over 30 days — and kind of depending on what type of mission that is — then you qualify for housing, for health care, for different retirement points, and for education benefits."

Over the last two decades, a number of expert panels, commissions and studies have called for reforms to the duty status system. More recently, the issue of different benefits for guardsmen got attention in March when President Donald Trump said during a visit to Memphis, Tennessee, that some National Guardsmen deployed to U.S. cities would receive the deployment pay and benefits like troops on active duty.

In an effort to simplify the system, Congress is proposing the Duty Status Reform Act. The bill would cut the more than 30 duty statuses that National Guard or Reserve troops can be put on, like Title 10, Title 32, and State Active Duty, down to four broad categories.

"As the Guard's mission has evolved, the duty status system has become increasingly complex. This legislation will simplify the structure and strengthen the Guard's ability to carry out its missions by standardizing pay and benefits," Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) said in a release about the Senate bill introduced Wednesday. The House version was introduced in January.

If the bill becomes law, it would slash dozens of duty statuses and establish four broad categories of orders. They are:

Category I Active duty: For war, national emergency, disaster response, cyber/weapons of mass destruction, presidential call-ups and pre-planned missions;

Category II Active duty: disciplinary jurisdiction, missing status, required active-duty training, active Guard and Reserve functions;

Category III Reserve Component: annual training, musters, and drills;

Category III Remote Assignments: online learning and non-supervised duties.

The bill would standardize pay and benefits, and give more clarity on duties, mission eligibility requirements and transitions between orders, according to a Senate release.

Plamann said the biggest challenge to getting reforms passed has been “the sheer size of this,” adding that an overhaul would mean amending hundreds of laws and policies in financial management, joint travel and other federal regulations.

“The can of worms that this is, is so massive it really has stagnated progress,” she added.

One issue that advocates have highlighted is that reservists and guardsmen are sometimes given different orders, even if they are assigned to the same mission. In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic response in New York, Navy reservists on the USNS Comfort were on Title 10 status, but Army National Guard soldiers at the Javits Center were on Title 32 status.

According to an August 2025 RAND Corporation report, the current system creates confusion for both commanders and their troops. In some cases, the “inflexibility” of the process prevents leaders from employing the Guard or Reserve, or deters troops from volunteering for assignments.

For example, if National Guardsmen are called up for orders that are 30 days or less, part-time troops get limited health insurance coverage. After 31 days, they and their entire family qualify for coverage on par with active duty troops.

“Picture a Guardsman or reservist called up for back-to-back 29-day stretches: they are working nearly continuously, but because each set of orders stays just under the line, they don’t get stable health coverage,” said Matt Schwartzman, a policy director for the Reserve Organization of America, said that the loopholes built into the system. “Not to mention the disruptions when certain health care coverage lapses because the order terminates. Same soldier, same work, completely different protection, decided entirely by where someone drew the date.”

He added that “the system rewards how orders are written over the duty actually performed, and members can serve almost full-time yet keep falling through the cracks on housing and health care. That’s the core problem.”

RAND experts also reported that the current structure also affects military families. In March 2015, a helicopter crashed in the Gulf of Mexico, killing four Guard members and seven Marines. The Guard troops were on “inactive duty training,” and so their families received less in survivor payments than the families of the fallen

Marines. Experts at the research group wrote that the 2017 annual defense bill corrected some inequities for survivor payments, but noted that other payment discrepancies remain for “inactive-duty training” deaths.

The bill adds two new categories, like cyber response and remote orders, which advocates said are more useful for today’s reservists.

Plamann, who serves in the Maryland National Guard as a Major and company commander, said her troops are often asked to do remote training between drills, but it’s not so clear-cut on the administrative side for how they should be categorized.

“There’s so much that we do in between drills,” she said. “Some units are better than others in getting the individual pay or retirement points for all the remote requirements that we have. But this will be nice to actually have something to point to in a structure that allows us to get some sort of compensation for that.”

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/duty-status-reform-congress/>

[Return to top](#)

New York Air National Guard

Air Force generals: MQ-9 aircraft called 'MVP' of the air war against Iran; similar aircraft flown remotely out of NF Airbase

WGRZ, June 10, 2026 :

Drones — such as those flown at the Niagara Falls Airbase — are now playing a major role in the war in the Middle East.

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — Drones or remotely piloted aircraft — such as those flown at the Niagara Falls Airbase — are now playing a major role as the war in the Middle East is flaring up with military actions between the U.S. and Iran.

Right now, we do not know if any local airmen are involved with operational security.

But 2 On Your Side did determine that they are trained, capable, and equipped to do so if the orders came down.

It is officially called the MQ-9 Reaper — known to the military as a remotely piloted aircraft — and the Air Force brass salutes its abilities as heard in May at Congressional hearings on Operation Epic Fury, which is how the Pentagon and generals refer to the war in Iran.

Air Force General Kenneth Wilsbach, who is the U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, said this back in May to members of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee: "I'm a fan of unmanned (aircraft) as well. In fact, for Epic Fury — perhaps maybe the Most Valuable Player was unmanned — and that's the MQ-9. We made many, many strikes. I don't want to say how many cause the number is classified. But no other platform is even close to the MQ-9."

Air Force Lt. General David Tabor who is the Deputy Air Force Chief of Staff added this: "We are monitoring MQ-9s very, very closely in light of what has occurred over the last several weeks in Operation Epic Fury. I think that what this has demonstrated is really the value of the MQ-9."

That value tied to the aerial surveillance but also possible attack abilities of the MQ-9 — which can be equipped with Hellfire missiles or other munitions packages — as it can loiter or circle around a target area for reportedly up to 24 hours.

That is unlike a fighter jet with an actual pilot, who has limited on target time and the risk of injury or death if shot down.

The pilots of these machines along with sensor operators, who remotely operate its sophisticated surveillance equipment from cockpit stations, which can actually be transported in trailers can be anywhere in the world.

Places such as the Niagara Falls Airbase, where some of the men and women among the 700 members of the Air National Guard's 107th Attack Wing do handle this type of mission.

2 On Your Side met their new commander on Saturday, and we asked about the mission and sometimes long intense hours controlling a flying machine — perhaps 6,000 miles away in the case of Iran.

Air National Guard Colonel Christopher Weissarr, 107th Attack Wing Commander, told us: "I have a lot of pride in what they do. They're highly trained. They're extremely capable and competent in what they do."

He spoke about what can be grueling long hours controlling this aircraft as crews are "performing this very high demanding mission. You might be working midnights to whatever. And then yes you might be 'home-stationed,' but you get home just in time to see your wife, or your husband and your children going to school. And now you're going to bed to try to catch up on sleep before you got to get back in the box (cockpit console) and execute."

Weissarr said further: "We can be anywhere, anytime, in a very short amount of time, able to play effects — whatever said effects are requested."

The 107th unit at the Airbase was assigned to fly the MQ-9 in 2014 with an understanding about the word "drone," according to Colonel Weisshaar: "It's not a drone. This is a full-up, highly capable platform that just happens to have the operators remote, which also gives us freedom of flexibility to operate anywhere in the world, at any given time, performing whatever is required for the national defense strategy."

Ironically, because it flies slow, the Iranians have shot down a number of MQ-9 Reapers or hit them in attacks on U.S. airbases in the Middle East.

So attrition, as the military says, is costly for the Pentagon and taxpayers.

Lt. General Tabor again stated: "Even with that attrition, we're down to about 135 planes right now. We are still able to fulfill our contract of 56 combat lines."

And then U.S. Air Force Lt. General Christopher Niemi told members of Congress: "The MQ-9, depending on what kind of sensors it has on it, can cost up to \$50 million a copy."

Again, we do not know if any Air Guard members at the Niagara Falls base have actually flown Reapers in the Iran War.

Air and Space Forces Magazine reports that MQ-9s — which actually fly out of bases overseas — are being flown to monitor the Strait of Hormuz and that they helped protect, with cover fire, a downed U.S. air crew member who had his plane shot down several weeks ago in Iran.

There are also new reports that the U.S. Air Force is seeking to buy more MQ-9 Reapers due to those losses in the conflict with Iran and to have defense contractors design and build a new type of remotely piloted aircraft to eventually replace it.

<https://www.wgrz.com/article/news/national/military-news/air-force-generals-mq9-aircraft-called-mvp-air-war-against-iran/71-b80bda84-9686-4f8d-b36f-9baa70f30078>

[Return to top](#)

What to know about the Four Leaf Air Show at Jones Beach on Fourth of July weekend

Newsday, June 15, 2026 :

Military-trained aerial performers from as close as Westhampton Beach and as far as the United Kingdom will fly over the Jones Beach oceanfront next month as part of an air show and fireworks display to mark America's 250th birthday.

American, Canadian and English pilots are among the performers in the FourLeaf Air Show and Fireworks at Jones Beach, the credit union announced in a news release. The three-day weekend event, which combines the annual air show over Jones Beach State Park, a Long Island tradition usually held during Memorial Day weekend, with the nation's milestone celebration, is expected to draw hundreds of thousands of spectators.

A 25-minute fireworks display and "a musical array of patriotic songs" will kick off the festivities at 9:30 p.m. on July 4, the release said. A simulcast of the event will be broadcast over WALK/97.5 FM and WKJY/98.3 FM.

The air show will take flight from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on both July 5 and 6. For the 11th time, the U.S. Navy Blue Angels will headline the event, but this time accompanied by armed forces demonstration teams from Canada and the U.K., according to the release.

"With the Blue Angels returning, international performers joining the lineup, and our annual fireworks spectacular lighting up the shoreline, these will be the perfect events for families to celebrate our country's history at one of Long Island's most iconic locations," George Gorman, regional director of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, said in the release.

The Royal Air Force Red Arrows — based in an area rich with aeronautical history — will make their New York debut as part of the air show lineup. The aerial acrobats hail from Lincolnshire, England, a municipality named "Bomber County" due to the number of squadrons based there during World War II, according to the county council's tourism website. The British Army Parachute Display Team, the Red Devils, will also fly to Jones Beach from the U.K.

For the first time in eight years, the Canadian Forces Snowbirds will fly south to the Island for the annual summer celebration.

A demonstration of U.S. military aircraft designed for combat search and rescue operations will be performed courtesy of the 106th Rescue Wing of the New York Air National Guard, organizers said. Other American military performers include the Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing, based in upstate Newburgh, the North American Aerospace Defense Command and the U.S. Army's Golden Knights Parachute Team.

Civilian performers include the American Airpower Museum Warbirds and the Farmingdale State College Flying Rams, both based out of Republic Airport, the release said. WHLI/1100 AM and WHLI/104.7 FM will broadcast play-by-play commentary of the air show.

While attending the air show is free, the usual \$10 fee to park at Jones Beach State Park will remain in effect, organizers said.

Those considering attending can download the FourLeaf Air Show app for more information on the event.

The three-day event "will be one of the most memorable events in our history as we celebrate America's 250th anniversary right here on Long Island," Linda Armyn, president and CEO of Bethpage-based FourLeaf Federal Credit Union, said in a statement. "From the Blue Angels soaring overhead to the fireworks over Jones Beach on Independence Day, this special weekend will celebrate the spirit of our nation and bring families together for an unforgettable tribute to American pride and tradition."

<https://www.newsday.com/lifestyle/holidays/fourth-of-july/jones-beach-air-show-250th-birthday-america-flrefgok>

[Return to top](#)

New York Army National Guard

'I've Never Seen Anything Like It': Soldier Reports UFO Encounter in Troy

Q105.7, June 12, 2026:

If you're a UFO skeptic, this one probably won't change your mind. But if you're fascinated by unexplained sightings—especially ones reported by military personnel—this story is worth a look.

A report recently filed with the National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC) describes an unusual sighting that allegedly took place near a National Guard facility in Troy on May 7th.

"It was confusing and I didn't report it out of fear. I don't think anyone else did either. We all just watched it kinda freaking out. In my 16 years in service I've never seen something like this in my life." - NUFORC UFO Report, Troy

The Size Of A Bus

According to the report, five military members were standing in a parking lot when they observed two triangle-shaped objects glide over a vehicle storage area and come to a stop. The witness described the objects as bluish-gray, roughly the size of a school bus, and hovering as low as 50 to 100 feet above the ground.

What happened next is where the story gets really interesting.

The witness claims the craft appeared to open panels on its undersides and project grid-like beams onto the ground and nearby vehicles, as if they were scanning the area. After several minutes, the objects reportedly rotated northward and accelerated away "faster than anything I've ever seen."

As with all UFO reports, there is no independent verification of the account. Interestingly, a NUFORC investigator noted multiple attempts were made to contact the witness for additional details, but no response was received, which isn't all that unusual

"Almost Didn't Feel Real"

The reporting witness, who claimed to have 16 years of military service, wrote that neither object made any sound and that the experience "almost didn't feel real."

Historically, many military personnel have been hesitant to discuss UFO sightings out of concern they could be ridiculed or viewed differently by peers and supervisors. For years, that stigma has been cited as a major reason some unusual encounters go unreported.

That needs to change...

LOOK: The states with the most UFO sightings

For each state, we've also included details of famous UFO sightings in that state. Of note is that almost three-quarters of all UFO sighting reports in the United States occur between 4 p.m. and midnight, and tend to peak between 9 and 10 p.m. Food for thought next time you're out scoping for alien life. Keep reading to see which states have had the most UFO sightings.

<https://q1057.com/ixp/81/p/military-witness-ufo-claim-troy/?tsq=s1>

[Return to top](#)

Early voting opens in Suffolk County congressional primary race

Prism News, June 16, 2026 :

Early voting is open in Suffolk County's NY-01 Democratic primary, where Lukas Ventouras and Christopher Gallant are vying to take on Nick LaLota.

Early voting was underway across Suffolk County as Democrats chose between Lukas Ventouras and Christopher Gallant for New York's 1st Congressional District, a contest that will decide who gets the party's chance to challenge Republican

incumbent Nick LaLota in November. The stakes are high: Republicans have held the district since 2014, and LaLota beat Democrat John Avlon in 2024 by roughly 11 points, leaving the next nominee with a steep climb in a district where federal policy reaches into housing, transportation, taxes, storm recovery and coastal protection.

The practical window to vote is already open. New York's primary election day is Tuesday, June 23, 2026, but early voting runs from Saturday, June 13, through Sunday, June 21. June 13 was also the deadline to register before the primary and the last day to request an early mail or absentee ballot to be received by mail. Suffolk County election officials also started using new voting machines in the 2026 primary, adding a visible change to the first days of voting.

The matchup gives voters two very different resumes. Christopher Gallant is running as a Long Island native from Amity Harbor whose background includes service in the New York Army National Guard, work as a Black Hawk helicopter pilot, experience as a former Federal Aviation Administration air traffic controller, volunteer firefighting and Army service. Candidate listings also link him to the Copiague Fire Department, and his profile has been shaped by military, transportation and emergency-response work as well as labor leadership. Lukas Ventouras entered the race as a law student from Northport, bringing a different kind of profile to a district where many voters are likely weighing not ideology in the abstract, but who looks ready to handle the daily pressures of Suffolk life.

That contrast matters in a seat that has become one of Long Island's hardest Democratic lifts. The winner of the primary will not just leave with a nomination, but with the job of trying to turn Suffolk County concerns into a districtwide challenge to LaLota, whose 2024 victory underscored how much ground Democrats still have to make up. For voters heading to early voting sites now, the choice is already live, and the nominee will emerge knowing the general-election fight begins against a Republican incumbent with a strong recent record in the district.

<https://riverheadnewsreview.timesreview.com/2026/06/134217/democrats-gallant-ventouras-debate-in-primary-race-to-challenge-lalota/>

[Return to top](#)

Gov. Hochul gives free World Cup tickets to NY National Guard members

WPIX, June 16, 2026 :

NEW YORK (PIX11) – A few members of the New York National Guard just copped free tickets to the summer's hottest event.

Gov. Kathy Hochul is bringing 10 lucky New York City-based guard members to Tuesday's highly anticipated France vs. Senegal match at MetLife Stadium.

Hochul said it's a "small thank you" for National Guard members who often go without.

"Members of the New York National Guard answer the call for our state day in and day out, often without recognition or fanfare," Hochul said. "As a small thank you for their service, I'm proud to provide tickets to the France-Senegal World Cup match."

The match kicks off at 3 p.m. Last-minute tickets on SeatGeek and VividSeats are nearly \$1,000 and sold out on Ticketmaster. All 12,000 shuttle bus tickets sold out a day early for the match.

It's the second of eight World Cup matches that will be held at MetLife Stadium, including the final on July 19. Tickets for the final are well over \$8,000 just to get in the building.

There've been a few rounds of free and discounted tickets for locals trying to get to the World Cup. Earlier in June, VetTix, Bank of America and FIFA announced free tickets for military veterans and their families. Some 250 veteran tickets are being set aside for each U.S. Men's National Team match.

Stay connected with community stories that matter: Visit our homepage

Hochul previously announced 500 free World Cup tickets for New Yorkers, first responders, and military families. They'll be given out via YMCAs and Tunnel to Towers.

In New York City, Mayor Zohran Mamdani also launched a lottery for 1,000 \$50 tickets to MetLife Stadium matches. And in New Jersey, Gov. Mikie Sherrill secured over 1,000 free tickets for locals, distributed through the YMCA, Big Sisters, and the Boys & Girls Club.

<https://pix11.com/news/ny-national-guard-members-get-free-tickets-to-world-cup-match/>

[Return to top](#)

Cornwall resident takes command of NY Army Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

Mid-Hudson News.com, June 17, 2026 :

WEST POINT – New York Army National Guard Col. Matthew Kilgore of Cornwall has assumed command of the 4,000 soldiers of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

The ceremony, held last Sunday, was held at his alma mater, the US Military Academy at West Point, Class of 2002.

Kilgore previously served as chief of staff for the New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team at the Camp Smith Training Site in Cortlandt Manor.

In his new role, Kilgore oversees soldiers across New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. The 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team is headquartered at the Syracuse Armory.

https://midhudsonnews.com/2026/06/18/cornwall-resident-takes-command-of-ny-army-guards-27th-infantry-brigade-combat-team/#google_vignette

[Return to top](#)

New York National Guard

Duty Calls: Danish, American military personnel respond to injured soldier

Times Union, June 15, 2026 :

Rapid coordination demonstrates how the countries' military personnel have learned to work together, Col. Eric Underhill says

Photo Caption: Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, left, state adjutant general, and Richard Anderson, Air Force assistant secretary, present a challenge coin to Danish Army Lance Cpl. A.M. Sethsen for providing medical help to Command Sgt. Maj. Cory Cush after he was injured in an accident in Greenland.

New York Army National Guard Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, state adjutant general, Command Sgt. Maj. Corey Cush and Richard Anderson, the Air Force's assistant secretary for manpower and reserve affairs, visited Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, to observe airmen with the state Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing in action.

Despite being overseas, Cush continued his routine of physical training that included exercises and running. Soldiers must keep themselves "fit to fight" and pass an annual physical fitness test. While on a run, he fell and broke a leg outside the airfield.

Two days later, after Cush was stabilized and his leg cast, he was flown to the Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia before being transported to Albany Medical Center Hospital for further care.

The 109th Airmen were flying equipment and personnel aboard ski-equipped LC-130 troop-cargo aircraft to and from science stations on the Greenland Ice Cap, according to Eric Durr, a spokesman for the New York National Guard.

Each year, the Air Force tasks the 109th crews to supply scientists working in Greenland, helping hone the skills they use on missions set in the harsh Arctic and Antarctic environments, according to a report by Durr that the National Guard posted online.

The 109th crews have been flying such missions while working with the Danish Joint Arctic Command since 1975. They have flown soldiers and their combat gear onto Arctic Ocean ice and frozen lakes while training with Canadian forces.

“Greenland provides a training ground you cannot replicate anywhere else,” Col. Steven Stosek, 109th Airlift Wing commander, said in the report. “It allows our crews to build the critical skills required to operate in the challenging polar environment.”

“We are deeply grateful to our Danish and Greenlandic (military) partners for their exceptional care and unwavering commitment and mutual support in such a demanding environment,” Anderson said.

That mutual support became apparent during a Danish and American response to Cush’s accident, according to Durr.

“... a combined effort involving Danish military personnel, Greenlandic civilian medical personnel and New York Air National Guard airmen got him patched up and back home for advanced medical treatment two days later,” Durr wrote.

Danish Army Lance Cpl. A.M. Sethsen, who teaches at the Danish Joint Arctic Command’s Arctic Basic School, and a Danish Army medic saw Cush fall. They immediately rushed to help him and took Cush to a nearby nursing station at the airport.

A couple of Danish army doctors and Lt. Col. Kevin Collins, the 109th flight surgeon, also helped stabilize Cush.

The rapid coordinated treatment of Cush demonstrated how the New York Guardsmen and Danish military personnel have learned to work together, according to Col. Eric Underhill, 109th deputy commander.

Jones, Capt. Justine and Master Sgt. Rebecca Elred, a medical team from the 109th's 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, cared for Cush as he was flown to the Scotia base and then to Albany.

Afterward, Shields and Anderson presented a general challenge coin to Sethsen in recognition of his quick reaction to Cush's injury.

End of mission

New York Army National Guard Maj. Gen. Jack James, commander of the 42nd Infantry Division, relinquished command of Task Force Spartan to Maj. Gen. John "Brad" Bowlin, commander of the 36th Infantry Division, during a transfer of authority ceremony in Kuwait.

The 42nd Infantry soldiers were responsible for combat operations during the war with Iran.

James and Command Sgt. Maj. Arnold Reyes encased the division's flag to signify the end of their Task Force Spartan mission in the Middle East.

Photo Caption: Maj. Gen. Jack James, left, and Command Sgt. Maj. Arnold Reyes encase the division's flag to signify the end of their Task Force Spartan mission in the Middle East.

Lt. Gen. Kevin Leahy, commander of U.S. Army Central and Third Army, presided over the ceremony marking a significant milestone in ARCENT history, as the transfer of authority occurred during a notable time in Middle East affairs. It also provided a rare opportunity for the two Army National Guard divisions to operate shoulder to shoulder in combat before the transition.

"I am honored to preside over this historic transfer of authority between the 42nd and 36th Infantry Divisions," said Leahy. "This was one of the longest relief-in-place operations in history. It allowed two legendary divisions to work together, with the 36th stepping in to manage key tasks so the 42nd could maintain an uninterrupted focus on combat operations — some of the most complex combat operations in U.S. Army history."

James added that this historic success was made possible only by the tireless work of their support teams. "Our team accomplished a number of (combat) firsts," James said in a statement. "(Every one of them was) enabled by our world-class communicators, maintainers, and sustainers, without whose efforts we could not have prevailed."

The operational handover adds another chapter to the storied histories between the two divisions.

Tracing their lineages to the 1918 Meuse-Argonne offensive, the 36th and 42nd infantry divisions share a combat legacy that began on the Western Front in World War I. During World War II, the 36th executed the first Allied amphibious landing in continental Europe at Salerno, Italy, while the 42nd led the charge into Germany — becoming the first in its corps to enter Munich and liberate the infamous Dachau concentration camp.

“Today, June 6th, is a historic day for our military,” Bowlin said. “As we pause to remember the Allied invasion of Normandy and our own proud lineage that traces back to the beaches of Salerno, we are also writing the next chapter of our history as Task Force Spartan conducts a seamless battle handover in contact.”

Task Force Spartan is ARCENT’s division-level formation comprised of soldiers from the active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve. Exercising command and control of Operation Spartan Shield, the task force maintains a land-based U.S. military presence in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility that strengthens defense relationships and builds partner capacity in the Middle East.

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

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/duty-calls-danish-american-military-help-soldier-22304038.php>

[Return to top](#)
