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The Gem State Guardian

The official newsletter of the
Idaho National Guard

ISSUE #22
MARCH 3
2014

Air National Guard embraces 'one Air Force' concept

By Tech. Sgt. David Eichaker
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. (2/10/2014) - Emphasizing the importance of embracing a "one Air Force" concept, Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling, command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard, addressed newly minted Air Force chief master sergeants attending the Air Force District of Washington Chief's Orientation and Recognition Ceremony here to educate them about the Air Guard and to further build upon relationships between the active and reserve components.

As part of that, Hotaling, the 11th command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard, talked about the National Guard's 377-year history performing both state and federal missions. He then focused on three missions where he said the Air Guard excels: protecting the homeland, fighting America's wars and building global partnerships through the State Partnership Program.

The Air Guard is the first choice for homeland operations, said Hotaling, noting that Air Guard personnel were among the first to respond to the tornado that tore through Moore, Okla., in May. In addition, more recently, Airmen had boots on the ground when winter storms ravaged the Midwest and water contamination threatened areas of West Virginia. "It's that link that we have," said Hotaling, adding the Air Guard is the tie between the community, state, local and federal levels.

"The Air National Guard provides that bridge where they can bounce between Title 32 (state active duty) and Title 10 (federal active duty)," he said.

The command chief noted, the Air National Guard has played a major part in fighting America's wars, particularly since 2001.



Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling, command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard, speaks with newly minted Air Force chief master sergeants attending the Air Force District of Washington Chief's Orientation and Recognition Ceremony at Joint Base Bolling-Anacostia, Washington, D.C., Feb. 6, 2014. (Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. David Eichaker)

"There are 16 Air National Guard bases around the United States that are providing air coverage (around the clock) for Operation Noble Eagle," he said, adding the Air Guard also runs the joint air defense operations center in the nation's capital and has deployed units worldwide.

Hotaling also praised Air Guard members for their long-term involvement in the SPP, where National Guard units conduct military and civilian engagements with foreign nations that help build stronger allies and support defense security goals.

"Every one of the 54 (states, territories and the District of Columbia) is partnered with at least one other country," Hotaling said, adding the program is run in conjunction with the State Department. "The State Department utilizes the National Guard to create those military-to-military relationships that are long term," said Hotaling.

Quality training and real world experience is why today's more than 105,000 Air Guard

members have been invaluable to governors and combatant commanders alike, said Hotaling.

"The status (of Guard members) may be different," said Hotaling, "but the standards will be the same. That's why they are a relevant choice to combatant commanders."

"We are all just American Airman," he said

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