

# News and stories

## Vermont's military college honors veterans

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Eric Blaisdell | [Rutland Herald](#)

NORTHFIELD — The oldest private military college in the country celebrated Veterans Day with cannon fire and rifle volleys.

The event at the Northfield campus Friday was meant to honor those who have served or are serving in the military. The day included the unveiling of the Hershel “Woody” Williams Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, intended to honor those who lost family members who died while defending the country. It is located near the Kreitzberg Library.

Those in attendance included Gov. Phil Scott, Norwich President Richard W. Schneider, and representatives for Sen. Bernie Sanders and Sen. Patrick Leahy.

The guest speaker was Brigadier Gen. Michel Natali, who graduated from the school in 1987.

Natali addressed the Corps of Cadets, who stood in formation in front of him. He said it was an honor and a privilege to be back on campus to speak to the cadets.

“On this day we take time out to honor and recognize the sacrifices of all of our military veterans past and present. ... We also pause to

reflect on those we have lost in the cause of our nation and for our Gold Star families," he said.

Natali talked about the role of the citizen soldier when it comes to upholding this country's democratic institutions and liberties. He said this past April marked the 100-year anniversary of the U.S. entering World War I.

"Our nation transitioned from declared neutrality into a conflict in which it would emerge as a global power," he said. "Instrumental to this was our nation's capacity to mobilize and deploy personnel and resources in an unprecedented magnitude."

Natali said about 4 million Americans served in World War I and about 118,000 died during the war. He said the citizen soldier was at the forefront of the war effort.

The idea of the citizen soldier today is just as relevant and essential today as it has ever been, according to Natali. He said after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, the role of the active military and the National Guard transformed quickly.

He said not only have they met the demands of fighting terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they've also been called on to help during domestic emergencies.

"Our nation and states continue to ask our all-volunteer force to leave family, friends, careers and school to deploy into harm's way in far off lands or to respond to natural disasters, perform recovery operations, aid those that are suffering or in need and they have not let us down," he said.

According to the school, Natali serves as the commanding general of the 53rd Troop Command, New York Army National Guard headquartered in Cortlandt Manor, New York.

He served on active duty for nine years as a military intelligence officer with assignments in Germany and Fort Drum in New York.

He also served in Haiti and Somalia and served a tour in Iraq. In 1996, the school said Natali joined the New York Army National Guard, where he served in numerous assignments.

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