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From Hood to Coast,
Oregon to Afghanistan

In the October issue...
Oregon's 3-116 comes home!

VOL. 9, ISSUE NO. 4



SEPTEMBER 2011

Oregon Sentinel

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Oregon Guard dedicates new facility at Camp Withycombe



Photo by Sgt. Jason Van Mourik, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs Office

The Oregon National Guard's 41 Division Armed Forces Reserve Center will be officially dedicated during a ceremony, held at Camp Withycombe, in Clackamas, Ore., Sept. 16. Leadership from Australia, Japan, Oregon, and the U.S. are scheduled to attend the event. The new facility will be home to nearly 1,300 Oregon National Guard members, as well as Soldiers with the U.S. Army Reserve. See story and photos on page 6.

Oregon Air Guard's 125 STS deploys to Afghanistan

Unit holds change of command ceremony prior to departure

Story by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs
with significant contribution and photos by
Tech. Sgt. Greg Neuleib,
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore.—The Oregon Air National Guard's 125 Special Tactics Squadron held a change of command ceremony at the Portland Air National Guard Base in Portland, Ore., Aug. 23.

Lt. Col. Anthony B. Capobianco replaced outgoing 125 STS commander, Maj. Jake L. Miller, who led the unit since August 2009.

Miller has led Special Tactics forces and conducted missions during Operation Enduring Freedom. Prior to assuming his current position, Miller was the assistant director of operations at the 321st Special Tactics Squadron, RAF Mildenhall, UK.

Capobianco began his career in Combat Control in 1998 learning to be a combat diver, military freefall and static-line parachutist. During Operation Enduring Freedom, he was an assistant director, Joint Forces Special Operations Command



Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul J. De Muniz (right), along with Oregon National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, (center), shake hands with members of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron. Members of Oregon Air National Guard's 125th STS stood in formation for a change of command and mobilization ceremony at the Portland Air National Guard Base in Portland, Ore. Lt. Col. Anthony B. Capobianco replaced outgoing 125 STS commander, Maj. Jake L. Miller, who commanded the unit since August 2009. Roughly 30 members of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron will deploy to augment an Active Duty squadron in Afghanistan; with rotations starting in the Fall of 2011.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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Oregon National Guard members and their families are encouraged to submit articles and story ideas. Stories from any source, military or civilian, are accepted. Letters to the editor are also welcome. All submissions must include the author's name, mailing address and daytime phone number. Names may be withheld in print upon request. All submissions are subject to editing prior to publication, and the Public Affairs staff reserves the right to print or reprint submissions at any time.

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COMMAND

A decade of sacrifice, dedication and motivation

It is hard to believe that it has been ten years since the terrible day of attacks, which changed our nation and our world, September 11th, 2001.

There can be no doubt that our first responders, our military, and our National Guard are truly some of the most amazing people in the nation's history.

Event after event has occurred, with an amazing response to each one. We have adapted and learned to leverage each other's strengths to overcome an evil of extremism, which only exists to target and kill thousands of civilians. There is no message that comes from killing the innocent. We are a strong nation, and our message is that we will not stand for it.

For the past ten years nearly 6,000 service members have lost their lives so that we could send a message to those who would choose to kill, hurt and destroy in the name of extremism.

Our state shared in our nation's sorrow, with 130 service members having paid the ultimate sacrifice, 20 of whom were members of the Oregon National Guard.

Families, communities and businesses across our state all have felt the impact of 9-11. Thousands of Guard members have deployed in the past decade, and as of today remain deployed in support of operations throughout the world including Iraq and Afghanistan.

We have gotten back to the roots of the U.S. Constitution, using the militia/National

Guard for operations within their respective states, and called to federal action to execute the Laws of the Union. We as a nation have stood together and triumphed.

On responding to disasters, the Soldiers and Airmen of the Oregon National Guard have worked nearly 640,000 man days on domestic emergencies since 2001, including floods, assistance with winter snowstorms, and assistance to the people of New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

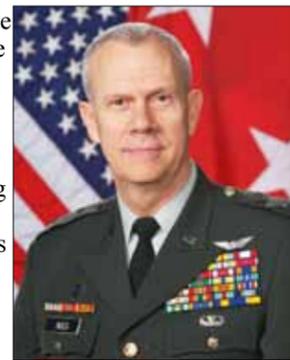
They have helped extinguish forest fires within the state which consumed nearly 400,000 acres, including the 2002 Biscuit fire which consumed in excess of 300,000 acres alone.

Through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, much like Katrina and Rita, we have assisted other states during their time of need.

There is no question; we have truly demonstrated that the Oregon National Guard is an amazing organization.

In addition to remembering our heroes from the immediate past decade, we also have the opportunity to recognize our Oregon Citizen Soldiers from 70 years ago with the dedication of the 41st Infantry Division Armed Forces Readiness Center at Camp Withycombe this month.

The 41 IBCT with several units and individual brigade mobilizations since 9-11 traces its roots of heroism to those who served in the honored Sunset Division. With attendance of dignitaries from Japan,



Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees,
The Adjutant General, Oregon

Australia, U.S. and local elected officials, as well as the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, there is no question of the impact the veterans of the 41st Infantry Division have had and will continue to have in Oregon.

This is a facility dedicated to our successful past and made to build strong partnership for our future.

This month, I am proud to say we all have been a part of, and have helped to recognize the history of the Oregon National Guard. Whether it has been ten or 100 years, the Oregon National Guard has lived the phrase: When we are needed; we are there.

Thank you for your sacrifice, dedication and motivation. Thank you for your commitment to Oregon's oldest and greatest institution. If our future is as bright as our past, all I have to say is, HOOAH! Always Ready! Always There!

September a busy time for Oregon National Guard

What a busy September. We have major events occurring all around us and we must stay focused to accomplish all the missions we are being assigned.

Welcome home to the 3-116! (Members of the unit will participate in a demobilization ceremony during the first week of October. The Oregon Sentinel plans to cover the ceremony in the October 2011 issue).

We have anxiously been awaiting your return to us, your families, employers, and communities. It has been a long year and we missed you very much.

We have heard nothing but great things about your deployment and you accomplished the mission above standard. Now it is our turn to make sure that you are reintegrated back into your families and communities. We have a robust reintegration plan for you and hope to meet your needs. I personally can't wait to spend time with you at your 30-60-90 day events.

Building Dedication! (see story on page 6) For those of you who have not had the opportunity to see the new 41st Division Armed Forces Reserve Center at Camp Withycombe, please make it a point to visit this impressive building. Most of the units are in and operating at the new facility, but the dedication ceremony on the September 16th should be quite an event.

Senior Leaders Conference! In conjunction to the Building Dedication there will be a Senior Leader's Conference that very same weekend in the AFRC. I look forward to this conference as it

brings all the leaders together in one place to discuss how the ORNG can get even better.

Tenth Anniversary of September 11, 2001. I remember exactly where I was when I watched that second plane slam into the World Trade Tower.

I was in the library at Stayton High School watching it on the news before school started. I went to class and that is all we talked about with the students, but my mind was in Corvallis because I was the First Sergeant of Bravo Co., 2-162 IN BN.

At the time there was much discussion about West Coast attacks and I knew I wanted to be ready if we got the call. I went to my principal and told her I had to go to the armory and she agreed. When I showed up that afternoon at the armory, there were already 10 plus Soldiers waiting there. They weren't called up or alerted, they just had the same feeling that I had, we better be ready.

That was a very impressive moment for me and really started my extensive study on what the term Citizen-Soldier means. I know each of you has your own story to tell. If you feel like sharing it, send it to me at brunk.conley@us.army.mil.

Command Sgt. Maj. Brunk W. Conley,
State Command Sergeant Major, Oregon National Guard



End of fiscal year good time to reflect, reassess goals

Events celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of September 11th, the Dedication of the Armed Forces Reserve Center, welcoming both Air and Army units returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, visiting dignitaries from Japan and Australia, plus a visit by the Chief of the National Guard, Gen. Craig McKinley—this is just a sample of what is going on this month.

All of us can be proud of these accomplishments. The Oregon Guard has the reputation of successfully completing any mission assigned. This month is no exception.

Every member of our organization should feel a sense of pride and the feeling of a job well done! As always, Oregon seems to lead the way.

As we look back this year and evaluate goals, progress and reflect on what needs to be accomplished the following year, the Warrant Officer Corps in Oregon remains strong, progressive and relevant in both our State and Federal Missions.

Our strength is a steady 85 percent, which does need to improve. We excel in recruiting highly-qualified NCOs especially in low

density MOSs.

We commissioned our first Engineering Warrant Officer, and federally recognized our first Legal Administrator. Branch proponents approved another Engineer, Logistician and Signal, plus the first ADA Warrant Officer in Oregon.

The Warrant Officer Strength Manager is about ready to submit packets for a Food Service and Mobility Warrant Officer.

In the past three articles I have discussed the Army Leadership Development and how it will affect the Warrant Officer of the Army National Guard. That project is completed. Once approved by the Council of Colonels and General Officer Advisory Council it will be posted on the CCWO website.

A Warrant Officer Discussion group has been established on Facebook. It has grown and become worldwide.

The group is open to all current and retired warrant officers. Oregon administrators are CW4s Jen Knight and Jan Martin, CW3s Marci Gollyhorn-Vertner and Dale Williams, and of course, myself.

This is a safe place where warrants can share, vent and post questions. I would



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Michael Zagya,
Command Chief Warrant Officer, Oregon National Guard

highly recommend you log on and join some of the discussions. (Search in the Facebook pages of the administrators to find the direct link).

This past month we said farewell to CW5s Clyde Tambling and Marco Frye--the last of the Vietnam-era pilots. Together they logged over 19,000 hours of flight-time. What an accomplishment in that alone! Best of luck to both of them.

Next month will be my farewell article as Command Chief Warrant Officer and an introduction of the incoming CCWO, CW5 Terry Swartwout. Stay tuned!

For the Corps!

NEWS

Men also victims of sexual assault, researchers say

Story by Judith Watson,
Alternate JFHQ SARC

Did you know that one man in seventeen will experience a completed or attempted sexual assault during his lifetime?

“According to a 2007 study by a team of Veterans’ Administration researchers, a nationwide screening of veterans seeking VA services turned up more than 60,000 with sexual trauma. More than half of those—nearly 32,000—were men.” (Bill Sizemore of the Virginian-Pilot, 10/9/2009)

If it is difficult for female victims to report the crime it is even more difficult for men to contact authorities.

“Boys are not supposed to be vulnerable, sad, helpless, ashamed, afraid,

submissive...” according to Jim Hopper, a psychology instructor at Harvard Medical School.

Military training reinforces that socialization. He further states that “It conditions men to accept physical wounds, death and killing while leaving them unprepared for emotional wounds that assault their male identity.”

The Department of Defense is committed to creating a climate in which victims and survivors feel accepted when they step forward to report an assault.

Victims of sexual assault want to know that they will not suffer negative consequences, either in the form of career advancement or personal stigma.

Two key factors that improve the climate for reporting sexual assault are commander involvement in creating a

pro-reporting environment and the role that fellow Soldiers and Airmen can play in being supportive to the survivor by encouraging that they report the crime.

The good news is that there are now over 32 military Victim Advocates throughout Oregon as well as six Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) for the two Brigades, the two Wings, and JFHQ.

For more information, call the SARC cell at 503-756-5327. You will reach a JFHQ SARC who is your resource for any questions you have regarding sexual assault. You can also call toll-free: 1-877-995-5247, visit online at www.safehelpline.org, or text 55-247 (inside the U.S.), or 202-470-5546 (outside the U.S.) to get confidential 24/7 assistance.

You can make a difference.

Diversity crosses boundaries, exceeds expectations... again

Story by Capt. Dawn Choy,
Supervisory Human Resources Specialist, Oregon Military Dept.

When it comes to defying all odds, many have lived through struggles in order to overcome obstacles to achieve their dreams or goals.

Even though our environment influences our attitudes and affects our behaviors, we have the choice and ability to control what we become.

A great example of this is the recent promotion of our first female Soldier to the rank of Brigadier General.

Brig. Gen. Julie Bentz was recently promoted to brigadier general, and is the first female to do so in our state’s history.

Although there have been opportunities in the past for other Guard members to achieve the rank of general officer, Bentz seized the opportunity to continue to a higher level in her career, and has now set a path for others to follow; not just inside our organization, but also for other organizations in Oregon as well.

In an article published in last month’s Sentinel, Brig. Gen. Bentz said that she was “glad to be an example that doors are continuing to open for all men and women who serve.”

This not only exemplifies the importance of opportunities available to our Guard members, but also the character of those who are recognized, and moved up through the ranks.

The numbers don’t lie: In the Oregon Army National Guard, about 1.6 percent of officers make it to the rank of lieutenant colonel or colonel. Of these, 1.4 percent are male, and just over 1.5 percent are female.

Oregon Army National Guard Warrant program is even more impressive. While just under two percent of Soldiers are in the Warrant program, .36 percent hold the senior positions of CW4 and CW5. They are divided as such; .32 percent male, and .37 are female.

In the Oregon Air National Guard, while 3.4 percent of officers make it to O-5 or O-6, 3.1 percent are male, and 2.4 percent are female.

Bottom line: We are a truly an organization who rewards our membership without bias.

No matter what your gender, race, background or experience, members of the Oregon National Guard have the ability to succeed, grow and create a life that exceeds even their own expectations.

Our organization believes in encouraging diversity and equity in the workplace, eliminating barriers which hinder progression, and provide enhanced career opportunities and professional development for all employees.

Everything we do creates a footprint in history; realizing this, it is incumbent upon all of us to maximize our potential and improve our organizations’ legacy. This goes for us as individuals, and us as an organization.

After all, we create the history by which others will remember, and ultimately judge us.

Going back to school? You’ve got some work to do!

Story by CW4 Diane Beach, Oregon National Guard Education Services Officer

Prior to attending college, you need to be proactive in applying for your college benefits, such as your Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), Federal Tuition Assistance, grants and scholarships. The benefits don’t just happen automatically.

In the case of the MGIB, many Soldiers and Airmen are eligible for more than one program, but you can only use one at a time, so you need to decide which MGIB will provide the maximum benefit before you apply.

Each MGIB is good for 36 months of full time benefit. You can use more than one MGIB, but not at the same time and not for more than a total of 48 months.

Apply for your MGIB through the Veterans Administration website at www.gibill.va.gov, and submit a VA 22-1990 online. Depending on which MGIB for which you are applying, you should upload a copy of your supporting documents which verify eligibility.

If you are applying for the Chapter 1606 MGIB, you need a copy of the Notice of Eligibility (NOBE), if applying for the Chapter 1607 (REAP) or the Chapter 33 (Post-9/11), you will need copies of your DD 214 that verify qualifying active duty time.



Photo courtesy of dianetota.com.

You also need to upload a copy of your kicker contract if eligible.

Soldiers attending a community college may receive more benefit using the Chapter 1607 (REAP) rather than the Chapter 33 (Post-9/11) when used along with Federal Tuition Assistance.

The Chapter 33 pays the school directly for the tuition and fees, but no more than the highest state tuition rate for your state at the undergraduate level.

Soldiers who are not eligible for 100 percent of the Post-9/11 MGIB can request Federal Tuition Assistance.

The college cannot receive duplicate payment from both Chapter 33 and Federal Tuition Assistance, but they can supplement TA with the Chapter 33 so 100 percent of tuition and fees are covered.

With the Chapter 33, you also receive a book stipend and E-5 housing, depending on percentage of benefit.

Soldiers can transfer the Chapter 33 MGIB to a dependent if they have at least six years of service and a four year obligation in the ARNG.

Effective October 1, the Chapter 33 will expand eligibility to include AGR, Title 32 time. Also, the Chapter 33 can now be used for non-college degree programs as well as on-the-job and apprenticeship training programs.

Fall term is the last term ARNG Soldiers can request Federal Tuition Assistance through <https://minuteman.ngb.army.mil/benefits/>.

For classes that begin on or after Oct. 1, all ARNG Soldiers need to request TA through the Army website at www.goarmy.com. You must register on to the website before you can request TA for winter term.

If you are deploying soon, and your spouse would like to receive tuition assistance have them check out the spouse TA program through MyCaa at <https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa/>. If you have questions concerning which MGIB to apply for or how to apply for TA, contact CW4 Diane Beach at diane.beach@us.army.mil.

Stimpson recognized for recruiting efforts



Photo by Guy Britnell, Oregon National Guard Recruiting & Retention Battalion

Oregon National Guard Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, the Adjutant General, Oregon, presents the Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees Recruiter of the Year Award to Staff Sgt. Scott A. Stimpson, during the Recruiting and Retention Battalion’s Annual Conference in Sunriver, Ore., Aug. 31.

Stimpson achieved 393 percent of his recruiting mission during fiscal year 2011, while shipping 93 percent of his enlistments to Basic Training.

He volunteered for the upcoming deployment of the 1186 Military Police Co., leaving for the unit’s pre-mobilization training the following morning after receiving the award.



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FEATURE

Oregon National Guard members participate in annual relay race in Oregon and Afg

A F G H A N I S T A N

Story and photos by Sgt. Anna Rutherford
1249 Engineer Battalion Public Affairs

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – It was an unusually cool evening on Forward Operating Base Sharana – perfect for a run.

With the cool weather and a fresh rain, the Hood to Coast Satellite Run kicked off Aug. 26.

The 12-person relay teams were comprised of Soldiers from the 1249th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Gridley, the 18th Engineer Brigade, Task Force Sword and the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, Task Force Attack.

The relay was run in conjunction with the Oregon Annual Hood to Coast 197-mile run, which extends from Mount Hood located in the northern region of Oregon, to the Pacific Ocean, specifically Seaside, Ore.

Teams are comprised of 12 runners each, running three legs of varying distances. This year marked the 30th anniversary of the relay race, also known as “The Mother of All Relays.”

“We did this for the challenge and unique opportunity,” said Team Warrior’s captain, 2nd Lt. Ray Jones of Dallas, Ore. “This was a good way for us to connect to our home state while deployed to Afghanistan.”

Teams comprised mainly of Oregon National Guard Soldiers were Teams Warrior and Oregon, led by 2nd Lt. Ray Jones and Capt. Daniel Faust of Portland, Ore.



Task Force Gridley, 1249th Engineer Battalion, Oregon Army National Guard, Capt. Robert Earhart of Keizer, Ore., tags Team Oregon team captain, Capt. Daniel Faust of Portland, Ore., during the second day of the Hood to Coast Satellite Run held on Forward Operating Base Sharana in Paktika province, Afghanistan, Aug. 27.

The Hood to Coast is the largest relay in the world and for the past four years, 360 Physical Therapy has sponsored deployed Oregon National Guardsmen with shirts and gear for the relay.

Maj. Russell Gibson of Salem, Ore., ran on a team comprised mainly of runners who ran the legs of the race in Oregon, while Gibson ran as a shadow runner in Afghanistan. There was a live hand-off via satellite phone to the runners in Oregon as Gibson finished his legs.

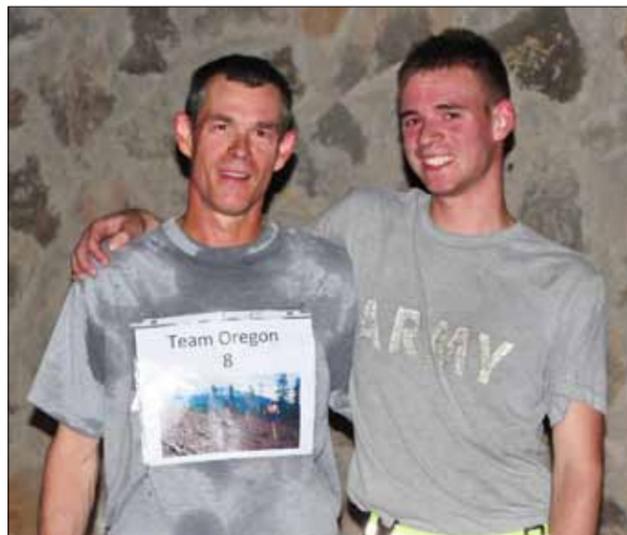
“This has been a great event,” Gibson said. “It’s pretty exciting to be able to run this event with the folks back home.”

The 1249th Engineer Battalion is headquartered in Salem, Ore. with Soldiers from its headquarters and forward support companies currently deployed to Afghanistan. The unit is scheduled to return to Oregon



Above: Task Force Gridley, 1249th Engineer Battalion, Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Polley and son Spc. Alexander Polley pose for a quick photo during the last night of the Hood to Coast Satellite Run held on Forward Operating Base Sharana in the early morning hours of Aug. 28, 2011. Participating runners in the relay race included National Guard Soldiers from Oregon and Nebraska, as well as engineers from the 18th Engineer Brigade and civilian contractors. The Hood to Coast is a relay race spanning a course of 197 miles from Mount Hood, to the Oregon coast. The satellite run was coordinated by members of the 1249th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Gridley, Oregon Army National Guard.

Right: Task Force Gridley, 1249th Engineer Battalion, Oregon Army National Guard Soldier Maj. Russell Gibson of Salem, Ore., finishes his second leg of the Hood to Coast Satellite Run held on Forward Operating Base Sharana in Paktika province, Afghanistan, Aug. 27.



Task Force Gridley, 1249th Engineer Battalion, Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Polley and son Spc. Alexander Polley pose for a quick photo during the last night of the Hood to Coast Satellite Run held on Forward Operating Base Sharana in the early morning hours of Aug. 28.

2011 Hood to Coast at a glance

| | Afghanistan | Oregon |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Total Distance: | 197 mi. | 200 mi. |
| # of legs: | 36 | 36 |
| # of teams: | 3 | 1,500 |
| Starting point: | TOC/CP | Mt. Hood |
| Finish line: | TOC/CP | Seaside |
| Winning team: | Team Warrior | Knoxville Track Club |
| Average temp.: | low 80s | 78 deg. |
| Elevation Range: | 7,300 ft. | 0 - 6,000 ft. |
| Volunteers: | n/a | 4,100 |
| Dates: | Aug. 26-27, 2011 | |



O R E G O N

Story by Spc. Cory Grogan,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

This year’s 30th anniversary of the Hood to Coast Relay was the second time I have run the “mother of all relays,” and the first time running it in Oregon.

In 2009, I simulated the race in Iraq with comrades from the 41 Infantry Brigade Combat Team. I will never forget running past the historical 4000 year old Ziggurat of Ur near the biblical home of Abraham in more than 120 degree heat.

Lt. Col. Christopher Reese, who is now the 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment Commander, ran the 11th leg of the relay that year, taking a virtual handoff via satellite phone. As he exited his office, more than 60 of us were waiting to run with him. Taking a break from hard work and having a connection to home made it a great experience.

When we ran the race in 2009, it was the third year that deployed Oregon Soldiers had run overseas with a team called “360 Goes 180.”

This year in Oregon, I ran the 11th leg in Oregon and handed off to Reese so he could finish the relay for our team. The experience went full circle as we waved a U.S. flag at the finish line in Seaside, Ore., with our teammates.

The concept of “360 Goes 180” is to represent Soldiers running nearly half-way around the world with their “Hood to Coast” team in Oregon. The relay which travels from Mt. Hood to Seaside in Oregon is the largest running relay in North America.

The 2011 team included three teams of 12 runners in Afghanistan, and one Soldier who ran the 11th leg with “360 Goes 180” while deployed.

It was the 1249th Engineer Battalion of the Oregon Army National Guard from Salem, Ore., that took a break from their busy mission to run relay this year.

The operations officer for the 1249th, Maj. Russell Gibson, ran the 11th leg with the Oregon team communicating via satellite phone, and through the Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System.

“The Soldiers who ran once again showed their spirit for the event is remarkable,” said 360 Physical Therapy Owner, Ike Anuciado.



Oregon National Guard Spc. Cory Grogan (right), hands off to Lt. Col. Chris Reese for the final leg of the Hood to Coast relay Aug. 27 near Seaside, Ore. The Oregon National Guard members ran the relay for team “360 Goes 180.” Photo courtesy of team “360 Goes 180”.

Afghanistan: Event great for team-building, great for morale, say Soldiers, participants

Hood to Coast Across the World



The team was started by Anuciado, whose father served four tours in Vietnam. Anuciado, who owns the Vancouver, Wash.-based company said he wanted to take his passion for running and appreciation for what our service members do to give something back.

The two 1249 Companies are currently deployed in Afghanistan supporting Operation Enduring Freedom as part of "Task Force Gridley" which includes Army National Guard units as well as active duty Army and Air Force personnel.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, which is one of the Salem units from the 1249th Engineer Battalion, is responsible for command and control of a forward support company, two route clearance companies, two construction engineer companies, a survey and design detachment, a concrete detachment, and an Air Force well drilling detachment, said Gibson.

He said the Soldiers from Oregon have been extremely busy conducting construction and route clearance operations.

"The focus for all of our missions is conducting them with our Afghan National Army (ANA) counterpart units," Gibson said.

"We are developing partnerships with ANA Engineer units and have begun conducting combined operations with them—this partnership with the Afghan forces is the real focus of our mission here."

He said running Hood to Coast in Afghanistan is a great opportunity.

"Most of the Soldiers from Oregon are motivated to participate in the Hood to Coast Relay as way to stay connected to home; I know that is true for me," Gibson said.

Gibson and the 36 other Soldiers from the 1249th ran more than 15 miles in Afghanistan at elevations between 7,100 and 7,500 feet for the relay. It was his first Hood to Coast race.

Next year, Gibson plans on starting a team comprised of the people with whom he is currently deployed.

"I have considered running before, but for one reason or another it has not worked out—I look forward to running the event next year when we are back in Oregon," he explained.

Reese said he has a greater appreciation for the "Hood to Coast" experience in Oregon after running in Iraq.

"Cory Grogan and I can now actually say we ran the "Hood to Coast" 180 degrees on the other side of the Earth, and here in Oregon," said Reese.

Reese said it was great to see the crowd cheering at the finish line knowing the 1249th was recognized for the great job they are doing.

"The Oregon Guard is loved by so many and I love being part of it," he said.



Above: "Team Oregon" from the Oregon National Guard's 1249th Engineer Battalion pauses for a photo prior to running a simulation of the Hood to Coast relay on Forward Operating Base Sharana in Paktika province, Afghanistan, Aug. 27. "Team Oregon" was one of three teams from Oregon to run in Afghanistan. Photo courtesy of U.S. Army. Above Right: Team "360 Goes 180" founder Ike Anunciado gets ready to run the second leg of the Hood to Coast relay at the Portland, Ore. Waterfront under the Hawthorne Bridge, Aug. 27. Photo by Spc. Cory Grogan, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs.



Above: "Office of the Staff Judge Advocate Team" from the Oregon National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters pauses for a photo during the Hood to Coast relay, Aug. 27. Twelve runners and four volunteers were organic members of the OSJA team. Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Mark Ronning, Oregon Military Department Staff Judge Advocate.

Story by Lt. Col. Mark Ronning, Oregon Military Department Staff Judge Advocate

The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate (OSJA) represented the Oregon Army National Guard at the 2011 Hood to Coast Relay, a 200-mile, race from Timberline Lodge to Seaside. Each team is comprised of 12 members, and each completes a "leg" of the race.

The OSJA is a 27-Soldier section within Joint Force Headquarters with the mission of providing legal services to all Soldiers and Commanders of the Oregon Army National Guard.

The 12 runners and four volunteers were organic members of the OSJA. The team was comprised of university students and professors, paralegals, attorneys, and ranks ranging from specialists to lieutenant colonels.

"OSJA's strong performance in the Hood to Coast Relay is a testament to the readiness and adaptability of the Oregon National

Guard," said Oregon Army National Guard Maj. Bryan Libel. He noted how the addition of 250 teams to this year's relay caused major delays and congestion along the route.

Ultimately, the Oregon JAG team placed in the top 25 percent of the 1,268 teams which ran the race. Capt. Samuel Hernandez, former Judicial Clerk to Chief Justice Paul J. De Muniz, said the race was a demanding, team-focused event which required a strong group of dedicated teammates.

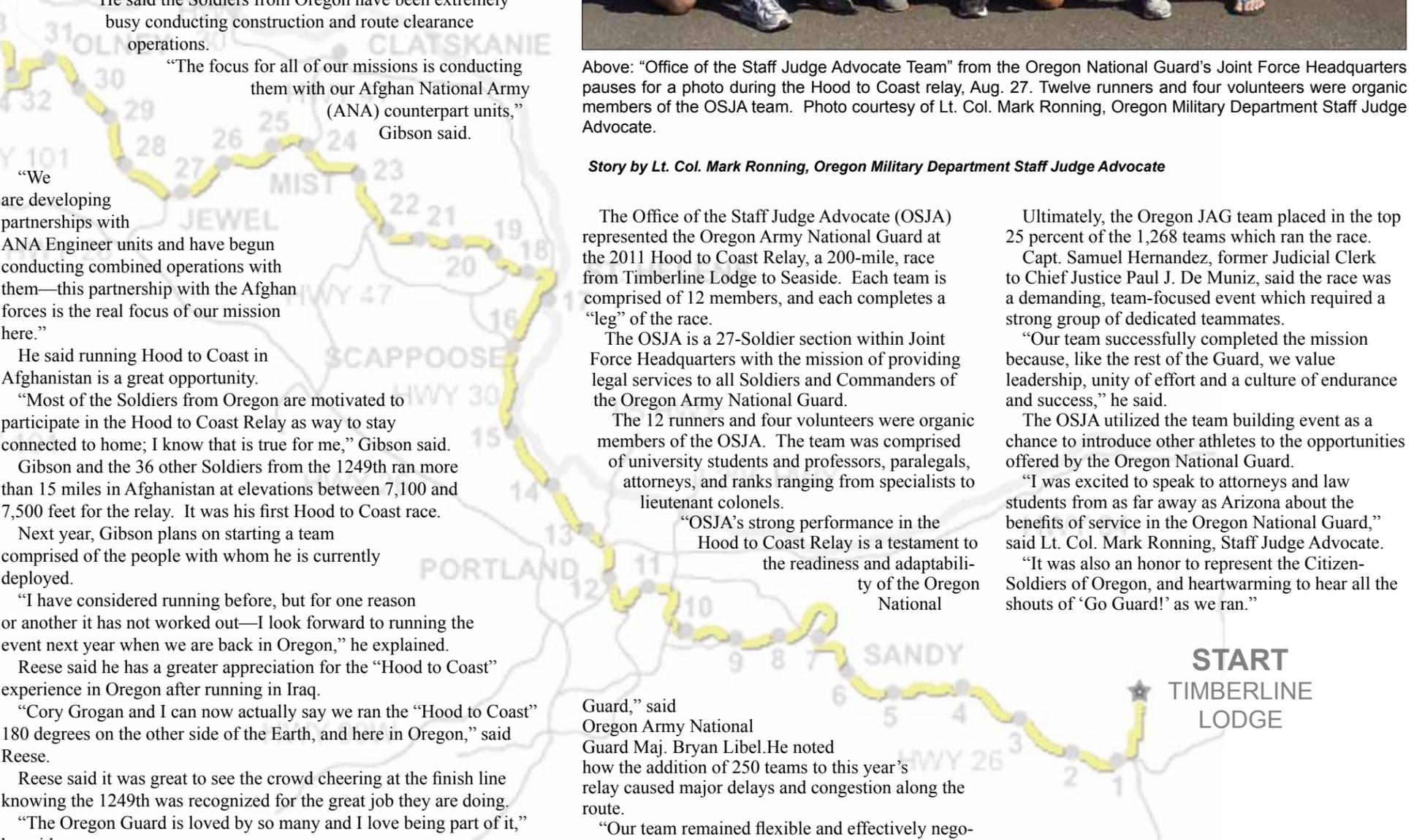
"Our team successfully completed the mission because, like the rest of the Guard, we value leadership, unity of effort and a culture of endurance and success," he said.

The OSJA utilized the team building event as a chance to introduce other athletes to the opportunities offered by the Oregon National Guard.

"I was excited to speak to attorneys and law students from as far away as Arizona about the benefits of service in the Oregon National Guard," said Lt. Col. Mark Ronning, Staff Judge Advocate.

"It was also an honor to represent the Citizen-Soldiers of Oregon, and heartwarming to hear all the shouts of 'Go Guard!' as we ran."

"Our team remained flexible and effectively negotiated logistical challenges, despite the lack of sleep, changing weather and unfamiliar terrain."



NEWS

New facility honors famed WWII unit, 41 Infantry Brigade Combat Team

Story by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

CLACKAMAS, Ore.—The Oregon National Guard’s new 41 Division Armed Forces Reserve Center at Camp Withycombe is scheduled to be officially dedicated during a ceremony on Sept. 16. The facility is located at 15300 NE Industrial Way, in Clackamas, Ore.

Scheduled to participate in the ceremony are representatives of the governments of Australia and Japan; the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, military dignitaries from Washington, D.C. and Oregon; state and local representatives; Oregon National Guard leadership, and members of the original 41st Infantry Division and their families.

The event will coincide with the 62nd Annual Reunion of the famed 41st Infantry “Sunset” Division in Portland, Ore. They will commemorate their unit’s 71st anniversary of being called into active service in 1940.

The unit was comprised of the National Guard divisions of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. All of them are in their upper eighties or nineties. This may



well be their last formal reunion.

The new AFRC is dedicated to the memory of the 41st Infantry Division and its Soldiers—a unit which gained recognition for their sacrifice and service during WWII. To help tell the story of the unit, the largest collection of 41st Division artifacts in the nation are on permanent display at the facility.

The 41st Inf. Div. was the first American Army Division to be sent overseas in WWII, and served longer than any other. They were also the first to be trained for jungle warfare; something they needed for their first assignment in New Guinea.

Their defeat of the Japanese in the Buna campaign, alongside the 32nd Division, was the first American Army victory of the Pacific War. The action earned them the Presidential Citation for outstanding performance.

After the WWII record of 76 days in actual combat—as they drove the Japanese out of the Salamaua area—they began calling themselves the “Jungleers”. The 41st followed up their lengthy deployment by making four major assault landings in just 34 days.

The fourth of those landings, a coral island called Biak, was the scene of the first tank battle of the Pacific war. Again, the Jungleers outperformed their Japanese adversaries.

When they left New Guinea in 1944, they headed to the Philippines, pushing the war closer to Japan. The final assignment for the 41st Inf. Div. was the occupation of Japan itself, near Hiroshima, the target of the first Atomic bomb.

The 41 Division Armed Forces Reserve Center, with a cost of just over \$72 million, is the largest facility built by the Oregon



Details of the lobby entrance of the 41 Division Armed Forces Reserve Center. Below left: Interior details of the state-of-the-art auditorium. Photos courtesy of Barrentine Bates Lee.

National Guard. At just over 250,000 square feet, it will be home to more than 1,300 Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers and the United States Army Reserve.

The project generated more than 1,200 jobs in the state during its construction. The Oregon National Guard broke ground for the new facility in June 2009.

The federal government has funded most of the total cost, with additional funds coming from the National Guard.

Barrentine Bates Lee, of Lake Oswego, Ore. was the architect. Construction of the facility was contracted with Hoffman

Construction Company of Portland, Ore. Actual construction began on June 26, 2011.

Today, the 41st Inf. Div. Association has about 400 members, but the group is seeking several thousand other Jungleers across the country who are living, but not aware there is an association.

If you are a former member of the 41st Inf. Div., please send a letter to 41st IDA, P.O. Box 61, Bloomsdale, MO 63670, or an e-mail to div41@yahoo.com.

Please look for an in-depth story on the dedication ceremony in the October 2011 Oregon Sentinel.

Oregon’s 102 CST trains at Autzen Stadium

Story and photo by Spc. Cory Grogan,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

EUGENE, Ore.—The Eugene SWAT team responds to information regarding suspected terrorists who are ready to act. After apprehending the individuals, they learn there is an imminent chemical threat at Autzen Stadium where the Oregon Duck’s football team plays.

An emergency management contingent including local fire responders and the Oregon National Guard’s 102 Civil Support Team immediately responds. They identify the threat, remove the substance, and decontaminate victims.

It is unlikely an emergency response to chemical, nuclear, biological, and radiological or a high yield explosive incident will be needed at Autzen Stadium, however, an elaborate training exercise, Aug. 16, shows a plan is in place if it does.

The exercise included Eugene Emergency Management, Eugene SWAT, Eugene HAZMAT, Eugene Fire Department and the Eugene Police Department.

“Responders are training for any emergency situation,” said Maj. Wyatt Welch, 102 CST Commander.

City services in Eugene are ready to work with the Oregon National Guard for a quick emergency response, he added.

Based in Salem, the 102 CST is a unit of more than 20 full-time Army and Air National Guard members who can be rapidly mobilized anywhere in Oregon to assist civil authorities. The team uses detection and analysis capabilities for chemical, biological or nuclear incidents. Their goal is to minimize the impact on civilian populations and facilitate requests for emergency and military support by civil authorities.

“The event at Autzen Stadium demonstrates how an interagency cooperative effort is possible in case of emergency,” Welch said.

He said he is glad University of Oregon agreed to sponsor the event because utilizing a venue like Autzen Stadium is



Members of the Oregon National Guard’s 102nd Civil Support Team, and the Eugene Fire Department HAZMAT team, respond to a simulated chemical dispersal at Autzen Stadium in Eugene, Ore., during a training exercise Aug. 17, in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Trials there.

what makes quality training possible.

“Having the University of Oregon allow this is huge because it gets everybody on the same piece of ground learning exactly what our overall capabilities are,” he said.

Sandy Barr from the City of Eugene Emergency management explained that the activity, which included multiple role players, was organized in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Trials.

“Everyone works together to evacuate and decontaminate the role players and it takes a lot of communication and teamwork,” she said.

Welch and Barr agree communication is vital so each agency understands strengths and weaknesses to rely on the best subject matter experts and work more efficiently as a team.

“The cooperation was fantastic, the 102 CST and city of Eugene have built a great

rapport over time,” said Capt. Richard Hosmer, Nuclear Medical Science Officer for 102 CST.

The organizations have state of the art equipment and good people working together to ensure resources are used to the best of their capability, Hosmer explained.

“This shows us how important communication is and it allows us to address that need,” said Capt. Rod Cullen, an Entry Team Leader with the Eugene Fire Department HAZMAT team.

Maj. Demian San Miguel, 102nd CST Deputy Commander, and former member of the Eugene Police Department, said as a resident of Eugene, he has a unique perspective on the exercise.

“It’s comforting knowing police, firefighters, the National Guard, and other local agencies have a plan in place to keep us safe,” he said.

September: Disaster Preparedness month

Story by Jennifer Chamberlain,
Oregon Emergency Management
Public Affairs Coordinator

Oregon’s National Guard and all of the state’s emergency responders do an incredible job of keeping us safe, and sometimes, rescue us from harm.

But they can’t do it alone. It is our personal responsibility to prepare our families to survive during disasters. In doing so, we contribute to the safety and security of the state and the nation as well.

Recent research conducted by FEMA on preparedness showed that 40 percent of survey respondents did not have household disaster plans, 80 percent had not conducted home evacuation drills, and nearly 60 percent did not know their community or school evacuation routes.

In Oregon, only 1 out of 20 people have an emergency kit stored where family members can get to it in the aftermath of a disaster.

September is a time, while out buying school supplies, etc., to put together an emergency kit with the following basic items; Water – one gallon per person per day; food - at least a three day supply; a radio, battery powered of hand crank; flashlight and extra batteries; first-aid kit; dust mask; prescriptions; pet food and water; important documents; cash; extra clothes; blankets.

Make your kit specific to your family and add items that will help you be more comfortable during a difficult situation.

Most importantly, National Guard members and their families need to be as prepared as other first responders since their assistance in the response is so necessary.

AIR GUARD NEWS

Airman called to serve country, God, bids farewell to military

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. (June 8, 2011)
 -- A long line of Airmen wait to receive communion from Chaplain Richard Sirianni on May 15, 2011 at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Portland, Ore.

The intimate World War II-era chapel is nearly filled to capacity with Airmen, there to hear Sunday Mass during the unit training assembly weekend and share in Chaplain Sirianni's final homily before his retirement from the Oregon Air National Guard.

"This is a bitter-sweet day," said Col. Michael Bieniewicz, 142nd Fighter Wing Vice-Wing Commander. "Father Rick has touched every single one of us individually and as in a larger sense the entire Oregon National Guard."

Sirianni's fascination with airplanes began at a young age, as he could hear and see aircraft flying into the airbase from his Mount Tabor home. Yet it was not until his mid-30s that he found the calling to serve as a military chaplain.

In October of 1987, Father Richard Sirianni joined the Oregon Air National Guard with the full support from the Archdioceses of Portland.

After an officer orientation course and Chaplain Service training he began serving as the 142nd Fighter Wing base priest.

"The training I have received in my 23 years of military service has been outstanding and typically 100-percent applicable as to what I do as a parish priest too," Sirianni said.

The early training through the two schools allowed Father Sirianni to deploy. From December 2003 to April 2004, he served as the staff Chaplain for 1st Air Force at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla.

"I turned down the job twice because I was afraid that I was not ready," he said.

Eventually it was 142nd Fighter Wing commander, retired Col. Bradley Applegate who finally convinced Sirianni he "needed to get out of his comfort zone," and take the deployment.

Building on this first deployment, it was three subsequent deployments to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, where Sirianni found he could draw upon his years both as a parish priest and a military Chaplain.

"The first few times in Landstuhl I worked mainly in the intensive care unit and found that fascinating," he said.

In 2004, Father Sirianni found himself again in the ICU after the Battle of Fallujah, where almost all of the U.S. casualties were Marines.

"It happened to be that most of those Marines were Catholic and I worked with their families coming to Germany," said Sirianni.

For his last deployment to Landstuhl in 2008, Sirianni requested to work in the psychiatric department primarily with military members suffering from post traumatic stress and depression.

"I chose it specially to work more as a counselor and because I knew that the skills I learned would be helpful to the Airmen back home here," Sirianni said.

As the former 142nd Fighter Wing Commander, and now the Deputy Chief of



Oregon Air National Guard Lt. Col. Rick Sirianni delivers the Homily during mass held on May 15, during the 142nd Fighter Wing Unit Training Assembly at the Portland Air National Guard Base in Portland, Ore. It was the Chaplain's last mass before he retires from the Oregon Air National Guard after 23 years of service.

Staff, Joint Forces Command in Naples, Italy Maj. Gen. Garry Dean paid tribute at Chaplain Sirianni's retirement ceremony held at the Portland Air National Guard base May 15.

"He has been a mentor to me personally but a cushion and support to all the Airmen in the Guard, as we have gone from a strategic reserve to operations around the globe," Dean said.

Even as Sirianni plans his retirement, he has committed to continuing service in the Oregon National Guard, helping members suffering from the stress of deployments to the everyday issues that come with being a Citizen-Airman.

"The Air Force has just given me too much to take that part away; I still feel that need to help those that serve," Sirianni said.

BG Gregg to 125 STS Airmen: 'Your courage, tenacity and dedication is impressive'



Members of Oregon Air National Guard's 125th Special Tactics Squadron stand in formation during a change of command and mobilization ceremony August 23, at the Portland Air National Guard Base. Photos by Tech. Sgt. Greg Neuleib, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Rescue Coordination Center and Special Tactics mission commander, Joint Special Operations Task Force-South (Task Force K-Bar).

Oregon Air National Guard Commander, Brig. Gen. Steven D. Gregg, said the new commander would inherit an outstanding team at an historic time.

"I have complete trust in your ability to ensure your Airmen are trained, prepared and equipped to fulfill their vital responsibilities down-range," he told Capobianco.

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, Adjutant General, Oregon, welcomed the new commander to the unit, and lauded his background and training.

"We look forward to your application of your many skills, your deep and varied background to the stewardship of this fantastic organization. It's exciting to have you on-board," Rees said.

Prior to assuming his current position, Capobianco was a strategic planner, U.S.

Special Operations Command, Center for Force Structure, Requirements, Resources and Strategic Assessments, MacDill AFB, Fla.

About 30 members of the 125th STS are deploying to augment Active Duty squadron rotations in Afghanistan for six-month rotations starting in the Fall of 2011.

Oregon Chief Justice Paul J. De Muniz thanked the Airmen for their service, and called them "the best special force operatives in the world."

Members of the unit undergo a rigorous two-year training program where they graduate as combat divers, military free-fall and static-line parachutists and are trained to operate in any environment in the world.

Combat Controllers and Special Operations Weathermen provide critical air-to-ground liaison with other special operations teams such as Army Rangers, Green Berets and Navy SEALs.

These duties include tactical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance feeds, or controlling MEDEVAC helicopters or

aircraft performing airdrop missions for resupply.

"What is most impressive is your courage, tenacity, and absolute dedication you bring to the mission and your fellow service members," Gregg told the Airmen who stood in formation in front of guests, Oregon National Guard leadership, family and friends.

"Should the enemy decide to take you on, I have complete faith in your ability to leverage the assets required to professionally deliver a response he will not soon forget," Gregg added.

"Our state and our nation owes you and your families a debt of gratitude, that in my opinion will never fully be repaid," he said.

"Always remember that Oregon is behind you. The leadership team is behind you. Your airmen, families, and employers are behind you," Gregg said.

The 125th Special Tactics Squadron was established on May 1, 2005, and is headquartered at the Portland Air National Guard Base. The unit currently has 79 members made up of Combat Controllers, Special Operations Weathermen, and numerous support personnel.

Oregon Air Guard Chief reflects on anniversary of Afghanistan deployment

I woke up May 19, 2010 in Afghanistan to the sound of my radio and pager telling me that there had been five explosions. As my head cleared I could hear small arms fire coming from different areas of the base.

Almost immediately an Apache helicopter sitting right above my camp opened up with its main gun, which was deafening. I thought I would have hated to be the guy on the other end of that. I was up and in my battle gear quickly.

I spent the next two hours getting water, supplies and more Air Force cops to the fence where the fight was happening. It was determined we needed more war fighters on the perimeter so I went up in the tower and relieved the security forces doing spotter duty so they could join the fight.

This picture was taken when my commander came up to check on me to make sure I was alright. That day taught me that those young Air Force Security Forces (ours averaged 20 years old) on the perimeter fence were the best in the world and gave me a new appreciation for that career field.

Had any one of the many insurgents wearing suicide vests gotten through our perimeter the casualties could have been huge.

As the Camp Mayor and the FSS Superintendent I was able to witness all parts of the fight coming together. Every person in all career fields, including the Army and Marines who joined the fight did their part that day and it worked just as we had trained—as one team.



Photo courtesy of Chief Master Sgt. David Gardner

Oregon Air National Guard Chief Master Sgt. David Gardner, in full battle-rattle, on duty at Bagram airbase in Afghanistan in May 2010.

AZUWUR



Resources & info for "gray-area" retirees

Oregon Guard retirees who have completed 20 years of qualifying service have not yet reached 60 years of age are known as the "Grey Area" retirees.

Although you are not yet drawing retired pay you still have a long list of benefits available to you and your spouse. For more information, contact the Retiree Service Office at 503-584-2891 or via e-mail at NGOR.J1.RSO@ng.army.mil.

You can also visit the following link: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Reserve/soldierservices/retirement/grayarea.htm>.

Retiree office needs your updated info

If you are retired from the Oregon Army or Air National Guard it pays to keep your contact information updated.

When you move, change phone numbers or even your e-mail address, there are several offices to contact; the Retiree Service Office (RSO): 503-584-2891, or via e-mail at NGOR.J1.RSO@ng.army.mil.

This office provides the Sentinel your current mailing address so you can continue to receive your copy.

Defense Entitlement and Enrollment System (DEERS): You can update your DEERS information at any of 10 locations in Oregon where ID cards are provided.

TRICARE: Contact TriWest at 1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-874-9378).

Defense Finance and Accounting Service: (DFAS), 1-800-982-8459.

Pre-Retirement Guide now available

If you are a current Oregon Guard member 58 years of age or older, you are nearing the age you can start to draw your military retirement.

Soldiers and Airmen over the age of 58, and their spouses, should attend a pre-retirement briefing and receive a copy of the "Pre-Retirement Counseling Guide." You may request your pre-retirement briefing

and Guide from your unit of assignment. To receive your retired pay you must apply in writing.

Air National Guard members should contact their commander's support staff or Force Support Squadron.

Army National Guard members should contact the RPAM NCO located in Room 108 of the Oregon Military Department.

Another place to obtain information and assistance on retirement is through the Retiree Service Office, located in Room 243 of the Anderson Readiness Center.

This office is open each Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The volunteers can answer many questions relating to your retirement or military benefits. They can be reached at 503-584-2891, or visit the retiree website at www.orngretirees.info.

Changes to GI Bill coming soon!

As changes to the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Improvements Act have gone into effect many veterans, servicemembers, and their eligible family members will see some significant changes in the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

Most of the changes will not take effect until Oct. 1. As of Aug. 1, these changes to the Bill were implemented: Reimbursement concerning tuition rate limits; multiple licensing certification and national placement exams; prorated housing stipends; monthly kicker payments and veterans being able to transfer their entitlement to eligible dependents.

The intent of the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Improvements Act is to expand eligibility, simplify tuition rates, and ensure that the Act offers the same types of benefits as previous versions of the GI Bill.

For more information, go to www.va.gov.

30-year term fixed home mortgage rate reduced

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) has lowered their 30-year term fixed home mortgage rate to 3.99 percent to qualified veteran home buyers.

150 Years of Oregon Veterans History book now available



Cover graphic for the book *150 Years of Oregon Veterans*. Graphic courtesy of Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Story and book cover by Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

You can now own a piece of Oregon history, as the new book produced by the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, *150 Years of Oregon Veterans*, is available.

With more than 275 full-color pages, over 200 personal accounts of veteran's stories and 650 full-color photographs, it is a 15.5 by 8.5 inch soft cover tabletop style-book.

"There has never been a book quite like this one," said Mike Allegre, a retired Oregon Air National Guard officer who now works for ODVA and was part of the team that produced the book. "There are stunning collections of stories representing 150 years of conflicts including the Indian and Civil Wars, World War I, World War II, the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War and present campaigns in the Middle East."

Order the book by mail, by phone using a credit card or using the online order form. The cost is \$39.95 which includes shipping and handling. (To order, see the information at the end of this article).

To order by phone, call 503-373-2284. You may also order the book and pick it up at the Salem office. For an online order form or to preview the book, visit: http://www.oregon.gov/ODVA/veterans_book.shtml

All proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to the Oregon Veterans' Home in The Dalles, Ore.

Checks should be made out to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Mail them to:
ODVA Cashiers - Veterans Book
700 Summer St. NE
Salem, OR 97301-1285

The ORVET Home Loan Program offers one of the lowest home loan interest rates available. This rate includes a 1.375 percent loan origination fee with an APR of 4.162 percent.

The ORVET Home Loan is a lifetime benefit for eligible veterans. Now with expanded veteran eligibility, the ORVET Home Loan Program has eliminated the previous 30-year eligibility restriction.

For more ORVET Home Loan information and rate details, click the link below, or contact ODVA's Home Loan Department at 1-888-673-8387 or 503-373-2051.

ODVA offers free benefits counseling

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) continues to build better lives for veterans and their families.

From filing claims for health or education benefits to helping veterans obtain earned medals and military awards, ODVA is there with you every step of the way.

The wide array of programs and services are provided by a grateful nation and state.

For more information, visit <http://www.oregon.gov/ODVA>.

Oregon combat veteran finds success in post-deployment spirits

Story by Nicole Hoeft, Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

CAMP ADAIR, Ore. -- One of the great truths about being a combat veteran is that war changes the course of the lives of those who experience it.

When Dawson Officer opened the doors to 4 Spirits Distillery, he knew he was taking on a huge risk, but for this Iraq veteran, this is what he was trained to do.

As a member of the Oregon Army National Guard's now infamous 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Brigade, Officer learned under extreme circumstances that he had to face his fears of living and of dying.

"After that, everything became trivial," said Officer. "What in the world could happen to me that would closely compare to prematurely accepting death?"

It was in this acceptance that he realized what he wanted to do with his life and the distillery was born.

"I was at home drinking whisky thinking I'd like to make this but with some changes. That was the first idea and then it just grew from there," recalled Officer.

To get 4 Spirits up and running, Officer

enlisted the help of his family and friends and he received plenty of it. His father, a Vietnam veteran, and his brother, also a veteran, helped build and construct.

His friends helped weld signs together, build the website and design the graphics for the bottles of his first two products, SlapTail and WebFoot Vodka.

But it was the naming of his company that he sought input from the other men of Delta Company. Officer wanted to dedicate the distillery to the memory of their four friends who were killed while serving in Iraq--Lt. Erik McCrae, Sgt. Justin Eyerly, Sgt. Justin Linden, and Sgt. David Roustum.

"We were combat soldiers who fought side by side with each other. They were hard working guys--dedicated, funny, knowledgeable and respected," he said. "There isn't a day that goes by that I don't see their faces and think about their loss."

4 Spirits Distillery was a name that Officer thought would honor them. Early on he actually scrapped the name, fearing what people would think of his intentions but, he finally decided the guys from his platoon would know best. Their feedback would decide if he would use the name or not.

"My concern was the guys I served with. If they had a problem with it then it was out," said Officer. "I was happy when they all saw the message that I was trying to send and got an overwhelming level of support. They thought it was a great way to honor our friends and the fallen."

The journey from Soldier to distiller has not always been easy. After a certain amount of pain and anguish while learning the trade, Officer now has his products on the shelves of many retail liquor stores.

"My vodka is small batch, it's not volume based. When you make it in small batches you get to care for it a bit more. I distill very slowly and I filter it slowly, but in an unconventional way, as far as I know," Officer said.

The result has produced a smooth, martini grade vodka with a little nose on the back end. He has distilled a winner.

Through the extremes of war and entrepreneurship, Officer has kept life in perspective.

"There are four guys who didn't get the chance to move on with life. I better start making it mean something for all of us."

The 4 Spirits Distillery's tasting room is located in the old Air Force Communications building in Adair



Dawson Officer, at his 4 Spirits Distillery in Corvallis, Ore. Photo courtesy of 4 Spirits.

Village (the old Camp Adair) at 6040 N.E. Marcus Harris Ave., located north of Corvallis off of highway 99W. Visit www.4spiritsdistillery.com for more information.