1-186th Infantry Battalion mobilizes, trains at Fort Hood for deployment

**Story by Oregon Sentinel Staff**

ASHLAND, Ore. — Family, friends and well-wishers of the Oregon Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, gathered to honor the Citizen-Soldiers during a mobilization ceremony, July 18, at the Southern Oregon University’s McNeal Pavilion in Ashland, Oregon.

The deployment is part of the regular rotational cycle of forces to provide security missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The battalion is headquartered in Ashland, with companies also based in Coos Bay, Grants Pass, Medford, Roseburg, and St. Helens.

The unit is under the command of Lt. Col. Noel Hohman and Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Hoppeman. The unit recently completed deployment processing and training at Fort Hood, Texas, prior to departing for Afghanistan.

The unit will provide security and support for military facilities in Afghanistan.

The history of the 41st Brigade can be traced back to 1917 when the 41st Infantry Division was created for service in World War I primarily from National Guard units from Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana.

The 41st Infantry Division was the longest deployed division during WWII, serving in the Pacific. Elements of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team have served in Saudi Arabia, The Sinai, Kuwait, Basra, Iraq and Afghanistan. The brigade deployed a large contingent known as Task Force Phoenix to Afghanistan in 2006 and again deployed the entire brigade to Iraq in 2009.

"The Oregon National Guard today is the best equipped, best trained, best led
**Oregon National Guard keeps getting better every year**

It was just over a year ago when I assumed duties as The Adjutant General, I vividly remember receiving the call from Governor Kitzhaber notifying me that I was selected to follow Maj. Gen. Raymond Ross, and the excitement of that moment continues every day.

Over the past year, I saw firsthand Oregon National Guard Department members live our vision: A ready, professional organization of Soldiers, Airmen and Civilians, trained and equipped to respond to any contingency, natural or man-made. From individual acts of heroism both overseas and at home, to unit-level actions for our State and Nation, to supporting our local, county, and state emergency responders, you always accomplish the mission and exceed expectations. I am fortunate to be part of this organization for almost 20 years, and every year we get better. It is the past year alone we deployed more than 1,000 Soldiers and Airmen in support of overseas contingency operations; fought forest fires; participated in Exercise Newport; and completed an XCTC rotation. The CERP Evaluation published the first CenSOS Playbook; and provided support to our communities. And that is just scratching the surface.

We have a lot to be proud of, and if you look to your left and right, you will see why. Our vision would not be possible, nor would our mission succeed, if it wasn’t for the truly outstanding Military Department employees each of us to work with every day. From our full-time force to our traditional Guardsmen and reservists, your everyday service makes our organization stand out.

You do your jobs extremely well, always answer our State and Nation’s call, and remain Always Ready, Always There!

**CWE Zchenkou assumes State Command Chief position**

Maj. Gen. Dan Hokanson, The Adjutant General, Oregon, appointed me as the Command Chief Warrant Officer for the Oregon National Guard on May 1, 2014. Maj. Gen. Hokanson’s confidence and trust in my abilities to serve as his State Chief Warrant Officer advisor provides me with the motivation and inspiration to complete the CCWO duties and responsibilities.

I serve as the warrant officer advisor to The Adjutant General and participate as a member of the Adjutant General’s primary staff. I am responsible for keeping the Adjutant General informed and making recommendations on matters of warrant officers’ morale, welfare, schooling, promotion, reassignment, retention and general recommendations to improve the Oregon National Guard and operations.

I am a member of a family of eight who grew up in Riddle, a small lumber town in Southern Oregon. After graduating high school in 1982, I began my military career by entering the U.S. Army as a UH-60 “Black” helicopter mechanic. Following my three-year commitment, I joined the Oregon National Guard, where I continued my career, subsequently joining the warrant officer ranks in 1988. For 26 years, I served as a Citizen Soldier, advancing in aviation as a pilot in several aircraft.

My aviation career path has led me to several assignments such as Warrant Officer Pilot, Air In-Command, Instructor Pilot, and Instrument Flight Examiner. This path also includes additional duties as Aviation Safety Officer, Tactical Operations Officer and Command Observer Representative.

During these 26 years, I continued with my civilian education, receiving an associate degree from Umpqua Community College and a bachelor of science from Western Oregon State College. I taught in both the McNair Air National Guard Scholarship program (six years) and Coos Bay School District (seven years) where I was a varsity basketball coach for both football and wrestling.

I deployed with the C-53 “Sherpa” in Support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in June 2004 to Iraq in 2006. In July 2006, I resigned my teaching position in Coos Bay, Ore., and applied, and was accepted to an Active Guard & Reserve (AGR) position as a Fixed Wing Instructor Pilot and Aviation Safety Officer. From October 2010 to September 2011, I returned to Iraq on another deployment. During these two deployments, I completed 1,200 combat flight hours and during my flying career have more than 5,750 accident free flight hours.

It is with these many years of experience of working with others, mentoring teaching, collaborating, and advising that I take with me as I perform my duties in the CCWO role of the Oregon state and I look forward to serving The Adjutant General, and the Warrant Officers.

In the next issue of the Oregon Sentinel, I will share my vision of the Warrant Officers Corps and how we will achieve this vision of leading the Warrant Officers Corps into the Oregon National Guard transformation.

**Gauntt reiterates ANG Command Chief’s AIM points**

Congratulations to Tech. Sgt. Doug Mathews, of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron, Combat Operations Group, Oregon Air National Guard, who was selected as the Air National Guard’s Warrant Officer of the Year and one of the United States Air Force Twelve Outstanding Airmen for 2014.

Tech. Sgt. Mathews is a Silver Star recipient and is the cream of the crop — an outstanding representative of Oregon National Guard. Since becoming the Oregon Air National Guard State Command Chief, I see a wider view of what a great organization we have. Why is this organization so great? It is because of the people that we serve. The focus for me is simple; it is the National Guard Command Chief James Houtsing has identified a few targets that focus on people and are called AIM points.

**The first AIM point is: Inclusive Commitment to the Professional of Arms.** Core values are more than minimum standards. They provide guidelines through our professional and personal lives. You never have to apologize for displaying our core values. Brig. Gen. Michael Stenard, our Oregon Air National Guard command chief, coined a term, “Every Airman is a leader and a leader for every Airman.” That should be our commitment to our great organization.

Health of the Force is the second AIM point. Fill your tool box with tools to become resilient. Embrace the four pillars of resilience (Mental, Physical, Social, and Spiritual). Our Army brothers and sisters break the mold into a separate category. I can only say we have five pillars depending on the training, but no matter which, it comes back to health.

Leadership flows so strongly about a healthy workforce they develop and support programs such as the Yellow Ribbon Program. YRP is all about supporting our Airmen and this program will set up you for success for employing, deployments during the deployment, and re-deployment. YRP provides you information on resources and how to use your benefits. The program is not just for members, YRP is all encompassing; a FAMILY, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, or SAPR, is in the words of the Air national Guard Command Chief Master Sergeant Daniel K. Houtsing, “We take care of the Airmen (Soldiers), we are one team, and we protect each other from harm.”

**Recruit and Empowerment is the last AIM point.** One of the best ways to empower your people is to informally evaluate how they do it, how it was significant, and the impact they had on our organization. Do it in a personal manner and then give them a "Thank you for the things you have done." That reinforce what you told them during your face to face. Don’t forget about the formal awards, identify who you are responsible for and take care of them, they are doing great in your Guard Story. This is the embracing side of our AIM points - the National Guard is the First Choice. We are first responders in manmade or natural disasters, as seen with this year’s fire season. We are the Enduring Choice because we belong to the communities in which we serve and the relationships we have with them. We are the Proven Choice because of the way we continue to serve with excellence. ...Go tell your Guard story!"
National association honors Wickenhagen

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

SALEM, Oregon — Oregon National Guard Capt. Sarah Wickenhagen, an aeromedical nurse practitioner with the Oregon National Guard’s Medical Command, based in Salem, has recently been named by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) as one of the recipients of their prestigious State Award for Excellence for 2014.

Wickenhagen, FNP, DNP, is also a policy analyst for the Oregon State Board of Nursing. She and other nurse practitioners and advocates were honored at an awards ceremony and reception held during the AANP 2014 National Conference, June 17-22, in Nashville, Tenn.

The State Award for Nurse Practitioner Excellence, founded in 1991, recognizes a nurse practitioner (NP) in a state who demonstrates excellence in practice. In 1993, the State Award for Nurse Practitioner Advocate was added to recognize the efforts of individuals who have made a significant contribution toward increasing the awareness and acceptance of the NP.

“I am truly honored to receive this award. I am very passionate about my profession and feel very blessed to be recognized by my peers,” Wickenhagen said.

Prior to joining the Board of Nursing in March, Wickenhagen worked in the Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) School of Nursing teaching in the graduate nursing programs and working clinically in pre-operative medicine. She has a varied background that includes serving as an Army nurse and caring for patients across the lifespan in both primary and acute care settings.

She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1996 from the University of Mobile, located in Mobile, Ala., and her Masters of Science and Doctorate of Nurse Practitioner (DNP) from OHSU in 2006 and 2013, respectively. Wickenhagen is attached to the Oregon Army National Guard’s 2-64st Aviation Battalion, where she provides medical care to unit service members. She is also training to serve as a crew member for the battalion’s MDEVAC unit.

In her spare time, Wickenhagen enjoys spending time with her family, including her husband, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Devin Wickenhagen, who is an Oregon Army National Guard helicopter pilot, and their two children.

“I am very proud to have Sarah recognized for all her work as a nurse practitioner educator and advocate. She inspires me with her dedication and professionalism and it’s very rewarding to see her honored at the state and national level,” Devin Wickenhagen said.

Sarah Wickenhagen said she was very thankful for the support of her family—something National Guard families know all too well, having to deal with military schools, annual training, deployments and work-related responsibilities.

“I am incredibly thankful for my family support and in particular my husband who has been with me on every step of this journey,” she said.

The AANP is the largest professional membership organization for NPs of all specialties. It represents the interests of the nation’s 189,000 NPs, including more than 50,000 members, providing a unified networking platform, and advocating for their role as providers of high-quality, cost-effective, comprehensive, patient-centered, and personalized health care.

State Chaplain promoted to colonel

Story by Oregon Sentinel Staff

SALEM, Oregon - Oregon National Guard Lt. Colonel Scott Delbridge, recently appointed as State Chaplain, was promoted to colonel in a ceremony held at Heritage Park in Salem, Ore., July 12.

The ceremony was attended by family, friends and members of the military, both currently serving and retired.

Maj. Gen. Dan Hokanson, Adjutant General, Oregon, presided over the ceremony. Delbridge has served with the Oregon Army National Guard since 1994 when he transferred from the Air National Guard.

COMMAND

Oregon Air Guard BG Prunk retires

Story by Sgt. Tianna Waite, 41st IBCT Public Affairs

SALEM, Oregon - Oregon Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Bruce W. Prunk, Special Assistant to the Director of the Air National Guard, retired after more than 30 years of service with a ceremony held at the Anderson Readiness Center in Salem, Ore., July 9.


Prunk was commissioned in 1983 through the Air National Guard’s Academy of Military Science. Prior to receiving his commission, he was an enlisted member of the 142nd Combat Support Squadron of the Oregon Air National Guard.

He has served in various positions throughout his career, including Assistant Adjutant General-Air for the Oregon National Guard, the Director of Staff of the Oregon Air National Guard for Oregon Joint Force Headquarters, and Deputy Commander of the 732nd Air Expeditionary Group, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing while deployed to Iraq in 2007.

In his most recent position, Prunk was responsible for strategy development, state and federal liaisons, inter-agency coordination, and special duties supporting the 105,000 Air National Guard members nation-wide.

During the retirement ceremony, Prunk received both the Oregon Distinguished Service Medal and the Oregon Thirty-Year Faithful Service Medal, which was presented by Maj. Gen. Daniel Hokanson, Adjutant General, Oregon. Prunk was also presented with a lithograph of an F-15 Eagle by Col. Rick Wedan, 142nd Fighter Wing commander.

Prunk’s wife, Janice, attended the ceremony and was presented a Certificate of Appreciation from the Secretary of the Air Force.

Lengyel visits Soldiers fighting Oregon fires

Story by Oregon Sentinel Staff


With Lengyel are CW3 Devin Wickenhagen (far left), HH-60M command pilot; Maj. Gen. Daniel Hokanson (center), Adjutant General, Oregon; and Lt. Col. Mark Ulvin (right), State Army Aviation Officer.

The Oregon National Guard assisted with the Beaver Complex fires, which were comprised of the Salt Creek Fire, located 20 miles northwest of Medford, and the Oregon Gulch Fire, located 15 miles east of Ashland. Authorities determined that lightning started the fires sometime around July 30-31.

As part of its firefighting efforts, the Oregon Army National Guard used the CH-47 Chinook helicopter, carrying a “Bambi” bucket which can carry 2,000 gallons of water on a cable length of 120 feet.

Officials determined that the 2014 summer season fires which burned through Oregon, Eastern Washington, and California, comprised the worst fire season on record. See related story on page 6.
STATE PARTNERSHIP

Oregon National Guard's first Bilateral Affairs Officer trades Pendleton for Dhaka

Story by Master Sgt. Nick Chey, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

DHAKA, Bangladesh — How does an Oregonian Guar don fly in helicopters out of Pendleton, Ore., to working hands-on with high-level U.S. State Department personnel and Bangladesh military leaders on Bangladesh-U.S. relationships as part of the State Partnership Program?

Ask Oregon Army National Guard Capt. Craig Davis.

As the bilateral affairs officer (BAO) stationed in Bangladesh, Talicato functions as a State Department Coordination Action Officer and forward Oregon National Guard leadership, information on the operations of the respective National Guard, U.S. Pacific Command commander, and U.S. ambassador.

The BAO works for the combat comman d (COMCOM) and for the Embassy Office of Defense Cooperation. Having BAOs in U.S. Public Affairs' area of responsibility acknowledges the strategic shift to the Pacific.

Oregon entered into the National Guard State Partnership Program with Bangladesh in 2008.

Talicato, who took on the new position in October 2013, and Davis were trained as a C-130 J Mission crew chief and a C-17 Mission crew chief, respectively. Under Davis’ leadership, Talicato and Davis have traveled to Bangladesh, under General John C. C. W. Young, 16th General Support Aviation Support Group commander, and C-17 Joint Task Force Commander, during Operation Unified Assistance.

In his full-time job in Oregon, Talicato taught as an elementary school teacher in Hermiston, Ore.

Talicato has the distinction of being the first BAO in the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) region. Another Oregon Army National Guard officer, Maj. Christian Frizzell, was assigned to the BAO position for Vietnam, another State Partner with Oregon since 2008. Frizzell recently was reassigned as the BAO for Mongolia, who is originally from the Alaska National Guard, and is now in the 190th Intelligence Group (PACOM) region. By the end of the 2013 fiscal year, Oregon Air National Guard has five BAOs in position.

"We all went through the same initial training as C-17s and C-130s," Talicato said. "Their training is screened and boarded. In some cases, candidates are personally interviewed by their state’s adjutant general. All candidates must be ‘promotable’ captains and majors, possess operations and logistics staff experience (or equivalent), have numerous duty training experience, have varied and extensive operational experience at the battalion or squadron, and brigade or group level.

"We are tasked with the role of helping to develop the vulnerabilities and quicksand of the national partners, their home state, and the federal government."

"We understand what is happening all around us, both in our home nation and with the home state, and in the United States as a whole," Talicato said. "We are tasked with understanding the objectives of the U.S. State Department as a whole, the Royal Bengal Armed Forces, our own National Guard, and the Office of Defense Cooperation, chief in this operation and the Defense Attaché." With this aspect of Talicato’s job is to build lasting relationships with Bangladesh’s counterparts and follow the pothole-picking mishap from a wide range of participants including the Defense Department, the State Department, USAID, and other organizations.

"It really is a unique experience," Talicato said. "I do work with amazing people from all over the United States, but I get to work hand in hand with Bangladesh military officers on a wide range of cooperative activities. It is really humbling and rewarding to work with a foreign military and learn that your work contributes peace, security, internal security, stability, and cooperation, and preventing future wars and conflicts."

As part of his job function, Talicato works with the Oregon’s State Partnership Program director, Oregon Air National Guard Col. Mark Crosby, and the deputy director Maj. Manuel Robledo, for State Partnership Program events involving the Oregon National Guard forces to participate in military-to-military events. As a result, the three officers’ worlds are tightly linked together.

BAOs, by default, acquire an intimate knowledge of the State Partnership Program in their state.

"Over the next decade, you are going to see the State Partnership Program continue to expand and become more professionally important security cooperation coordination in Bangladesh," Talicato said.

"Col. Crosby made over 11 trips to Bangladesh over the years which has made a direct relationship with the relationships he formed, and the foundation he created here has made a difference in the regional security objectives of the Indo-Pacific. With the addition of BAOs in U.S. embassies throughout the region, there now exists a full-time, experienced, joint and functional understanding of not only the Indo-Pacific region, but also the Global Partnership for the Expanding Force." The Global Partnership for the Expanding Force is a group of 18 countries to establish a common understanding, and respect between the Oregon National Guard and the Bangladesh military.

"It is this unique understanding, and respect that is a major factor in enhanced security cooperation from things such as natural disasters and terrorism, and preventing future armed conflict," Talicato added.

Talicato and his family have faced several logistical challenges moving from Oregon to Dhaka, Bangladesh’s capital city. In addition, they have had to shift their cultural perspectives.

"Landing in Bangladesh requires you to do things differently than what you are used to, because it is such a profoundly different place than the U.S.,” Talicato said. "Our family went from living in Pendleton with around 15,000 people to Dhaka, a massive country of more than 150 million people."

The Talicatos relocated their personal effects via a PCS move, which Capt. Davis calls a "big logistical task," to say nothing of moving to the complete opposite side of the globe.

"The first thing that the newcomer to Bangladesh experiences is the traffic and nature of driving here," he says. "There is little to no traffic rules enforcement or organization. It is pretty much everybody for themselves out there."

Talicato muses about passengers riding on top of already-occupied buses that would be condemned in the U.S., and a chaotic mixture of Rickshaws, three-wheeler motorized rickshaws, also known as "CGOs," normal passenger vehicles, and thousands of people walking alongside.

"Then there’s all the sorts of animals sharing the road," Talicato says. "It’s quite an eye-opener."

Living in Bangladesh is an experience of constant movement and activity, Talicato says. "Not only because the city is fast-paced and full of energy, but also because the activity is a daily experience and norms are entirely different, but after about six or seven months things start to take on a normality, he adds.

"There are many huge challenges you face in Bangladesh, but the sense of community among the Americans living here in very strong, and we made lots of new friends very quickly," he said.

Talicato said the experiences helped his family to manage many daily household tasks and provide part-time daycare to our daughter," Talicato said. "I think that in the end that is the fact that we have helped hire in our house during the day, but with how busy everyone is, they are only able to do part-time and dirt that finds its way everywhere it’s a real challenge, he added.

Talicato graduated from the University of Montana and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 2006 from Montana Tech. He deployed from Flight School XXI in Fort Rucker, Alabama, in August 2007. He then assumed the role of operational control officer assigned to TF-22 in Pendleton, Oregon. He deployed with the unit as a pilot, platoon leader, and battalion intelligence officer.

He deployed with the 182nd Attack Reconnaissance Battalion from 2010-2011, and operated with the 182nd Security Forces Operating Base Shank, in Logar Province.

The sub-tropical lowlands of South Asia are a stark contrast to the deserts of Afghanistan, or the forests, lakes, rivers and mountains of western Montana, where Talicato grew up loving sports and fishing with family and childhood friends.

"The biggest difference by just taking everything in stride, managing our expectations, and staying the course, I think the area is rich with amazing history," Talicato said. "I am not exaggerating when I say the culture around Dhaka is so different back home is different here. As Americans, we’re used to living in a world where there’s experience. In Bangladesh, you have to take things as they are and withholds judgment, and you risk only seeing the bad and missing opportunities to experience some really great things here."

Talicato says the Bangladesh people are very welcoming, extremely hard working and love children.

"Bangladesh has numerous internal and external challenges facing it, and these challenges are deep and complex," he adds.

The fact that Bangladesh’s population is 90 percent Muslim, which is religiously and politically diverse in the region, is a country in South Asia, and values the role of women in the region, matters at a strategic level, Talicato said.

"The strategic importance of the United States and Bangladesh to the People’s Republic of Bangladesh is true in every sense of the word," Talicato said. "For the United States, it is going to play a leading role in growing and molding this relationship in the 21st century."

Talicato holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Montana (2006), and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Eastern Oregon University (2012), and graduated from the Oregon Army National Guard Captains Career Course (2013) and the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management—Overseas Course (2014).
162nd Engineer Company cumulates year of training at AT

YAKIMA, Washington — When the Oregon National Guard needs something blown up, the 162nd Engineers hope they get the call.

During the last two weeks of annual training at the Yakima Firing Range this summer, Soldiers from the unit did just that.

Besides practicing setting shape charges, designing creative ways to breach metal or concrete, or polishing their Soldier skills, the engineering unit also has a little more important calling — none clearance.

"One of the most important things we do as engineers is route clearance," said Oregon Army National Guard Capt. Raymond Jones, commander, 162nd Engineer Company.

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael R. Polley, 124th Engineer Battalion command sergeant major, of West Linn, Ore., paid the engineer a surprise visit above the demolition site.

He said their annual training is just one of the benefits of being an engineer, and a driving force behind Soldier retention.

"There's nothing more exciting than doing demolitions," Polley said. "And for these engineers, it's a retention tool that keeps them turning back year after year, and they get paid to do it. There's nothing more exciting than that."

The Soldiers spend all year training and working on their craft, and are able to exercise those skills during their annual training cycle. Polley added.

"What our Soldiers are doing here at AT is the culmination of a year's worth of work," Polley said.

Sgt. First Class Gustafson, a medic with the 162nd Engineer Co., said the annual training kept everyone busy with Soldier tasks, engineer-specific training, and weapons qualifications. For Gustafson, he had the added training as a medic.

"All combat engineers have training in demolition," he said. "However, I worked with Soldiers on medical training.

The Cervalli, Ore., native-said engineers have a knack for improvisation.

"What's really cool is having the ability to see what's available rather than requesting specific things that you don't have," Gustafson said.

If the unit deploys, their training as engineers and their improvisation skills give them a number of options to complete the mission, he added. However, he warned, dealing with dangerous explosives could lead to the demand for great attention to detail.

"The devil is in the details," he said.

TheSoldiers stressed the importance of learning these highly-specialized tools of the trade, seasoned engineers mentor young Soldiers, showing them proper "incites" of C-4 explosive and cutting detonation cord in appropriate lengths. All the while, platoon sergeants hover over them, providing guidance and feedback.

"No, no, strap it this way," says Spec. Corey Claswan, unit combat engineer, to another young specialist. "You see, you're getting it all over your gloves," he advises the young Soldier.

"Just take off your gloves and wrap them up with the brick," Claswan finally says, after watching the specialist get more and more C-4 on his gloved hands. Sgt. 1st Class Edward Lewis, one of the seasoned platoon sergeants in the unit watches the interactions and flashes a smile at 1st Lt. Christopher Campbell, the unit platoon leader.

Campbell comments that he won the lottery with Lewis and Claswan.

"Lewis and Claswan are definitely the "ret" behind the science," Campbell says.

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Corey Claswan (standing) and Sgt. 1st Class Edward Lewis, of the 162nd Engineer Company, 124th Engineer Battalion, inspected operations they put through C-4 charges during their annual training at Yakima Training Site, Wash., June 20.

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Pacific Northwest sees one of the busiest fire seasons on record

Story and photos by
Stef Stgl. Jason M. Anzair
Oregon Army National Guard Affairs

MADRAS, Oregon — Citizen-Soldiers with the Oregon Army National Guard joined other agencies to assist with firefighting efforts in Madras, in July.

Two Oregon Army National Guard HH-60M Blackhawks and two CH-47 Chinook helicopters assisted ground crews throughout the logging Unit fire.

The fire complex was made up of five separate fires throughout the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs reservation.

"There has been a lot of rain this season," said Capt. Mike Smith of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. "The winds have been high, but the rain has helped keep the fires from spreading." The fire complex has burned 56,000 acres, or about one-third of the total area of the Warm Springs Reservation.

"We have two pilots, one CH-47 and one HH-60M," said Capt. Scott St. John of the Oregon Army National Guard. "We are working very closely with the local fire departments and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs to make sure the fires are contained."

Soldiers of Oregon's 2-162 Infantry settle into Afghanistan mission

Story and photos by
Capt. Leslie Reed
4th Infantry Division

KABUL, Afghanistan — Oregon Citizen-Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, headquartered in Portland, Ore., arrived in Afghanistan in July. The soldiers are part of a larger U.S. force deployed to the country to help fight terrorism and support the Afghan government.

"We are excited to be here and to be able to make a difference," said Capt. Scott St. John of the Oregon Army National Guard. "We are working very closely with the local fire departments and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs to make sure the fires are contained."

The soldiers are deploying for a year-long mission and will be responsible for providing security and support to the local population.

"This is a great opportunity for our soldiers," said Maj. Gen. Jeffrey N. Cottrell, U.S. Forces Afghanistan. "They will be working closely with the Afghan National Army and police to provide security and support to the local population."
Oregon’s CERFP evaluation exercise a success, inspectors say

Story by Master Sgt. Nick Ochrym
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

WARRENTON, Oregon — The Oregon National Guard’s Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) completed their biennial training and evaluation exercise at Camp Rika in Warrington, Aug. 24-28.

The joint unit, comprised of elements of the Oregon Air National Guard and the Oregon National Guard, tasked approximately 200 Oregon Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen from around Oregon for the event. According to the CERFP commander, Oregon Army National Guard Lt. Col. Michael McCollum, the week was not just an outstanding week of training, but unit members were also able to set some national records in terms of time, training accomplishments, and setting benchmarks.

"One of our evaluators commented that Oregon is in the top-three units in the entire nation, and many of the elements within Oregon CERFP had individual "fans" that the evaluators had never previously seen," McCollum said.

The mission of the Oregon National Guard’s CERFP is to provide immediate response and support to civil authorities, including: incident site search capability of damaged buildings, rescuing trapped casualties, providing medical and trauma care, performing medical triage and initial treatment to stabilize patients for transport to medical facilities, and ongoing recovery of bodies.

Oregon Air National Guard Senior Airman (Tech.) Kyla Wright, a 341st Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Unit CERFP Search and Extraction team, practiced rappelling on the five-story tower of the newly-built rubble pile at Camp Rika.

Wright and other members of the Search and Extraction element have undergone numerous civilian and military courses dealing with medical, explosives, rigging, trauma response, and others — something he believes complements both aspects of his unit training.

"I receive skills in my civilian job that help me in the National Guard, and vice versa. It’s like having two careers," Wright said.

Wright admitted he joined the Oregon National Guard to "create opportunities" for his future and career. "A lot of the skills I have, they’re going to be transferable to the outside world," Wright said.

The Oregon CERFP is one of the nation’s newest validated teams. The team completed required external validation in May 2012, which evaluated members in the technical aspects required for their mission.

In March 2013, the team also underwent a Standardization Evaluation and Assistance Team (STEAT) inspection, which evaluated the CERFP’s mission command and building capabilities.

The team’s results allowed for its ultimate validation and mission readiness status.

Oregon Air National Guard Lt. Col. Alex Charcher-Cohen, Bio-medical Officer for Oregon’s CERFP, said the exercises are important for members of the unit.

"This is the big game for us. This is what certifies us, and allows us to be a resource for the governor and the state of Oregon," he said.

For residents living in the Pacific Northwest, the skills and training CERFP members undergo are critical, Charcher-Cohen said, given the threat of earthquakes and tsunamis.

"This is how professional defense mission is extremely important," he said.

Charcher-Cohen recently attended a seminar which helped write together the CERFP unit members from throughout the country. He said talking with soldiers and Airmen from the Indiana National Guard and its state partner of Israel was eye-opening.

"It’s very important to talk face-to-face with each other because unfortunately, places like Israel have real world experience in things like this," he said.

Indians is partnered with Israel through the National Guard’s State Partnership Program. They go about their training in a different, more realistic way with the use of real explosives and building implosions to enhance their training.

"When they do one of these exercises, they place explosive charges in a building and then blow up the building," Charcher-Cohen said.

Oregon CERFP exercises a combined use of unmanned and live "role players" to simulate victims. Sgt. Ben Clapp, of the Oregon Army National Guard’s 224th Engineer Company, who is the Assistant Training Officer for the Oregon CERFP Search and Extraction Team, said going into confined spaces to rescue a victim gives him a different perspective.

"It’s exciting, tiring and a lot of hard work, but it is a different change from the engineer field," Clapp said.

Search and Extraction members have to receive training in many areas, like basic gear maladies, how the work tiring, hot, and difficult, especially when rescuing victims, he said.

"It’s amazing what dead-weight feels like. (The victims) are heavy, especially down here," he said.

According to Oregon Army National Guard Lt. Nicole Deier, a nurse with the 142nd Field Hospital, one of the challenges to rescuers and medical personnel is the situation associated with rescue, and dealing with death.

"Seeing causalities can cause PTSD," Deier said. "What we’re doing is building a team that can respond to those first responders, and de brief them, and decrease the possibility of PTSD and create resilience (for them) down the road."

Deier said the psychological first aid program will employ a team made up of a chaplain, nurses, and others to help facilitate a debriefing for members of the unit following an incident response mission. In her full-time position, Deier works at a psychiatry nurse at the Oregon State Hospital, dealing with acute mental health issues.

"I think we need to ignore the mental health aspect," Deier said. "People want to remain tough. People’s mental health and physical health are intertwined, and we need to take care of both of them."

Deier had some advice for anyone working as a first responder or in medical care.

"Look out for one another, and don’t be afraid to talk," she said.

In March, Oregon’s Oregon CERFP participated in Vigilant Guard Exercise at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska. Oregon’s Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen worked alongside members from the Hawaiian National Guard CERFP unit, training to respond to a large-scale earthquake scenario.

The exercise tied into the Alaska Shield and several linked exercises on both the state and national level.

Working in a joint service unit like the CERFP comes with its own challenges. Differences in culture, equipment, noncompliance, and simple commands can sometimes trip up members.

Charcher-Cohen said the cohesion between unit members, and the reliance on comrades during their exercises strengthens bonds and friendships.

"Creating cultures that can be challenging, but we’ve worked together to find areas of commonality and understanding, and ultimately it’s about the mission," he said.

Healthcare, education, retirement, and benefits are staying in the Guard

Story by Sgt. Philip Stevors, Oregon Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention

It’s not about passing on to the next generation of Soldiers the knowledge, experience and skills that has been gained through the years of service and training.

This knowledge, with the effort of recruiting and leadership can help guide the next generation of Oregon Guardsmen.

A huge responsibility of senior NCO’s is the ability to instill into their junior members the many different areas, such as NCO’s want to share the benefits and opportunities of military life to the Oregon Army National Guard for a full and healthy career.

The primary reason that Soldiers decide to leave the Oregon Army National Guard is lack of career advancement and lack of opportunities for advancement to receive the best education.

One of the issues not only in the national spotlight but also for Oregon Guardsmen is healthcare. As an M-Day Soldier you are eligible to receive TriCare Benefits. For the standard Soldier in 2014, $516.80 a month it all it takes to be covered, and for families the cost is $3249.29 a month.

When comparing this to what other healthcare options are out there currently, this is a great opportunity to take advantage of. This also is considered minimum essential coverage under the Affordable Care Act. (Please visit https://www.healthcare.gov, as the provider for the West Coast of the United States).

Right behind healthcare, the talk is somewhat paying for the rising education costs. Oregon Guardsmen are at 136 semester hours or undergraduate credit or baccalaureate degree, whichever comes first and 39 semester hours of graduate credit or master’s degree whichever comes first.

In light of recent financial restrictions within the last year, the following has also been applied to rules within FTAs; Soldiers will be eligible for FTA upon completion of one year service after graduating ATG, OCS, or IJOC and Soldiers are able to take up to 16 semester hours of TA funded courses per year.

In addition to this, eligible, Soldiers are able to take advantage of the Montgomery GI Bill, or the Post 9/11 GI Bill, if (it is previously deployed). For a full-time student, the Montgomery GI Bill is $567 a month. If previously deployed, the Post 9/11 GI Bill will pay tuition according to the time you have in active federal service, starting at one year at 50 percent tuition coverage, a BAH payment every month according to some active duty percentage, and a books and supplies benefit.

If becoming an officer and attending college is the direction you would like to take, RTC provides many options available for enlisted Soldiers. Two, three, and four year scholarships are available as well as a stipend per month depending which year you are in active school.

The simultaneous membership program is also available, which allows you to be an officer in training with your current unit. You will commission as a second lieutenant upon completion of the Advanced Course.

If you would rather stay put get into the civilian workforce, the Guard has you covered there as well. The Oregon Guard has an extensive network of employment resources available to assist job-seekers.

For retirement, the Guard has benefits there as well. In the National Guard, with a 20-year career by age 60, you may be eligible to receive monthly payments for the rest of your life. This is based on serving one weekend a month and two weeks a year for 20 years.

Another benefit can be helping you get into your own home. VA Loans are a way for the lender to feel more secure about lending and allow you to get into a home with possibly little to no down payment.

Retention is the responsibility of all Soldiers: it is keeping the force structure. What information you know or have read here to spread the knowledge of what the Oregon Army National Guard can do for Soldiers and their families.

For more information, visit: oneguardsmen.com.

For more information, visit: OregonArmyguard.com.
Oregon Army National Guard's field artillery unit spends annual training at Yakima 'putting rounds on targets'
OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Matthews recognized as one of twelve Outstanding Airmen throughout Air Force

Story by Senior Airman John E. Miller, Air National Guard Readiness Center Public Affairs

When you talk to Tech. Sgt. Douglas Matthews, a proud member of the Special Operations community, one quickly emerges: The Team. Together, men, women, mission, team challenges and team accomplishments. Being part of a team is at the core of how Special Operations accomplishes its mission, not only on the battlefield, but in every facet of their jobs. For Matthews, the Air National Guard Outstanding Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, and one of the twelve Air Force (active component) Outstanding Airmen of the Year, the complete team focus is a way of life.

Matthews was one of the original charter members with the Oregon Air National Guard’s 125th Special Tactics Squadron at Portland Air National Guard Base. He was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in combat on Nov. 27, 2012 in Afghanistan. Matthews was injured in the battle, when an improvised explosive device was detonated under his vehicle, triggering a large explosion on his patrol. Despite his exposed position, he coordinated close-air support against enemy forces. He radioed medical evacuation to remain behind and engage the enemy with multiple air platforms, which allowed him to break contact and return to base — remarkably with no loss of life.

The Silver Star is the nation’s third-highest decoration for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force. Matthews refers to his job as being the team’s guardian. “Combat controllers all have a sense of guardianship for the team. We take a lot of responsibility for them, don’t come back. If we’re supporting aircraft, looking around trying to do our teammates the best situational awareness of what’s going on, on the battlefield.”

Even during his year-long recovery, Matthews made every effort to be a good wingman to his team members who were still deployed. “I can be pretty hard to leave that, to almost abandon those guys while they’re still over there. You feel like it’s your responsibility to help them out, to watch their back,” he said. But there is no shortage of wingmen in a guard unit, and the 123rd lived up to that creed. “It takes a whole to adjust, and it’s a very different lifestyle. You rely heavily on the support of close friends and teammates at homes who have shared these similar experiences,” Matthews said.

After five years of active duty service, Matthews joined the Oregon Air National Guard in 2008 in order to continue his education while still serving the nation. He is currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree in integrative physiology at the University of Colorado Boulder.

“The combat control career field is small. There are only two units in the ANG. I wanted to go full-time to a unit and the Oregon Air Guard allowed me to live wherever I wanted. I scattered bill quarterly. I grew up in Colorado, so that’s where I live. I wanted to still be able to serve in whatever capacity I could manage while still getting my degree.”

Matthews has made physical fitness not only a lifestyle, but soon it will be his occupation as well. He is in the process of opening a cross training gym in the Boulder-Denver area.

“I like the variety with the workouts. There’s always something different. You’re doing. There’s always something pushing you,” said Matthews. “I like the community with [the sport]. It’s a great social outlet. While [military] life means moves and deployments, Matthews says that he can easily find a wingman through fitness. “No matter where you move to, where you go, there’s always some place you can easily meet people.”

Even a professional wingman needs some solitude from time to time, and Matthews finds it by being outdoors.

“Have to be outdoors — I lose my mind if I’m cooped up inside somewhere,” he said. “I love to go hiking, I grew up running a lot. I’m into amature photography. It’s a great way to grab the camera and go on a hike and take pictures of whatever things you see. I can do it by myself or with other people. It especially goes really well with the things that I like doing — being outdoors.”

What he’s serving in the Air National Guard, attending college courses, working out at the gym, or enjoying the outdoors, Matthews shows that Guardsmen are always on mission for their country and their communities.

Focused training allows Guardsmen to enhance roles as Sexual Assault Victim Advocates

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. John Hopenhoefer, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, OR — The training can be both challenging and supportive, as trained professionals and instructor assistants victim advocates with corresponding their roles, and processing cases that involve sexual abuse and assault.

The three days of instruction and class work, held June 24-26, allowed members of the Oregon Army and Air National Guard to bolster their skills and reinforce their responsibilities as Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SARP) victim advocates.

In a report released by the Pentagon in May of this year, 5,061 service members reported being sexually assaulted in 2013. The record high number and increase of reported claims can be attributed to new efforts to encourage reporting and is a direct result of the SARP program.

The overall goal of the training helps victim advocates serve as facilitators and as a confidential source to aid a victim of sexual abuse, and begin the process of getting the assistance they need to recover.

“That’s what we’re here for,” said Army National Guard Maj. Rey Agpillana, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), for Joint Forces Headquarters, in Salem, Oregon.

“This training is to give knowledge and encourage proficiency so that you can be successful in your roles as victim advocates,” he added.

In his role as the SARC, Agpillana oversees the SARP program for the State. The training helps victim advocates remain current in their roles as they are required to attend 32 hours of training within a two-year period.

The informal class structure allows for interaction between victim advocates and instructors, facilitating a wide range of questions to be asked, and issues to be discussed. This was the first time the training had been held at the Portland Air National Guard Base.

Agpillana pointed out that although the rates of sexual assault are highest among women, “the actual numbers are higher among men, because more men serve in the military,” he said.

Along with stories and case studies the group watched several videos that explored the nature of sexual violence and how the military is working to educate uniformed members on the lasting impacts of sexual assault. As victim advocates, the challenges are daunting when having to help to reduce the rates of sexual assault and abuse, Agpillana said.

“Just remember to have faith in your leadership and your SARC’S; they are there for support and advice,” he added.

Dr. DeAnn Smetana, 142nd Fighter Wing director of psychological health, leads a discussion on “personal space” during three days of training for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SARP) training, June 24-26 at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Ore.

“Your role is to be able to listen,” said Smetana. “As caregivers, each of you has unique traits that allow you to give the person assistance. This role constantly demands,” she said.

In one particular exercise, Smetana had individuals pair up, then with one person stationary, the other approached until they hit, “a personal comfort zone,” to illustrate how each person has their own degree of “comfort area.”

To better assist victims of sexual assault, Kelly Dominoce, from the Portland Veterans Administration Medical Center in Vancouver, Wash., further elaborated on the role of victim advocates when left, and going individuals suffering from sexual abuse.

“With trauma, there is no ‘one-way’ that someone responds to an MST [Military Sexual Trauma] event,” Dominoce said.

She described to the class that it is not uncommon for some individuals to wait for years to get help or begin the healing process.

“There is a stigma behind sexual assault, where self-blame or self-worth comes into question for those suffering,” Dominoce said.

She pointed out that victims will be left with lingering unanswered questions. “Often times women will question themselves — why didn’t they fight back during an assault, whereas men will often question issues associated with sexual orientation.”

Even as the media has recently reported backlogs for VA medical cases, helping members get the support they need has not affected victims of military sexual trauma.

“For MST cases, the VA does a really good job of getting a consultant assigned in 48 hours,” said Dominoce. Elaborating on the assistance and process, Dominoce said, a normal cycle of treatment can take anywhere from six to nine months of self-follow through.

“The assistance and professionals in place can help bring about dramatic and enduring changes for those suffering from a sexual assault,” she said.

The Oregon Air National Guard is a robust team of colleagues that are unrelentingly committed to helping our airmen and women along the way. Whether it’s through combat missions, or personal life challenges, the Oregon ANG is a place where our Airmen can rely on one another and remain resilient. Click here to learn more about the ANG: wa.ang.mil

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**OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

**Chief Master Sergeant of the ANG visits Klamath Falls**

**Story by Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs**

Klamath Falls, Oregon — The command chief of the Air National Guard visited Klamath Field in Klamath Falls, July 15. Chief Master Sgt. James Houdt hosted numerous sessions with Airmen from the 173rd Fighter Wing and 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron ranging from junior enlisted, company grade officers, to Airmen support personnel, such as the director of psychological health and the chaplain’s office.

He frequently touched on the difficult fact that military budgets are slim and explained that this is not going to change. He stressed that the profession of arms is changing, and that Airmen must adapt to a new environment.

"Are things changing rapidly in our United States Air Force?" he asked the audience to give a general agreement. "We need to be able to close the door to the future, be frustrated, to be a professional in this profession of arms, and who needs to change? - we do.

He went on to say this is the starting point for the rest of the conversation, meeting, discussion, and, looking toward what the future has in store. Houdt brought his unique perspective from the top of the enlisted corps and spoke bluntly about what he sees down the road.

"If we do not change the way we do business, we will face enemies who are peers to us in military strength — and that’s scary," he said.

He emphasized that what cost savings are realized through cuts now are providing a safeguard against that point; that the money we are able to invest in future systems and weapons platforms for that contingency are critical.

While the chief discussed some difficult concepts affecting our Air Force and Air National Guard, Chief Master Sgt. Houdt reached Airmen with a positive message.

"Out of the three components active, Reserve and Guard you are the best of because of how efficient you are, because you do more with less," he said.

The 173rd Fighter Wing sees this unfolding as, "We spend the number of pilots produced without greatly increasing costs, and with the addition of a modest complement of active-duty Airmen scheduled to begin arriving in the fall.

When asked whether the Guard would enjoy equal footing with the active duty on benefits such as base gyms and other nice-to-have infrastructure, he compares the cost of those programs balanced against the ANG’s efficiency saying “it’s a dangerous road to go down.”

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**Kingsley Airmen test defensive techniques during combatives competition**

**Story by Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs**

Klamath Falls, Oregon — The 173rd Fighter Wing Security Forces Squadron Airmen spent two days grappling with each other during a combatives course held June 18-19.

The security forces combatives course teaches various techniques with names like the guillotino, arm bar, and rear neck chokes.

Tech. Sgt. Clinton Wells and Staff Sgt. Matthew Taylor led this two-day annual training after volunteering to become instructors for this newly expanded program. Taylor and Wells share a passion for the self-defense program.

"I like that it brings a lot of knowledge to our Airmen; a lot of the situations we have to go into were not always in the best position," said Taylor. "This is going to teach us how to have a turn around situation around," he said.

The combatives program teaches both self-defense and weapon defense.

Airmen learn to use their skill sets to escape compromising situations and regain control.

"This system we are teaching is highly effective," said Wells. "We are teaching them how to fight."

The Airmen began by practicing the techniques and gradually build up to effectively use the techniques to dominate the situations.

"There are times when you can’t control the environment you are in," said Wells. "All of sudden you find yourself in a bad position...you may be knocked on the ground, you may be putting choke holds on you,...we are teaching how to fight out of that situation and turn it around to your advantage."

The security forces trainees all agreed that through difficult, the training is beneficial.

"It is useful training," said Senior Airmen Ryan Kahle. "It’s just logging flight hours to train the brain to not cave-in in the worst possible situation."

Training that emphasizes the hands-on aspect can be physically taxing.

"I don’t know if I’d call it fun, but it’s better than a B.O.D.," said Kahle."

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**Science, math and technology the focus of Kingsley’s STARBASE Program**

**Story by Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs**

Klamath Falls, Oregon — Just over a year ago, former STARBASE director Markweighted chose to leave the STARBASE program and returned.

She sought at the time that the doors of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program would remain closed for good.

But after a turbulent year consisting of STARBASE being pulled out of the sequestration budget fight, Kingsley Field’s STARBASE program is once again up and running — for the students.

Congress restored funding for the program for next year, but the rebirth is still to be seen.

Currently, the program doesn’t have a new director, but Ashley Lemieux, the office manager hired in 2014, fills some of that role. She says next year remains cloudy and unsure of what the program will consist of, as well as what it will look like.

"We already have on two-thirds of next school-year’s calendar full... local schools are eager to secure their place in the program," said Lemieux.

The curriculum is not only educational and beneficial for the students, it’s fully accredited.

Students spend a week at Kingsley Field, arriving in the morning and leaving at the end of the school day — and it’s free to the schools that take advantage of it.

Upon entering the classroom there are models of cars and rockets, a lab area boasting a 3D printer, and contraptions of all shapes and sizes.

A shelf holds a dozen programmable robots in one corner, yet one thing conspicuously missing — stacks of text books. That’s by design; the program is entirely hands-on. Science is taught through experiments, bridge building with cardboard, egg drops in protective containers and numerous other lab experiments designed to drive students into the worlds of engineering, science, and math.

"It’s the type of educational experience that is at a premium for many districts here and around the state says Suzette Nierach, a Henley Elementary School teacher.

"I have had 34-37 students all year this year in half of a modular unit, about 64-squares-feet, we literally don’t have room for a booklet much less all of this great equipment," she said pointing to the full lab made ready for her sixth graders to perform experiments involving hot and cold reactions.

Lana Lokey, another STARBASE teacher stands at one of the stations using a mortar and pestle to guide Alka-Seltzer for the endothermic reactions.

"We’re going to see some rusty explosions," she said with a smile. "It’s about getting them to say ‘boooch', and then you have them, it’s the best part of the job."

Lokey goes on to say that every school who visits the facility confirms that teaching STEM subjects is squeezed by the necessity of teaching the three R’s — reading, writing and arithmetic — and that virtually no school has the time or space to perform experiments like the one she is preparing — and if they are able to teach science it is relegated to a textbook.

"STARBASE provides the avenue to leave the textbook behind and not only learn, but get excited about a future in one of these disciplines," said Lokey.

For more information about STARBASE Kingsley please call the office manager, Alexia Janelle at (541) 852-6472 or email alobstrainer@gmail.com.
‘Charlie Med’ brings a M.A.S.H.-style mobile medical unit to Yakima’s AT

YAKIMA, Wash. — Most people who grew up watching television in the late 1970s and early 1980s are familiar with the situational comedy show M.A.S.H., which chronicled a U.S. Army mobile medical unit during the Korean War.

According to the Oregon Army National Guard’s Charlie Co., “Charlie Med” 141st Brigade Support Battalion commander, Capt. Greg Friesen, his new Troop Medical Clinic (TMC) is very much like the one in the show.

“This bunch is a tight-knit group who cares for each other, and they have a lot of caring and compassion,” Ramirez said. “They joke and have a good time, but when it’s time to practice medicine, there’s nobody more serious than this bunch.”

Made up of 44 personnel, including doctors, nurses, administrators, dentists and various technicians, the unit is stationed in in Integratedelta-2 care, or patient stabilization.

Comprised of nine tents, some of which are connected via modular hallways — the largest of which being the main hospital section — resembles large igloos connected with passageways.

Second Lts. Alexander Davidson, Charlie Co., Treatment Platoon Leader and Health Services Officer for the TMC, said while the medical corps is somewhat released.

“Even though we don’t do this every day like the active duty, the people in this unit have a lot of experience from their civilian jobs, and you can see how it crosses over when they come to drill,” Davidson said.

Davidson, a recent graduate from the University of Wyoming, works part time as a relief counselor at a children’s treatment center.

Originally from Fort Lewis, Washington, Davidson comes from a military family, but admits he never really considered a military career as a youth.

“The military wasn’t my first choice. I went to UO to run track, and ran into some ROTC guys, and it caught my eye,” he said.

“I never thought I’d take my career this far, but I’m very happy with the way things have turned out,” he added.

Ramirez is happy Davidson decided on a career path with his unit.

“I’ve been there,” he said. “I’ve got three young lieutenants, which are Medical Service Corps personnel, so their learning curve is extremely steep.

To be able to come here and do not only their administrative and leadership tasks, but to take it upon themselves to learn the medicine side of it, a big thing, I think Davidson is going to be a very effective leader.”

Self-training is not limited to the unit’s leadership. All soldiers within the TMC ensure their medical skills are kept up to date, and balance their training by professional education to keep their medical certifications up to date.

Spc. Nathaniel Newton, of Wilsonville, Ore., a treatment medic for Charlie Co., is hoping to acquire skills as an x-ray technician in order to broaden his civilian career horizons.

“The training is fantastic,” Newton said. “It’s been nice to get out on the ranges with these new facilities and our new capabilities. If we wanted to, we could make tennsa scenarios, so there’s a lot of training and classes that need to happen, including a mass casualty exercise. AT is definitely the shortest amount of time to do the most training.”

Newton said the unit members spend all year building up to their annual training cycle, but unit soldiers have a number of other warfighting and administrative functions to complete.

He concedes it’s difficult for most to fit in all the medical-related training and patient care during their monthly drills, but he concurred with the commander’s assessment that members of his unit are self-starters, and motivated to train themselves on medical tasks.

“It’s the training and the camaraderie,” Newton said. “If you’re in an Army career, you should go into a job that you’re passionate about. The Army gives me that.”

“Everyone in the unit is knowledgeable. There’s a sense of passion for patient care,” Newton said. “It comes down to providing the best patient care you can. There’s a great feeling about being able to help someone.”

For soldiers interested in becoming members of Charlie Med, Ramirez recommends taking Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) courses at local community colleges.

“Having some background in medicine — understanding the concepts, or a hands-on doctrine is what you need,” Ramirez said.

“Most of our medics are civilian EMTs. Those classes are short, inexpensive, and easy. It will give you the fundamental skills, but also be able to use easy concepts and common terminology,” he said.

“Charlie Med” is based at the Kller Armory in Portland, Ore.

Story by Capt. Guy Gregory
Photos by Spc. Marissa McLane, 141st Brigade Support Battalion

Soldiers pause during annual training at Yakima for safety ’stand down’

Safety was a top agenda item for Soldiers of the National Guard’s 141st Brigade Support Battalion during the unit’s annual training at the Yakima Training Center in June.

According to the unit safety officer, Capt. Cameron Nichols, the event was not only the first of its kind for a unit under the Oregon Army National Guard, but will be held on an annual event.

“Our battalion commander wanted to bring something interactive in one location that held the interest of our Soldiers and enhanced our unit readiness,” Nichols said.

The event was the culmination of months of planning which began with the Oregon National Guard Safety Office in Salem.

Nichols coordinated the event along with Lt. Col. Michael Burghardt, 141st IBSB command, expressed his vision to get Soldiers more actively involved in learning and practicing the five risk management steps to mitigate hazardous conditions on and off duty.

Lt. Col. Robert Frasier, state safety officer, said he was very impressed with the unit’s commitment to safety, and over the course of a year, observed how senior noncommissioned officers mentor junior members on how to manage and mitigate risks.

“We’re part of the unit culture,” Frasier said. “The 141st IBSB is the only unit in the 41st IBCT to conduct a Safety Stand Down day, and I know the Soldiers only enjoyed their time at all the safety stations.”

The all-day event focused on the importance of risk management and its role in ensuring Soldiers remain safe on and off duty in their daily lives.

Soldiers participated in six separate events; conducting essential combat life support, how to perform CPR on unconscious victims, boating and motor vehicle safety, safe use of fire extinguishers, and how to plan for conducting missions and recreational activities safely by conducting pre-mission checks and inspections.

Participants were briefed on how to identify and respond to hazards as well as find ways to mitigate hazards when planning and executing any activity.

Cedar Crest Regional Hospital said the events reminded Soldiers of the importance of standards for safety and how to work as a team to effectively apply those standards to create a safe home and work environment.

“The event was to train every Soldier to be mentally up to the standards of every station they visited,” Flores said.

Burghardt said his intent for the Safety Stand Down is to ensure his Soldiers take what they have learned and apply those lessons to safely conduct all missions, including convoy operations.

Leaders are required to brief all Soldiers prior to conducting any mission, and this includes a safety brief.

According to Burghardt, Soldiers can also take the lessons learned and apply them in their daily lives.

"Because of the topics covered and the hands-on presentations, service members will remember these skills and teach their family members how to apply them in their daily activities,” Burghardt said.

Sgt. Summer Besel, who participated in the Stand Down, says she understands the commander’s vision for the event.

“It’s the event in a good idea. Soldiers will feel more prepared, as the event provides an overview of safety procedures that can be applied to mitigate hazards we may encounter in both our military and civilian lives.”

The Safety Stand Down concluded with an awards ceremony that recognized Soldiers who consistently demonstrated an uncompromising work ethic of safety at annual training.

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Nick Cloy, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard 2nd Lt. Alexandra Davidson, treatment platoon leader for Charlie Co., 141st Brigade Support Battalion, works on a computer program in the Troop Medical Clinic (TMC) during the unit’s annual training at Yakima Training Center, Wash., June 21. The unit’s TMC supports medical needs of service members with a full complement of doctor, nurse, dentist, x-ray, and administrative services.

Oregon Army National Guard Maj. Brian Stramell, executive officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 141st Brigade Support Battalion, uses a fire extinguisher to put out a fire during a brigade Safety Stand Down held at the Yakima Training Center, in Yakima, Wash., June 24.

An Oregon Army National Guard Soldier practices CPR during the unit’s safety stand down held during annual training at the Yakima Training Center in June.
FEATuRES

Oregon Soldiers, Airmen compete for ‘Iron Chef’ title at 2014 Bite of Oregon

PORTLAND, Ore. — A cooking team from the Oregon Army National Guard took first place in the dessert portion of the Bite of Oregon event held in Portland, Ore., Aug. 16.

The winning team, comprised of Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Jeffrey Reed and Sgt. Elizabeth Stewart, both of Golf Co., 141st Brigade Support Battalion, took the title with a mixed berry cobbler using a combordal style cake. The secret ingredient announced just prior to the start of the competition was whole sweet corn. In 2013, Reed and Stewart competed in the annual Phillip A. Connolly cooking competition put on by the Department of the Army. The duo garnered both state and regional titles in the competition.

Reed, a native of Coos Bay, Oregon, is a member of the Oregon Air National Guard team, with head chef Master Sgt. Michael “Mick” Greener and teammate Chef Master Sgt. Michelle Marshall. The Air Guard team prepared a mixed berry cobbler and sweet corn creme brulee. Marshall came to the competition with formal culinary training at the Culinary Institute of Portland.

Above left: Oregon Air National Guard Master Sgt. Michael Greenaud (left), and Chef Master Sgt. Michelle Marshall (right), serve berry cream dessert with sweet corn compete to judges Above, Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Jeffrey Reed (right) and Sgt. Elizabeth Stewart (left), prepare their dessert recipe during the Iron Chef portion of the Bite of Oregon event held in Portland, Ore., Aug. 16. Reed and Stewart won the Bite of Oregon competition with a mixed berry cobbler with sweet corn as the secret ingredient. In 2013, Reed and Stewart participated in the annual Department of Army Phillip A. Connolly Award Competition for cooking, taking both state and regional titles.

“This is a great chance for our Citizen Soldiers and Airmen to show how they are fantastic members of our community, and during a great event such as the Bite of Oregon,” said Maj. Gen. Daniel Hokanson, Adjutant General, Oregon Army National Guard.

Oregon Army National Guard Ryan Sablan, food service specialist and first cook for Golf Co., 141st Brigade Support Battalion, said he expected the Soldiers on his team to do well, in part because they had been preparing for this event by default of what they do in their full-time civilian jobs and during drill weekends.

“Every drill is a live mission,” Sablan said. “Preparation (for this event) has been happening with experienced food service folks as long as they’ve been in the military, and in some cases in the civilian world.”

Sablan, who acted as the Army Guard’s team advisor and coach, competed in the 2012 Bite of Oregon against chefs from Circo.

He said every new challenge has to be treated like it’s the first time, and just because his Soldiers came to the event with a lot of expertise, didn’t mean they were assured victory.

“The Air Force is very competitive, so we need to get into a situation where we meet and exceed the standard. Even though both branches are internal, there is a sharp sense of competition today,” Sablan said.

Stewart said her team did not expect to win, and lauded the Oregon Air National Guard team for a very professional effort. She added that many of the audience members had no idea the Oregon National Guard had cooks or any level of culinary talent.

“This is awesome, because a lot of people get to experience and see how we train all year,” Stewart said. “This event helps people understand that we do more than go to war or learn to shoot a gun. Our Soldiers have many talents.”

Proceeds from the annual event went to benefit Special Olympics Oregon. For more information on The Bite, including event schedules, please visit: www.biteoforegon.com.

Oregon Army National Guard Maj. Jeffrey Reed (left) and Sgt. Elizabeth Stewart, give each other a ‘high-five’ in celebration after their team was announced the winner of the Iron Chef portion of the Bite of Oregon event held in Portland, Ore., Aug. 16.

Oregon National Guard brings the ‘boom’ to Waterfront Concert in Portland

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Oregon National Guard helped kick-off the 2014-2015 season of the Oregon Symphony during the 18th annual Waterfront Concert at Tom McCall Waterfront Park in Portland, Oregon, Aug. 28.

The concert was opened by the 234th Army Band and closed with a Hawtita salute during the symphony’s grand finale. Citizen-Soldiers of Alpha Battery, 2-218th Field Artillery Battalion, were members of the delegation from the Oregon National Guard’s 234th Army Band, and several other local classical performers.

General, Oregon, during their visit to Oregon as part of the Oregon National Guard’s State Partnership Program. Members of the delegation posed for photos with the Hawtitas and the Soldiers. Their interpreter said they enjoyed the concert and were impressed with how the Oregon National Guard gets involved with the community.

The Waterfront Concert also featured performances by the Metropolitan Youth Symphony, Hillbore Mariachi Una Voz, BRAVO Youth Orchestra, Portland Youth Philharmonic, the Portland Tucha Drum troop, and performances by the Portland Opera and Oregon Ballet Theater. The event also featured a live fireworks display.

In 2013, the Oregon Symphony canceled the event at Waterfront Park due to budget constraints. The annual concert typically costs $192,000, with partial funding through the City of Portland’s Regional Arts Culture Council. At the time, Portland Mayor Charlie Hales vowed to restore funding for this year’s event.

Soldiers from Alpha Battery, 2-218th Field Artillery Battalion also participated in annual training at the Yakima Training Center in June, along with Soldiers of the 141st Brigade Support Battalion and 62nd Engineer Company. Alpha Battery, 2-218th FA Bn., is headquartered at the Jackson Armory in Portland, Ore.

Are you prepared for emergencies? Being prepared means being equipped with the proper supplies you may need in the event of an emergency or disaster. Keep your supplies in an easy-to-carry emergency preparedness kit that you can use at home or take with you in case you must evacuate.

For more information, or to build a kit, visit the Red Cross website at www.redcross.org/prepaprelocation/home-family/gyt/kit

Be a survivor, not a statistic!
Charlie Co., 1-186th Infantry, soldiers overcome obstacles

Oregon National Guard Soldiers from Charlie Company, 1-186th Infantry, based out of Milford, Ohio, conducted psychological operations training and evaluations at Fort Hood, Texas, prior to their departure for Afghanistan. The major tasks during those few weeks culminated in qualifications for the crew on mounted gunnery.

The different stages for qualifying a unit can be very arduous, resulting in long hours in the heat and humidity of Texas, testing Soldiers' physical fitness, discipline and mental readiness.

The qualification process started with getting Soldiers qualified to drive the different vehicles they will be utilizing during their deployment. These vehicles are the M1A1 Abrams, M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle and M1A1 SEP V2, two vehicles belonging to the Armored Combat Team, followed by a two-week training period on the weapons systems.

"The next step was for the soldiers to qualify on the weapons systems they are assigned," the soldier said. "The training went almost to a week on different ranges training their marksmanship abilities, ranging from their individual weapons to crew served machine guns. The next stage involved the crews moving through several scenarios, engaging a series of targets while being graded on time, accuracy and correctness of commands.

Once the individual crews were qualified on weaponry, the next task was to conduct a convoy live fire patrol. This exercise comprised of several vehicle crews, which moved along a route and encountered scenarios to test their ability to react to the different situations in a timely, organized and effective manner. The crews practiced Improvised Explosive Device (IED) detection and reacted to simulated explosive and small arms fire. The crews were more proficient and confident in their abilities to coordinate fires safely and effectively with those units beside them.

This sort of training is important for the unit because it familiarizes them with the vehicle and weapons systems that will be essential tools for them during their time in Afghanistan. It also builds their ability to work as a team."
Retiree offers praise for Oregon Sentinel

Greetings. This is just a quick note to offer praise for the latest edition of Oregon Sentinel. This is a top quality publication and I look forward to every edition.
- Gary K. Miller, CBMCo (ret.)

Bonamici speaks at Employer Summit

U.S. Representative Suzanne Bonamici, (D-OR, 1st District), speaks to audience members during the Northwest Military Employer Summit, held at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas, Ore., June 5. The event was organized by the Oregon National Guard’s Reintegration Program and the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). The event brings together community leaders, elected officials, and representatives of Oregon’s military to recognize select employers who support their military employees. Bonamici presented an ESGR Seven Seals Award to Ed Passport for their dedication and support of military service members employed at the company.

Oregon’s Substance Abuse program addresses concerns

The U.S. Military has a long history and culture of alcohol and substance misuse. Years of research confirm that substance misuse is a problem for the military, especially among alcohol and binge drinkers. To address these concerns, reduce the stigma, and support Soldiers when they need help, the National Guard Bureau implemented several changes to the Resiliency program. These changes are meant to help the Army meet their mission. The Oregon Substance Abuse Program’s mission is to provide prevention training, promote family involvement, and support through education, and connect Soldiers to treatment resources to increase military discipline, individual performance, as well as combat readiness and resilience.

Oregon National Guard now has one Alcohol and Drug Control Officer (ADCO), Maryann Verdeccia, and one Prevention Coordinator (PC), Steve Cooper, who support the OSAP program. The ADCO manages all substance abuse and risk reduction activities, assists commanders in identifying and referring Soldiers with known or possible substance abuse issues, and mentors and evaluates prevention and compliance. The PC’s provides units with prevention training and administers the Unit Risk Inventory to all units.

Additionally, the ADCO and PC serve as subject matter experts for the OSAP program and Army Regulation 425-85, and act as a resource for Soldiers and Command with any questions or concerns. Finally, the OSAP program is working to reduce stigma against Soldiers with Substance Use Disorders (SUD) and especially those who ask for help. Please do not hesitate to contact any member of the OSAP program team for more information. To include Sgt. 1st Class James Goldeman at 503-356-5317 or 503-356-5306, or visit the OSAP Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/maraylicia. verdeccia/ORNGOSAP.

National Preparedness month raises awareness

September was National Preparedness Month and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) urges the U.S. to “be disaster aware, take action to prepare.” In Oregon, events took place highlighting the importance of emergency preparedness. The Oregon and what individuals and families can do to prepare for emergencies.

One such event called “Place the West” took runners and walkers along a tsunami evacuation route in Cannon Beach, Ore., Sept. 28. It was organized by an emergency preparedness fair near the city’s supply chain systems established above the tsunami inundation zone.

It was a collaborative effort among FEMA, the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI), Clatsop County, the City of Cannon Beach and its citizens. It focused on the importance of emergency preparedness for a Cascadia earthquake and tsunami, and highlighting the work Cannon Beach has done as a community to prepare.

“It is amazing to be a part of an event where the whole community is coming together to raise awareness about the importance of preparation,” Clatsop County Emergency Manager Tiffany Brown said. “Being prepared will save lives and property during a disaster.”

Oregon is located near the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a 600 hundred mile earthquake fault stretching from offshore Northern California to Southern British Columbia.

Experts predict a large earthquake and tsunami similar to the one that struck Japan in 2011 could strike Oregon in the near future.

The “Cascadia Subduction Zone has let rip with more than 90 great earthquakes,” State Geologist Vicki McConnell explained. “It’s geologically active, and Oregon could experience a huge earthquake and tsunami any time.”

The theme for the race is: “Know the Fault, Take the Route.”

“One of the best ways to get prepared for a tsunami is to practice walking or even running the escape route,” McConnell said. “Oregon Geologic Hazards Coordinator Althea Rizzo noted: ‘Take the Wave is a great way to practice that route and have a lot of fun doing it.’”

Kim honored by Asia-Pacific Council

In May, Oregon Army National Guard Lt. Col. Sungok Kim received the 2014 Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) Military Meritorious Service Award.

The honor is given annually to a service member for outstanding work in fostering a strong relationship between the military and the Asian American community, promoting equal rights and equal opportunity within the military, and overall public service.

FAPAC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that represents Asian Pacific Americans who are civilian or military employees of the federal government and District of Columbia.

While serving in the state human relations/equal opportunity (EO) officer, Kim made significant changes to the way the Oregon National Guard’s EO program operates and enforces standards.

The state’s EO regulation, ORA 609-21, hadn’t been updated since Oct. 9, 1987. Kim helped publish a more comprehensive regulation on June 27, 2012. It has the responsibilities and operations of the EO program for each brigade and subordinate units, including complaint procedures. He also certified 251 equal opportunity leaders throughout the state to support deployments with the new training standards.

In addition, Kim organized the 2013 event for Asian American Pacific Islander (AAP) Heritage Month, which featured Samoan, Filipino and Vietnamese representatives as guest speakers, and the sharing of Asian dishes at the Oregon Military Department. As a State Diversity Council member, Kim nurtured a new relationship with the Korean Society of Oregon.

Last year’s recipient of the FAPAC award was also a Guard Soldier: Dr. (Major) Hyo Jin (Jeana) Cho from the District of Columbia was honored for writing a dissertation on cross-race mentoring in the Army that aimed to find ways to assist future mentors and mentees.

The FAPAC award in May coincided with Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month, which commemorates the immigration of the first Japanese to the U.S.

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REFLECTIONS ON WWII

A Soldier re-enactor stands near the World War II memorial in Salem, Ore., during the Spirit of '45 Day celebration, Aug. 10. The celebration honored the achievements of all the men and women who participated in WWII.
Former Soldier is the 'spirit' behind veteran business venture

Story by Mike Aitken, Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs

The award is the highest honor given by the French government and is awarded for distinguished public service, including the service of U.S. military veterans who fought on French territory.

Edward Phillips, age 90, was presented the National Order of the Legion of Honour during a formal ceremony July 2. France's Consul General serving Portland, Mrs. Françoise Ayler, placed the distinct medal on Phillips' lapel.

For more than a decade, the government of France has presented the Legion of Honour to U.S. veterans who participated in the liberation of France during World War II.

Phillips was a master sergeant in the U.S. Army's 24th Signal Operations Company, which landed at Omaha Beach in northern France on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Within seven months Phillips and his unit were involved in several treacherous battles including the Battle of St. Lo, the Battle of Aachen and the Battle of the Bulge.

More than 75 people were in attendance at the ceremony, including many family members, at Phillips' residence in Wilsonville, Oregon.

The former soldier said he was a little nervous and wondered why he received so much attention.

"Back then I didn't do as much as thousands of others did there. Maybe they're more deserving," Phillips said humbly.

"The entire event was very nice and I appreciated the award the French government presented to me. I shed a few tears, as did some others, but it was a wonderful memorable time for all of us." Established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, the French Order can only be presented by someone who has received it and is only given to living recipients.

Phillips is among nearly one million people who have been awarded the medal. Among the notable Americans who have received the honor are aviator Charles Lindbergh, several military generals including Dwight D. Eisenhower and Curtis LeMay, singer Barbara Streisand, and actor Robert Redford.

3-116 Soldiers host veteran tankers during gunnery training

Story by Mike Aitken, Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs

To Soldiers who served as crewmembers aboard any U.S. Army tank, the names of these tankers are familiar: M1 Abrams, M60 Patton, M4 Sherman, M26 Pershing, and others.

Imagine Army veterans, who once trained for war inside these metal beasts of burden, having an opportunity to jump back into the chieftains of a tank years or even decades earlier.

Thanks to a former Army Armor Cavalry Soldier in Roseburg, Ken Osborne, and the cooperation of the Oregon Army National Guard in La Grande, several veteran tankers were able to retrieve their time of serving aboard one of the newer tanks in the Army's arsenal — the M1A2 SEP Abrams Main Battle Tank.

And they did it while the Soldiers of Oregon's 1st Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment, were testing their driving skills at the Orchard Combat Training Center, in Idaho, July 1-12.

A member of the national U.S. Army Brotherhood of Tankers, Osborne made a phone call several days ago and spoke with Master Sgt. Dan Ishang in La Grande. Their conversation and Osborne's request opened the door to this rare opportunity.

"The fact we could even embed with them was phenomenal. We talked with these Soldiers about their tanks, how they train, and answered each other's questions about our service. We spoke the same language," Osborne said. "It's been about 25 years since I was away from a tank and even longer for Vietnam vets.

In the hot desert sands, the old Soldiers smiled as they rode aboard the modern Abrams tank. Osborne said the Guard Soldiers did more than just allow the "old tankers" to get back on the tanks.

"For those veterans planning on using the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), this day was therapeutic.

"Most of the men there are combat veterans. Experiencing this together helps improve their mental health. At one time one of our guys was a 19-year-old tank commander in Vietnam; a Staff Sergeant," Osborne said. "Sadly he got promoted because everyone else was dead.

"We didn't just get back in our tank, we were kicking up some sand while riding on a 60-ton tank. In the late afternoon, the young Soldiers fired up the barbeque in the shadow of the tanks they had just spent part of a day showing off.

"Tankers will always be tankers, long after they're discharged," Osborne said.

USO COMES BACK TO PDX

July 2 marked the official dedication of the United Service Organization's (USO) new Welcome Center at Portland International Airport. Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden took part in the ceremony with USO staff members Christine Vu, retired Col. Joe Williams, and several other honorees, including Miss Oregon 2014, Rebecca Anderson.

The center at the airport will help to fulfill the USO's mission of lifting the spirits of America's troops and their families.

A nonprofits, non-governmental organization, the USO provides an extensive range of programs at more than 160 locations in 27 states and 14 countries, and at hundreds of entertainment events each year.

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