142nd Fighter Wing welcomes home Citizen-Airmen from deployment

Story by Tech. Sgt. John Hugheal and Staff Sgt. Brandon Boyd, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Oregon — Airmen from the 142nd Civil Engineer Squadron (CES), along with members of the 142nd Security Forces Squadron (SFS), who recently returned from deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), were formally recognized during a demobilization ceremony, Dec. 7, at the Portland Air National Guard Base.

Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber and Secretary of State Kate Brown were in attendance, along with other distinguished guests, including Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, The Adjutant General, Oregon, and Brig. Gen. Michael Stencel, Commander of the Oregon Air National Guard.

Although the ceremony celebrated the recent homecoming of two units, members actually deployed to various destinations in Afghanistan and Bahrain, contingent on their profession and filling critical duty positions.

“Our nation needed each and every one of their personal and collective skills; whether as fire fighters, emergency managers, engineers and security professionals, they all volunteered for these assignments,” said Hokanson.

Twenty-four engineer technicians were assigned to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, focusing on installation infrastructure.

See Airmen on Page 10

Oregon Soldiers witness transition in Afghanistan

Story by Capt. Frank Hartnett, USAF, International Security Assistance Force/Resolute Support Headquarters

KABUL, Afghanistan — Thirteen years after its creation through the signing of the Bonn Agreement in Germany, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) concluded operations and transitioned to North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) Resolute Support (RS) mission in a ceremony, Dec. 28, in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Resolute Support Commander, U.S. Army Gen. John F. Campbell, and his Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Sgt. Maj. Delbert D. Byers, symbolically rolled and cased the ISAF flag and unfurled the new RS flag. The solemn ceremony, held at the ISAF Headquarters, paid tribute to the international efforts launched in 2001 by the NATO-led coalition as they worked with Afghan partners.

“Today marks an end of an era and the beginning of a new one. Resolute Support will serve as the bedrock of our enduring partnership with Afghanistan,” said General Campbell.

The Resolute Support mission will consist of more than 12,500 troops focused on building Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) sustainability. Twenty-eight NATO Allies and 14 partner nations will contribute to the mission in different ways. Training, advice and assistance for Afghan security forces and institutions will continue through the new, NATO-led, non-combat mission.

ISAF’s original mandate was to assist the newly-established Afghan Transitional Authority in and around Kabul. The scope and scale of ISAF’s mission grew as the Coalition added Provincial Reconstruction Teams and took on the responsibility to provide security while Afghan security forces were growing in strength. A critical function throughout the effort was the mentoring and training of Afghan forces. ISAF’s lasting legacy, accomplished with Afghan partners, was the
First and foremost, I want to thank every one of our nearly 1,000 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen currently serving overseas. It is also my wish to recognize and thank the families of our deployed Soldiers and Airmen; without your support their service would not be possible.

It’s hard to believe a new year is already upon us. With all you accomplished in 2014, I look forward to the great achievements 2015 will bring. Over the past year, we welcomed home both Army and Air units deployed overseas for combat and training; we trained, mobilized, and deployed more than 1,000 Oregon Army and Air National Guardsmen; we fought forest fires; conducted numerous Air Control Alert missions - to include intercepting Russian aircraft off the Oregon Coast; we trained all Air Force F-15C Air Superiority pilots; published the first Cascadia Playbook for Oregon; improved our State Partnership with Bangladesh and Vietnam; transitioned into a new organizational structure to better prepare for domestic operations; and implemented a new strategic planning process. These are just a few of your many success stories.

As we head into the next year, it is vital for leaders at all levels to understand the direction we are headed. I ask that you take the time to review our recently published Strategic Direction to the Oregon Military Department (SD20MD). The SD20MD is a follow on to the Strategic Letter published last year and provides a comprehensive look at the Oregon Military Department Strategic Plan for 2015-2019 that will be published later this spring.

The mission of the Oregon National Guard is to be “First Responders” in times of a state and federal crisis. This means you and I are always on call to help! We are collectively Superman, Batman, and Underdog.

Last week I joined you in a 1,200 mile roundtrip for the Oregon National Guard’s Community Chief Warrant Officer (CCWO) Conference. I’ve attended almost every CCWO Conference since I was first invited in 2004. This year we have a new name for the conference. It used to be called the Oregon Warrant Officer Symposium (WOSYS), or Region Six WOSAC (OR, WA, CA, AK, ID, SD, AZ), the Council of Five. They are now called Oregon WOSAC (OR WOSAC). Meetings are scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month in the Oregon Military Department, room 100, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. All warrant officers are invited to attend these meetings via phone conference call (RSVP is required). Each branch is represented by a senior warrant. Their responsibility of representing the warrant officers in their branch is twofold: first to bring issues and concerns to the CCWO for resolutions, second to forward information to the Soldier affecting their career and professional development. We also have governance of those士舰 that step up out of the strength of the Oregon warrant officer corps.

As a member of the WOSAC is the Warrant Officer Leadership Advisory Committee (WOLAC). This committee is comprised of warrant officers throughout the state volunteering to mentor other warrant officers in their career progression. One of my primary goals is to work with the “Whole Warrant Officer” assessment tool for warrant officers using the “Whole Soldier Concept”. The “Whole Soldier Concept” uses all factors of the officer’s career in the development of any order of ranking. The principle criteria for selection must be the potential of the officer for service in the next capacity. It is the composite of the “Whole Record” that makes up the “Whole Soldier Concept”. The end result is a tool for the individual to have a transparent, concise evaluation of where they are ranked amongst their peers and how they can improve their standings.

The Oregon National Guard isn’t the only organization going through a transformation. As these changes come about, it is these very lines of communication and open dialogue that remain prevalent and pertinent to the success of any organization, council or board. Establishing a hub of information and communication is key. We must continue to reach out and inform OMD Citizen-Soldiers, families and friends, follow us on Twitter at OMD_Army Now for announcements, comments and suggestions.

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon Military Department. It is published in response to the Oregon Department of Military Affairs, the Oregon National Guard, and the Oregon Air National Guard. The Oregon Sentinel is distributed to members of the Oregon Army and Air National Guard and other interested persons by request, free of charge. The Sentinel is printed and published by Media Group, Inc. on a nonprofit basis. The Oregon Sentinel is not affiliated with the Oregon Military Department. The Oregon Sentinel is a nonprofit corporation and is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Oregon Sentinel is an equal opportunity employer. The Oregon Sentinel is published weekly.

Preparation enables us to respond when we are needed

The Oregon National Guard is to be “First Responders” in times of a state and federal crisis. This means you and I are always on call to help! We are collectively Superman, Batman, and Underdog.

Let me start by asking you a critical question: are you number one priority during training? Is it training? Are you focused on your fitness? Are you focused on your personal readiness? I hope you answered yes.

Fitness is an obvious factor, yet, it is not about appearance. Fitness means staying in condition to withstand the pace and work load of combat. Readiness has been defined over the years as, immunizations, dental, and the annual physical. These requirements provide a link to inform all Soldiers. These requirements such as, immunizations, dental, and the annual physical assessment tool for warrant officers using

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon Military Department. It is published in response to the Oregon Department of Military Affairs, the Oregon National Guard, and the Oregon Air National Guard. The Oregon Sentinel is distributed to members of the Oregon Army and Air National Guard and other interested persons by request, free of charge. The Sentinel is printed and published by Media Group, Inc. on a nonprofit basis. The Oregon Sentinel is not affiliated with the Oregon Military Department. The Oregon Sentinel is a nonprofit corporation and is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Oregon Sentinel is published weekly.
Ferre announces retirement, Stuckey named Interagency Director

SALEM, Oregon – Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, Adjutant General, Oregon, in coordination with the Oregon governor’s office, is pleased to announce the appointment of Dave Ferre as the Oregon Military Department’s (OMD) interagency director, effective Feb. 1, 2015.

Stuckey, who is currently the director of Oregon’s Office of Emergency Management (OEM), is scheduled to replace Dave Ferre, who has announced his retirement.

“Dave Ferre’s vast amount of interagency experience and background as an exceptional leader was instrumental to the success of our organization,” said Maj. Gen. Daniel Hokanson. “We thank him for a career of contributions and life-long sacrifice to his state and nation, and look forward to David Stuckey’s knowledge, experience, and leadership as our new interagency director.”

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

The search to fill the position of OEM director is an open competitive application process. The selected candidate will work with Stuckey to ensure a smooth transition.

Ferre has more than 30 years of collective experience as a state employee beginning as an Oregon State Trooper in 1976. He has held various positions in state government, including acting OMD state personnel director, OMD state disaster preparedness officer, and eventually as director of operations and the unit commander for the 104th Air Control Squadron.

After serving a number of command positions throughout the Oregon Air National Guard, to include the plans and programs officer, executive officer for the 142nd Fighter Wing, and 142nd Mission Support Group commander, Ferre was appointed as the Oregon Combat Operations Group commander. In August 2005, Ferre was appointed the United States Property and Fiscal Officer for Oregon (appointed by the Chief of National Guard Bureau). He retired from the military as a colonel in December 2011. Stuckey has a long and established career in the military and emergency management. He served as deputy director of the Oregon Office of Emergency Management from April 2010 to June 2012. During that time, he was part of three presidential emergency declarations and multiple emergency response activations.

Stuckey was instrumental in responding to the 2011 Oregon floods and was the governor’s authorized representative and state coordinating officer in response to the tsunami resulting from the Japanese earthquake in 2011.

The mission of the Oregon Office of Emergency Management is to maintain emergency response and recovery activities with the state and local emergency services agencies and organizations.

173rd Fighter Wing commander bids farewell, retires after 26-year career

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon – Commander of the 173rd Fighter Wing, Col. Jeremy Baenen, retired November 21 in a ceremony at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon. The 173rd Fighter Wing is home to the sole F-15C training base for the United States Air Force.

“It’s very satisfying to me to finish my career in this Wing which is doing really tremendous work for the Air Force,” said Baenen. “As a key piece to pilot production, we are where America’s air superiority begins. Watching us meet those objectives, watching our pilots growing really, really happy.”

He leaves the 173rd Fighter Wing poised to fly and train more new pilots than ever before but it was not without numerous hurdles. Baenen assumed command on Jan. 13, 2013 and guided the Wing through a time of change and fiscal constraints, including the addition of active-duty Airmen to the mission with the Total Force Integration (TFI), major base construction, and the highest number of pilot production ever.

Under his leadership, Kingsley welcomed 14 more aircraft to the ramp for a total authorized 32 airframes. He implemented an expanded mission while sequestration slashed budgets across the Department of Defense and the Air National Guard.

“The thing I am probably most proud of is what the Airmen have done here,” said Baenen. “It’s been a lot of challenges, but during all of that it was really fun to see everyone rise to the challenge, meet the mission, and hit the ball out of the park every time.”

The Wing has been recognized numerous times during Baenen’s tenure, most recently during the first ever Unit Effectiveness Inspection (UEI), earning the rating of ‘Highly Effective’. Baenen credits these accomplishments to the professionalism of the Airmen of the 173rd Fighter Wing.

“We’ve had tremendous challenges here in the last few years … from sequestration to layoffs, to the TFI … new simulators and a UEI inspection … and really that’s a credit to the entire Wing,” he said, summing up the last two years.

Baenen’s service spans 26 years, including his time at the Air Force Academy. Baenen notes that over those years he made a point to ask retiring Airmen what the most important things were that they would pass along to the remaining troops. In his final remarks, Baenen passed along words, “I’d like to just leave you with a salute to our troops. God bless you all and good luck in the future.”

Col. Kirk Pierce, currently the director of Plans and Programs for the National Guard Bureau in Washington D.C., will assume command of the 173rd Fighter Wing in an official assumption of command ceremony in January. The vice wing commander, Col. Greger Leist, will be the acting wing commander until Pierce’s arrival.

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

Col. Jeremy Baenen welcomes a cold blast of water upon stepping to the tarmac following his last flight in the F-15 Eagle shortly before his retirement ceremony, Nov. 21. The dousing is part of a tradition for pilots upon their last flight in an aircraft.

NGB Chief, Oregon Adjutant General visit troops in Afghanistan

“I am so proud of the contributions the National Guard is making here and has made for the last 12 years.”

- Gen. Frank J. Grass, Chief, National Guard Bureau

Gen. Frank J. Grass (right), Chief, National Guard Bureau, visits with Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers in Kabul, Afghanistan, Nov. 3.

Oregon Soldier awarded Purple Heart, Bronze Star during recovery

Story by Lori Newman,
Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs

SAN ANTONIO, Texas – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald presented Oregon Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Steven Tessitore the Bronze Star and a Purple Heart medals during a ceremony, Dec. 19, at the Center for the Intrepid, a rehab center at Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston in Texas.

Tessitore, an infantryman with B Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, suffered a gunshot wound in his neck, Nov. 15, when a gunman opened fire during a Quick Reaction Force security patrol in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Brooke Army Medical Center Commander Col. Evan Renz hosted the ceremony, with Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr., vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also in attendance.

“It is heartwarming to see your family here today,” said McDonald who met with Tessitore and his family prior to the ceremony. “Our nation is indebted to you and we are also indebted to your family as well.”

McDonald said he read Tessitore’s personnel account of being wounded and the days that surrounded.

“He was shot in the throat, gravely wounded, and he received what he described as a ‘bullet’ hypothalamic wound,” McDonald said.

“By November 19, he was communicating with his family and fellow soldiers in Afghanistan. Apart from what that says about technology, think about what it says about our Soldiers – about their focus, their fortitude and their skill in life-saving first aid in the direst of circumstance,” the secretary said. “Think what it says about all the surgeons, doctors, nurses and support staff who attended to Sergeant Tessitore from the dirty, dusty streets of a faraway land, to the pristine Brooke Army Medical Center.”

McDonald thanked Tessitore for his service and sacrifice, and promised that when it was time, the VA will be honored to care for him and his family, and “will provide all the services and benefits he has so richly earned.”

Tessitore received the Bronze Star for “his outstanding performance, expertise and dedication to duty which greatly contributed to the success of the unit’s mission during combat operations.”

The Bronze Star medal is the fourth highest individual military award and the ninth-highest by order of precedence in the U.S. military. It may be awarded for acts of heroism, acts of merit or meritorious service in a combat zone.

The Purple Heart is the oldest U.S. military decoration in present use and the first American award made available to the common Soldier. The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the United States who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hand of the enemy.

“Nobody in their right mind wants a Purple Heart, and I find myself receiving one today against everything that I have ever wanted, but I appreciate it,” Tessitore said. “The only reason I am here today to receive this medal is because of my unit and how well they prepared, so on behalf of Oregon Company 2-162 and my entire battalion, thank you very much for taking care of me and for allowing me to be here today.”

Continued from Front Page

establishment of a 350,000-strong security force, which is now fully responsible for security in Afghanistan. Throughout 2014, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan was able to disrupt national elections, allowing more than seven million Afghans to exercise their right to vote. This led to the establishment of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), which marked the first peaceful democratic transition of power in Afghan history.

“Take some time to write the next chapter in our story,” said General Hans-Lothar Domrose, Joint Force Command Brunssum Commander, referring to the launch of Resolute Support.

Under Resolute Support, efforts to train, advise and assist Afghan Security Institutions (ASI) and the ANSF at the operational and military level will focus on eight essential functions and policy planning, resourcing, and execution (EF 6); strategy and policy planning, resourcing, and execution (EF 6); and strategic communication (EF 8). These eight essential functions comprise the systems and processes required for the professionalism and sustainability of the ASI and ANSF.

“We need your help to build the systems necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of our forces,” said Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Afghanistan’s National Security Advisor. “This is an formidable challenge for any modern army and police force.”

Basic measurements of progress across all major sectors of society have shown improvement: life expectancy is rising; mobile communication technology is expanding; an independent media corps is working; the Taliban are being driven from key areas; women are found in positions of leadership; and more than 13 million children are in school. This is inconceivable 13 years ago.

The international community continues to pledge support and financial commitment to help foster an Afghan Decade of Transformation. These efforts will be undertaken with the leadership of President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. Both leaders have reinforced their pledges for transparency and accountability.

As the ceremony concluded, General Campbell gave his final thoughts and assessment on the progress made by Afghan and international partners.

“Together, we have lifted the Afghan people out of the darkness of despair and given them hope for the future. We are very proud of our relationship – a relationship built on trust, friendship, and shared interests. That trust and a common vision for a stable, secure, and unified Afghanistan fills me with confidence that we’ll continue to be successful. The road before us remains challenging, but we will triumph.”

On behalf of President Ashraf Ghani and the Afghan people, Mohammad Hanif Atmar expressed his gratitude for the Coalition’s effort and sacrifices, “We will never forget your sons and daughters who have died on our soil. They are now our sons and daughters. Afghan and Coalition personnel have spilled their blood to ensure a brighter future for our country and to bring peace to the world.”
Turning blue to ‘green’: First wave energy converter installed off Camp Rilea

WARRENTON, Oregon — The first wave energy converter (WEC) was deployed off the coast of Camp Rilea in September 2014. The device known as APEX is made by M3 Wave LLC, a local startup company located in Corvallis, Oregon.

APEX is a small scale pilot device that was in the water for two weeks. It was equipped with research instrumentation to gather specific information regarding the performance in the ocean environment and compare with analytical results.

The goal of the APEX deployment was to validate the technology that can be used in full scale versions. The full scale WEC is anticipated to produce about 150 kW. An additional goal was to limit impact to existing ocean uses thereby proving it as an economic multiplier to the local economy.

M3 worked with local manufacturing to construct the APEX and collaborated with crabs and fisherman for mitigating ocean usage conflicts. Camp Rilea would benefit from having this renewable energy developed and connected to the electrical grid. This would provide a steady supply of green energy and provide for energy security to the training site.

The Clatsop County Emergency Operations Center, located at Camp Rilea, would also be assured of the energy security from this energy source. M3 Wave is analyzing the data from the deployment and based on preliminary feedback is very encouraged with the results. Oregon has a competitive advantage for developing this industry to create jobs and to provide abundant clean renewable energy.

The launch and recovery was successful and is significant from the standpoint that this is the world’s first open ocean test of a WEC of this type. M3 Wave partnered with the Tongue Point Job Corps Center- Seamanship Training Program for use of the Ironwood for the launch and recovery operations.

The Ironwood, a retired Coast Guard buoy tender is used as a training vessel at the Tongue Point Job Corps Center. It was used to transport the WEC to the site and later into the ocean at a depth of about 50 feet and then recover it following the trial. Oregon Wave Energy Trust (OWET) provided video documentation which is available online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_0709nF1L.

The M3 Wave technology is very straightforward. APEX is a submersed pressure differential wave energy device that captures a portion of the energy contained in ocean surface waves by using the differential pressure under the peaks and troughs of the waves. This is done through air bladders at opposite ends of the device. The air is forced through a turbine/generator that produces electricity.

It’s quite ingenious and there are no external moving parts. The device simply sits on the ocean floor. Although they were not connected to the electrical infrastructure, they were producing the first wave energy electricity off of Camp Rilea while deployed.

Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber proclaimed September 22-26, 2014 as Oregon Wave Week. Significant to this proclamation was the ninth annual Ocean Energy Renewable Conference held in Portland. OWET hosted this event along with sponsors like Northwest National Marine Renewable Energy Center (NNMREC), Portland General Electric, Energy Trust of Oregon, Oregon Department of Energy, and several private companies.

The conference is an annual event which brings together industry leaders from around the world to advance the development of wave energy. OWET is charged to implement a strategic vision to recruit and support a wave power industry, and provided grant funding to M3 Wave for the development and deployment of the APEX. They also provided grant funding to the Oregon Military Department to support the deployment, which was provided by Leidos Maritime Solutions.

The Oregon Territorial Sea Plan (TSP) contains specific policies for state ocean management. State Planning Goal 19 was set up for defining marine uses and establishing areas within the State waters that are suitable for wave energy development. These areas called Renewable Energy Facility Suitability Study Areas (REFSSA) were adopted by the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission in January 2013. One of the REFSSA’s is just off the coast at Camp Rilea and was placed there due to the unique military training area that can both support energy and benefit from it.

The Oregon Coast has tremendous ocean energy resource characterized by powerful and steady waves. Ocean wave energy is excellent because it is continuous and predictable, and is available 24 hours a day. Because of this abundant, clean, renewable energy resource, there is considerable interest in sea trials in Oregon. Although M3 was the first to get a device in the water at the Rilea REFSSA, there is another company planning for a deployment in 2015.

The technology is just starting to be developed and ocean testing is needed. NNMREC is a partnership between Oregon State University and the University of Washington. NNMREC has the Pacific Marine Energy Center, which are facilities located around the Pacific Northwest. In Oregon they have the North Energy Test Site (NETS) off the coast of Newport, a South Energy Test Site (SETS) south of Newport and six miles offshore, and laboratory at OSU. Both NETS and SETS are considered a medium depth sites unlike the Rilea REFSSA, which is a shallow test site and optimal for the APEX technology.

Lt. Col. Ken Safe is the Construction and Facility Management Officer (CFMO) for the Oregon Army National Guard. He is also the Net Zero Energy Program Manager and is a licensed professional engineer.

Confere gets logistics done right

Story by Sgt. Cory Grogan, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

WARRENTON, Oregon – The Oregon National Guard’s 2014 State Logistics Conference took place at Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Oregon, Dec. 1-5. The annual team-building workshop is designed to bring logisticians from around the state together to stay updated on current and new logistics systems.

“These are the people who are in the trenches providing the resources for our warfighters,” said Col. Donald Rolph, the Oregon Army National Guard’s director of logistics. “Without them we’re not able to get trucks that move, we wouldn’t have clothes for the Soldiers, we wouldn’t be able to feed the Soldiers.”

Master Sgt. Warren Sturm, deputy director of logistics for the state, said more than 150 logisticians from around the state of Oregon attended the conference for hands-on and small group training.

“It’s an opportunity to see the faces behind the systems,” said Master Sgt. Warren Sturm. “You’re going to meet the people you train with every day, and you’re going to learn how to do your job better.”

The deputy chief of staff for logistics, Lt. Col. Kimberly York, said there are battalion and company logisticians working at the conference to recognize the great work logisticians do that can often be difficult.

“It’s not only to network and to train, but it’s also to reward,” York explained. “We will see the results of the conference have been positive.”

Soldiers test their mettle in annual Best Warrior competition

Above: Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers carry a zodiac raft towards a lake during the annual Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Oregon. Sept. 27. The three-day event pit Soldiers from across the state against each other to compete in physical and mental challenges for the titles of Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

Below: Pfc. Jay Eyestone (left) earned the title of Soldier of the Year and Staff Sgt. Ammon Benedict (right) earned the title of noncommissioned Officer of the Year. They will represent the Oregon Army National Guard in the regional competition.
DHAKA, BANGLADESH — The fifth annual Pacific Resilience Disaster Relief Exercise and Exchange (PR DREE) drew to an end during a closing ceremony at the Lakeshore Hotel in Dhaka Thursday.

His Excellency Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury, Minister of Disaster Management and Relief, officially closed PR DREE 2014 following remarks by Brig. Gen. Abu Sayeed Khan, Director General of the Plans and Operations Directorate for the Bangladesh Armed Forces Division (AFD), and Maj. Gen. Gary M. Haro, Deputy Commander of U.S. Army Pacific. The Honorable Desh Mozena, U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh was also in attendance.

“I am highly convinced that [PR DREE 2014] will wield enough benefit in order to strengthen our capacity to face and mitigate the earthquake threat within Dhaka city,” said Chowdhury.

“This exercise has brought all the major stakeholders to the table to share experiences and understanding involving organizations of national and international level,” he added. Led by AFD and USARPAC, PR DREE involves the critical support of numerous civilian institutions. Without civil-military integration and coordination, a disaster management plan will be slower and less effective.

The PR DREE 2014 aims to unite all necessary participants on a global scale to ensure that disaster management is maximized through effective engagement, planning and practice.

Through this coordination and management, all responders will be more prepared to counter the impacts a large-scale earthquake that may affect Bangladesh.

The four-day event included presentations by Subject Matter Experts, a Table Top Exercise (TTX), a Field Training Exercise (FTX) and an extensive After Action Review (AAR).

PR DREE is structured to increase disaster preparedness, response capabilities and civilian-military coordination in the face of a large-scale natural disaster. The TTX and FTX exercises focused on training, equipment and personnel between Bangladesh, the U.S. and numerous NGOs and NPOs, increasing readiness for earthquake response and recovery in Dhaka. Ministries, utility companies, media, military, international organizations and numerous other entities sent representatives to participate, building the relationships that will be necessary in any disaster.

“Bringing together diverse governmental agencies and military stakeholders to work closely on a range of shared interests helps to ensure that the execution of disaster response is both unified and swift,” said Haro.

Approximately 100 civil and military stakeholders participated in the TTX on Tuesday at the Fire Service and Civil Defence Training Academy.

Participants were presented with a hypothetical scenario: a magnitude 7.1 earthquake taking place on the Madhupur fault line, directly affecting Dhaka city. Were such a large-scale earthquake to hit Dhaka, the most populous city in Bangladesh and one of the most densely populated cities in the world, it is estimated that 70,000 buildings would collapse, causing the death, injury and entrapment of thousands of people.

The TTX familiarized participants with the earthquake scenario, their various roles and responsibilities, and the primary themes of the event: logistics and communication.

This week you increased earthquake preparedness, and response capabilities by evaluating the Standing Order on Disasters and the draft Dhaka City Earthquake Contingency Plan,” said Hara.

“You paid particular attention to the reception and utilization of logistics critical to the relief effort and as a result of this training, we are closer to maximizing the interoperability between the Armed Forces Division, the U.S. Embassy, the Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief and others,” Haro added.

After two days of exercises, stakeholders gathered for an extensive AAR prior to the closing ceremony. To ensure that preparedness is an ongoing effort, participants examined issues, concerns, and gaps that need to be addressed before or during next year’s PR DREE.

“We are looking forward to keep going with this type of exercises initiatives and interactions more and more in the future,” said Khan. “Your contribution, intellectual ideas and support will be noted highly in our institutional memory.”

PR DREE provides a platform for collaboration in order to build upon existing partner nation capacity and enhance the U.S. government’s readiness and preparedness to provide aid for all-hazards. The more opportunity there is for this type of interaction, the more successful both the United States and Bangladesh will be in our collective emergency response efforts.

Khan closed his remarks with traditional Bangladesh words of wisdom: “It is said, no disaster can say that there will be no blessings in future, and no blessings can say there will be disasters in future.”
Oregon Guardsmen train in Vietnam; make friends across the globe


The Oregon National Guard formally began a partnership with Vietnam’s National Committee for Search and Rescue (VINASARCOM) in November 2012 through the National Guard State Partnership Program. This training exchange was designed to use the expertise of Oregon’s CERFP to enhance the capabilities of VINASARCOM in areas such as light and medium urban search and extraction and medical first response.

The partnership also provides the Oregon National Guard with an opportunity to learn skills and procedures used in Vietnam in times of disaster and emergencies that may not be as common in the U.S.

Nine Citizen-Soldiers from the Oregon Army National Guard’s 224th Engineer Company, and one Citizen-Airman from the Oregon Air National Guard’s 142nd Fighter Wing traveled halfway across the world to train with, learn from, and engage with Vietnamese engineers of the 249th Engineer Brigade, Vietnam People’s Army. The training included a variety of search and rescue scenarios including rapping, rescue hoist operations, casualty extraction and rigging.

“The Oregon SPP with Vietnam is an incredible opportunity for our Citizen-Soldiers to conduct foreign relations training with Vietnam,” said Capt. Thanh Vo, 224th Engineer Company commander. “Where in the past we were fighting on opposite sides, today we are exchanging skills to better improve our capabilities to save our fellow countrymen’s lives.”

The weeklong exchange not only brought together search and extraction experts from two nations, but also forged friendships to last a lifetime. Facing temperatures in the high 90’s and low 100’s, with humidity so thick you could cut it with a knife, this group of Oregonians continued to not only provide top-notch training, but also find the time throughout the day to make personal connections with the 74 Vietnamese engineers they worked with.

“The joint training environment that we worked in with the Vietnamese was beneficial to our Soldiers,” Vo continued. “It provided the opportunity to not only work with people outside of the National Guard, but to learn and train with Soldiers from an entirely different culture.”

Vo said the skills the Oregon Guardsmen learned in bridging communication barriers and creating relationships is key to solidifying the National Guard as a component of the United States’ international presence.

Vietnam delegation tours Oregon emergency response facilities, training

SALEM, Oregon – The Oregon National Guard hosted a delegation from Vietnam’s National Committee for Search and Rescue (VINASARCOM), Aug. 24-30, as part of the ongoing State Partnership Program. The weeklong visit included workshops related to emergency management and emergency response, as well as tours of emergency management and Oregon National Guard facilities.

Vice Admiral Pham Ngoc Minh, Deputy Official in November 2012 as part of Oregon’s Office of Emergency Management during a workshop and tour of the state emergency coordination center, Aug. 27, in Salem, Oregon. The delegation visited facilities throughout the state to gain an understanding of Oregon’s emergency and disaster response preparedness in conjunction with the Oregon National Guard’s State Partnership Program.

The Oregon National Guard’s State Partnership with Vietnam is poised to greatly benefit all those involved in the program, with cross-cultural awareness, domestic emergency preparedness training, and the enhancement of international relationships.

The partnership between the Oregon National Guard and Vietnam was made official in November 2012 as part of the National Guard Bureau-sanctioned program, which pairs emerging democracies with National Guard states.

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Stefanie Blanchard, of the 224th Engineer Company, demonstrates search and extraction marking techniques to a group of Vietnamese engineers, Sept. 23, at the 249th Engineer Brigade Headquarters in Vietnam. The markings are used to identify different areas in a disaster zone or collapsed building and provide information such as casualties in the rubble, search teams in the rubble, or fatalities.

A visiting delegation from Vietnam’s National Committee for Search and Rescue (VINASARCOM) poses for a group photo with members of Oregon’s Office of Emergency Management during a workshop and tour of the state emergency coordination center, Aug. 27, in Salem, Oregon. The delegation visited facilities throughout the state to gain an understanding of Oregon’s emergency and disaster response preparedness in conjunction with the Oregon National Guard’s State Partnership Program.

The Oregon National Guard’s State Partnership with Vietnam is poised to greatly benefit all those involved in the program, with cross-cultural awareness, domestic emergency preparedness training, and the enhancement of international relationships.

The partnership between the Oregon National Guard and Vietnam was made official in November 2012 as part of the National Guard Bureau-sanctioned program, which pairs emerging democracies with National Guard states.
Oregon Soldiers bring the ‘big guns’ to XCTC for annual training

BOISE, Idaho — Dusty grit, diesel exhaust and a cacophony of cannon blasts filled the air at the Orchard Combat Training Center (OCTC) as more than 500 Oregon National Guard Soldiers recently trained on their tanks, mortars and ground assault tactics.

With 22 Abrams M1A2 System Enhanced Package (SEP) Tanks, 38 Bradley Fighting Vehicles and enough mortars to shake the dirt out from under the high-desert tumbleweeds, the Oregon Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, trained for three weeks to increase their combat readiness.

“Being at the Orchard Training Center allows leaders to get their tanks, their Bradleys and their Soldiers with live-fire and tactical maneuver and practice those skills, so when and if it becomes time to use them, they are already trained, proficient and confident,” said Lt. Col. Brian Dean, commander of the 3-116th Cav. Bn.

The Oregon Citizen-Solders ate, slept and trained in the hot, sandy OCTC to trained in the desert during XCTC exercise. More than 500 Oregon National Guard Soldiers filled the air at the Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho, Aug. 21. More than 500 Oregon National Guard Soldiers participated in the XCTC exercise where commanders evaluated combat readiness.

Dean said this was the hardest, most extensive training specific to the battalion’s war-fighting function as tankers since the United States began counterinsurgency operations following the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. He said his troops, whether training or supporting, moved together as one, well-oiled machine.

“I couldn’t be more proud of the Soldiers and leaders of this battalion,” he said.

Story by
1st Sgt. Kevin Hartman
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

“What I hope the troops learn here is confidence in their leaders, their equipment and themselves,” Dean said. “This is an opportunity to get out and practice as a team and really enjoy being in the Army and following the Army as a profession.”

Training together for several weeks also has other benefits. Troops said the camaraderie and unit bonding was a big part of annual training.

“You don’t want to deploy with a crew that doesn’t really like each other. You want to make sure you really have cohesion and I think that’s one thing the National Guard really does well,” said Sgt. Eduardo Martinez, a tank gunner with Charlie Company, 3-116th Cav. Bn.

Tank and Bradley training is a series of scenarios designed to test the crew’s capabilities under pressure to navigate technical and mechanical errors. Staff Sgt. Brian Allender, the tank commander for Martinez’s crew, said a good team is what helps push through the stress.

“This environment and these big guns going off just adds to the chaos,” said Allender. “We eat a lot of dirt out here… a lot of dirt.”

Allender, Martinez and their crew ended up shooting the combat score on the target range and for the entire battalion. Martinez said the experience is what makes being in the National Guard unique and fulfilling.

“Who else gets to come out here and shoot big bullets, drive a machine this much, and go out and have a good time running around ranges?” Martinez added.

While Martinez’s tank crew scored 955 out of 1,000 to earn a “Top Gun” title, a Bradley crew also fired well and was named “Top Gun” in their category with a score of 988. Dean said seeing such high marks was a highlight for the training.

“The impressive part for me is that they continue to grow, even when they’re good and they’re meeting the standard, they just get better and better,” Dean said. “Anything I say about how difficult this is would be an understatement.”

The Soldiers in the armored beasts were not the only military forces training at OCTC. Mortar men with Detachment 2, Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) littered one of the range with craters. The team launched mortars from an observation point.

“If they didn’t have us, the tanks couldn’t do their job,” said Spc. Samantha Brumley, also a tank mechanic with F Company.

Keeping the troops moving wasn’t the only vital support. Units also rotated around the training area to ensure Soldiers had their basic needs taken care of. One group with HHHC delivered the most basic need to training troops — food.

“Without food, they don’t have energy to train or fight,” Dean said.

Staff Sgt. David Wahlstrom, a Bradley commander with 3rd Platoon, A Company, 3-116th Cav. Bn., said a good team is what helps push through the stress.

“The training value out here is invaluable. This is where armor fights. Open terrain like this.”

All of the training, however, would not be possible without the support of HHHC, as well as maintenance Soldiers with the 145th Brigade Support Battalion.

“Without food, they don’t have energy to train or fight.” —Sgt. David Wahlstrom

Joshua Shepherd, fire support officer (FSO), 1st Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, Minnesota Army National Guard, at close range during a maneuver to contact exercise, Aug. 23, at Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho, Aug. 21. More than 500 Oregon National Guard Soldiers trained in the desert during OCTC exercise.

Sgt. Gerson Ferrera, main gunner for the commander’s tank of 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry, demonstrates the controls for the weapon system on an Abrams M1A2 System Enhanced Package (SEP) tank during the unit’s annual training at the Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho, Aug. 23. More than 500 Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers participated in the XCTC exercise where commanders evaluated combat readiness.

A Bradley Fighting Vehicle of A Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, engages an Abrams M1A1 of 1st Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, Minnesota Army National Guard, at close range during a maneuver to contact exercise, Aug. 23, at Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho. More than 500 Soldiers with the Oregon Army National Guard took part in the training designed to test their combat readiness.

Photo by 1st Sgt. Kevin Hartman, 115th MPAD

Spc. Brandon Brummett, with Headquarters, Headquarters Command, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, serves breakfast to Soldiers conducting their annual training at Orchard Combat Training Center, near Boise, Idaho, Aug. 21. Brummett, of LaGrande, Oregon, along with more than 500 Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers, trained in Idaho for two weeks where commanders evaluated the unique combat readiness of each unit.

“Here we come out here and shoot big bullets, drive a machine this much, and go out and have a good time running around ranges?” —Sgt. Eduardo Martinez

1st Sgt. Kevin Hartman, 115th MPAD

Commanders evaluated combat readiness.
Turning wrenches, adjusting stereotypes: Soldier follows dreams as tank mechanic

BOISE, Idaho — Speckled with engine oil and coated with a layer of dust, 23-year-old Spc. Samantha Brumley rummages through a larger-than-life toolbox to begin work with her fellow tank mechanics on servicing an Abrams M1A2 System Enhancement Package (SEP) tank in the high-desert training area southeast of Boise.

Her team was at the Orchard Combat Training Center (OCTC) conducting annual training in support of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, in August 2014. While the service to the tank’s nuclear, biological and chemical filter system is routine, Brumley’s hands-on support is not. Brumley is the first woman to officially become a tank mechanic in the Oregon Army National Guard.

“I wanted to be a nurse. I actually wanted to be a medic when I got in, but that didn’t happen,” Brumley said. Instead, the then 17-year-old joined as a communications specialist and later switched again to become an armament repairer where she maintained and fixed weapons. But she wanted more.

A 2013 decision by the Pentagon opened up more roles in combat units to women. This decision provided an opportunity to Brumley. After working near F Company tank mechanics, Brumley was asked if she would like to go to school to become a tank mechanic, a role that had traditionally only been held by men.

The La Grande, Oregon, woman’s response was simple.

“I’m not a desk-type person. I like getting hands-on. I like getting dirty. So I was like ‘yeah, I wanna go.’” Brumley said.

In the spring of 2014, a year after the Pentagon decision, Brumley was on her way to a military career transition course at the Regional Training Institute in Umatilla, Oregon.

“I never thought I would join the National Guard and be a tank mechanic,” said Brumley. “I certainly never thought I’d be the first woman.” But she was the first woman to attend the tank mechanic course at the RTI.

Brumley said the six-week class taught her more than how to turn wrenches and make adjustments to a tank. It highlighted the adjustments she, the instructors and fellow tank mechanics would need to make as well.

“They didn’t know how to act. They’d always say ‘sorry, no offense’ every five minutes or they’d see me lifting something and say ‘oh, that’s too heavy for her, she can’t do this,’” said Brumley.

She said the next generation of women looking to break into combat roles need to have thick skin. “You can’t take offense to a lot of things. You just need to be your own person and don’t let the guys get you down.”

Brumley graduated and returned to the same F Company tank section she had bonded with prior to attending school. This time, she came with the knowledge and official job title allowing her to work side-by-side with the tank mechanics.

This year’s three-week training at the OCTC was Brumley’s first annual training mission as a tank mechanic. Her supervisor and peers said she took on every challenge, including the two dozen Abrams tanks operating in a sandy landscape could throw at their maintenance section.

“She’s just as good as any Soldier out there or even better,” said her section leader, Sgt. 1st Class Paul Hussey. “She’s operated the 70-ton recovery vehicle quite well even though it was her first time ever operating it.”

After 17 years of working on tanks Hussey has seen how the field has changed over time. He said Brumley is treated just like all the other mechanics.

“I always think it’s about the person rather than if they’re a man or a woman for our job as tank mechanics,” Hussey said.

“She’s asked to do the same job as everybody else and she’s going to be expected to do the job just as good as everybody else.”

When dealing with parts from a 70-ton tank, mechanics have to work together. For the NBC filter, Brumley works alongside Sgt. Justin Daniel. Daniel is a full-time technician for the Oregon Army National Guard where he already worked with women and said he had seen this transition coming.

“I know it seems like a big deal up here in the public sometimes, but down here in the real world, it’s no big deal,” said Daniel, a fellow tank mechanic from La Grande, Oregon. “We just treat each other as Soldiers instead of a gender role.”

Brumley said she didn’t have any adjustment coming back to F Company, but acknowledged there may be some friction elsewhere in the military as women take on more front-line functions.

“We’re all Soldiers. We all wear the same uniform. Buck up and get used to it,” Brumley said.

She may have wanted to join as a medic, but six years later and now a tank mechanic, Brumley said the Army experience has helped shift her desire from fixing people to fixing vehicles.

“Being a mechanic here helped me discover what being a mechanic is like,” Brumley said. She added that her newly found skills have given her direction for a career she’s not in uniform. “I want to be a diesel mechanic.”

Her supervisor Hussey has this advice for women looking to follow in Brumley’s footsteps, “Don’t let anybody kick you down. Just drive forward.”

Before scrambling into the driver’s seat of the Abrams tank – another position held predominantly by male Soldiers, Brumley said she is humbled by her potential impact on other women in uniform.

“I’m proud of being the first female tank mechanic, but I don’t like getting called out on it because it’s different,” Brumley said. “It’s just a job and an opportunity. I feel like one of the guys anyway. All the opportunities I’ve had, I wouldn’t trade it.”

With that, Brumley fires up the Abrams tank and rolls forward, on track for what comes next.
Klamath Falls Airmen complete successful annual training in Chilquin

“Deploying allowed me to utilize the skills that I have developed during my seven years in the National Guard while learning more about this career field,” she said.

As one of just two noncommissioned officers with the group, Cubias has multiple deployments to his credit with the unit prior to this mission. He and the rest of the team of Oregon Guardsmen, including military operations,” said Col. Richard Wedan, shared Hokanson’s pride in knowing that you, as individuals and teams, made an impact toward the military war effort,” he said.

“I feel like I belong to something greater, something bigger,” he said. “I’m representing my country.”

In his concluding remarks at the demobilization ceremony, Hokanson reiterated the conduct and accomplishments of the 13 local Airmen returning home to the Pacific Northwest from overseas duty.

“I hope each and every one of you takes pride in knowing that you, as individuals and together as a team, made a difference and always made us proud,” Hokanson said. “Your skills are not only critical on a global scale but also here at home, and we’re really glad to have you back.”

Commander of the 142d Fighter Wing Col. Richard Wedan, shared Hokanson’s sentiments, shaking hands with each Airmen following the ceremony and spending time with many family members and supporters who reinforced the mission from the home front. “We need to remember the sacrifices made by the families, friends, and employers of these Airmen as well,” said Wedan. “Their enduring assistance and care is critical to the National Guard’s success.”

Airmen provided critical support to overseas installations

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Members of the 142nd Fighter Wing Civil Engineer Squadron and Security Forces Squadron take part in their formal demobilization ceremony at the Portland Air National Guard Base, in Portland, Oregon, Dec. 7. The Airmen returned from deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

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New aircraft shelters at Portland Air Base protect Eagles, maintainers

PORTLAND AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Oregon -- Winter, spring, summer or fall; each of these seasons ushers in distinctive environments for the maintenance crew who work on the flightline.

With nine new aircraft shelters recently installed, the maintenance crew is now equipped to cover when it comes to protecting the base’s F-15 Eagles from the elements.

In previous Phase I and II inspections, the shelters mitigate concerns of working in wet areas or under-lighted spaces during early morning or late afternoon situations for the maintenance Airmen who generate the jets each day.

One of the biggest benefits for sheltering the jets is corrosion prevention. As much as 20 percent of the exterior of the aircraft, some of the most expensive damage happens to the electronic components of the jets which are inside of the jets with humidity and moisture.

Just imagine what your car would look like if you never put it in the garage for 30 years,” said Harris.

The Logistics Department (A4) at NGB would not approve the funds until the middle of 2012. “No flying time was affected, and we have funding for air and maintenance crews who work on the flightline,” said Harris.

“Once they get power, they will be able to handle 400 Hz of power, thus allowing the jets to be generated from the shelter bays.”

According to Kohl, any fighter jet in the U.S. military inventory can fit in the new shelters. Overall the shelters will provide safety for flightline staff and will save money for the base over time.

“We did the analysis and the shelters will pay for themselves between five and six years,” said Harris. “This was one of the driving factors that led NGB to approve the shelters because they realized it was a good investment of long term resources.”

Several other factors and savings will be predictable over time as well. The jets won’t need deicing in the winter - saving time and money, and diminishing ground water issues.

The idea was to put a minimal impact on the operation regarding our shelters when we moved into our work area,” said Kohl.

Kohl made the arrangements to have shelters set up for the flightline staff to work out of and insured that escorts were provided for security with the contractors working on base.

“No flying time was affected, and we did not miss one sortie during the whole construction period,” said Kohl.

When the project was completed Aug. 25, the morning launch took off from the west ramp of the base and two hours later the jets were recovered at the east ramp using the new shelters.

According to Kohl, any fighter jet in the U.S. military inventory can fit in the new shelters. Overall the shelters will provide safety for flightline staff and will save money for the base over time.

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

Wing Inspection Team tests 142nd FW unit readiness

PORTLAND AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Oregon -- The Wing Inspection Team conducted a readiness exercise, July 31-Aug. 3, that challenged many members of the wing to make themselves Inspection-Ready. The overall plan and implementation of these exercises now resides at the wing-level Inspector General office with support from the Wing Inspection Team.

These subject matter experts were sworn in last year by the wing commander, Col. Rick Wedan. They conduct independent evaluations through inspections and other means of testing the Wing’s readiness.

“It’s so refreshing to see the new Air Force Inspection System change the way we think about evaluation and exercises,” said Wedan.

“Putting outdated and irrelevant evaluation scenarios in the rear view mirror is a step in the right direction.”

In previous Phase I and II inspections, the wing would ramp up months before and spend significant time and resources over several UTA periods preparing for that inspection.

By managing the process at the wing level, the inspectors rely on the contractor and base staff to ensure the jets are flightworthy in a timely manner.

The inspection process got fully back on track and the team in place to secure the shelters.

The fiscal year 2013 money was used to purchase the shelters, the construction started in the spring of 2014.

The process initially began when then-Oregon Air National Guard Commander, Brig. Gen. Darrell Collins, asked Lt. Col. Joseph Harris, 142nd Fighter Wing Aircraft Maintenance Commander at the time, if he could develop a new aircraft inspect at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, and investigate a new system to de-humidify aircraft.

“De-humidifying is a standalone, but one of the results was that NGB (National Guard Bureau) approved the use of shelters for aircraft,” said Harris.

One of the biggest benefits for sheltering the jets is corrosion prevention. As much as 20 percent of the exterior of the aircraft, some of the most expensive damage happens to the electronic components on the inside of the jets with humidity and moisture.

“The team (came) with their game faces on, doing their level best to make the inspection a success,” Wedan added.

The rush to get past the old problems stands alone to resolve any personal problems.

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Lt. Col. Todd Hefford, pilot with the 142nd Fighter Squadron begins to prepare for a morning flight as Senior Airman Adam Burger (ladder) and Master Sgt. Dustin Brice, assigned to the 142nd Fighter Wing Aircraft Maintenance Group, begin pre-flight maintenance operations, Sept. 4, Portland Air National Guard Base, Oregon.
142nd FW Airmen can now earn CCAF degrees through Klamath Community College

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

PORTLAND AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Oregon — Every autumn, college students across the nation participate in a rite of passage, as they return to campuses large and small to pursue their dreams of earning a diploma. Airmen at the 142nd Fighter Wing now have the same opportunity to complete their associate’s degrees on base.

With the official signing of a memorandum of understanding, Oct. 7, the 142nd Fighter Wing and Klamath Community College (KCC), based in Klamath Falls, Oregon, began offering classes on site at Portland Air National Guard Base to help Airmen achieve their Community College of the Air Force Degrees (CCAF). “This agreement will allow our Airmen to complete the classes they need to finish their CCAF degrees and hopefully be able to add another stripe in the process,” said Col. Rick Wedan, 142nd Fighter Wing Commander.

Beginning in October of 2015, members of the Air Force and Air National Guard will need to have completed a CCAF degree to be promoted to the ranks of Sergeant (E-5) and Chief Sergeant (E-9).

The 173rd Fighter Wing now joins the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field, Klamath Falls, Oregon, with the same educational partnership. Leaders at the 173rd Fighter Wing signed a similar memorandum of understanding in April. The agreement allows KCC staff and faculty access to the Portland Air Base to academically advise students and instruct classes.

“We have experience with Kingsley Field [with the 173rd Fighter Wing] working with their Airmen because it’s the right thing to do; to support our Airmen because of what all of you do for our country,” said Dr. Roberto Gutierrez, KCC President.

The courses are specifically intended to cover the requirements needed for degree programs with the Community College of the Air Force. Speech and math classes are being offered on base this fall term, and they meet the CCAF semester-hour requirements.

“Currently we have a mix of AGR [active duty guard-reserve], traditional Guard and Reservists taking courses” said Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Reper, Combat Operations Group senior enlisted advisor. It was the Chief Master Sergeant Counsel that got the ball rolling to allow Airmen a chance to finish key courses toward their degrees on base.

“There are five core areas where a three-hour class is required for basic electives,” said Reper. “Eventually humanities, social science and written communication coursework will be added.”

Gutierrez explained how the dynamics of the work place have changed from previous generations. “The transformation of the work place has begun and 70 percent of new jobs now require post secondary education.”

“Community college system reflects our values as a nation, because the system allows open access to everyone,” he said. “Airmen completing their associate’s degrees will see the pathway to promotions enhanced in the process. The courses begin after the duty day and range from two to three hours in length.

“This is a great opportunity for our folks, and a testament to our Citizen-Airmen as integrated members of the community,” said Wedan.

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F-15 maintenance; the relationship between jet and maintainer

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

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon — The life of a 173rd Fighter Wing maintainer at Kingsley Field, Oregon, has fundamental qualities; first off, you will be busy … really busy.

The base routinely prepares 12 jets on the ramp per day for take off. That means the 173rd’s maintenance groups will need to work on 24 aircraft daily. There is no time to put an aircraft back in the air after being serviced. The base only has five unused aircraft at any given time.

The 173rd Fighter Wing is the only jet-wing in the national guard with the F-15 Eagle. Each jet is designated a “CANN-bird” and is called by that name as each unique aircraft is treated as part of a special airframe.

One of the challenges of flying in this day and age is overcoming the shortage of F-15 parts. Maintenance groups overcome this by parking at least one aircraft in a hangar and borrowing its critical parts for other aircraft.

They are called “CANN-birds” and they are used for a month or so before returning to the flying schedule. This cycle contributes to the busy pace at Kingsley, but the fact of the matter is it is normal for all flying units.

Any maintainer will tell you when it’s time to put an aircraft back in the air after it has been out of service, a CANN-bird has not been flown for some time, it won’t be as simple as replacing the parts and cranking it up.

No, it will require troubleshooting, working little kinks out here and there; it could almost be called massaging. What makes this interesting is that, theoretically, it really shouldn’t happen this way.

All aircraft parts are tested, calibrated, adjusted, and ready to go and the aircraft should crank right up. However, in reality, some attention is needed.

“Every aircraft is different. If you use cars as an example, every Mustang is different,” said Chief Master Sgt. Joe McKenzie, 173rd Fighter Wing maintenance chief.

What McKenzie is saying is that two cars produced at the same time on the same line will still have differences. He relates that to the jets and says, “We have to know beyond the broad guidelines in the T.O. how things should be set exactly to make each individual aircraft really perform … and each one is different.”

He gives one example that speaks volumes about the level of experience needed to effectively maintain the jets.

“If you look at the sight windows on the IDGs (integrated drive generators), there are silver bands on them showing what the internal oil level should be; but I know, and everybody out here that’s been cranking a jet for 20 years, knows exactly what level their aircraft should have. They are all a little different; too high and the generator can get hot and cause a heat failure and too low and it won’t crank enough juice,” says McKenzie.

McKenzie referenced levels that are within tolerances, within the indicated band on the sight window, and within the specifications of the technical order.

The complex systems that endure massive amounts of stress are kept in perfect working order by a maintainer’s intimate knowledge of his jet; a bond between the maintainer and his aircraft.

With the recent iron flow into Kingsley Field — gaining five aircraft — the maintainers feel the frustration of having to make a new jet their own.

When asked what the hardest part of switching from one aircraft to another, F-15 crew chief Master Sgt. Sean Campbell says immediately, “Watching the jet leave.”

That’s surprising when he could have easily mentioned the laundry list of problems these “new” aircraft have — leaks, bad hydraulics, bad wiring, non-functional radar and avionics systems, and the list goes on.

Maj. Michael Lambert, the former maintenance squadron commander, says it takes about two years to get one of these new jets to the place where the 173rd Maintenance Group is satisfied with their performance.

Think of it as two years for the maintainers to know their aircraft thoroughly, he said.

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For more information, or to build a kit, visit the Red Cross website at: www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/get-kit

Be a survivor, not a statistic!
To help her cope with his deployment, she joined the Oregon Military Teen Panel and has recently completed her first year. “It’s a very rough time to go through. There’s so many adjustments in such a short period of time,” said Brooke Blythe, a sophomore at Mountain View High School. “Helping out of sorts got my mind off (deployment) helps me too,” she said. The Teen Panel is a federally funded program under the Oregon National Guard’s Service Member and Family Support Division. Since the panel was created in 2010, it has blossomed to 14 kids representing all seven regions of Oregon. Their purpose? Connecting with other military kids and helping to bridge the gap between service members, their families and their children. “We’re giving these teens the ability to speak to their peers in a way that enhances the teen who does the ability to speak to their peers in a way that enhances the teen who does the military families,” she said. According to Conroy and Michelle Kochosky, State Family Program director, the panel steps in where many Oregon schools don’t — it provides a simpler way for military kids to connect with one another through youth-oriented programs. “Oregon does not currently, within the school system, have a way for families to self-identify so in the school structure there isn’t a lot of intentional support for families,” Conroy said. “Kids could be going to school with other military kids and they wouldn’t know it.” “It’s up for their local school districts on how (or) if they implement, and there’s probably five across the entire state that have any type of formalized curriculum or activity or support club,” Kochosky, 36, added. “We underestimate how many schools are willing to help that probably don’t know or have never thought to ask; a lot of teachers are willing to help if we just encourage them.” As members of the panel, teens serve two-year terms, meet once quarterly and participate in monthly conference calls. They also do community service work in Oregon and Idaho and plan annual youth and family events such as the State Youth Symposium, Month of the Military Child and Young Leaders’ Conference. Brooke helps organize conference calls between panel members and also creates an article published in a monthly newsletter to youth and families. She said she plans to work harder in her final year as a teen panel member and try to encourage other Central Oregon military kids to apply. “It depends on the person, but if they were really good at speaking in front of people, inspirationally, and good with kids, I would recommend it,” Brooke said. “It’s given me a lot of leadership and amazing opportunities that the average kid may not get. It’s helped me mature and become the person I want to be.”

This article and the photo were reprinted with permission from The Bulletin.

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142FW Family Programs manager retires, welcomes new director

PORTLAND AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Oregon – As an eight year old, Mary Bell and her family moved to the Portland Air Force Base in 1961, when her father was reassigned from Spandau Air Force Base in Germany. Five years later, he was the last active duty Airman on base to help transition the active Air Force alert mission to the Air National Guard.

“Few men an any profession today can say they have been in the same place for 54 years and create an amazing family,” said Amy Conroy, Director for nearly 12 years with the Oregon National Guard B1-82 Cavalry Squadron in June and isn’t expected to return until July 2015.

Kids could be going to school with other military kids and they wouldn’t know it.

- Amy Conroy, Citizen-Airman and Family Readiness Manager
Playbook and Resilience Plan prepare Oregon for ‘the big one’

Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber signs a proclamation for a National Preparedness Month during a kick-off event for the Cascadia Playbook, Sept. 9, after touring the Emergency Operations Center for Clatsop County at Camp Rilea in Warrenton. Oregon. The Governor’s Office and the Oregon Office of Emergency Management developed the Cascadia Playbook to help ensure state agencies are synchronized in their emergency response, and provide decision makers with a guide to allocate and manage resources efficiently.

For more information visit the Oregon Office of Emergency Management website: http://www.oregon.gov/OMD/OEM/Pages/index.aspx

Recruiting & Retention

Oregon ranks top 10 for retention

The Oregon Army National Guard’s Recruiting and Retention Battalion (RRB) has met and exceeded its retention quota for fiscal year 2014, even as nearly 1,000 Oregon Soldiers deployed overseas this year. This ranks the state of Oregon as the tenth in the Army National Guard for retention.

The retention goal was met on September 11, 2014, 13 years after the 9/11 attacks and despite multiple combat deployments over the past decade.

This year, the Oregon Army Guard managed 106 percent of its retention quota with 904 Soldiers reenlisting or extending. Overall, seven out of the 12 months were above quota with August being the highest at 171 percent above the monthly requirement. These numbers vastly surpassed last year, which only met 76 percent of quota.

The RRB was able to meet the quota this year by switching focus from recruiting new Soldiers to retaining the skilled troops already in the Oregon Army Guard ranks.

“We had more emphasis on retention this year, more drive to keep people in,” said Staff Sgt. James Leeper, a recruiting and retention noncommissioned officer with RRB.

This marks a turning point for the Oregon Army Guard and is a major part of the Army National Guard’s efforts in the event of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami.

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SPACE-A: travel for less the military way

We who live in the Pacific Northwest are blessed with frequent military flights to many desirable destinations. My wife and I have flown to Japan, Iceland, Germany, Crete, Sicily, and Italy. The flights are typically announced now on Facebook. Just type in the base you are watching for flights to see if they will give you the flights leaving in the next 72 hours, even perhaps the number of seats available. Flights originate from LewisMcChord AFB, NAS Whidbey Island, Gray Army Airfield, Fairchild AFB, and Oregon flight facilities in Salem and Portland Air National Guard Base. Contact information for local flights is: McChord (253) 982-7268, Whidbey NAS (360) 257-2604, and Fairchild (509) 247-3406.

You may fly on an armed aircraft, depending on the service, but there is no cost, other than the usual fees/taxes for the TSA. Aircraft vary from large cargo planes to VIP aircraft and you should aim to travel with about 30 pounds of luggage.

Reservists and Guardsmen not on active status, may only fly in the U.S. to include HI, Puerto Rico, Alaska, and territories. Active and retired personnel may fly worldwide, where allowed.

I always go to the base a day ahead, having already arranged quarters, and then check with the counter folks at the flight terminal about the flight and show time. Be prompt for the show time, report in, and wait to be called for the flight. Should the flight be overbooked, seats will be awarded by the oldest signup.

As you obtain your boarding pass, you may be able to order/pay for an inflight meal, which will be delivered to the aircraft for you. For U.S. Navy flights, you can grab a sandwich before the flight. Then you will go through a TSA-type screening and board the aircraft. Be sure to have your ID, credits cards, and a very flexible schedule in case there are no planes to get you back.

Space-A flights are a privilege/benefit that you have earned and are for your use with the patience, daring, and the skill of seeing our country’s military at work.

Lt. Col. Allan E. Jeska
U.S. Army Special Forces (Ret.)
jeskaai@juno.com

TRICARE is warning users of a scam

TRICARE is warning beneficiaries of the need to be aware of a telephone scam affecting beneficiaries older than 65 on Medicare nationwide.

A caller will usually identify themselves as being an official Medicare vendor, and will then offer to sell beneficiaries back braces.

Do not give any personal identifiable information, such as birth date, Social Security number or banking information if you receive such a call. TRICARE representatives never ask beneficiaries for this information when calling for an official Department of Defense survey.

Beneficiaries who receive a call of this nature, can contact the Defense Health Agency (DHA) Program Integrity Office directly.

For more information on fraud and abuse visit the like TRICARE Fraud and Abuse website at www.TRICARE.mil/frac. For more on TRICARE, visit the Military.com TRICARE section.

TRICARE changes access options

TRICARE beneficiaries need to watch their email and ensure they have a millConnect account to receive information about changes to their TRICARE coverage. The Department of Defense is no longer sending paper letters to notify beneficiaries about changes to their coverage and eligibility status.

Beneficiaries will now receive emails or post cards directing them to online resources where they can view their information.

If you have a valid email address in the Defense Enrollee Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), you will receive an email telling you to visit millConnect to read your letter. If you do not have an email address in DEERS, you will receive a post card directing you to millConnect.

Visit the TRICARE website at www.tricare.mil or call the TRICARE Customer Service Center in Springfield, Oregon, at 1-800-424-1354, or post cards directing them to online resources where they can view their information.

Visit the TRICARE website at www.tricare.mil or call the TRICARE Customer Service Center in Springfield, Oregon, at 1-800-424-1354, or contact your regional contractor for assistance.

Retiree Service Office
Anderson Readiness Center Room 243 3225 State Street Salem, OR 97309
503-584-2891, or 1-800-452-7500, ext. 2891

Email: ng.or.or.arng.mbx.j1-rso2@mail.mil
Web: www.ORNG-SMFS.org

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Two years before the beginning of World War II, Dario Raschio wanted to join the military and learn how to fly. In 1939, one year after Raschio earned a biology degree from St. Stephen’s in Portland, he was hired to teach science at his alma mater. When the war started, Raschio wanted to join the military and serve his country.

Unsure if the U.S. Navy would take him, Raschio had to make use of all the skills he had learned. After three years of teaching, he became a 'floatplane' pilot. It was during the war that Raschio proved himself as a skilled aviator.

Raschio is 104 years old and has two children. He is the last remaining sailor from the USS Oregon.

**Fact:** The USS Oregon was a battleship built in 1906 and commissioned by the U.S. Navy. It was one of the last battleships of the World War I era and served in both World War I and World War II. It was decommissioned in 1947 and scrapped in 1963.