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FALL 2015

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Above left: An Oregon Army National Guard HH-60M Blackhawk helicopter crew, with Charlie Company, 7-158th Aviation, navigates through smoke on the way to drop water from a ‘Bambi bucket’ in support of firefighting ground crews, August 5, at the Stouts Fire near Canyonville, Oregon. Above right: A member of the Oregon National Guard uses a variety of tools to put out wildfire hot spots at the Grizzly Bear Complex Fire near Elgin, Oregon, Sept. 3. See Soldiers and Airmen on Page 4.

Photos by Jason van Mourik, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Above: Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Alek Skarlatos (left), U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Spencer Stone and Anthony Sadler look to each other at the conclusion of a ceremony at the Pentagon, Sept. 17, honoring them for their heroic actions in stopping a gunman on a Paris-bound train outside of Brussels, August 21.

Right: Secretary of Defense Ash Carter presents the Soldier’s medal to Spc. Alek Skarlatos during a ceremony at the Pentagon, Sept. 17, honoring him for his role in stopping the gunman on a Paris-bound train outside of Brussels, August 21.

Photos by Glenn Fawcett, Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs

SALEM, Oregon – For Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Alek Skarlatos, his rest and recuperation (R&R) time following a recent deployment to Afghanistan has not gone exactly as planned. While on vacation in Europe with two of his lifelong friends, U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Spencer Stone and Anthony Sadler, Skarlatos unexpectedly found himself back in harm’s way.

A gunman carrying an AK-47 and a Lugar pistol opened fire aboard a train carrying 500 passengers from Amsterdam to Paris, August 21. The sound of gunfire immediately caught the attention of Skarlatos, who looked up to see the attacker emerging from the lavatory. The gunman had stopped to reload. Skarlatos tapped his friend, Stone, on the shoulder and motioned towards the gunman, saying, “let’s go.”

Stone tackled the gunman and tried to wrestle the rifle out of his hands. Together, the three friends and a British passenger surrounded the gunman to subdue him. The attacker fought back with a box-cutter, injuring Stone. Skarlatos took the gunman’s rifle and used it as a blunt weapon to knock him unconscious, then

See Soldier on Page 4
**Emergency preparedness a necessity for the future**

This past month we have witnessed many changes. The change of summer to fall, a new school year, different colors of leaves, and a change of sports seasons. Throughout the promotion of Lt. Gen. Dan Hokanson, this past month has also brought about new changes to help the Oregon National Guard.

These changes allow us to reflect on the past few months and evaluate the successes that we as an organization have had. Comments from top National Guard leaders continue to recognize the State of Oregon as a model for other states. However, “all best laid plans of mice and men go awry.” Especially to those who serve to an interrupted call.

In a conversation with Lt. Col. Brian Houston, HH-60B Blackhawk medevac helicopter pilot, he stated that when that call comes in, regardless of the time of day, he and his crew will load up the aircraft and get ready to go. There are several of our Oregon Citizen-Soldiers who not only believe this but are also prepared to do so at a moment’s notice. For them and their families the knowledge and the expectations Oregon taxpayers have on those who serve is strong.

“The goodness of our organization, we pride ourselves as a brigade, a battalion, a company, and/or as a platoon when it comes to inspections, surveys, and matrices that build up our readiness. Our readiness is our ability to individually and/or collectively respond to the call from our command, state or nation.”

**Hokanson bids farewell, takes Oregon heritage with him**

I have had the honor to serve alongside some of our nation’s greatest Citizen-Soldiers, Airmen and Civilians; and under the command of three Oregon governors.

My family and I will miss being part of the Oregon Military Department family. It has been incredible to be part of our great organization and all it has accomplished, and we look forward to following all you will accomplish in the future. Although I will be leaving Oregon in the near future, I will never forget my military heritage and what it means to be an Oregon Guardman.

Very Respectfully,

Dan Hokanson

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon National Guard, published twice a month under the provisions of AR 70-25, 1 August 2016. The Sentinel is available online at www.oregon.gov/egon/Sentinel, and is distributed electronically, to other interested persons by request, free of charge, at the Oregon Military Department unless prior arrangements are made with the Public Affairs staff.

All submissions must include the author’s name, mailing source, military or civilian, are accepted. All ideas, stories and letters to the editor from any lies are encouraged to submit articles and stories at the discretion of the editorial staff.

Guard members and their families are allowed, and can be found online at www.oregon.gov/egon/OMD/AGPA/publications.shtml.

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**SALEM, Oregon** – Governor Kate Brown appointed Brigadier General Michael E. Stencil to succeed Lieutenant General Daniel R. Hokanson as Adjutant General of Oregon, in an official announcement, Sept. 25.

Brigadier General Stencil began serving as Acting Adjutant General on August 16, following Hokanson’s promotion to Deputy Commander, United States Northern Command (NORTHCOM), Vice Commander, United States Element, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado.

“Michael Stencil is a proven and accomplished leader. He will make an excellent Adjutant General, and I thank him for his continued commitment to the state and nation,” said Governor Brown.

Prior to his selection as Adjutant General, Stencil served as Acting Commander, in a dual position as the Oregon National Guard’s Air Component Commander as well as the Air National Guard Assistant to the Commander of 116th Air Force.

To the Soldiers, Airmen, Civilians and Families of the Oregon Military Department:

I am truly humbled that I have been confirmed for appointment to the rank of lieutenant general and assignment as Deputy Commander, United States Northern Command/ Vice Commander, United States Element, North American Aerospace Defense Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. It will be an honor to serve in this capacity.

My appointment would not have been possible without the experiences and opportunities I was fortunate to have as a member of the Oregon National Guard. Over the past 20 years, I have had the honor to serve alongside some of our nation’s greatest Citizen-Soldiers, Airmen and Civilians; and under the command of three Oregon governors.

My family and I will miss being part of the Oregon Military Department family. It has been incredible to be part of our great organization and all it has accomplished, and we look forward to following all you will accomplish in the future. Although I will be leaving Oregon in the near future, I will never forget my military heritage and what it means to be an Oregon Guardman.

Very Respectfully,

Dan Hokanson

Brigadier General Stencil received his commission in 1984 from the Air National Guard Academy of Military Science. Upon completing Undergraduate Pilot Training in 1985, he completed F-4 upgrade training and was assigned to the 123rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Portland Air National Guard Base. In 1989 he completed F-15 transition training as part of the 142nd Fighter Wing’s conversion to the F-15. His many assignments consist of Maintenance Officer and State Plans and Programs Officer at Oregon Air National Guard Headquarters.

Brigadier General Stencil has served as Commander of the Oregon Air National Guard and Chief of Staff to the Oregon Air National Guard in Salem. He has commanded the 142nd Fighter Wing with an interim assignment as Battle Director in Air Force Central’s 609th Air and Space Operations Center, Al Udeid Air Force Base, Qatar. He previously commanded the 142nd Civil Engineering Squadron and the 142nd Mission Support Group. He also previously served as the State Director of operations/A-3 Joint Force Headquarters for the Oregon Air National Guard where he was the principal advisor to the commander of the Oregon Air National Guard on emergency management planning for state and federal tasking.
Renewal of labor management agreement marks 20 years of partnership

Story and photo courtesy CWA Dale A. Williams, Deputy Director of Human Resources

On May 12, 2015, Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, then-Ad joint General, Oregon Army National Guard, and AFGE Local 2986 President Gary Snider signed the fourth iteration of the Labor Management Partnership Agreement, reaffirming that the Oregon National Guard and AFGE Local 2986 will continue to do business well into the future for the betterment of the Oregon National Guard.

The partnership originally began February 23, 1995, when then-Ad joint General of Oregon, Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, and then-president of AFGE Local 2986, Terry Swartwout, signed the first Oregon National Guard Labor Management Partnership Agreement. The agreement was in response to President Bill Clinton’s Executive Order 12871, which mandated partnerships within the federal government.

Executive Order 12871 was signed to focus the executive branch of government on evaluating, analyzing, implementing, and monitoring matters affecting the labor management relationship, and utilizing interest-based bargaining techniques to improve the efficiency of the government.

In the 20 years since that time, the Oregon National Guard has had four subsequent adjutants general and two subsequent U.S. Presidents (Bush and Obama) each with executive orders of their own on this subject. The Partnership Agreement has had two additional iterations, five collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) and seven presidents of AFGE Local 2986.

Interest-based bargaining takes a lot of commitment. Much time is invested in trying to obtain a consensus, understand other people’s points of view, and the nucleus of the interest at hand. It isn’t a case of merely actively listening to the other party’s interests. It entails becoming familiar and understanding fully what the interest is behind a particular concern or issue. It’s not always easy, but it produces a superior result that all parties can live with.

With the signing of this agreement and our shared, continued commitment, we expect to keep adding value to the Oregon National Guard for the next 20 years.

82nd Tactical Support Detachment supports division operations at NTC

Story by Lt. Col. Kenneth Safe, 82nd TSD Commander

The 82nd Tactical Support Detachment (TSD) conducted annual training with 7th Infantry Division (7th ID) at the National Training Center (NTC), Fort Irwin, in May and June of 2015.

The TSD was transferred from the 82nd Rear Operations Center in March of 2014. Since the formation of the unit, this was the first time the 82nd TSD and 7th ID set up and operated the Division Tactical Command Post (DTCP) as a multi-component unit (MCU).

As part of the Operation Enforceable Freedom (OEF), a joint operation with the 234th Army Band, the command general of ‘7th ID, this structure and mission is a “proof of principle” as the active component is faced with the reduced force structure and continued high operational tempo requirements.

The DTCP exercises the MCU staff in division tactical operations while providing mission support to an active duty U.S. Army Stryker brigade out of Joint Base Lewis-McCord.

“The support from ‘7th ID has been exceptional from the unit commander to the woodrow; greenwood, battleship captain. “Although emphasis on battlefield situational awareness was a priority, there was an encouraging and constructive learning environment with ‘7th ID in the DTAC.”

The 82nd TSD is a small detachment of 47 personnel with 18 officer positions and three warrant officer positions. The unit is unique in that it’s comprised entirely of staff sections that ‘round out’ the division staff. The multi-component DTCP mission is a great opportunity to integrate with the active component.

“We quickly attained battle rhythm as we learned how to work and function as a division TOC [Tactical Operations Center],” said Capt. David Rose, fires officer.

The 82nd TSD is the only unit in the Oregon Army National Guard that trains at the division staff level.

“Some of my early difficulties were determining what a brigade fight meant at the division level, with the scope of operations significantly wider than I have ever experienced,” said Capt. Brian Fike, battle captain. “It was an eye opener to realize the combat power and how it can be applied to shape the battlefield.”

The mission provides excellent broadening experience for officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs). As can be expected, the unit structure and mission is still not well known. Col. William Prendergast, commander of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, was able to visit and learn about the DTAC while he was at NTC.

The 82nd TSD staff said seeing the MCU DTAC in operation was motivating and they returned from NTC with excitement. They now have a foundation to continue developing the DTAC capability.

“NTC was a great experience to expand my knowledge base and experience in division operations, and to work in partnership with different units and components within the Army,” said Staff Sgt. Lucien Darenburg, operations NCO.

Sgt. Daniel Hall, CBRN NCO, received a recognition coin from Maj. Gen. Ferrell for his contributions during the training.


The staff said the culminating exercise was “awesome” and was well attended. Those in attendance were, Lt. Gen. Steven Lanza, I Corps commanding general; Maj. Gen. Terry Ferrell; Brig. Gen. Joe Jarrard, Adjutant General of the Georgia National Guard; and Col. (Promotable) Antonio Aguto, Jr., deputy commanding general operations.

Currently, the DTAC mission is to support an NTC training cycle each year. The next NTC training cycle is scheduled for January 2016.

234th Army Band concerts observe WWII anniversary

Story by Oregon Sentinel Staff

SALEM, Oregon — The Oregon Army National Guard’s 234th Army Band performed a series of summer concerts to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of WWII.

The band was the featured musical headline on the 70th Anniversary of WWII events coinciding with the national Spirit of ‘45 Commemoration. Oregon Army National Guard Governor Kate Brown proclaimed August 9-16, 2015, as “Greatest Generation.” The second week of August was proclaimed August 9-16, 2015, as national Spirit of ‘45 Commemoration. The 70th Anniversary of the end of WWII.


From left: Lt. Col. Jeneri Parry, management chief negotiator with the Oregon National Guard’s Human Resources Department; AFGE Local 2986 President Gary Snider; and Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, then-Ad joint General, Oregon, renewed the 20-year partnership between the union and the Oregon National Guard, May 12, 2015.

Marijuana prohibited despite Measure 91

Story by Tech. Sgt. James Baddoff, 116th ACS, Drug Demand Reduction Program Manager

During drug testing, several Oregon National Guardsmen have asked a question, how does Measure 91 affect them? Measure 91 does not affect existing employment laws of Oregon. An employee who requires drug testing can continue to do so. So, in short, the use of marijuana is still forbidden in the Oregon National Guard. Additionally, both the Air and Army National Guard prohibit the ingestion of products containing, and products derived from, hemp seed or hemp seed oil. For additional information see Command Policy Memorandum #143.

What about synthetic or substitute marijuana? No.

The Oregon Board of Pharmacy has voted to ban the sale and possession of synthetic marijuana. Synthetic marijuana is comprised of a number of different chemicals, none of which are derived from the Cannabis family Cannabaceae. The chemicals contained in synthetic marijuana have been added to the Oregon Board of Pharmacy’s list of controlled substances.

For members struggling with substance abuse issues, please seek help from either your chain of command or mental health care providers. We are stronger as an organization when our members are healthy, happy and ready to protect our communities.

Oregon Military Museum Park.


The Oregon Military Museum is named in honor of Brig. Gen. Thayer, and is undergoing a $16 million renovation. The Army Band concert at Camp Withycombe, August 15, was preceded by a ribbon-cutting ceremony dedicating the Oregon Military Museum Park.

The park includes two of the original military buildings at Camp Withycombe, the Quartermaster Storehouse and the Field Artillery Horse Barn. The band will also tell the story of the world famous Clarkamak Firing Range, which produced national and international rifle champions for many years.

For more information on the Oregon Military Museum, visit http://www.oregonmilitarymuseum.org.
**Soldiers and Airmen deploy to fire camps throughout the state**

Extended from Front Page

SALEM, Oregon – Oregon National Guard Soldiers and Airmen worked alongside civilian fire crews during the 2015 wildfire season. Approximately 375 of Oregon’s finest provided support to local, county and even out-of-state fire response personnel across the state. They dug fire lines, put out smoldering trees, and dropped water from helicopters.

Oregon Army National Guard helicopter crews, called in by state authorities in August, to provide support for the Stouts Fire near Canyonville, Oregon. Two HH-60M Blackhawk helicopters, assigned to Charlie Company 1-758th Aviation, based out of Salem, Oregon, and one CH-47 Chinook, assigned to Detachment 1, 168th Aviation Company, 168th Aviation, provided bambi bucket support to ground crews with fire suppression.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 David McPherson said the mission provided valuable training time. “It helps increase our proficiency as pilots,” he said. “This is probably one of the toughest flying that we do, so it’s a good experience.”

The Oregon Army National Guard helicopters were just three among more than a dozen aircraft working in the area. “It’s extremely busy and challenging to operate with all the different aircraft out there,” said Capt. William Lieblhuber, Det. 1, 160th Aviation commander. “Everyone has to keep watch at all times to make sure we stay safe.”

With Charlie Company, 7-158th Aviation, continued on to support wildfire efforts near John Day, Oregon, in September, as well as providing a medical evacuation helicopter. “For many of us, this is just another day at work,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Dennis Cooper. “This is what we do, what we train for, to support Oregonians in their time of need.”

Following the activation of the Oregon National Guard by Oregon Governor Kate Brown approximately 375 Soldiers and Airmen completed training at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPST), in Salem, Oregon, and deployed to fire camps throughout the state. Volunteers came from both of the Oregon Army National Guard brigades, the 1-186th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and the 82nd Brigade Troop Command, and both of the Oregon Air Guard wings, the 142nd Fighter Wing and the 173rd Fighter Wing.

Daniel Cleveland, a wild lands fire management officer for the Oregon Military Department, underscored the importance of the training while talking about this year’s fire season. “The fire switches direction every day,” he said. “You could be on the trail edge or the heel of the fire and then the winds will switch and the next thing you know you’re on the front of the fire.”

One team of Citizen-Soldiers deployed to the Canyon Creek fire near John Day. “They helped save John Day and Canyon City,” said George White, Central Oregon District forester. “The Guard crews played a pivotal role in securing the fire perimeter.”

A team of Citizen-Airmen deployed to Elgin and Troy, Oregon, in June, to assist with mop-up operations at the Grizzly Fire.

“Our Soldiers are motivated and glad to be able to help,” said 1st Sgt. Eric Petitt, noncommissioned officer in charge at the Elgin fire camp. The Oregon National Guard has an ongoing agreement with the Oregon Department of Forestry, known as Operation Plan Smokey, which stipulates the details of how Oregon National Guard members will be utilized to assist in firefighting efforts. This agreement is reviewed by both agencies annually to remain up-to-date for each fire season.

The Oregon National Guard has an Oregon Army National Guard HH-60M Blackhawk helicopter (above right) with Charlie Company, 7-158th Aviation, filled a 500-gallon bambi bucket (above left) with water to suppress the Stouts Fire near Canyonville, Oregon, August 5.

**Soldier thrust into overnight fame from Paris to D.C. to Hollywood**

Continued from Front Page

Photo courtesy 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Alek Skarlatos and his Dancing with the Stars partner, Lindsay Arnold, pose for a photo on the runway at Air Assault school. Following his brush with fame, Skarlatos plans to follow a career path that was already in the works with his leadership prior to that life-changing day on the train. As a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-186th Infantry Battalion, he plans to complete his Warrior Leader Course (WLC), for promotion, as well as sniper training and Air Assault school.

On the current status of the fire support mission, August 21, briefs Brig. Gen. Michael E. Stencl, Adjutant General, Oregon, said, “These men are true heroes. The Oregon National Guard is extremely proud of Spc. Skarlatos.”

Skarlatos’ quick reaction, his courage and his bravery undoubtedly saved countless lives, for which we are thankful beyond words. He is a true Citizen-Soldier and we displayed the courage each of us would hope to find in ourselves.

The young specialist’s life has changed dramatically since he made that split-second decision on the Paris-bound train. He said all the attention is overwhelming; his schedule packed with flights between media engagements. On the morning of September 3, he appeared on Good Morning America and was named as a contestant on ABC’s Dancing with the Stars. Skarlatos is paired with professional dancer Lindsay Arnold as a member of the Season 21 cast.

“I think it’ll be fun. I hope I learn a lot,” Skarlatos said, “I’ll need to, if I’m going to stay on [the show] very long.”

His work ethic as a Soldier paired with Lindsay Arnold’s dance instructions seem to be paying off. He has survived the first two eliminations on the show, showing off both his first and quick step. Following his brush with fame, Skarlatos plans to follow a career path that was already in the works with his leadership prior to that life-changing day on the train. As a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-186th Infantry Battalion, he plans to complete his Warrior Leader Course (WLC), for promotion, as well as sniper training and Air Assault school.

Photo by Capt. Leslie Reed, 41st IBCT Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Alek Skarlatos and his Dancing with the Stars partner, Lindsay Arnold, pose for a photo on the runway at Air Assault school. Following his brush with fame, Skarlatos plans to follow a career path that was already in the works with his leadership prior to that life-changing day on the train. As a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-186th Infantry Battalion, he plans to complete his Warrior Leader Course (WLC), for promotion, as well as sniper training and Air Assault school.

Photo by Capt. Leslie Reed, 41st IBCT Public Affairs

Skarlatos and his Dancing with the Stars partner, Lindsay Arnold, pose for a photo on the runway at Air Assault school. Following his brush with fame, Skarlatos plans to follow a career path that was already in the works with his leadership prior to that life-changing day on the train. As a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-186th Infantry Battalion, he plans to complete his Warrior Leader Course (WLC), for promotion, as well as sniper training and Air Assault school.

Photo by Cap. Leslie Reed, 41st IBCT Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Alek Skarlatos (center right) alongside other Dancing with the Stars competitors, celebrates his scores from the judges following his Jazz performance with professional dance partner, Lindsay Arnold, Sept. 21 in Los Angeles, Calif. Skarlatos was invited to compete on the ABC reality show after he and his friends subbed a guman on a Paris-bound train, August 21. Skarlatos has successfully danced the Fox Trot, Quickstep, Tango and a Jazz piece and remains a fierce competitor on the show.
Regional Training Institute seeks instructors for influx of students

It was supposed to be a raid. The mission was fairly straightforward. The rehearsals were going to facilitate a major organizational change. For instance, the RTI detachment for the ALC courses was going to be able to achieve major organizational change. Still, the RTI cadre are stretched pretty thin. "RTI instructors don’t go to annual training (AT) all together like Soldiers in other units," he said. "Instead, we schedule them for one drill weekend, followed immediately by two weeks of AT, followed immediately by another drill weekend, for a solid 19-day block in which they can teach a course. We stagger them this way all year long."

The RTI has to be resourceful in its use of personnel in order to meet the increasing demands for training in the western region. The current course offerings of the RTI include the Tactical Certification Course (TCC) in addition to its ABI/SGI, MOS-T, ITC and ALC courses. The RTI detachment in Monmouth is also responsible for teaching the Health Care Specialist (68W) certification course and for running the Officer Candidate State (OCS)

To add even more acronyms to an already crowded list, there are plans afoot to develop a Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (SUAV) operator course, as well as a Maneuver Senior Leader’s Course (TCC) in addition to its ABI/SGI, MOS-T, ITC and ALC courses. The RTI detachment in Monmouth is also responsible for teaching the Health Care Specialist (68W) certification course and for running the Officer Candidate State (OCS)

"We are making a big push right now for new instructors," Sigfridson said. "A tour with the RTI also sets the stage for those E-6s and E-7s to go back to their units and be more effective leaders. That’s what we do, they secure personnel, and by keeping all alert aircraft co-located in one area of the base.

The RTI is going to need those new instructors if they hope to meet the growing demand for training. "We’re really breaking new ground," said Sigfridson. "It’s an exciting time to be a part of the RTI."
Oregon Army National Guard battles in heavyweight match-up at National Training Center

**FEATURES**

Story by
Sgt. 1st Class David Duvall
115th Brigade Public Affairs Officer

In conjunction with contributions from
Sgt. Anthony VanDecker, 115th BPAO, and

More than 700 Oregon Soldiers augmented the 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team (Amor) during “force-on-force” Army National Guard versus U.S. Army Opposing Force (OPFOR) combat and maneuver battles at the National Training Center.


The Oregon units augmented the Idaho Army National Guard’s 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team (CRICT) during the first decisive action-integrated combat and maneuver training exercise the National Training Operation has completed since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom. The 116th CRCT (Army) brought big guns to the fight in the first “force-on-force” Army National Guard versus U.S. Army Opposing Force (OPFOR) heavy weight match-up.

“The purpose of this NTC is to allow the brigades to advance in collective training skills and our proficiency as a combined-arms team,” said Maj. General Robert A. Motes, Oregon Army National Guard Chief of Staff. “The NTC brings unprecedented training opportunities to the Army, and this is one of those unique opportunities to train the National Guard.”

Every aspect of the training was designed to increase our fighting capabilities and readiness at all levels, from the individual Soldier up to the higher headquarters echelons. In this case, the main focus was to synchronize the brigades use of combat multipliers in full-spectrum battles against the U.S. Army’s 2nd Squadron, 116th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), also known as the Blackhorse.

The 116th CRCT pulled no punches as their Stones tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles; Paladin Howitzers; Apache helicopters, from the Idaho Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 116th Attack Reconnaissance and Engineer units, from the Arizona Army National Guard’s 473rd Engineer Battalion, collided with enemy enemy opposing forces.

The National Guard is part of the total Army force and we have combat formations within our team. It’s important that we give our organizations the opportunity to come out and go against watchdog OPFOR to grow and train,” said Maj. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, Director of the Oregon Army National Guard.

Kadavy said NTC training among combat units in the National Guard achieve the training levels required by the Army in order to meet the nation’s demands.

“The training simulated an expanse of operational experience, allowing large units to deploy together and work simultaneously. More than 2,200 Service Members participated in the exercise, including units from Idaho Army National Guard units 10 times, 11 units from the U.S. Army Reserve units and six units from the Oregon Army National Guard units.

“The most important thing is if we get the opportunity to talk to all 4,000 plus OPFOR forces and train together at one time,” said Johnson. “The National Training Center is one of these rare resources today’s Army that allow us the opportunity to do this.”

Fort Irwin, known as tactical assembly areas, played the desert terrain. Each unit, or echelon, was set up to maintain security of their location and react to any opposing forces that “attacked” with simulated indirect or direct fires. Units conducted several tactical points (packed up and moved to new locations) during the two-week training cycle in order to prevent the OPFOR from planning large-scale attacks.

“We didn't get to do this type of training as a unit at Fort Hood,” said Oregon Army National Guard Spc. James Ross, of Grants Pass, Oregon, with the 116th MHP Company. “Spc. Jamilcl Ginyar, an Oregon college student from Yuma, California, with the 116th MHP Company said, ‘This training is like being in the United States’.

All of the vehicles, weapons systems and Soldiers were fitted with a laser training system, known as Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES). The laser system rendered “hits” appropriate for each Soldier based on their location and mode of engagement during simulated attacks. When a soldier was “hit,” the soldier was identified in charge of being trained at the units NTC would naturally deployed and vehicles required simulated casualties.

“I like to see their face when they, you know, said Spc. Ayers. “They are happy when they’re training.”

In the field, cooks don’t have fresh ingredients at their disposal to create a home, or plumbing and electricity to operate a full kitchen. They have to live and make good use of their location and react to any opposing forces that presented itself.

The meals are warmed in a field kitchen based on a sailor and personal by generators. Guns and weapons didn’t have to be brought to the Soldiers by Charlie, 116th Cavalry. It’s all about the little things that cooks do to boost moral and keep everyone moving forward.

“The Soldiers were really happy to have coffee this morning,” said Spc. Ayers.

In another tactical assembly area, Spc. Sarah Kelly of Portland, Oregon, with Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry Regiment, with Fort Campbell, Ky., with 116th MHP, worked to provide relief from the desert heat for Soldiers of Alpha Company, 116th Cavalry Battalion.

“The shift helped where we made it,” said Spc. Ayers. “We also had cold lemonade available.”

The simulated deployment environment helps prepare Soldiers for a real world deployment. Living in the field, developing team cohesion, and coping with environmental stresses. They lacked common amenities, such as a bed, showers and running water.

“The troops have been great. They don’t want more, they want more,” said Maj. Gen. James Webb, with the 116th. “They’ve been to many challenges. I’m especially proud of each and every one of them."

The 116th MHP Company (based in Salem and Milton, Oregon) contributed to the 116th CRCT’s NTC training as a combat service and support unit. Many of the Soldiers assigned to the unit are and have never been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Woodruff said the training was successful in general, developing more cohesive teams, said 1st Sgt. Misty Connan, senior enlisted advisor for the 116th. “We are also developing more cohesive teams, as troops come together and train together.”

The 116th CRCT was the first unit to utilize the 116th CRCT’s NTC training as a combined arms fire exercises (CALFEX) with multiple 116th MHP units using different weapons systems as a synchronized effort, tanks, Bradleys, mortars, infantry and engineer units, as well as aviation support.

“The CALFEX is a great opportunity for these Soldiers and Leaders to maneuver under five-day conditions with themselves and their crews, to include both live and software-based live fire and MULCOs (Mobile Clearing Line Charges),” said Dean. Oregon Army National Guard’s 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry, was the NTC firing site during the 116th CRCT’s NTC training. They aren’t being billed as active Army unit.

“The battalion deployed more than 2,000 troops with their combat equipment and vehicles to Fort Irwin and fired more than 50,000 shells during the training exercise,” added Dean. Oregon Army National Guard’s 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry, was the NTC firing site during the 116th CRCT’s NTC training. They aren’t being billed as active Army unit.

The battalion deployed more than 2,000 troops with their combat equipment and vehicles to Fort Irwin and fired more than 50,000 shells during the training exercise. The battalion’s over time for qualification we would have the opportunity to do company level live fire,” said Lt. Col. Dean Bean, of Salem, Oregon, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry. “You’ve got to shoot accurately, move troops and communicate effectively.”

“The OCFs only said they’ve seen one other company deploy as max OPFOR as we did last year,” said Miller.

Oregon Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Patrick Koen, of McMinnville, Molalla, a tank commander with Charlie Company, 3-116th, said the OPFOR made us combat hardened, challenging.

“They made us rigid and stay there very well,” said Koen. “When they moved and who moved, it was too difficult to plan their movements.”

Despite a well-equipped OPFOR, Dean said the Soldiers did exceptionally well in an extremely challenging environment with a very difficult standard. “We have a plan, Combat packages accurately and effectively,” said Dean. “We know our game plan and we know we have moves to improve.”
Oregon enlists first female combat engineer in Army National Guard history

PORTLAND, Oregon – Eighteen-year-old Mackenzie Clarke sits in the lobby of the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) in Portland, Oregon, with other recruits watching a DVD movie on a large screen television. She waits for her name to be called, as she passes the time alternating between texting a friend and occasionally looking over to an adjacent room crowded with several Oregon Army National Guard recruiters. The recruiters also wait to hear her name being called, so they can join her for a swearing in ceremony.

Clarke and the Oregon Army National Guard are about to make national history. The recent graduate of Clackamas High School has agreed to enlist as the Army National Guard’s first female combat engineer (12B) – the first combat military occupational specialty (MOS) to be opened to female Soldiers by Army officials. The Pentagon officially lifted a ban on women in combat in January 2013, and the U.S. Army opened up the combat engineer MOS to females in April 2015. According to Army officials, Soldiers in the 12B MOS learn a wide variety of tasks, including explosive demolitions to clear obstacles, operating heavy equipment, route and mine clearing, construction of fighting positions, and constructing bridges.

Over the building paging system comes the call, “Army National Guard applicant, Clarke, please report to the lobby.”

“Clarke, please report to the lobby.”

Master Sgt. Mark Browning and the Staff Sgt. Erin Meyers, of the Oregon Army National Guard Recruiting & Retention Battalion, promptly exit the room, and walk over to where Clarke was now standing.

“Ready for this?” Browning asks. Clarke, who lives in Damascus, Oregon, responds with a smile.

Clarke, who lives in Damascus, Oregon, met the Army’s qualification standards to enter training as a combat engineer, one of 14 combat-specific jobs that were previously exclusive to males.


Clarke certainly didn’t settle for anything less than her favorite choice when she signed up to become a combat engineer.

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

Growing up, Clarke played with Legos. She liked building things, tearing them down and then rebuilding them again. With a knack for math and science, she had her sights set on being an engineer.

“They said I was going to blow stuff up, and I couldn’t resist,” Clarke said.

Meyers, who assisted Clarke in the enlistment process, said joining the military is no piece of cake. Add to this being a female, let alone the first female combat engineer. But Meyers was convinced Clarke was up to the challenge.

“I wouldn’t put her in the job if I didn’t think she was going to be good at it,” Meyers said. “That includes the public scrutiny. She’s just going to push forward no matter how tough things get.”

Clarke said she never considered gender when considering her new role in the military. Throughout her life, her compass was always pointed toward activities she thought would be interesting and worthwhile, she said.

“The idea I’ve ever had a problem with gender stereotypes,” Clarke said. “I’ve always done what I want and what I’m good at. I’m not afraid of what this is going to throw at me.”

In a large, red-carpeted room festooned with representatives of the different military branches, Clarke prepared to officially enter the military with her oath of enlistment. U.S. Army Capt. Julie Hermann, executive officer at MEPS Portland, presided over the ceremony. Clarke raised her right hand and repeated an oath her heart had her as Browning and Meyers stood in the back of the room, smiling approvingly.

“I think this is great,” Herman said about Clarke’s enlistment following the ceremony.

“It’s a long time coming, if females want to do it, by all means we should be able to do it just like the men.”

Clarke summed up the excitement about being the first female combat engineer in much the same fashion as she does with everything else in her life – with a relaxed, ‘can-do’ attitude.

“One thing that keeps going through my head about being the first … I’m going to be good at it whether I’m a girl or not,” she said.

According to the Oregon Army National Guard Recruiting & Retention Battalion, Clarke is scheduled to attend the Recruit Sustainment Program at Camp Riles in Warrenton, Oregon, until her tentative report date at Basic Combat Training in October. There, she’ll join other Soldiers waiting to ship out to basic training to do physical fitness and learn rank structure, basic drill and ceremony, land navigation, rappelling, rifle marksmanship and other Soldier skills.

“I think this is fantastic,” Browning said. “We do our best to set up our recruits to be successful at basic training, and we are going to give Clarke every opportunity to succeed in her military career.”

Clarke was inspired to pursue a career in the Oregon Army National Guard, Clarke had some simple advice.

“Tell to all the different branches and find out which is the best fit for you, then look at the different jobs and pick one that you like,” Clarke said.

Clarke certainly didn’t settle for anything less than her favorite choice when she signed up to become a combat engineer.

Above: 2nd Lt. Deanna Holliman’s family pins on her new rank as she commissions into the Oregon Army National Guard as a field artillery officer during an RTOC graduation ceremony at Oregon State University, Sept. 18.

Left: 2nd Lt. Deanna Holliman renders her first salute as an officer to Sgt. 1st Class Travis Parker, military science instructor for OSU-Cascades, Sept. 18.

Story and photos by
Christopher L. Ingersoll,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

CROVAIIs, Oregon – Second Lieutenant Deanna Holliman became the first female Oregon State University (OSU) Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) graduate in the Oregon Army National Guard to branch into combat arms during a graduation and commissioning ceremony for U.S. Army ROTC cadets at OSU, Sept. 18.

Holliman chose to pursue a career as a field artillery officer (13A). She will be assigned to 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oregon Army National Guard.

Holliman was unaware that she was making Oregon history until she was told just before the commissioning ceremony. She said her motivation for joining the Oregon Army National Guard was the appeal of work that is out of the ordinary.

“There are some jobs in the military that didn’t appeal to me because I could do the same thing as a civilian,” she said, wearing cross cannons on her dress uniform. “Those type of jobs are not why I wanted to go into the military. Field artillery seemed different and unique.”

Originally from Bend, Oregon, Holliman’s mother, Bonda Powell, said her daughter has always been a strong woman and is not surprised to see her making history in a strong career.

In March 2014, the U.S. Army opened approximately 1,900 field artillery officer positions to women in the active component, and 1,700 in the Guard and Reserve. More recently, in August 2015, the Army announced plans to open all but one field artillery position to enlisted women, with the exception of the fire support specialist (13F) military occupational specialty (MOS). This decision will open positions such as cannon crewmember (13B) and field artillery automated tactical data system specialist (13D) to enlisted females.

These are the latest changes in an ongoing campaign to phase out the Direct Ground Combat Assignment Rule.

Cadet becomes OSU’s first female officer to branch into combat arms

In March 2014, the Oregon State University ROTC cadet program was approved to open up all but one field artillery officer position to women, with the exception of the fire support specialist (13F) military occupational specialty (MOS). This decision will open positions such as cannon crewmember (13B) and field artillery automated tactical data system specialist (13D) to enlisted females.

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Above: AOSU’s first female officer to branch into combat arms.

Story and photos by
Christopher L. Ingersoll,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

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Teaching new tricks to the oldest field artillery unit in the West

YAKIMA, Washington – It took well over a year of planning, but only seven minutes for Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers to fire the M119A2 Howitzer cannons following their first air insertion mission using aviation assets.

Soldiers of Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, conducted Operation Thunderstruck during their annual training, June 20, at the Yakima Training Center near Yakima, Washington. The artillery training mission was the first of its kind to be executed in the history of the Oregon Army National Guard.

Story and photos by Capt. Leslie Reed, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

Soldiers with Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, prepare to attach an M119A2 Howitzer to a CH-47 F-Model Chinook helicopter during an artillery training mission, Operation Thunderstruck, June 20, at the Yakima Training Center near Yakima, Washington. The artillery training mission was the first of its kind to be executed in the history of the Oregon Army National Guard.

“We have Ravens we want to start adding to our arsenal,” he said. “There are a couple of people here and there that have done it in the past, but overall this is a new experience for the whole unit. This shows great trust in what we have done it in the past, but overall this is a new experience for the unit. This pretty much flies itself between point A and point B with a 50-foot hover,” said Sgt. Jeremy Maddox, flight engineer with Bravo Company, 1-168th Aviation.

McKnight said. “They are preparing for a deployment and sling loading is part of their certification. So it was a success on both ends.”

“With the training mission June 20, at the Yakima Training Center in Washington.

“Mission at the desired effect. The charge, fuses, and charge three. The fuse explosive shells, point-detonating characteristics of various helicopters, practicing rigging and unloading sling loads,” McKnight said. “It was a nice surprise to actually start to use the training and an even greater surprise to do the mission.”

Air Assault personnel were also responsible for guiding the aircraft in with hand and arm signals, performing and supervising the slings, and acting as the hook-up crew for the helicopter.

A team of five personnel is necessary to attach the M119A2 Howitzers. One person connects what is referred to as the “dog bone” or static probe to the underside of the helicopter, while three Soldiers provide support. A fifth Soldier stands at the ready, providing backup in case the Soldier with the static probe falls due to strong gusts of wind known as “rotor wash” coming down from the helicopter rotors. At the same time, the Chinook’s crew chief observes the situation on the ground through the cargo-hold door (a hatch that opens from the helicopter floor) and gives direction to the pilots.

“The main thing is to make sure we have the Howitzer tied up quickly,” McKnight said. “There are some slippery surfaces on the Howitzer that can get scratched for any reason, otherwise it could be dead-lined.”

Dead-lined would mean that the Howitzer becomes inoperative or would be damaged and unsafe for further use. Soldiers ensured that important parts of the Howitzers were covered-up to avoid damage.

“Safety is probably the biggest challenge and my biggest concern,” he said. “If we’re not safe, than the mission is not a success.”

One of the game changers during the operation was not relying on trucks to pull the Howitzers. The gun crews would be traveling by air with their gun attached below. They had to make necessary adjustments ahead of time and ensure they had all the proper tools they would need.

A gun crew consists of seven Soldiers, a gun chief plus six additional Soldiers who are assigned as ammo chief and gunners. During the training mission, each gun crew fired four rounds with high explosive shells, point-detonating fuses, and charge three. The fuse initiates an explosion, through a series of sensitive explosive material, also known as an explosive train, causing the round to produce the desired effect. The charge, which can range from one to seven, refers to the propellant, which pushes the projectile or round to the target, destroying it on impact.

“Spc. Joel Reyes, an ammo team chief, was specifically responsible for preparing the rounds, “...making sure when chief calls for a round, that I have it ready and we are able to fire that round.”

That includes making sure they have the right charge, the right fuse and that they are firing the right shell. All of which is critical in effectively putting the artillery on its intended target.

The F-Model Chinook, piloted by Chief Warrant Officer-4 Don Ford and Chief Warrant Officer-2 Anthony Ives, both of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, is a new model of the CH-47 helicopter. The Oregon Army National Guard owns several older model CH-47s, but only has one of the new F-Models and anticipates receiving two more. Oregon Guard helicopter pilots across the state are currently undergoing training to become qualified on the newer aircraft, which have updated electronics and cargo loading systems.


The helicopter used specifically for this artillery mission was borrowed from California for training purposes.

“Since this is a total new mission for us,” he said. “There are a couple of people here and there that have done it in the past, but overall this is a new experience for the whole unit. This shows great trust in what we have done in the past, and now we are able to build upon it.”

Sling loading and air assailing Howitzers is not the only training on Alpha Battery’s dream list. The unit’s senior enlisted Soldier, 1st Sgt. Richard Parker, said they want to start utilizing more of their high tech equipment, such as the MQ-11 Raven – a lightweight Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), designed to conduct low-altitude reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition.

“We have Ravens we want to start adding to our arsenal,” said Parker. “We’d like to send people to Raven school, which we are already working on, and utilize them to do recon missions for us. It helps save Soldiers, plus gives us an eye in the sky.”

As the unit looks towards the future, they are also marking their past. Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, will celebrate its 150th anniversary this coming February and is one of the oldest artillery batteries east of the Mississippi River.
WARRENTON, Oregon – Oregon Air and Army National Guard members were among more than 250 participants that took part in the Pathfinder-Minuteman 2015 training exercise at Camp Rilea in Warren- ton, Oregon, August 4-5. Pathfinder-Minuten-man is an annual joint multi-agency, multi-state disaster response exercise.

Military personnel from U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), Air National Guard from six states, the U.S. Air Force Reserve, and the U.S. Coast Guard joined forces with civilian organizations, such as State Emergency Registry of Volunteers in Oregon (SERV-OR), and state and county agencies to simulate a coordinated response to a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. Officials believe the Northwest is overdue for a magnitude 7.0 or greater earthquake and subsequent tsunami due to the Cascadia Subduction Zone.
How to prepare for the Big One, a Cascadia Subduction Zone event

**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Over the past 10,000 years, there have been 41 earthquakes in the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a 600 mile long earthquake fault stretching from offshore northern California to southern British Columbia. In the event of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, the devastation would extend from the coast to the Cascade Range, from northern California to British Columbia. The resulting earthquake could be similar to the magnitude 9 earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan in March 2011. All of this was covered very thoroughly by the excellent New Yorker article “The Really Big One” by Kathryn Schulz, perhaps too well. The article which came out earlier in August has left us a great deal of conversation and contemplation on the part of the public. Emergency management agencies have seen an uptick in the number of inquiries from panicked people wanting to know if Oregon is next to be the site of a BIG earthquake. The short answer is no. And the long answer is no. The truth is that yes, Oregon and the entire Pacific Northwest will be impacted for years to come after a Cascadia event. It is also true that there is a lot we can do and communities can do to prepare for a major earthquake in Oregon.

Guidance from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management says that families and communities should be prepared to be self-reliant for two weeks after Cascadia. It simply could be that long before relief efforts can reach some areas of the state. Many of our first responders will also be affected. The normal support system will not be fully functioning. But the situation is not hopeless. Despite the bleak picture illustrated in the New Yorker article, there is much that can be done to prepare for disasters. It starts by talking about it with your family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, churches, schools, the guy at the coffee shop … basically with just about everyone. It will take all of us working towards this goal to make it work. Start small with a conversation tonight around the dinner table, or on Facebook with your friends and family. This action doesn’t cost any money and can be accomplished today. It’s a start. Your next step could be to establish a friends and family network. Designate one person, preferably east of the Mississippi, to be your central point of contact. Put their contact information into your mobile phone under the name “1EQ_Contact”. While you may not be able to call out of an affected area, you may be able to text that you are ok.

Once you have contacted your emergency contact, go to a pre-designated meeting place. This should be well known to everyone in your friends and family. But walking there from different starting points, because you never know where you will be when an earthquake happens. It is very likely that you will not be able to drive after an earthquake due to road damage. Think about alternate routes if the roads over rivers are down. Make back-up plans. These actions don’t cost any money but will do a great deal to make you better prepared. The next steps involve gathering the equipment and supplies you will need to camp out in your home for weeks. Oregon is fortunate to have a culture that loves the outdoors, so many are already prepared that they may know more. It is just a matter of taking it one step at a time.

Take the time to pull out that old camping gear and see what you have and what needs to be replaced. Remember that earthquakes can happen at any time of the year, so plan for both hot and cold weather. Think through what your family will need, because it is individual and unique to each. Do you have pets? Do you have elders in your family that might need extra care? Children? Everyone should be included in the planning and preparedness efforts to make sure everyone’s needs are met. The importance of preparing your family to be self-sufficient can’t be overstated. We all saw the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and how people left the area to go to massive evacuation centers out of the impacted area. You don’t want to be one of those unprepared families disbursed out of the region. You can take control and take the steps necessary to make sure your family is safe and well after Cascadia.

You can also be a part of the world’s largest Drop, Cover, and Hold On earthquake drill on October 15, 2015. The Great Oregon ShakeOut is a great opportunity to get everyone in Oregon thinking about earthquake preparedness. Join the millions of others practicing in the drill. You can find more information at www.shakeout.org/Oregon.

Oregon coast residents Race the Wave, a tsunami awareness event

The 2nd Annual Race the Wave run, walk or roll returned to Cannon Beach, Sept. 13. The event provided an energetic, easy way to prepare for a large tsunami that will be caused by a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. Race the Wave began along the beach before following a scenic evacuation route through the city, and ending out of the tsunami inundation zone at the supply cache containers. A post-race preparedness fair featured grilled hot dogs, games, emergency preparedness giveaways, preparedness displays and more. This year’s event also included a one-mile preparedness walk/roll along a fully paved evacuation route.

“This will offer a chance for everyone to practice,” said Justin Ross, Emergency Preparedness Program Coordinator Oregon Office on Disability and Health. “The one mile course is free and great for those interested in walking a shorter distance as well as people with limited mobility.”

Oregon Office of Emergency Management Director Andrew Phelps, says that the underlying principle of the vent is preparedness.

“Knowing and practicing evacuation routes is a simple way to become more prepared for a tsunami or any emergency that could impact your community,” said Phelps. “This is a fun way to address a serious topic, and I am excited to support this unique preparedness initiative because we know activities like this could save lives when a disaster occurs.”

Being able to move quickly to high ground is critical because a tsunami caused by a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake will hit the Oregon coast in as little as 15 minutes. The earthquake will be the only warning that a tsunami is about to arrive.

Oregon Congressman Susanne Bonamici, who participated in last year’s Race the Wave, said she is making it a priority to be there again this year.

“We need to increase awareness about the unique risks tsunamis pose to our coastlines and educate people about how to respond when there is an emergency. Race the Wave is a great way for residents and visitors to practice tsunami evacuation routes and learn more about what they can do to prepare their families and their communities. The event is the result of a fantastic partnership among federal, state, and local agencies and organizations, and I hope Race the Wave will continue to grow and spread to other coastal communities in the future.”

Race the Wave was supported by the community of Cannon Beach, Cannon Beach Children’s Center, Clatsop County Office of Emergency Management, Oregon Office of Disability Management, Oregon Office on Disability & Health at Oregon Health & Science University, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region X office, and DOGAMI.

**Are you prepared for emergencies?**

Being prepared means being equipped with the proper supplies you may need during or after an emergency. You need to 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/prepare/location/home-family/get-kit

**Be a survivor, not a statistic!**
123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron trains with Romanian air force

CAMPIA TURZII, Romania – U.S. Air Force Airmen from the 142nd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard, Portland, Oregon, are conducting training with the Romanian air force as part of a Theater Security Package (TSP) of F-15C Eagle fighter aircraft deployed to Campia Turzii, Romania.

More than 200 Airmen from various active duty and Air National Guard (ANG) units comprise the 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron (EFS), which is serving in the TSP as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve. In response to Russia’s actions in Ukraine, Operation Atlantic Resolve is a visible demonstration of U.S. commitment to the collective security and stability of Europe and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies in the region.

A Romanian MiG-21 fighter aircraft takes off during the 2015 Campia Turzii Air Show, July 19, at Campia Turzii, Romania. More than 200 Airmen from the 142nd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard, trained with the Romanian air force as part of a Theater Security Package deployed to Romania.

“Operation Atlantic Resolve is a fantastic opportunity for different fighter squadrons across the country to take advantage of our exceptional airspace, weather, and hospitality and allow the pilots to train as they would fight in combat,” said Col. Kirk Pierce, 173rd Fighter Wing commander. “It is to show the United States’ dedication to security, stability and peace in Europe and to work on interoperability with our NATO allies.”

The 123rd EFS took over as the lead unit of the TSP from the 125th Fighter Wing, Florida Air National Guard, Jacksonville, Fla. The 159th EFS arrived in March with 12 F-15Cs to start the ANG TSP in the European theater.

The U.S. Air Force’s forward presence in Europe, augmented by a rotational force like the TSP, allows us to work with our allies to improve ready air forces capable of maintaining regional security,” said U.S. Air Force Gen. Frank Gorenc, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa (USAFE-AFAFRICA) commander, in a news release.

The TSP deployments are not new to the Air Force as fighter squadrons have been deploying like this to the Pacific region since 2004. It is very important for us to exercise that capability with our NATO allies, and I think we can all benefit from this experience,” said U.S. ANG Maj. Gen. Eric Vollmecke, ANG assistant to the USAFE-AFAFRICA commander, in a news release concerning the 159th EFS deployment to Leeuwarden Air Base, Netherlands. “Our NATO allies are very capable aviators and have great air forces. There are many things we can learn from them, especially from their innovation. They may not have the resources that the U.S. has, but they have done an impressive job of maintaining an impressive level of readiness.

173rd Fighter Wing hosts Sentry Eagle air-to-air exercise, open house

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon – The 173rd Fighter Wing hosted six fighter squadrons and a tanker unit at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon, for the 15th Sentry Eagle multi-force exercise, July 30-August 2.

Sentry Eagle is the Air National Guard’s largest air-to-air exercise, providing military pilots of the active and Reserve components a forum to test their flying skills, including air-to-air combat tactics against different types of aircraft, as well as large force employment training.

“This exercise is a fantastic opportunity for different fighter squadrons across the country to take advantage of our exceptional airspace, weather, and hospitality and allow the pilots to train as they would fight in combat,” said Col. Kirk Pierce, 173rd Fighter Wing commander. “Sentry Eagle allows units to set the objectives of the exercise to meet their unit’s training needs.

Sentry Eagle 2015 marked a nearly 30-year-span for the exercise featuring dissimilar air combat techniques among fighter airframes. The exercise drew units from as far away as South Carolina and included units from Arizona, Texas, and California and aircraft from U.S. Naval Air Station Lemoore. More than 40 fighter aircraft and two tankers participated this year, including F-15s, F-16s, and KC-135s.

“Sentry Eagle 2015 was a huge tactical success for all of the participating units, preparing them for the battlefields we may encounter in the future,” said Maj. Victor Knill, the assistant project officer for the exercise. He said among the various scenarios, units faced up against an overwhelming, realistic enemy air threat. Additionally the practice defending counter-air, or protecting something from an entering enemy air strike with an offensive counter-air where they escorted a sparring force to eliminate a defended target.

Bringing the exercise to fruition required the fuel shop to pump more than 1-million gallons of fuel, the maintenance group to coordinate ramp space for all the visiting aircraft, and the 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron to orchestrate launch and recovery of 1,128 arrivals and departures for the four days of Sentry Eagle.

“That is close to triple our normal operating tempo,” said Doug Cunningham, the air traffic manager. The tower brought in extra people in order to accommodate this high traffic time, as did many base organizations.

Fuels added an extra large spool to help fuel everything from fueling more than 50 aircraft to receiving 12-14 delivery tankers daily to maintain enough fuel for another day of flying.

Master Sgt. Eddie Gibson, the fuels superintendent, said they received delivered over 1.3-million gallons of fuel for the exercise.

Additionally, parking for all of the aircraft takes precise planning. Maintenance troops created an alternate pattern utilizing closer spacing, storing a number of resident Kingsley jets that didn’t fly in the exercise, and worked closely with operations to coordinate the traffic flow.

“Setting up the parking is the most difficult part, you have to get out and physically measure the spaces; we are literally down to the foot for parking these aircraft,” said Master Sgt. Bryan Johnson, the lead maintenance expediter for Sentry Eagle.

Another feature of the exercise, since its inception 30 years ago, is an open house where the public was welcomed to the base for most of the day on Saturday to observe the large number of aircraft launching and departing, as well as a festival-like atmosphere surrounding the flight line.

“We had static displays, a climbing wall, and some really interactive displays set up for the community and we estimate 10-thousand people visited the base for the open house,” said Master Sgt. Jennifer Shirar, 173rd FW public affairs manager.

Organizers hope to host the next Sentry Eagle at Kingsley Field in 2017.