Airman awarded Bronze Star for combat support

PORTLAND, Oregon – The Oregon Air National Guard recognized one of their Citizen-Airmen with a Bronze Star medal for his service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom during a ceremony at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Feb. 7.

Staff Sgt. Owen Unbehaun, of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron (STS), received the Bronze Star medal during a packed morning ceremony held at the unit’s auditorium. In attendance were Unbehaun’s parents, brother, and girlfriend. The 234th Army Band provided music for the ceremony.

Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, Adjutant General, Oregon, presided over the ceremony, and presented Unbehaun with the medal. Oregon Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Michael E. Stencel, Air Component Commander for Oregon, as well as other Oregon National Guard leadership were in attendance.

Unbehaun, a Combat Control Craftsman with the 125th STS, served in Afghanistan with the 21st Expeditionary Special Tactics Squadron, Combined Joint Operations Air Component, Special Operations Command Central.

As the sole Airman serving as a Joint Terminal Attack Controller assigned to an Army Special Forces Team and later a Navy SEAL Team that was partnered with an Afghan Commando Special Operations

See Unbehaun on Page 11

Staff Sgt. Owen Unbehaun (right), of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron (STS), poses for a photo with Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson (left), Adjutant General, Oregon, after receiving the Bronze Star medal in a ceremony at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Feb. 7. Unbehaun provided combat airpower during 43 complex operations as a Joint Terminal Attack Controller assigned to Special Forces teams in Afghanistan. Two more Oregon Airmen, with the 142nd Civil Engineer Squadron, also received Bronze Stars for their support of airfield operations in Bagram, Afghanistan. See Airmen on Page 11 for the full story.
This spring and summer we are welcoming home more than one thousand service members from deployments with the 1-82 Cavalry Squadron, 234 Engineer Company, 2-162 Infantry Battalion, 1-186 Infantry Battalion, 125th Special Tactics Squadron, and other units in the Oregon National Guard.

In addition, we are also mobilizing members of the 116th Air Control Squadron, 142nd Fighter Wing, 142nd Special Operations Wing, and B-1B/L-18 Aviation in the months ahead. As our Soldiers, Airmen, and their Families have done over the past three years, Oregon National Guard will continue to answer their nation’s call.

As service members and their families go through the mobilization, deployment and demobilization process, we must make every effort to provide them the best possible support. Our Service Member and Family Support (SMSF) team is there to help at every level, to connect our service members and their Families to the available resources.

As our SMSF team has access to numerous resources for our Soldiers, Airmen and their Families – they are no substitute for a battle buddy, wingman, or unit leaders. The efforts of leaders at every level, in conjunction with our SMSF team, Family Support Groups, Psychological Health Professionals and numerous other support groups and agencies have made significant contributions to the overall health of our organization.

I ask for everyone’s continued support across our organizations as we mobilize and deploy and reintegrate our Soldiers, Airmen and their Families – today, tomorrow, and into the future. Support this mobilizing and deployed, and welcome home and support the reintegration of those returning, not just back into their unit, but back into their families and communities.

We must never forget the importance and value of every member of our team.

**Troops returning and deploying need our full support**

**Enyeart retires following 37 years of service**

**Story by Oregon Sentinel Staff**

**SALEM, Oregon – Oregon Army National Guard Maj. Gen. David Enyeart retired after more than 30 years of military service, in a ceremony in front of family and friends held at the Anderson Readiness Center on Feb. 8.**

In his most recent position, Enyeart served as the Chief of Staff of U.S. Forces Korea, where he was responsible for directing, planning, coordinating and integrating actions of the Joint Staff while directly supporting national objectives to maintain stability on the Korean Peninsula in the face of potential threats.

Enyeart began his career in the U.S. Army in 1978. He received his commission as a second lieutenant from Officer Candidate School in June 1985 and joined the Oregon Army National Guard as a mortar platoon leader. Over the course of more than three decades, Enyeart served on three overseas deployments; two in Afghanistan, and one in Iraq. His military career includes commands ranging from unit level to brigade level before becoming the Assistant Adjutant General – Army for the Oregon National Guard, and then Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.

Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Photo by Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.

Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.

Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.

Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.

Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.

Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.

Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.

Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.

Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.

Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kevin Hanks (center) is pinned by family members with his new rank during a promotion ceremony, Feb. 8, in Salem, Oregon. Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpont (second from right), Land Component Commander, presided over the ceremony.

Toledo, Oregon.
Story by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Oregon – Air National Guard commanders assembled for the 142nd Fighter Wing change of command ceremony at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Feb. 7.

Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald took command during a traditional ceremony as the unit colors were passed from Col. Richard W. Wedan, who retired after more than 27 years of service to the Air National Guard.

Fitzgerald most recently served as the 142nd Fighter Wing Mission Support Group commander. He is a command pilot with more than 2,200 flying hours.

During his remarks to the Airmen and those in attendance, Fitzgerald emphasized the vision for the future, “It starts and ends with providing the state and nation with the most highly qualified forces possible to the commander in the field.” He also touched on four emphasis areas; leadership, looking for ways to improve the organization, managing resources and executing the Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) mission.

In his concluding remarks, Wedan lauded the Airmen of the 173rd Fighter Wing. “Teaching young kids how to fly the jet; when I think about it, I’ve probably helped shape over 450 Airmen as an instructor pilot,” he said.

Wedan had the opportunity to pass and review his Airmen one final time during the change of command ceremony, and delivered his gratitude for their service to the Portland Air Force. He also presented The Legion of Merit medal. “It was only 26 months ago that I stood here and asked you to join me and embrace a vision of change and excellence,” said Wedan.

Reviewing his four focus areas throughout the course of his command, Wedan delivered the final grades for his Airmen. The report card included evaluations for the wing’s performance in the ACA mission, improving the air base infrastructure, engaging in the community, as well as retention and recruiting. In each case, Wedan awarded the wing with an “A”.

In his concluding remarks, Wedan highlighted why Fitzgerald is distinctively ready for taking command of the 142nd Fighter Wing. “I cannot think of a finer officer to lead going forward... Paul, I present to you the finest combat organization in the world.”

Col. Richard W. Wedan, outgoing commander, and Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald (right), incoming commander, stand at attention during the 142nd Fighter Wing change of command ceremony, Feb. 7, at the Portland Air National Guard Base.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Brandon Boyd, 142nd FW Public Affairs

Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald (right), incoming commander of the 142nd Fighter Wing, receives the guidon colors from Brig. Gen. Michael E. Stencel (left) presents the 173rd Fighter Wing guidon to Col. Kirk Pierce (right), as he assumes command in a ceremony at Kingsley Field, in Klamath Falls, Oregon, Jan. 10. Pierce has 26 years of military service and has held several strategy, plans and policy-related positions for the National Guard Bureau and the Pentagon.

Photo by Senior Airman Penny Stroudy, 173rd FW Public Affairs

Col. Richard W. Wedan, outgoing 142nd Fighter Wing commander, celebrates after his final flight in an F-15 Eagle at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Feb. 7, prior to his retirement. His son, 2nd Lt. Steven Wedan, joined him on the “first flight” in the backseat of Wedan’s wingman jet, piloted by incoming commander Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Story by Master Sgt. Jennifer Shihar, 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KINGSLY FIELD, Oregon – “Sir, I assume command,” said Col. Kirk “Tick” Pierce, thereby accepting command of the 173rd Fighter Wing during an impressive ceremony at Klamath Falls, Jan. 10. The official passing of the guidon took place at Kingsley Field’s base theater. In addition to sharing some background and command philosophy, Pierce lauded the Airmen of the 173rd Fighter Wing.

“It’s an honor for me to represent and to lead you,” he said. “You have a phenomenal reputation in both the state and Air Force.”

Pierce comes to the Wing from the National Guard Bureau (NGB) in Washington, D.C., where he served as Chief of Strategy and Analysis Division, the Director of Plans and Programs, and his most recent position as the Senior Military Advisor to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy - Strategy and Force Development at the Pentagon.

Pierce holds a degree in History from Evergreen State College and delivered his gratitude for their service to those in attendance, Fitzgerald emphasized “A+.”

With regards to personal development, Fitzgerald described the challenges of “being the very best that you can be.” He elaborated on this concept of comprehensive Airman fitness encapsulated by Air Combat Command, saying, “I want our leaders to reach their full potential - beginning with physical fitness, mental readiness, understanding the social aspects of working in a large organization like our wing and addressing one’s own spiritual needs.”

During the ceremony, Stencel described Fitzgerald’s attributes and service to the Air Force that have led up to his selection as the next wing commander. “Having worked in operations, maintenance, and the support group, Fitzgerald brings an enviable appreciation for the pulse of a fighter wing,” he said.

In 2009, Fitzgerald was selected for the Air National Guard internship program where he served as a member of the Plans and Programs Director at the National Guard Bureau (NGB) in Washington, D.C. After his tour at NGB, he returned to command and was assigned to a variety of state positions before returning to the wing three years ago. “What do you say about a guy who wears wings and is willing to take them off for a while to better himself and serve on different levles? I believe he is more balanced or better prepared individual to lead this organization,” Stencel said.

Stencel applauded Wedan for his service as the wing commander and his proactive approach with the Weapons System Council. “I appreciated Wedan’s ability to see a need and a solution within the same concern.”

Wedan’s wingman jet, piloted by incoming commander Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Col. Kirk Pierce, 173rd FW Commander

Col. Richard W. Wedan, outgoing commander, and Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald (right), incoming commander, stand at attention during the 142nd Fighter Wing change of command ceremony, Feb. 7, at the Portland Air National Guard Base.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

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

142nd Fighter Wing welcomes new commander, bids farewell to Wedan

In his concluding remarks, Wedan highlighted why Fitzgerald is distinctively ready for taking command of the 142nd Fighter Wing. “I cannot think of a finer officer to lead going forward... Paul, I present to you the finest combat organization in the world.”

Col. Richard W. Wedan, outgoing commander, and Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald (right), incoming commander, stand at attention during the 142nd Fighter Wing change of command ceremony, Feb. 7, at the Portland Air National Guard Base.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

142nd Fighter Wing welcomes new commander, bids farewell to Wedan

Col. Richard W. Wedan, outgoing 142nd Fighter Wing commander, celebrates after his final flight in an F-15 Eagle at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Feb. 7, prior to his retirement. His son, 2nd Lt. Steven Wedan, joined him on the “first flight” in the backseat of Wedan’s wingman jet, piloted by incoming commander Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs
In addition to the company and platoon assets, Soldiers needed to prepare themselves for moving. We all dislike moving houses back home, and those feelings transfer to military life as well. Packing all the equipment that they have been issued (plus the stuff they have acquired during deployment to make their off-duty time more bearable) is a tedious process; often more difficult than anticipated given the amount of room they have available for storage.

Upon arrival, the company hit the ground running. With a zero-dark-thirty arrival, it was a continuous rush to get a multitude of tasks done in order to begin operations. Assembling and receiving billeting, off-loading equipment, moving in, and establishing a new pattern of life is just the start of the resettlement process.

With the new mission came new equipment. Receiving vehicles and weapons systems from another unit is never an easy process and, since they will be held accountable for all that they receive, the Soldiers painstakingly went through all the paperwork and equipment to ensure accuracy. Once the paperwork was finished, the Soldiers needed to familiarize themselves with the equipment they received; which is a mission in itself.

After a short nap, the company moved to the firing range in order to ensure that their weapons and equipment were functioning properly and accurately. ‘Apache’ Company went on a four-mile round-trip, dismounted patrol to the firing range and back. Preparation for the trip consisted of planning, like every other combat patrol, rehearsal of battle drills, redundant contingency planning and gear inspections before they stepped-off. Once the patrol reached the firing range, they confirmed the accuracy of their machine guns and practiced acquiring and engaging targets with accurate and sustained automatic fire. Upon return of the patrol, the Soldiers assumed their force protection mission and integrated into the complex defense of one of the largest operational bases in Afghanistan.

The New Year not only marked the transition of the majority of operations to the Afghanistan forces, but also the halfway point of the mobilization for ‘Apache’ Company, 1-186th Infantry Battalion. Missing the holiday season is tough for anybody, but for a Soldier half-a-world away from their families, it’s something to be respected and admired.

Despite being away from their friends and loved ones, the Soldiers received a morale boost in the ability to be together in cheering for the Oregon Ducks while watching their championship game. It was a nice reminder of home and why we are here.

Motorcycle training from TEAM OREGON

Whether you are already riding or want to learn how, Team Oregon has the training you need!

Basic Rider Training (BRT) – 15 hours
No experience necessary. Get your motorcycle endorsement!

Intermediate Rider Training (IRT) – 8 hours
Some experience necessary. Get your motorcycle endorsement!

Rider Skills Practice (RSP) – 5 hours
Techniques for cornering, emergency braking and collision avoidance!

Advanced Rider Training (ART) – 6.5 hours
Refine cornering skills on the tight curves of an enclosed track!
Register at team-oregon.org or call 800-545-9944.

Cost of the course may be reimbursed by the Oregon Army National Guard Safety Office, call 503-584-3320.


Photos courtesy U.S. Coast Guard Sector Columbia River
Oregon National Guard's 3670th Component Repair Company conduct final testing of optical devices at the Logistics Readiness Center at West Point in New York. Feb. 5. Eight Oregon Soldiers completed 1,600 repairs at the West Point LRC.

**Institute of Excellence**

transformed Umatilla Depot into premier training facility

**Story by Maj. Timothy Merritt, 249th Regional Training Institute**

HERMISTON, Oregon — As tumbleweeds roll slowly across the desolate landscape of Camp Umatilla Training Center, a team of NCOs move into position to conduct a deliberate ambush against a small force of local Opposing Forces (OPFOR).

The 1st Infantry Training Battalion of the 249th Regional Training Institute (RTI) is conducting training cycles of the Infantry Advanced Leader Course (ALC) with active duty Soldiers for the first time. After achieving the distinction of Institute of Excellence in 2014, the 249th RTI, now located at Camp Umatilla, is the only infantry ALC located west of the Mississippi River in the continental United States. This accreditation enabled National Guard units across the nation to conduct training at a premier National Guard military training academy. Through the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, the transition from a federal military ordinance depot to a premier National Guard military training center is slowly evolving.

Earning the coveted title of “Institute of Excellence” enables the 249th RTI Regiment to conduct training operations for mid-level NCOs through its Advance Leader Course in addition to its current offerings of infantry MOS Transition (MOS-T) course and Infantry Transition Course (ITC). Since September 2014, more than 100 NCOs have undergone the rigorous course of training that includes 179 hours of instruction time. For some cycles, students are flown by Chinook helicopter to Yakima, Washington, for live-fire exercises on .50 caliber and M249 machine guns, as well as the MK-19 40 mm automatic grenade launcher. The cycle culminates with a challenging Field Training Exercise (FTX). “Camp Umatilla has developed a much in the time I have been here, but we still have long way to go,” said Master Sgt. James Limestone, chief instructor at the 249th RTI. “We’ve gone from what was basically a ghost town and transformed it into a nationally-recognized training site. The sky is the limit.”

The expanded RTI mission provides the services of a much-needed training facility for both National Guard and active duty units in the region. “We are the only certified Army Infantry training academy west of the Mississippi in the continental U.S.,” said Lt. Col. Geoff Value, the operations officer and administrative officer for the 249th RTI. “The addition of the active duty component is a dramatic shift in the operational vision for the post and sets the stage for significant future growth.”

The quality of instruction at the Camp Umatilla Training Center is unparalleled. Instructors are required to pass Army Basic Instructor (ABI) training, as well as Small Group Instructor (SGI) training courses prior to training the ALC classes. In fact, the 249th RTI even teaches the ABI/SGI courses at its sister facility in Monmouth, Oregon.

The three to four years spent teaching at the RTI prepare the instructors for future assignments as well. A tour at Camp Umatilla acts as a broadening assignment with some of the most senior instructors going on to first sergeant positions with units such as D Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry, 7th Infantry Division; and the 3670th Component Repair Company in fiscal year 2015.

“The development of Camp Umatilla as one of Oregon’s premier training sites is directly related to our continued growth and future growth,” said Maj. Timothy Merritt, 249th Regional Training Institute commander. “We are excited to continue repositioning Camp Umatilla as a broadening assignment destination for future Infantry Senior Leaders.”
Oregon Guard leads the way as top moving destination in the nation

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

SALEM, Ore. — It’s official, a recent study confirmed what most Oregonians already know; Oregon is the most desirable destination to live in the United States right now.

“Oregon holds onto its title as ‘Top Moving Destination’ and continues to pull away from the pack,” stated a press release for the United Van Lines’ National Movers Study, and continues to pull away from the pack, “The country needs each of you, and to the community where you live and work. We need you to be excited for our future,” said Brush. “I need you to train the next generation; don’t train them on医科 homeowners, train them to be better than you.”

Oregon Guard showcases critical roles to Guard Bureau’s top enlisted leader

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

PORTLAND, Ore. — Chief Master Sgt. Mitchell O. Brush, Senior Enlisted Advisor for the National Guard Bureau, visited the Oregon National Guard, Jan. 4-7. He toured both Air and Army National Guard facilities throughout the state to gain a close-up perspective of various mission sets and interface with Oregon Soldiers and Airmen about their work.

Brush is the senior enlisted leader for both the Army and Air National Guard, advising the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Gen. Frank J. Grass, on all enlisted matters affecting training, health of the force and professional development for National Guard Airmen and Soldiers throughout all states and U.S. territories.

After an introduction and briefing by Chief Master Sgt. Julie Eddings, 142nd Fighter Wing Command Chief, a group of senior enlisted leaders began a concise tour to make up work week and visit the Portland Air National Guard Base that provide 24/7 vigilance for the greater Portland area.

“Oregon is the place to be right now if you are looking for a career and good lifestyle,” said Brush. “This is the kind of dedication and passion to those in attendance.

Throughout his visit, Brush held town hall meetings with Oregon Soldiers and Airmen in each place that he toured. He addressed current issues facing enlisted Guardsmen and shared the National Guard Bureau’s vision and way ahead for the future. He tasked the Soldiers and Airmen to be advocates for the military and help tell the story.

Other deciding factors include cost of living and lifestyle. According to Zillow, in San Francisco, it’s $881,000 and in Los Angeles, it’s $848,000. With lower housing costs and no sales tax, living in Oregon means keeping more of your salary, so there is more to spend on the things that Oregonians like to brag about: the local food, beverages, arts and entertainment scene, as well as the outdoor activities.
Oregon National Guard strengthens partnerships in the Pacific

By Nick Choy and Staff Sgt. Jason van Mourik
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

SALEM, Oregon – As 2014 came to a close, officials with the Oregon National Guard’s State Partnership Program (SPP) said the training year ended on a high note, marking several key engagements throughout the year that helped to further strengthen U.S. relations with both Vietnam and Bangladesh.

In 2014, the Oregon National Guard (ORNG) placed United States Pacific Command’s (USPACOM) first and third Bilateral Affairs Officers (BAO) in Bangladesh and Vietnam. Officers with USPACOM and staff at each respective embassy say that Oregon’s BAOs were well received and have been a great asset.

The ORNG also actively participated in the USPACOM Capacities Development Working Group (CDWG) Planning Conference at Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In the second year of the Oregon National Guard’s partnership with Vietnam, the Oregon SPP conducted what the U.S. Embassy called “the most successful U.S.-Vietnam People’s Army engagement ever” in September 2014.

Ten urban search and rescue experts from the Oregon National Guard’s CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CBRNE ERFP) traveled to Hanoi and conducted training designed to enhance emergency search and rescue capabilities.

The team of Oregon engineers worked alongside more than 50 engineers with the Vietnam People’s Army, employing search and extraction techniques in a variety of scenarios using simulated collapsed building sites.

Oregon Army National Guard Capt. Mark Timmons, action officer for Oregon’s CERFP, emphasized that the experience Oregon gained working on these events while training with Vietnamese service members is invaluable.

“It was remarkable to see participants from both countries quickly come together and center around the training used to save our countrymen’s lives in the event of a homeland disaster,” Timmons said. “Our mutual interest in saving lives allowed all of us to understand one another and the techniques we were training on despite the differences in language.”

Timmons said the partnership between Oregon and Vietnam serves as a personal career highlight.

“I’ve enjoyed one of the most memorable events in my military career,” he said. “They (our Vietnamese partners) were eager to learn from us and demonstrated their approach to us for urban search and rescue.

The training followed senior leader visits that took place earlier in the year. Maj. Gen. Daniel Hokanson, Adjunct General, Oregon, traveled to Vietnam. Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States Nguyen Quoc Luong; Vietnam Economics Counselor Le Chi Dung; and a delegation from Vietnam’s National Committee for Search and Rescue (VINASARCOM) also made visits to Oregon.

For the third consecutive year, Oregon’s SPP participated in the Vietnam Bilateral Defense Discussions (BDD), including serving as the Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) subcommittee co-chair with VINASARCOM. Oregon has worked closely with USPACOM’s Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DMAH) on ways to enhance collaboration and synchronization of HADR efforts in Vietnam.

The partnership between Oregon SPP and CFE-DMAH will also be beneficial in assisting Vietnam with their request to develop a large-scale training exercise incorporating their new national disaster management coordination center, which is scheduled for completion in September 2015. The first workshop for this working group was held in Hanoi, November 17-20, 2014.

In Bangladesh, the Oregon SPP’s key focus continues to be supporting Bangladesh’s disaster management initiatives, as well as improving the country’s urban search and rescue division.

Oregon Army National Guard aviators completed a Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE) with the Bangladesh Air Force’s 9th Helicopter Squadron at the U.S. Embassy and Bashor Air Base in Dhaka in May 2014. The group helped the Bangladesh Air Force develop techniques and procedures for conducting aerial search and rescue, as well as aerial firefighting in urban areas in response to fires and other natural disasters. One of the recommendations to come out of the SMEE was that helicopters could put urban fires utilizing water buckets — a concept widely accepted in the Pacific Northwest for fighting forest fires.

“In the U.S., we just take it for granted that emergency and fire services will immediately respond to emergencies anywhere, especially in an urban area, but the neighborhoods are so congested in Dhaka it is literally not possible for emergency vehicles to drive to fires or other emergencies in progress,” said Oregon Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer-3 Devin Wickenhagen, of Charlie Co., 7-158 Aviation Battalion, based in Salem. "They (our Vietnamese partners) were eager to learn from us and demonstrated their approach to us for urban search and rescue.

For the fourth year in a row, the Oregon National Guard provided Soldiers and Airmen to the U.S. Army Pacific-sponsored Disaster Relief Exercise and Exchange in Dhaka, August 18-21, 2014. The DREE was followed by a senior leader visit in September in which Oregon National Guard Brig. Gen. Todd A. Plampton, Assistant Adjutant General-Army, gave a presentation at Bangladesh’s Staff Course and War College. In October 2014, staff from Oregon’s SPP also attended the Bangladesh Bilateral Defense Discussion (BDD).

Hokanson said that as the relationship between the Oregon National Guard and its state partners continues to move forward, there is an emphasis to find ways to enhance collaboration, reduce duplication of efforts, and meet the nation’s longer-term objectives.

“Oregon is leading the way in the Pacific region with our partnership with Vietnam and Bangladesh in terms of urban search and rescue training and preparation for natural disasters,” Hokanson said. “Taking care of the homeland is something that is rooted in the National Guard and we are enthusiastic to share this part of our mission with our state partners.

According to organizers of these training events, partnerships such as these not only enhance skills of all those involved, but also align with the U.S. strategic pivot toward the Asia-Pacific region.

In Bangladesh, the Oregon SPP’s training program focused on medical first response procedures for disaster situations, as part of the Oregon National Guard’s State Partnership Program.
**FEATURE**

**173rd Fighter Wing Airman fabricates fix to keep F-15 fleet airborne**

**Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Jeff Childs**, **173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs**

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon - What keeps the oldest fighter aircraft in the U.S. Air Force inventory airborne? The trend is ingenuity and resourcefulness. Oregon National Guard Airmen at the 173rd Fighter Wing have pioneered a critical fix, preserving airworthiness of the F-15 aircraft as the airframe approaches 40-years in service.

**Maximum Performance**

Picture a muscle car, vintage 1978, and what it would mean to take that car to the quarter-mile track and ask for every last ounce of power and torque possible from its engine; running the RPMs to the red, transferring all of that force through the drivetrain and turning it into forward motion – every day.

The F-15 airframe dates back to 1978 and they do get ‘max performed’ every time they take to the sky. Take gravitational forces (better known as G’s) into consideration. These aircraft usually pull up to nine G’s on a given mission. Translated into everyday terms, that means nine times the actual weight of the aircraft. According to the Boeing technical specifications, a given F-15 weighs 45,000 pounds, so at nine G’s it is exerting 405,000 pounds on the wings and the airframe.

Over the years, those forces sap the strength of even the most stalwart of metals; titanium reigns supreme in this environment for its strength-to-weight ratio – half the weight of steel and four times as strong. The modern F-15 aircraft uses this metal extensively, but those G forces worry away at the metal and eventually it will crack.

**Extended Warranty**

Necessity has prolonged the service life of this aircraft from 6,000 flight hours to 10,000 flight hours and more in recent years. There are precious few F-22s to augment the air superiority mission, and the F-35 has yet to reach full service. The wing spars absorb tremendous stress and as a result will fatigue upgrade.

Sure enough, this testing revealed a critical vulnerability; the wing spar itself, scratching it slightly.

“With that extended service metal fatigue, issues can arise. To identify problems that will arise from this extended lifespan, Boeing conducted stress testing of the F-15 airframe to absolute failure, well beyond the 20,000-flight-hours mark.”

“Identiﬁcations that will arise from this extended lifespan, Boeing conducted stress testing of the F-15 airframe to absolute failure, well beyond the 20,000-flight-hours mark.”

“Sure enough, this testing revealed a critical vulnerability; the wing spar itself, scratching it slightly.”

Childs, a sheet metal specialist at Kingsley Field, if it were possible to engineer an inspection point for wing spars.

Childs has an extensive background in machining and fabrication. He even designed and fabricated his own 1932 Ford T-Bucket from scratch.

“It took three years,” he said of building the car. “The hardest part was modifying the lathe gearbox to get clearance for the front gate on our stock aluminum.”

So when McAllister asked him if he saw a potential solution to inspecting wing spars, he said “sure.”

Childs and other members of the shop spent several weeks of trial and error until they created a fixture machined from a block of aluminum that holds a carbide cutting tool, which allows them to precisely cut away the titanium skin without damaging the wing spar. This small opening in the titanium skin allows for the non-destructive inspection of the wing spar with an Eddy Current Tester.

**Treading on Thin Skin**

It’s a difﬁcult proposition because the wing skin and the wing spar are literally touching each other. The way Childs designed the process, successive cuts are made, taking a small thickness of titanium on each pass.

“I created a fixture that attaches directly to the spar and allows us to machine-off a couple thousandths of an inch at a time,” said Childs, who physically performs all the cutting operations.

“Although the fixture is fairly simple once designed, the procedure is not stress free. Anomalies in the spar itself cause the titanium skin to lie differently on each wing. When the remaining piece separating the spar is only the approximate thickness of a human hair, he takes his fixture off and uses a hand-grinding tool to remove the final paper-like bit.”

“We take off thin layers in successive cuts until we get close, then we hold our breath for the last cut,” he said.

On two occasions the cutting tool has cut through to the spar itself, scratching it slightly. “When it happened I was almost sick to my stomach,” said Childs.

“It took three years,” he said of building the car. “The hardest part was modifying the lathe gearbox to get clearance for the front gate on our stock aluminum.”

“Sure enough, this testing revealed a critical vulnerability; the wing spar itself, scratching it slightly.”

“Identiﬁcations that will arise from this extended lifespan, Boeing conducted stress testing of the F-15 airframe to absolute failure, well beyond the 20,000-flight-hours mark.”

“Childs has an extensive background in machining and fabrication. He even designed and fabricated his own 1932 Ford T-Bucket from scratch.”

“Childs and other members of the shop spent several weeks of trial and error until they created a fixture machined from a block of aluminum that holds a carbide cutting tool, which allows them to precisely cut away the titanium skin without damaging the wing spar. This small opening in the titanium skin allows for the non-destructive inspection of the wing spar with an Eddy Current Tester.”

**Grassroots Ingenuity**

The solution is an example of ingenuity and resourcefulness. McAllister asked one of his Airman, Tech. Sgt. Jeff Childs, to scan the wing spar for cracks.

Childs’ solution, seen at the top of the photo, keeps the bit steady while he makes the most crucial final pass where it’s possible to unintentionally cut into the wing spar itself. He holds the fixture with both hands where he can sense the slightest change in vibration to avoid the spar.

Above: Tech. Sgt. Jeff Childs, with the 173rd Fighter Wing metals shop, requires a small mirror to help ensure his cutting tool does not cut the wing spar while taking fine cuts, measuring only a thickness of an inch, on the skin of an F-15 aircraft wing. While removing the quarter-inch section of titanium skin covering the wing, the delicate part is ensuring he does not damage the underlying spar.

The core of this setup is the aluminum fixture Tech. Sgt. Jeff Childs designed. The fixture precisely mates a carbide cutting tool which cuts the titanium skin away from the spar beneath, one pass at a time. When the process is complete it leaves a small 5-inch opening in the wing skin which does not affect it in any way, but allows an inspection confirming the wing spar’s soundness. (Photo Illustration by Senior Airman Penny Sneezy, 173rd Fighter Wing)

“Childs showed them how to make the fixture and helped them cut five wings.”

McAllister says the engineers at depot maintenance think the design is excellent. They are currently supplying every F-15 unit with plans and instructions for manufacturing the fixture that Childs developed to accomplish wing spar inspections.

“This rough drawing of the fixture and a new TCTO has gone out to all the F-15 units to begin working the fix,” said McAllister.

In the future it is projected that other units will adopt this technique, which Childs and the sheet metal shop continue to refine. They are looking at using an ultrasound scan to help measure the thickness between cuts to provide a wider margin of error.

Soon, the F-15 fleet will fly with some field-grade ingenuity on many airframes courtesy of Tech. Sgt. Jeff Childs, of the 173rd Fighter Wing.

The F-15 weighs almost 45,000 pounds, so at nine G’s it is exerting 405,000 pounds on the wings and the airframe. According to Boeing, the F-15 airframe dates back to 1978 and they do get ‘max performed’ every time they take to the sky. Take gravitational forces (better known as G’s) into consideration. These aircraft usually pull up to nine G’s on a given mission. Translated into everyday terms, that means nine times the actual weight of the aircraft.

Philosophy that will arise from this extended lifespan, Boeing conducted stress testing of the F-15 airframe to absolute failure, well beyond the 20,000-flight-hours mark.

Sure enough, this testing revealed a critical vulnerability; the wing spar itself, scratching it slightly.

“With that extended service metal fatigue, issues can arise. To identify problems that will arise from this extended lifespan, Boeing conducted stress testing of the F-15 airframe to absolute failure, well beyond the 20,000-flight-hours mark.”

“Sure enough, this testing revealed a critical vulnerability; the wing spar itself, scratching it slightly.”

Childs has an extensive background in machining and fabrication. He even designed and fabricated his own 1932 Ford T-Bucket from scratch.

“Childs has an extensive background in machining and fabrication. He even designed and fabricated his own 1932 Ford T-Bucket from scratch.”

“Childs and other members of the shop spent several weeks of trial and error until they created a fixture machined from a block of aluminum that holds a carbide cutting tool, which allows them to precisely cut away the titanium skin without damaging the wing spar. This small opening in the titanium skin allows for the non-destructive inspection of the wing spar with an Eddy Current Tester.”

**Grassroots Ingenuity**

The solution is an example of ingenuity and resourcefulness. McAllister asked one of his Airman, Tech. Sgt. Jeff Childs, to scan the wing spar for cracks.

Childs’ solution, seen at the top of the photo, keeps the bit steady while he makes the most crucial final pass where it’s possible to unintentionally cut into the wing spar itself. He holds the fixture with both hands where he can sense the slightest change in vibration to avoid the spar.

Above: Tech. Sgt. Jeff Childs, with the 173rd Fighter Wing metals shop, requires a small mirror to help ensure his cutting tool does not cut the wing spar while taking fine cuts, measuring only a thickness of an inch, on the skin of an F-15 aircraft wing. While removing the quarter-inch section of titanium skin covering the wing, the delicate part is ensuring he does not damage the underlying spar.

The core of this setup is the aluminum fixture Tech. Sgt. Jeff Childs designed. The fixture precisely mates a carbide cutting tool which cuts the titanium skin away from the spar beneath, one pass at a time. When the process is complete it leaves a small 5-inch opening in the wing skin which does not affect it in any way, but allows an inspection confirming the wing spar’s soundness. (Photo Illustration by Senior Airman Penny Sneezy, 173rd Fighter Wing)

“Childs showed them how to make the fixture and helped them cut five wings.”

McAllister says the engineers at depot maintenance think the design is excellent. They are currently supplying every F-15 unit with plans and instructions for manufacturing the fixture that Childs developed to accomplish wing spar inspections.

“This rough drawing of the fixture and a new TCTO has gone out to all the F-15 units to begin working the fix,” said McAllister.

In the future it is projected that other units will adopt this technique, which Childs and the sheet metal shop continue to refine. They are looking at using an ultrasound scan to help measure the thickness between cuts to provide a wider margin of error.

Soon, the F-15 fleet will fly with some field-grade ingenuity on many airframes courtesy of Tech. Sgt. Jeff Childs, of the 173rd Fighter Wing.

The F-15 weighs almost 45,000 pounds, so at nine G’s it is exerting 405,000 pounds on the wings and the airframe. According to Boeing, the F-15 airframe dates back to 1978 and they do get ‘max performed’ every time they take to the sky. Take gravitational forces (better known as G’s) into consideration. These aircraft usually pull up to nine G’s on a given mission. Translated into everyday terms, that means nine times the actual weight of the aircraft. According to the Boeing technical specifications, a given F-15 weighs 45,000 pounds, so at nine G’s it is exerting 405,000 pounds on the wings and the airframe.
234th Army Band hosts high school honor band, inspires teens

Sgt. 1st Class Mathew Farris (right), a percussionist with the 234th Army Band, works with Eddie Shop (center right), of Clackton High School; Dakota De La Rosa (center left), of Milwaukie High School; and Sammy Locke (left), of Molalla High School, during the Winter Band Practice at Clackamas High School, Feb. 14.

As a member of the 234th, Farris realized the professional players in the band would inspire young musicians. He also knew Camp Withycombe was centrally located in the district and had the necessary resources to facilitate a large honor band. He discussed it with the commander and other band members. Alexander, who is also a band director for Aloha High School in Beaverton, Oregon, was immediately supportive of the idea.

"This puts us out there and makes the community aware of what services the Oregon National Guard has to offer them through the 234th Army Band in terms of how we can inspire or entertain them and musically support their communities," said Alexander. "In this case, of partnering with a music education district, it becomes the community by offering the directors opportunities that their students may not have.

Farris said the honor band receives positive feedback from students, parents and other directors each year. He said his students love the music, working with a university director, and working with professional players from the 234th Army Band.

"Parents came up to me and said thank you so much for putting on this event," said Alexander. "They were just thrilled that the Army does this for them."

Alexander said the 234th plans to continue sponsoring a high school honor band every year and he is hoping to expand the event to other OMEA districts in the future.

"As far as local music education programs, I just encourage everyone to stay involved," said Alexander. "This is part of our culture and our history and it’s worth the investment."
Kingsley Field’s 114th Squadron earns 2014 Top Fighter Squadron title

Story by Senior Airman Penny Snoozy, 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KINGSLEY FIELD, Oregon – The 114th Fighter Squadron, part of the 173rd Fighter Wing, took top honors out of all the Air Education and Training Command’s (AETC) F-15 and F-16 squadrons from around the United States and was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron for the fourth time.

Every year, AETC looks at their fighter squadrons to see who is performing at the best in each of the five top operations squadron categories. The 114th FS won the category for Top Fighter Squadron.

The 114th FS has attained this award three previous years (2006, 2009 and 2010) making this the fourth year of recognition for their award-winning performance.

“The real credit for winning the award this year, and in years past, has been every single person in the entire operations group,” says Col. Frederick French, 173rd Operations Group commander.

“This award is labeled as the Top Fighter Squadron, but it really encompasses everybody in the operations group that contributes to the 114th FS’s success. Without the whole team, this award would not be at Kingsley Field.”

The 114th FS surpassed 65,000 Class-A free flying hours including their 4,800 flying hours and 3,877 sorties during fiscal year 2014. They also increased student production by 80 percent, graduating 59 near mission ready F-15 pilots, all while undertaking the active duty, Total Force Initiative, which greatly increased training and manning requirements. The squadron members also accrued more than 2,500 hours of community service.

French says he is very proud of the dedication of each and every member and considers the award the highest honor they can receive from the Air Force.

The 173rd Fighter Wing, the only F-15 training schoolhouse in the U.S., is a training wing, which limits the awards they can win. Since the squadron is unable to compete for other air-to-air fighter squadron awards, winning this award is one of the few ways to highlight the accomplishments of these Airmen.

French boasts that “… [excellence] comes out of Kingsley day in and day out.” With this work ethic, he says 2015 looks to be another promising year for the 173rd FW and the 114th FS.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregen Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.

Oregon Air National Guard instructor pilot Lt. Col. Alan Michaels, 114th Fighter Squadron, prepares for a flight at Kingsley Field, Oregon, March 4. The continued success of student pilots and their instructors at the 173rd Fighter Wing’s F-15C Formal Training Unit is one of many reasons the 114th FS was named the 2014 Top Fighter Squadron of the Year.
Airmen awarded Bronze Stars for service in Afghanistan

PORTLAND, Oregon – Two Oregon Air Guardsmen were awarded Bronze Star medals in a ceremony at the Portland Air National Guard Base, March 8, for their efforts during a recent deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Resolute Support.

Lt. Col. Jason Lay and Chief Master Sgt. Gilbert served alongside another, leading a team of 101 total force engineers who managed a 740-acre airfield, executed 970 work orders and oversaw 35 construction projects worth more than $123 million.

The actions of these Oregon Airmen ensured the airfield remained capable of supporting ongoing combat operations at the busiest combat logistics center operated by the Department of Defense.

"Without their efforts, cargo would not have been moved, personnel would not have been transported, and troops in contact with the enemy would not have received critical air support," said Hokanson.

Gilbert received the Bronze Star for his distinguished service as chief enlisted manager of the 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron. He led 99 Airmen through the completion of 970 work orders, 13 high priority projects and maintenance of the airfield.

"The leadership of Lt. Col. Lay and Chief Master Sgt. Gilbert enabled them to push themselves and their team to very high levels," said Col. Donna Prigmore, 142nd Fighter Wing Support Group Commander. Prigmore said both awardees possessed a tremendous amount of technical expertise and the leadership needed to accomplish the mission under tight deadlines.

"It was a fast-paced, no-fail mission," said Gilbert about the significance of the deployment. "We helped oversee the transition between Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Resolute Support, which included a large decrease in the number of boots on the ground."

The Bronze Star medal was established in 1944 and is the fourth-highest individual military award and the ninth-highest by order of precedence in the U.S. Military. It is awarded to members of the armed forces who distinguish themselves by heroic or meritorious service in a combat zone.

Oregon Air Guard members gather for annual awards

Story by Tech. Sgt. John Hughe, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Oregon – Members of the Oregon Air National Guard gathered to be acknowledged for their achievements during the past year at the 21st Annual Oregon Air National Guard Awards banquet held at the Embassy Suites Hotel, March 14.

Award winners from across the state of Oregon dined during a formal banquet and represented the 137th Fighter Wing and 257th Air Traffic Control Squadron, based in Klamath Falls, Oregon; the 116th Air Control Squadron from Salem, Oregon; the 123rd Weather Flight, based at the Portland Air National Guard Base, in Portland, Oregon.

Ceremony attendees included Maj. Gen. Daniel Hokanson, Adjunct General, Oregon, and Air Component Commander; Brig. Gen. Michael Stencil with his wife, Sue, as well as senior enlisted leader, Oregon National Guard Command Sergeant Major Shane Lake and his wife, Stacy, along with the men of the Oregon Air National Guard.

During a brief introduction, Hokanson thanked those that worked long hours to organize the event, saying, "This is always a first-class event and I look forward to seeing all of next year's award recipients throughout the night."

Prior to dinner, the 142nd Fighter Wing Base Honor Guard conducted an all-service Hat Ceremony to honor those service men and women still Missing In Action and held as Prisoners of War. The ceremony represented all five branches of the military; Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard members still unaccounted for in service to the nation.

The top state award winners for 2014 Airmen of the Year went to Senior Airman Sean S. Saling, assigned to the 123rd Weather Flight, as the top Category I award winner; along with Tech. Sgt. John D. Barr, IV, from the 125th Special Tactics Squadron, as the Category II top award winner; and Master Sgt. Jason W. Witts, assigned to the 123rd Logistical Readiness Squadron, as the Category III overall Airmen of the Year.

Other special recognition awards went to 142nd Fighter Wing members; Lt. Col. Sean Sullivan, 142nd Fighter Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Danny Ross (left) and Air Component Commander Brig. Gen. Michael Stencil (right) during the 21st Annual Oregon Air National Guard Awards Banquet, March 14, in Portland, Oregon.

ARE YOU A VET? NEED SOME ASSISTANCE?

The Oregon Military Assistance Helpline is a FREE and CONFIDENTIAL service that can help you and your family resolve any personal problems.

800.511.6944

www.ormah.com

Oregon Air Guard Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Brandon Boyd, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs
Yellow Ribbon Program assists service members, families with transition

Story and photos by
Tech. Sgt. Aaron Perkins
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

BEND, Oregon - As many Guardsmen know these days, it is sometimes hard to get readjusted back to the routine of civilian life when they have been away on a military deployment for a period of time. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRPR) is designed to help Guardsmen with this transition.

The organization is set up to help educate service members, and their families, on the resources and benefits available to them. It's not just about getting through deployment - it's about reducing the stress of transitioning into and out of each deployment phase, as well as supporting the member's reintegration. It helps with the unique challenges that National Guard service members and families face by connecting them with their local support community.

"It's nice to have all the resources available under one roof, to be able to go around and talk to different people and organizations that can help you out," Clark said.

The YRRP works with a variety of federal offices such as the Department of Labor, Veterans Affairs, Small Business Administration, as well as local service providers, veteran service organizations and the American Red Cross. It helps service members and their families navigate through the numerous Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs and state systems.

"We're here today to help inform families about how to contact service members and their command when they are deployed in case of emergencies that occur here at home," said Bourne. "We are also here to educate families on preparedness for situations like an earthquake, to make sure they have a 72-hour disaster kit prepared, just in case, with all the pertinent information."

A highlight of the event was welcoming a few members of the Oklahoma National Guard who were on site to observe and take notes on how the Oregon YRPR does business.

"This is one of the more well-known Yellow Ribbon programs, so we're here to guinea pig and see what we like to hopefully bring back to our program," said Staff Sgt. Garrett Davis, an Oklahoma Air Guardsman. "So far it has been really great, high energy and enthusiasm. You can tell people here care about what they do and want to help returning service members and ones we are getting ready to deploy."

Oregon Guard participates in new teen resiliency pilot program

Story by Staff Sgt. Darron Salser
National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Virginia - A pilot program designed to bolster the resiliency of Army National Guard teens and build positive methods of coping with stress is currently underway in 19 states.

Part of the Army’s Comprehensive Soldier Family Fitness Program that trains Soldiers and their spouses on skills to cope with stresses, the pilot program has a curriculum tailored to the teen population and teaches teens life skills - adults have because of their many life experiences - such as being self aware, critical thinking, and building stronger relationships.

"The goal of the pilot program is to translate [these] skills to provide families with a common language around which to build resilience and performance skills," said Robin Cordovez, acting program manager for the Child and Youth Programs Branch at the National Guard Bureau.

"By tailoring it to the youth population, a successful program could lead to a teen resiliency program that will continue to grow within the Army National Guard," she said, adding that having the teen resiliency program could become a permanent part of the Army National Guard youth programs.

It's nice to have all the resources available under one roof.

- Staff Sgt. Seth Clark
142nd Civil Engineer Squadron

Military-connected youth ages 13-18 pose with a HMMWV during the 2014 Oregon State Youth Symposium, September 26-28, 2014, at Biak Training Center in Central Oregon. The teens learned about military culture and participated in team-building activities, including tackling the low-ropes course.

Oregon National Guard Barbie & Youth Program
Kazakhstan emergency professionals tour Oregon emergency operations facilities

Andrew Phelps, OEM Director

SALEM, Oregon — Kazakhstan emergency response professionals from the Emergency Situations Committee (ESC) visited the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Emergency Coordination Center (OCC) in Salem, Oregon. The exercise simulated a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and resultant tsunami.

The exercise was designed to test specific response capabilities during the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake declaration for 26 counties and 2 tribal nations. Participants included Department of Human Services, Oregon Department of Corrections, Oregon State Fire Marshall, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon State Marine Board, Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Military Department, and a Department of Homeland Security-Protective Services/Naval Postgraduate School’s Center for Homeland Defense and Security—where Phelps got his foot in the door as the Deputy Chief, Firefighting Service Management Division, Emergency Coordination Center, Disaster Mitigation Department, Firefighting Service Management Division, and the Aeronautical Operational Emergency Situations Committee, March 3, in the OEM Emergency Coordination Center in Salem, Oregon. The Kazakhstan ESC delegation visit was part of the World Affairs Council of Oregon, International Visitor Program.

“Phelps brought our project to life,” said Sydney Snead, Program Officer for the International Visitor Program in Oregon. “The natural disasters we face in Oregon are very similar to those in Kazakhstan,” said Snead.

The purpose of the Office of Emergency Management is to execute the Governor’s responsibilities to maintain an emergency response and recovery system for any emergency or disaster, regardless of cause in order to reduce or eliminate the impact on lives, property, and the environment,” explained Phelps. “We can all benefit from looking at the challenges we face through the different cultures of emergency management.

The project that brought the Kazakhs to OEM is unique because it highlights U.S. best practices in emergency management, and responding to natural and man-made disasters, and focuses on the challenging steps we take for recovery for affected populations, said Sydney Snead, Program Officer for the International Visitor Program in Oregon.

“Our need to communicate and find solutions to the challenges we face in emergency management is in stark contrast to the challenge of learning from the experience of other countries in the area of emergency management, including communications, coordination and situational awareness,” said Kelly Jo Craigmiles, ECC Manager. “This is critical for ensuring the swift, unified, and effective response so we can use at home or take with you in case you must evacuate. Phelps volunteered as a fire fighter, and in many other roles, to absorb and learn as much as he could about emergency response professionals from any emergency or disaster, regardless of cause in order to reduce or eliminate the impact on lives, property, and the environment,” explained Phelps. “We can all benefit from looking at the challenges we face through the different cultures of emergency management.

The exercise was in preparation for the Cascadia Rising 2016, a major functional exercise scheduled for June 2016, involving multiple county, state and tribal nations in Oregon, as well as the State of Washington, FEMA Region X, along with a variety of military and other partners to improve regional response capabilities during a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami.

Exercises ensure OEM can support trained responders who know how to deliver services during large incident response, added Craigmiles.

Phelps brings unique experiences as OEM director

SALEM, Oregon — New Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Director Andrew Phelps was working as an actor in New York City when he received a call from his girlfriend on Sept. 11, 2001 describing the ominous fireball she had just seen. While observing the scene from the roof of his East Village Apartment, Phelps realized one of New York City’s iconic twin towers was on fire.

When Phelps saw a second plane flying toward the fire he said he thought to himself, “maybe it is coming to help.” However, as the plane got closer and the wings began to tilt, Phelps said he remembers trying to will the plane to miss the building during a very surreal experience.

Phelps and his friend spent most of the morning atop their apartment with a view of the terrible scene, he explained. When they safely made it down from the tower, Phelps said he grabbed a neighbors binoculars to take a closer look, only to realize the objects were people. That fateful moment had a profound effect, changing his path in life, Phelps said.

“I wanted to donate blood or do something like move pallets for the Salvation Army,” Phelps explained. “I just wanted to do something, anything to help.”

Phelps remembers making his way toward the scene with gloves, goggles and a hard hat, but feeling helpless about his efforts on the rubble piling move buckets of debris by hand. That is when Phelps decided that next time something happened like 9/11, he would be in a position to do something to help. He said it was that tragic experience that inspired a career in emergency management.

Shortly after, Phelps helped start the first FEMA sponsored Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in New York City.

“When we started, we thought it was a good idea; and now I am proud to say there are more than 50 CERT Teams in the city,” said Phelps.

Phelps volunteered as a fire fighter, and in many other roles, to absorb and learn as much as he could about emergency management, and the Aeromobile Operational foreign policy series in the nation. It’s a win-win for community to interact with professionals from around the world, and the meeting at OEM was a great example of that,” said World Affairs Council, Oregon President Maria Wufl.

“Every time I bring over 500 emerging leaders from nearly 100 countries to our community to interact with professionals and area families. It’s a win-win for visitors and locals — and a great form of grassroots diplomacy!” Wufl added.

The council hosts many other programs and that the International Speaker Series has become the largest foreign policy provider in the state.

The Kazakhstan ESC delegation included leaders from the nation’s Disaster Management Center, Civil Defense Division, Disaster Mitigation Department, Firefighting Service Management Division, and the Aeronautical Operational Emergency Coordination Center. It’s a win-win for community to interact with professionals from around the world, and the meeting at OEM was a great example of that,” said World Affairs Council, Oregon President Maria Wufl.

“Every time I bring over 500 emerging leaders from nearly 100 countries to our community to interact with professionals and area families. It’s a win-win for visitors and locals — and a great form of grassroots diplomacy!” Wufl added.

The council hosts many other programs and that the International Speaker Series has become the largest foreign policy provider in the state.

The Kazakhstan ESC delegation included leaders from the nation’s Disaster Management Center, Civil Defense Division, Disaster Mitigation Department, Firefighting Service Management Division, and the Aeronautical Operational Emergency Coordination Center. It’s a win-win for community to interact with professionals from around the world, and the meeting at OEM was a great example of that,” said World Affairs Council, Oregon President Maria Wufl.

“Every time I bring over 500 emerging leaders from nearly 100 countries to our community to interact with professionals and area families. It’s a win-win for visitors and locals — and a great form of grassroots diplomacy!” Wufl added.

The council hosts many other programs and that the International Speaker Series has become the largest foreign policy provider in the state.
Oregon Army National Guard Soldier trains Army World Class Athletes

PORTLAND, Oregon – The Army World Class Athlete Program (WCAP) represents the U.S. Army by training athletes to compete in the Olympic games. The Oregon Army National Guard’s own Maj. Dan Browne, former WCAP runner and Olympian, is training the track and field team for the upcoming 2016 Summer Olympic games in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil.


“Our mission here in the WCAP is to make the Olympic team and I think we are on the right track for that,” said Rono, 10,000-meter and marathon runner. “We try to improve, train hard and stay healthy so we don’t have any issues.”

Rono’s teammate Katum, a marathon runner, shared Rono’s focus.

“My mission is to qualify for the Olympics and get the gold medal in 2016,” he said.

With the Olympics on the horizon, the team, comprised of native Kenyans and U.S. collegiate runners, endure a challenging training schedule to improve their already world-class running times.

“Training for running is not something that is easy, you have to endure the pain, sometimes you get injuries,” Katum said. “It takes a lot of endurance, it’s painful, but once you find your motivation, nothing is going to hinder you from your goal.”

The training day for the team begins at around 8:30 a.m. with a core workout, followed by two hours of various intervals and a warm up, according to Browne. The team then breaks for lunch, where they try to take in as many calories in the form of carbohydrates as possible, to offset the roughly 5,000 calories they burn off in a training day. Afterward, they rest their muscles and stretch to prepare for the second two-hour session of running that usually begins at 3:30 p.m.

Even though each member of the WCAP team is a Soldier first, their Army mission is to train for the Olympics, which frees them of distractions like having to learn a living. Their single focus is to run and rest for the next run.

“We are so lucky and thankful about being able to train full time and focus on that and nothing else, so we try to use this program to the fullest,” Katum said.

His teammate, Shadrack Kipchirchir, 10,000-meter and marathon runner, agreed.

“The Army is fully supporting us and giving us everything we need, so now we have to work hard to represent them well,” Kipchirchir added.

For many members of the team, running professionally is the culmination of a childhood ambition. Chellimo, the 5,000-meter runner, said that he first noticed he could run as a child and has been doing it ever since.

“When I was young, my brothers would chase after me, but they wouldn’t catch me,” Chellimo said. “That is when I knew that I had a talent, and I have been running ever since.”

Chellimo also began running during his youth, growing up in Kenya.

“Way back when I was in Kenya, I started running in middle school,” Katum said. “I loved running and continued until now.”

Browne says that for the WCAP team, the next big milestone is the World Championships in Beijing, China, and with the row talent and a team atmosphere, he is excited to try for that goal.

“I am pretty excited, I have got all my Soldiers here now on the ground and we are working hard together,” Browne said.

“These guys are very fast.”

Browne said Rono ran at the USA Half Marathon Championships, running the equivalent of six and a half Army Physical Fitness tests with a 9:30 pace.

“Running 102.25 for a half marathon is a pretty incredible accomplishment. Now that they are in a team, iron is going to sharpen iron,” Browne said.

Oregon Soldier takes military combatives to next level, competes in Jiu-Jitsu

TIGARD, Oregon — Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, a well-known fighting style to many martial arts fans, has become one of the more popular disciplines according to mixed martial artists. Recently, an Oregon Army National Guard infantry officer earned a bronze medal in his division at the International Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation’s World Masters Tournament in Long Beach, California on Nov. 2.


“I realized very quickly that our fight was not at 300 meters, but more like three meters or less,” Winkler said. “For example, when an unarmed Iraqi approaches a checkpoint operation, shouting in anger and frustration, we need to have the skills to take him down using the right amount of force.”

Over the next few years, Winkler enrolled in the levels one and two Army Combatives courses at Fort Benning, Georgia, for a total of 120 hours of instruction. After the course, he began to pursue martial arts privately. In 2007, he found a local Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu academy that he now trains.

Winkler said he chose Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as the combat art he wished to study and pursue because the art form enhances not only his specific mission as an infantryman, but also his overall military career and lifestyle.

“Jiu-Jitsu is a non-striking form of martial arts,” Winkler said. “The goal is to submit your opponent with attacks that threaten the joints in the body such as fingers, wrists, elbows, shoulders, toes, ankles, knees, neck or to render your opponent unconscious through the application of a choke that cuts the blood supply off to the brain. Because it is non-striking it is called the gentle art.”

He said one advantage of Jiu-Jitsu is that a smaller, weaker person who is well-trained can use leverage and balance against a stronger, heavier opponent. Once they gain a dominant position, they can use a variety of techniques to incapacitate their opponent.

“As an infantryman, our overarching mission is to destroy the enemy in close combat,” Winkler said. “Competitions provide a relatively safe platform to test ones mental and physical mettle against a fully-resistant opponent, while engaging in a combat sport. While the Army Combatives program is about Jiu-Jitsu based, Winkler said the sport of Jiu-Jitsu leaves a number of large gaps in the need for hand-to-hand combat skills on the battlefield.

“For starters, there is no striking or weapons, but I can’t imagine a combat situation that would not include strikes and weapons: handgun, knife, stick, rock -- pretty much anything one could get into their hands to increase the odds of survival,” said Winkler. “That being said, the Army’s philosophy explained at the Combatives School at Fort Benning when I attended is the person who wins the hand-to-hand combat fight on the battlefield is the person whose buddy shows up first with a gun.”

He said the Warrior Tasks regarding Combatives underpin the philosophy which Soldiers are required to be proficient in gaining dominant positions over an opponent, allowing time for their buddy to show up with a weapon.

Winkler said Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu also enhances his ability to command as well.

“Every Soldier I have met in my more than 30-year military career, including myself, has a natural respect for those who exhibit the Warrior Spirit and who take training and their combat role seriously.”

Training in Jiu-Jitsu not only provides a tremendous workout, but it also provides a mechanism for mental sharpness through continual learning,” he said. “After eight years of training, I still see things I have never seen before in terms of new techniques. It also adds a level of confidence to my day-to-day interactions, whether it is work related or family related.”
During WWII, news broke that the Japanese had mass murdered American prisoners of war. The men were forced to march through the island of Palawan in order to prevent their rescue by the rapidly advancing Allied Forces. The prisoners were herded and divided into groups and were then set ablaze. Escaping prisoners were shot, but amazingly, 11 men did manage to escape and journey to the world.

Two months later, on February 28, Brig. Gen. Harold Haney, Assistant Division Commander of the 41st Infantry Division, invaded Palawan, Philippines, with the 186th Infantry Regiment under Operation Victor III after a decisive Allied naval victory with the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

The 186th Inf. Regiment’s “Jungleers,” so nicknames for the 41st Infantry Division’s jungle warfare expert in New Orleans, invaded to island of Palawan on the morning of February 28.

Author Paul F. McCartney, in his book The Jungleers: A History of the 41st Infantry Division, described the beach landings on February 28.

“The 13th Air Force and naval units laid down a bombardment and at 0845, followed by a 10-minute rocket barrage. The assault waves stepped ashore on White Beach 1, just west of Bancao-Bancao Point. At this time, the Japs were still in the town of Puerto Princesa. There was some confusion during the landing because of poor beach control. Since no opposition was encountered, the landing forces were quickly consolidated.”

“The 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry, furnished the assault waves,” said McCartney.

“In this role, the 186th Infantry played a key part in securing the island’s northwestern tip, where Puerto Princesa is located.”

Soldiers of the 186th Infantry Regiment during the battle for Palawan at the Philippine islands, February 28, 1945. After completing the New Guinea campaign, August 1944, the 41st Infantry Division was ordered to the Philippines. For the rest of the war, the 41st focused on mopping up pockets of Japanese resistance throughout the southern Philippines until hostilities ended in August 1945.

McCartney said, “The assault battalion pushed inland at a rapid pace and moved on the airstrips,” McCartney’s account continued. “By 1100 it had passed and secured the first phase line, and the reserve battalion had come ashore. The 2nd Battalion was moving very slowly but was closing in on Puerto Princesa. Shortly after noon, it crossed the second phase line, pored over the runways of the airstrip and was patrolling north of the third phase line. Late that afternoon all areas within the third phase line had been secured and patrols were continuing their activities. The town of Puerto Princesa fell to the 2nd Battalion at 1259.”

Operation Victor III encountered very little Japanese resistance while securing the town of Puerto Princesa, and it appeared that the Japanese had no intention of holding the town. The only sign of Japanese occupation were the remnants of air raid shelters. The 186th Regiment continued into Palawan and fought the Japanese and quickly gained the upper hand. They had libered and secured the island with the help of the Filipino guerrilla forces and the main force departed Palawan by March 18. McCartney describes what happened after March 18. “During this period, plans were made to utilize the 2nd Battalion, the cannon company and the guerilla forces for further operations and to establish overall control of Palawan,” McCartney stated.

By cutting off supplies, Allied forces had paid a heavy toll on Japanese and their ability to hold the island. The last holdout of Japanese forces still fit to fight, attacked on March 25 according to McCartney. “For the most part, the remaining Japanese were fighting for self-preservation,” McCartney said. “Their food stocks had been depleted and their activities consisted mostly of foraging food and dodging Allied patrols.” There was one exception to this evade action on March 25. Guerrillas operating in the vicinity of Mouser Point engaged the remnants of the Japanese who were well-organized and believed to be infantry troops. The Japanese attacked from three sides in successive waves, using good fire control, but after losing 52 men in three days, they ceased fighting.

The 2nd Battalion continued to work with the guerrillas to clean up Palawan and Victor III was officially terminated on June 20, 1945.

On Palawan, many of the 186th Soldiers encountered their first modern town in many years. In Puerto Princesa, they walked on paved roads, reading signs they could understand and saw actual houses, schools and gardens. After Victor III, the 41st Infantry Division created lasting friendships with the Filipinos on Palawan and a strong respect for their fighting ability.

A commemoration of the end of WWII is scheduled in Puerto Princesa, April 20-24, organized by U.S. Agency for International Development Philippines, Philippine Competitiveness (COMPETE) Project in partnership with the Department of Tourism, National Government, City Government of Puerto Princesa, Palawan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc., Provincial Tourism Council, and Rajah Travel Corporation. Many dignitaries are invited to attend the commemoration and focus on members of the 186th Infantry Regiment of the 41st Infantry Division. For more information, please go to www.rajahtravel.biz/palawanliberation.
The Oregon National Guard is deeply saddened by the passing of Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Gene A. Katke, the first Oregon Air Guard officer to serve as Oregon’s adjutant general. Gene Albert Katke was born Nov. 15, 1934, in Portland, Oregon, to Albert and Marie Katke. He was their only child, but he had many aunts, uncles and cousins. He attended Benson Tech High School, where he was active in the Glee Club and radio. One of his other interests was hot-rodding, and he was a founding member of the Road Knights Car Club. He graduated from Benson with a technical electronics diploma in 1952.

Katke earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business and technology from Oregon State University. He later earned a masters degree in business administration from Portland State University in 1975.

He met the love of his life, Harleen Joyce Hardman, and they were married for 55 years. They had three sons; Martin, Gregg and Scott. Gene and Harleen loved international travel, the Oregon coast, and raising their family.

Katke began his 41-year career with the Oregon Air National Guard in March 1953 as an airman first class and served as a communications specialist until Oct. 14, 1966. On Oct. 15, 1966, he received a direct commission and was assigned as a communications officer with the 244th Mobile Communications Squadron. While assigned to the 244th, he held positions as communication systems staff officer, supply operations officer, and was then assigned as commander of the newly-formed 244th Command and Control Flight. In November 1976, he accepted a position as a supply management officer with the Washington Air National Guard, 252nd Combat Communications Group, Camp Murray, Washington.

In 1977, Katke returned to Oregon to assume command of the 244th Combat Communications Squadron, a position he held until Sept. 30, 1983. He was then assigned to Headquarters, Oregon Air National Guard, as a communications electronics staff officer before being appointed deputy commander of the Oregon Air National Guard in 1988. He was named assistant adjutant general, Oregon Air National Guard, in June 1990. Katke was appointed as adjutant general, Oregon, on May 28, 1991. He was promoted to, and federally recognized as, a major general on March 11, 1993. He retired in 1994.

Katke’s awards and decorations include: the Legion of Merit; Meritorious Service Medal; Air Force Commendation Medal with one bronze oak leaf cluster; Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with two bronze oak leaf clusters; Air Force Organizational Excellence Award; Combat Readiness Medal with one silver and one bronze oak leaf cluster; Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal with three bronze oak leaf clusters; National Defense Service Medal; Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon with one silver and three bronze oak leaf clusters; Armed Forces Reserve Medal with two hourglass devices; Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon with one bronze star; Air Force Training Ribbon; Oregon Exceptional Service Medal; Oregon National Guard Meritorious Service Medal; Thirty-Year Award; Oregon Thirty Year Faithful Service Medal; Oregon Faithful Service Medal with one silver oak leaf cluster; the Perfect Attendance Ribbon; and the Oregon Distinguished Service Award.

His civilian career included: production, purchasing, and sub-contracting assignments with Cascade Corporation from 1958 to 1966; federal credit union management from 1966 to 1968; production engineering management and management assignment on the corporate staff of Obak Industries from 1968 to 1974; and manufacturing engineering management with Dillingham Inc. He owned and managed residential rental property since 1965. In 1979, he turned his love for sailing into a business by purchasing Sexton’s Chandlery, a small retail boating supply store. With his sons, he moved the business to a more favorable location, which included a shop and boat yard. Katke was president of both Sexton’s Chandlery Inc. and of Tomahawk Boat Works, Inc., founded in 1983. He continued to be a presence in the business until very recently.

Preceded in death by his wife, Harleen, he is survived by their sons Marty, Gregg and Scott.

Former Oregon Guardsman and veterans’ advocate passes away

The Oregon National Guard is deeply saddened by the passing of Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Staryl C. Austin, Jr. Austin died, Jan. 1, 2015 in Salem, Oregon, at the age of 94. He was born in Condor, Oregon, on Sep. 16, 1920. He later moved to Bend and then Albany before his family arrived in Salem in 1929. He graduated from Salem High School in 1938, and developed an interest in flying from an early age.

He enlisted in the Army Air Corps at age 21 and after early training as an airplane mechanic he was accepted into flight school. Austin became a pilot trainer and was sent to the European theater in 1944 where he flew 58 missions as a P-47 pilot, including air support for the Battle of the Bulge.

Upon returning to Salem after WWII, he married his sweetheart, Jacqueline Judd, whom he had met several years earlier while picking strawberries. Austin soon joined the fledgling Oklahoma Air National Guard, moving with Jackie to Tulsa, where he attended the Spartan School of Engineering. Recalled to active duty during the Korean War, the couple moved to France where he was stationed, giving them the opportunity to explore much of Western Europe when not on duty.

Austin joined the Oregon Air National Guard in 1953, commanding the 142nd Fighter Interceptor Group. He and Jackie settled in Portland, where sons Steve and Andy were born, then moved to Salem in 1958 after he was assigned to the Oregon Military Department Headquarters. In 1963 he was promoted to brigadier general and was appointed assistant adjutant general-Air National Guard. In 1973 he became the first Air National Guard officer to be appointed deputy adjutant general-Air National Guard. He held this position until his military retirement in 1981.

He was the second U.S. Air National Guard recipient of the Order of the Sword, a special program where non-commissioned officers of a command honor individuals that they hold in high esteem.

During his 40-year military career he was also awarded the U.S. Air Force Outstanding Service Medal; the Legion of Merit and many other honors, but his true bliss was always flying. In retirement, he was active with the P-47 Thunderbolt Pilots Association and the National Guard Association. In 2007, he was inducted into the Oregon Aviation Hall of Honor, located at the Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum in McMinnville, Oregon.

Austin’s second career began in 1981 when he was appointed by Oregon Governor Vic Atiyeh as director of the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs (ODVA). He took on the difficult challenge of restoring financial stability to the Veteran’s Home Loan program and succeeded in laying the foundation for today’s $30 million a year program. He retired from this position, but remained active in a volunteer capacity, serving on the Governor’s Veterans’ Advisory Committee, the Board of Directors for the Veterans Care Centers of Oregon, and lobbying the Oregon legislature on behalf of Oregon veterans.

Austin is survived by his wife of 69 years, Jacqueline; sons, Steve and Andrew; daughter-in-law, Kathy; grandchildren, Andrew Van Den Bos and Treyvor Austin; brother, Charles; and many cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.