An Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook Helicopter from Company B, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, deploys Soldiers into the Persian Gulf during a Helocast exercise May 2. Helocast is a method of inserting teams of troops into combat zones that might not be otherwise accessible. See the full story on page 5.

SALEM, Oregon – Soldiers of the Oregon Army National Guard’s 1186th Military Police (MP) Company spent a day at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) learning active shooter response techniques from their civilian counterparts in Salem, Oregon, April 2, 2016.

“The goal of this training is to integrate what we are training the police throughout the state of Oregon with the MPs that are serving here in Oregon in our National Guard,” said DPSST Regional Training Coordinator Tim Ragan. “We want to get them on the same page so that if there were ever a situation they would be an asset to us, or to be able to help a local agency with some sort of emergency.”

Normally, the training takes two days. The MPs received a crash course in four hours.

“It is a familiarization training,” DPSST Instructor Josh Calief said. “They are learning timing and response; to see and identify what is going on and to identify the threat, then reacting accordingly.”

The Soldiers began with classroom instruction learning the techniques and philosophy behind the action. After the classroom instruction, the Soldiers were shown demonstrations of the techniques; practiced the techniques without ammunition; then they went through scenarios with role players and marking ammunition cartridges. The idea was to have the training be as close to real life as possible.

“It has been an eye opener, a refresher, actually having role-players and incorporating what we already know,” said Pfc. Andrea Martinez, of Hermiston, Oregon. “Being able to do training in facilities like this, using weapons and doing tactics we talk about consistently...

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with the 1186th Military Police (MP) Company, 821st Troop Command Battalion, 82nd Brigade (Troop Command), move through an active shooter training scenario after learning techniques from their civilian counterparts at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) in Salem, Oregon, April 2, 2016. The Soldiers learned how to integrate with civilian law enforcement in case emergencies require a combined effort to protect Oregon citizens.

See MPs on Page 4
**The Oregon Sentinel**

**The Oregon Military Department**

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Major General Julie Bentz receives 30 year medal

**COMMAND**

**What the Oregon National Guard brings to the table**

From the State Partnership Program to emergency management, from wildfire support to federal disaster missions, our Oregon National Guard is in a unique position that requires the continual building and maintaining of partnerships and collaboration across the state, country, and world. The Guard’s unique position gives Soldiers and Airmen a set of skills and experiences unmatched by any other organization or service.

We, the Oregon National Guard, bring to Oregon a highly skilled, ready, and unique Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen across the state bring a range of skill sets not only from their civilian careers and experiences, but also from dynamic opportunities across DoD. This is a win-win scenario for both our local communities and the Oregon National Guard. The Oregon National Guard is our governor’s Guard. We are, “Always Ready, Always There.” In order to meet this mission, we must also prepare and train for local disasters that may affect our state and the entire Pacific-Northwest Region. Most recently, the Oregon National Guard prepared for and participated in the Cascadia Rising exercise. This four-day exercise integrated multiple local, state, and federal agencies to include FEMA, the governor’s office, Oregon Office of Emergency Management, Washington and Kentucky National Guard, the Forest Service, Fire and Rescue, Air Force Reserves, U.S. Coast Guard, and local tribal nations, to name a few. Again, the mission to train in concert with so many agencies to get the job done, highlights another integral and unique role the Oregon National Guard plays in serving our nation.

The Oregon National Guard’s mission, in support of homeland, emergency response and assistance. The Oregon National Guard continues to lead the way with the Department of the Bureau’s State Partnership Program. Assisting in the federal mission to build partnerships around the world, the Oregon National Guard is deployed to two countries, Bangladesh and Vietnam. This program allows the exchange of skills related to domestic emergency response and disaster preparedness. It also provides Guardsmen the opportunity to conduct operations in cooperation, and bring back to our local communities.

Last, but certainly not least, Oregon National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are always conducting training to stay ready to deploy and fight for our democracy, across the globe. Over the last year alone, Oregon and Idaho Soldiers and Airmen have deployed and returned from both the Middle East and Europe. They have conducted annual training exercises to stay battle ready. From F-15s in the sky, to Howitzers on the ground, to Air Assault training, to special tactics, Oregon National Guard is a highly skilled, ready force.

I am proud to be an Oregon Guardman and I am proud of all our Guardmen throughout the state. I challenge others to rise to the occasion and become unique Oregon Guardsman. You and the Oregon Guard will be better for it.

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**Oregon Army National Guard general retires in ceremony**

Story and photos by

Tecg Stj. Jason van Mourik

Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

SALEM, OR -- The Oregon Army National Guard hosted a ceremony in honor of Brig. Gen. Todd A. Plimpton, June 17, at the Anderson Readiness Center, in Salem, Oregon.

Plimpton most recently served as the commander of the Oregon Army National Guard (Land Component Command), which oversees all Army operations for the State of Oregon and is responsible for more than 6,000 Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers. Brig. Gen. William Edwards succeeded Plimpton and assumed command of the Oregon Army National Guard in a change of command ceremony, April 3, 2016, at Camp Withycombe, in Clackamas, Oregon.

"Todd has a long and distinguished career as a Citizen-Soldier and we wish him the very best in his retirement," said Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon.

Plimpton began his 33-year military career in 1983 when he enlisted in the Nevada Army National Guard. He served as an enlisted member of the 422nd Signal Battalion, as well as a company commander, assistant operations officer, and assistant operations officer after receiving his commission through the Officer Candidate School at Nevada University in 1986. The following year, he transferred to the Oregon Army National Guard, where he has served in a number of leadership positions over the span of his career.

Plimpton served as a weapons platoon leader, as well as a company commander for D Company, 1st Battalion, 249th Infantry Regiment. He was the Aide-de-Camp for the 82nd Brigade as well as the senior company-level command including, B Troop, 1st Squadron, 82nd

Cavalry Regiment, E Company and then D Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment. Plimpton served as logistics officer, operations officer and then executive officer for the 1-186th Infantry. During his term in the battalion, he deployed to Sinai, Egypt, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2002-2003. Upon his return from the Middle East, he deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Plimpton has deployed with the battalion and in support of Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief efforts in 2005.

In 2008, Plimpton took command of Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Oregon. In 2008, he deployed again in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as the battalion commander, the battalion deployed a significant number of Soldiers to support in Operation Iraq Freedom. Plimpton supported the battalion and in support of Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief efforts in 2005.

In 2013, Plimpton was appointed as the Assistant Adjutant General - Army before taking command of the Oregon Army National Guard in 2013. During his time in the battalion, he served as the Joint Force Headquarters Officer during Operation Enduring Freedom as well as the senior company level command including the Legion of Merit; Bronze Star Medal. Meritorious Service Medal with two bronze oak leaf clusters; Air Medal with one bronze oak leaf cluster, among many other federal and state awards.

He was also awarded the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award.

In his civilian career, Plimpton is a partner in the law firm of Belanger & Plimpton, in Lovelock, Nevada. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication from the University of Nevada in 1987. He holds a Master’s in Business Administration and Doctorate of Jurisprudence from Willamette University. He also completed a Masters of Strategic Studies at the U.S. Army War College.

He is a member of several professional associations, including Military Officers Association of America; Oregon National Guard Association of the United States; Oregon National Guard Association; American Bar Association; Knights of Columbus; Order of the Arrow, Boy Scouts of America; and Lovelock Lions Club.

Plimpton and his wife, Jill, currently reside in Lovelock, Nevada, and they have four children together; Eric, Ben, Scott and Katie.
**Command**

**Air National Guard command chief retires after 28 years of service**

**JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md.**

The command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard retired from the Air National Guard on May 20, 2016, during a May 20 change of command ceremony held at the ANG Readiness Center on Joint Base Andrews, Maryland.

Command Chief Master Sgt. James W. Hotaling, the 11th command chief master sergeant of the ANG, retired from the Air Force after 28 years of service in the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, regular Air Force, and Coast Guard Reserve.

"Every time he came into my office, he never once talked about himself - not once," said Clarke. "He never asked to do anything for his position or advancement. He was always the Airmen and the Air National Guard. He always had the Airmen he served in his heart."

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody talked about how Hotaling treats everyone as part of the same team, and the role of a senior enlisted advisor.

"I want to share how great this team has been for our Air Force, because nothing gets done in the Air Force without a team," Cody said. "I've never once heard [Chief Hotaling] talk about a legacy. ... He never talked about the privilege to make it better for the ones who were coming after him - to make our Air Force better. It was never about the person in the position; it was always about what the position had the opportunity to do.

Hotaling's remarks centered on what it means to be a member of a warrior society, and the National Guard's heritage as a part of today's military.

"[Minutemen] dropped their plow, they picked up their musket and they went to war," said Kadavy. "And, as an infantryman, they take the hill," he said.

Kepner, assured him that he would. "As long as I look at the future, it's not a time where we can take a knee," he said. "The strategic initiatives that were started with Command Sgt. Maj. Conley, we've got to go forward with them. The work ahead of us is important and it is significant."

After enlisting in 1980, Kepner served with the 82nd Airborne Division and the 30th Mountain Division before transferring to the Pennsylvania National Guard in 1987. He most recently served as Command Chief, 28th Infantry Division and previously served as the brigade sergeant major of the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 28th ID, from an infantry brigade combat team to a Stryker brigade combat team.

"He comes with a wealth of experience, is tremendously talented and is an outstanding and great leader," said Kadavy during the ceremony. "Kepner said he's ready to take on the challenges of his new role.

 Lt. Gen. Kadavy, I commit to you that the Army National Guard will be successful," he said. "The new leader is an outstanding leader, a successful in being warfighter capable and governor responsive.

He's the kind of guy that has the ability to get to work. "I look forward to working with all of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard and it is because of their leadership and their friendship that I am able to be here today," he said.

Kepner deployed to Kosovo and later to Iraq and participated in transitioning the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 28th ID, from an infantry brigade combat team to a Stryker brigade combat team.

"He always had the Airmen he served in his heart."


**Colonel Smith takes command of the 173rd Fighter Wing**

**KINGSLEY FIELD, Ore.** — A change of command took place, April 3, at Kingsley Field, when Col. Jeff Smith, who has more than 20 years of military experience, took command of the 173rd Fighter Wing in an official ceremony.

Smith has a wide range of experience to include 10 years with the active-duty component and 12 years with the Oregon Air National Guard in 2005. He previously served as the 173rd Maintenance Group commander and was the 173rd Maintenance squadron commander, and the 114th Fighter Squadron director of operations.

Col. Smith, a native of Kingsley, Ore., with strong relationships at the national level," said Brig. Gen. Jeffery Silver, Oregon Air National Guard commandant. "I have no doubt that he will successfully carry on the 173rd Fighter Wing’s legacy of excellence as he leads the Wing forward."

"The official ceremony included the passing of the wing guidon from the outgoing commander to the incoming commander. According to Air Force protocol, this ceremony is rooted in military history, dating to the 18th Century. During this time, organizational flags were developed representing the individual units. When a change of command took place, the outgoing commander would pass the flag to the individual assuming command. This took place in front of the entire unit so that all could witness the new commander assuming his position.

Additionally, Smith’s name was revealed on the flagstaff, flying in honor of "The newly painted aircraft on display commemorates the Oregon Air National Guard’s 75th Anniversary." Smith thanked those in attendance, the local community, and his family.

"We are proud to be part of the support system to help the whole wing move forward," Smith said. "We have phenomenal Airmen doing phenomenal things all across the base. I will learn a ton in this new job about people and jobs that I have not been directly connected with before, and I look forward to it.

Smith noted that this job does not come to him without challenges but was quick to add, "We have the right team with the right skills to address all of those with proper engagement.

Continued from Front Page

it’s like it’s real.”

During the training scenarios, the MPs had to get civilians out safely, identify and subdue the threat, all while taking fire. The Soldiers cleared a tower-type building with stairs and rooms while searching for the shooter. They also trained in a school-type building, clearing classrooms until they identified the threat and captured him.

“We did scenarios where we had to clear the buildings and people were shooting at us with munitions rounds,” said Spc. Alexander Lofting, of Pendleton, Oregon. “When I was in the tower there were a lot of stairs. It was kind of confusing.”

After each scenario, the instructors commented on why the scenario was set up in a certain way. They asked the Soldiers what they saw, how did they react, and why they reacted that particular way.

“We make noise, have some gunfire, send civilians out to cause confusion,” said Chris Wingo, who role-played as an active shooter. “They did very well both times. They acquired the target quickly, made a decision to shoot.”

The survival skill instructors are retired or current law enforcement officers working throughout the state. They said decision-making is imperative when operating in an intense situation. Decisions need to happen fast to prevent loss of life. “Make a decision and go with it. You have to take charge,” said DPSST Instructor Greg Peterson. “Drive straight forward. Keep moving. You may get hit, suck it up and move on.”

The basics of military and civilian law enforcement are essentially the same. It is how and why the techniques are implemented that makes them different. Each unit has a different mission and they train accordingly. Stateside active shooter response is different to any of the training scenarios.

The MP unit also has civilian law enforcement officers in their ranks. Baxter, from Clackamas, Oregon, said they share the skills they have learned with the unit.

“Make a decision and go with it. It’s a different mindset.”

MP Soldiers received in basic training and their initial training as an MP.

“As MP Soldiers we have to operate at one end of the spectrum for wartime missions then we have to operate at the complete opposite end for peacetime, or stateside missions,” said Staff Sgt. Kristopher Baxter, platoon sergeant with the 1186th MP Company. “It’s a different mindset.”

Stateside law enforcement for the MPs includes crowd control, safety checks, and traffic stops. With the DPSST training, the MPs will also be able to work together effectively with civilian law enforcement to defeat a threat, such as an active shooter, and save lives.

The MP unit also has civilian law enforcement officers in their ranks. Baxter, from Clackamas, Oregon, said they share the skills they have learned with the unit.

“The training today gave us an advantage of having an entirely civilian-side trained staff and personnel. It gives us a civilian-specific viewpoint,” Baxter added.

One of those dually-qualified law enforcement officers, Staff Sgt. Colleen Neubert, of Irrigon, Oregon, said working together, learning civilian law enforcement operations, techniques and philosophy will aid in peacetime stateside emergency support.

“When the National Guard is called in to help other agencies they will know what we will do; that we are trained to DPSST standards,” said Neubert.
Oregon Youth ChalleNGe Program graduates 51st class

BEND, Ore. — The Oregon National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program (OYCP) hosted a graduation ceremony for its 51st class, June 15, at the Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center in Redmond, Oregon.

Oregon Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins and Deputy Director for the Oregon Military Department Dave Stuckey both gave remarks, congratulating the class on their perseverance through the grueling in-residence phase of the program.

OYCP is a statewide accredited alternative high school that serves all of Oregon. The graduation ceremony featured 126 students from 50 different high schools and 17 Oregon counties and consists of a rigorous five-and-a-half-month in-residence phase followed by a year of active mentorship.

Of the 126 graduates, 13 received high school diplomas and 6 earned GEDs. 117 cadets earned enough credits through OYCP to return to their hometown high schools and graduate with their respective classes.

As part of their training through the program, 126 cadets earned their food handler permits, as well as first aid and CPR certification. In addition, cadets donated 130 units of blood through the American Red Cross. Cadets set a goal of giving 110 units of blood, and exceeded that goal by 20 units. During the five-and-a-half-month residential phase of the program, the class also provided 11,015 hours of community service at numerous civic events and nonprofit organizations in the Bend area, averaging 87 hours of service per cadet. The estimated total value of their combined volunteer service is $101,888.75.

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1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment in the Persian Gulf

Left: An Oregon Army National Guard crew chief from Company B, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, looks out of his CH-47 Chinook helicopter as it lands aboard the USS Ponce, an Afloat Forward Staging Base, in the Persian Gulf, March 14.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Ian Kummer, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs

An Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopter from Company B, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, lands aboard the USS Ponce, an Afloat Forward Staging Base, in the Persian Gulf, March 14. The 40th CAB practices landings aboard Naval vessels every month while deployed overseas.

1-168th Aviation Battalion performs sling-load and helocast jumps

Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, conducted sling-load training operations with Company B, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment March 31, 2016. The decommissioned vehicles were transported to Udairi Range Complex where they will be used as mortar targets. (Photos by Sgt. Dana Moen, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division Public Affairs)

Soldiers from the 86th Engineer Dive Detachment drop off Soldiers from the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade back onto dry land after being helocasted into the Persian Gulf by a CH-47 Chinook helicopter with Company B, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, May 2. Helocast is a method of inserting teams of troops into zones that might not be otherwise accessible. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ian M. Kummer, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs)
Oregon Airmen train in Finland as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve

KUOPIO, Finland – More than 100 Oregon Air National Guard Airmen from the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field, Oregon, traveled to Kuopio, Finland for a training opportunity between two partner countries.

The exercise was part of Operation Atlantic Resolve, but differed from other deployments to the region called theater security packages in that it is really a training opportunity between partner nations—Finland and the United States.

The 173rd Fighter Wing is the sole F-15C training unit for the United States Air Force, and its main mission is to introduce Airmen to the F-15C for the first time or requalify pilots from non-flying positions or other airframes. 173rd Fighter Wing Commander Col. Jeff Smith said that expertise proved valuable in this environment.

"At home with our students we use a building block approach beginning with one-versus-one scenarios and progressing to two-versus-two and so on, and that format is how we are conducting this exercise beginning with the smallest block, getting familiar with each other’s tactics and working to cross the language barrier,” he said. “By the end of next week we’ll be training in large force exercises, possibly as many as eight-versus-eight.”

Lt. Col. Alaric Michaelis, 173rd FW F-15 instructor pilot, says that in more than 19 years of flying the F-15, this training experience is near the top.

"The fighter pilots from Finland are the best international fighter pilots that I, in my career, have flown with," he said. “It’s not just their ability, but their want, their tenacity, and their grit to get better.”

Another high point the American pilots are quick to point out is the first-class way the Finns have welcomed them.

"Personally this has been my favorite trip I’ve ever been on,” said Maj. Kevin Welch, an instructor pilot with the 173rd Fighter Wing. “To see the work ethic of the younger guys—to see the intensity of the older guys to help make them better is amazing!"

Over the final week of the training exercise, the Finns and the Americans will practice a large scale exercise against the Swedish Air Force; Welch says it will put to the test everything they have learned in the last 10 days.

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741st Brigade Engineer Battalion practice breaching a building

Left: Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers from Alpha and Bravo Companies, 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion (BEB), 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, stand behind a blast curtain during a training demolition breach on April 9, 2016, at Camp Rilea near Warrenton, Oregon. Soldiers were able to experience multiple urban breach methods during the day long training event.

Right: Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers from the 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion (BEB), 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, prepare to execute an equipment breach during training on April 9, 2016, at Camp Rilea near Warrenton, Oregon. The equipment breach was just one of several urban breaching methods that the Soldiers trained on during the day long training event.
Oregon National Guard hosts annual marksmanship competition

Members of the Oregon National Guard shoot tracer rounds for a night-fire exercise during The Adjutant General (TAG) Match marksmanship competition at Camp Umatilla, April 16. The TAG Match is an annual event that allows Soldiers and Airmen to become familiar with multiple military small arms in a competitive atmosphere to promote marksmanship training. Winners earn points towards national awards for marksmanship.

HERMISTON, Oregon – Oregon National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from across the state competed in The Adjutant General (TAG) Match marksmanship competition at Camp Umatilla, April 15-17. The annual three-day match is a chance for individuals and four-person teams to compete with small arms weapons, including some they have never fired before. The event is supported by the Small Arms Readiness Training Section (SERTS) who spend a year planning and developing the event.

"It’s a unique opportunity for Guard members to compete on several available weapons that not all Service Members get to train with," said Sgt. 1st Class Scott Mansfield, assistant SERTS coordinator from Joint Force Headquarters. "From hand grenades to competition Kimber .22-caliber rifles, it’s a chance to have a lot of fun in a safe environment.”

The event is voluntary and this year saw the biggest turnout of 82 Service Members. "The best part of these competitions is working with other forces," said Sgt. Thomas Hoy, an infantry squad leader with the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, in Gresham, Oregon. "It’s great to see competitors who haven’t shot certain weapon systems come off the line with a big smile.”

This year’s winning team was from C Troop, 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, headquartered in Bend, Oregon. The team members included Sgt. Montgomery Lemire, Spc. Lance Peirce, Spc. Caelen Moore and Capt. Ron Clement.

"It’s great training that we take back to our units," said Lemire. “As a sniper team leader, I’m doing the job that I love.”

Winners earn points towards national awards for marksmanship.
Cascadia Rising exercise pushes Oregon National Guardsmen to the brink

Several major Oregon cities, 23 county jurisdictions, all 9 tribal nations, 17 state agencies and departments, the American Red Cross, and two private sector partner organizations and our own Oregon National Guard partnered with Washington and Idaho to test their ability to respond to a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and the following tsunami.

CAMP RILEA, Ore., – In the early morning hours of June 7, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck the Pacific Northwest, generating a tsunami in the two natural disasters combined to create a disaster unlike any in the region. Boomer- raged, tens of thousands were rapidly evacuated. People were injured, homes were lost, emergency workers and residents battled to keep injured and injured people alive.

As the emergency services, Cascadia Rising is designed to test first responders and emergency management agencies throughout the Pacific Northwest should the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) suffer a long overdue seismic event. In total, nearly 80,000 participants took part in the two-day nationwide drill.

As members of Oregon’s CERFP team work with citizens and state leaders to prepare for a major earthquake, the simulations tested members’ skills and procedures.

This is an essential event for our unit to put our skills to the test and work with multiple partners,” said Lt. Col. Mike Melle, CERFP commander.

“Participating in Cascadia Rising allows us to hone our skills and procedures, and it also gives us a chance to test our equipment and improve our response capabilities.

The exercise is designed to test our ability to respond to a major earthquake and the resulting tsunami, and to ensure that our units are prepared to respond effectively to such events.

On the second day of the exercise, the Kentucky National Guard took the lead allowing the Oregon members a chance to flesh out different problem solutions to familiar issues.

To a real-world situation, we have to think outside the box and be creative in our approach.

As the commander of the 124th Air Support Wing, Lt. Col. Brian McBryde said the Cascadia Rising exercise allowed the 124th Air Support Wing members a chance to train with other units.

This was our first time to work with another CERFP team and it allowed us to both teach and learn at the same time,” he said.

The first day of our exercise is often the biggest challenge but building relationships is everything in this business.”

On the exercise, our mission was to respond and recover as quickly as possible.

By working with other units, we can improve our response capabilities and be better prepared to respond to any future disasters.

In summary, the exercise was a success and we learned a lot from it.

The Portland Air National Guard’s 30th Rescue Squadron, assigned to the Portland Air National Guard Base, Ore., train with Oregon and Kentucky National Guard chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, high yield explosives (CBRN) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) team. The team is dedicated to preparing for and responding to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.


Above: Oregon Air National Guard Security Force members from the 142nd Fighter Wing and 137th Fighter Wing train together as they establish security and search operations at the Camp Rilea training village, Warrenore, Ore., during the Cascadia Rising exercise, June 18, 2018. The Cascadia Rising scenario is a 9.0 magnitude earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) resulting in a tsunami, testing first responders, emergency management and public safety officials in the Pacific Northwest. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs).

Above: Oregon Air National Guard Security Force members from the 142nd Fighter Wing and 137th Fighter Wing train together as they establish security and search operations at the Camp Rilea training village, Warrenore, Ore., during the Cascadia Rising exercise, June 8, 2018. The Cascadia Rising scenario is a 9.0 magnitude earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) resulting in a tsunami, testing first responders, emergency management and public safety officials in the Pacific Northwest. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs).

Above: The CERFP Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) members from the Oregon and Kentucky National Guard team together during the Cascadia Rising exercise at Camp Rilea, Warrenore, Ore., June 8.

Above: The CERFP Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) members from the Oregon and Kentucky National Guard team together during the Cascadia Rising exercise at Camp Rilea, Warrenore, Ore., June 8.

Right: Oregon Air National Guard Lt. Col. Alex Charney-Cohen, left, and Oregon Army National Guard Lt. Col. Michael Mello, CERFP commander, right, discuss the set up area for equipment and materials in the exercise village at Camp Rilea during Cascadia Rising exercise, Warrenore, Ore., June 9.

During the course of the exercise, other factors such as the weather can be challenging.

The exercise is designed to test our ability to respond to a major earthquake and the resulting tsunami, and to ensure that our units are prepared to respond effectively to any future disasters.

The exercise was a success and we learned a lot from it.

The exercise allowed the 124th Air Support Wing members a chance to train with other units.

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OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD

173rd Fighter Wing Airman Spotlight - Major (Dr.) Anil Menon

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

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon -- Maj. (Dr.) Anil Menon is a Citizen-Airman with a tremendous breadth of experience. He is residency-trained and board-certified in Emergency Medicine and Aerospace Medicine. He lives and works in Houston, Texas as an emergency room doctor and as a flight surgeon certified to work in Mission Control for NASA. There, Menon supports the International Space Station and travels to Russia to support launch and landing. In the last two years he has lived at the Gagarin Training Center near Moscow for six months. He travelled to Baikanour, Kazakhstan, four times for launches and landings. He also helped design the medical kit used for contingency operations.

Menon is a flight surgeon in the 173rd Fighter Wing (173 FW) at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. He has deployed twice with CCATT, transporting critically wounded soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan to Germany.

After his most recent CCATT deployment in April 2015, he and his fiancée, Anna, flew to Bagdadgra, India, to provide race support for an ultramarathon called Windchasers. Ten minutes after arriving at Bagdadgra airport, they felt the airport shake. These tremors were from a 7.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Nepal, causing more than 8,000 fatalities, 22,000 injuries. Menon and Anna made the decision to give up race support and venture to Kathmandu. After 24 hours of driving, they reached the outskirts of Kathmandu, found housing, and identified themselves to a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) providing relief to disaster victims. Menon organized the early medical response amongst other volunteers, and Anna worked on waste and sanitation.

Menon is no stranger to medical humanitarian missions. He was also a volunteer in the Haitian 2010 earthquake, bringing desperately needed medical care to earthquake survivors in austere conditions.

The Birth pangs of Portland ANG Base – Part II: Major Units Arrive

Story by Lt Col Terrence G. Popravak, USAF (Retired)

PORTLAND, Ore. -- With construction of Portland Army Air Base's (PAAB) well underway in the spring of 1941, the first "housekeeping" unit arrived by train and truck from Hamilton Field, California, the 43rd Air Base Group (HBG), 44th Air Base Squadron and 57th Materiel Squadron, with 17 officers and 231 enlisted men, circa April 21, 1941. Advance elements of the base's first tactical unit, the 55th Pursuit Group, also from Hamilton Field in California, showed up as well. But due to a lack of barracks at the base ready to accommodate the new arrivals, many were temporarily billeted in tents over at Vancouver Barracks and commuted the eight miles to the base by truck to perform their duties. At Vancouver Barracks the Portland residents were able to stay in相近的 barracks, with the women soldiers residing in the downstairs of another barracks for orderly purposes. Soldiers were immediately needed at the base, for lack of facilities and equipment, remained at Vancouver Barracks and accompanied officers to the base on various occasions. Though much progress had been made in building the base, there were no permanent barracks yet, and the area became a sea of mud.

Among units arriving early at Portland in these early days were the 255thSeparate Quartermaster Company (AB), 35th Signal Company, 320th Signal Company, from McChord Field, as well as the 684th Quartermaster Company, satellite campus in Vancouver). The officers assigned to Portland Army Air Base were not the only Air Corps elements with a space problem. The initial aircrews assigned to the headquarters were a Northrop A-17 single-engine attack plane and a lone Douglas B-18 Bolo twin-engine bomber. But the problem was in the expansion of the flightline itself, as the base by design was to be a temporary one. After war broke out the 55th Fighter Group (HBG) was deployed to Portland from Hamilton Field, California. The 43rd AIBG was organized to instruct new personnel in the use of the station. Given the limited facilities initially available, such training was constrained. But classes were organized to instruct personnel in military matters, including rifle training, though it was dry-run fire as there was no range available. The largest single group trained in these early days were 100 men from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and 100 men from Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, Missouri, who arrived as one unit. They received seven weeks of basic training at Portland.

The A-17 series attack aircraft was a directdescendant of the pace-setting Northrop "Gamma," made famous by the aerial explorer Lincoln Ellsworth. It replaced the Curtiss A-29 "Savannah," a 12-Shot Flying Entrance, in the three flying squadrons based at Portland's Army Air Base during WWI in 1914.

The main body of the 55th Pursuit Group (Headquarters, 37th, 38th, and 54th Pursuit Squadrons) relocated to Portland and its three flying squadrons began to operate with P-43 Lancer fighter planes fresh from the factory. The 55th Pursuit Group, commanded by Major James W. McCauley, was thus the first tactical unit to be stationed at Portland. Air strength built slowly, however, as the aircraft arrived in Portland in dribs and drabs as they came out of the factory on the East Coast and were then flown across the states to Portland. After war broke out the 55th Fighter Group moved north in February 1942, to defend the Puget Sound area during the early war period when the US was at greater risk from Imperial Japanese attack. It later deployed overseas to the European Theater of Operations where it flew combat with Eighth Air Force in the Lockheed P-38 Lightning and later the North American P-51 Mustang.

Many of the new arrivals at Portland were drafted from other parts of the United States as well as local recruits. Given the great demand within the Army for training at Portland. Menon is a flight surgeon in the 173rd Fighter Wing (173 FW) at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. He has deployed twice with CCATT, transporting critically wounded soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan to Germany. The main body of the 55th Pursuit Group (Headquarters, 37th, 38th, and 54th Pursuit Squadrons) relocated to Portland and its three flying squadrons began to operate with P-43 Lancer fighter planes fresh from the factory. The 55th Pursuit Group, commanded by Major James W. McCauley, was thus the first tactical unit to be stationed at Portland. Air strength built slowly, however, as the aircraft arrived in Portland in dribs and drabs as they came out of the factory on the East Coast and were then flown across the states to Portland. After war broke out the 55th Fighter Group moved north in February 1942, to defend the Puget Sound area during the early war period when the US was at greater risk from Imperial Japanese attack. It later deployed overseas to the European Theater of Operations where it flew combat with Eighth Air Force in the Lockheed P-38 Lightning and later the North American P-51 Mustang. The 55th Pursuit Group is designated as the 55th Operations Group, operating the Boeing E-4B National Airborne Operations Center (NAOC), a key component of the National Military Command System for the President, Secretary of Defense, and Joint Chiefs of Staff. The group is also responsible for units operating a number of reconnaissance variants of the Boeing C-135 as part of the 55th Wing at Offutt AFB, Nebraska. Portland's construction was not without "turbulence" within units as such personnel received orders sending them from Portland for such training, some not returning to Portland. Remaining personnel had to fill in for such departures, temporary or permanent, until returnees or replacements arrived. Operationally, the base and assigned units fell under 2nd Air Force, headquartered at Fort George Wright near Spokane, Washington, and commanded by Major General John F. Curry. General Curry made frequent visits to Portland to inspect the construction and arriving units. He later became the first national commander of the Civil Air Patrol. On May 21, 2015, the Chief of the Army's General Headquarters Air Group (GHQ AF), Lt. Gen. Delos C. Emmons, also paid a visit to Portland to see the new base. Emmons GHQ AF was in operational control of all the Army's aviation units including Curry's 2nd Air Force. Though busy with construction and organization tasks on base, Portland's new Air Airmen also made efforts to engage the citizens of Portland and the surrounding area. And some of the women associated with these men also began community engagement; in May officers' wives met in Vancouver to organize the Ladies Auxiliary. On May 30, 1941, Memorial Day, the first parade of officers and men assigned to the base.
173rd Fighter Wing student pilots learn air-to-air dominance in an F-15

Part three of the B-Course series follows the journey from the classroom to the cockpit as student pilots with Class 16-ABK, at the 173rd Fighter Wing, learn one-on-one air-combat scenarios of an F-15 Eagle.

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon – As 16-ABK crosses the halfway point they leave behind the basic aspects of flying and dogfighting in one-on-one scenarios. The F-15 does these things very well, but these students are moving toward the air-combat scenarios of an F-15.

“It’s like driving a race car, while you’re playing a video game, while you’re commentating on it on the radio at the same time,” says tongue in cheek. The underlying point is that for these students the task of flying and fighting in this aircraft outfits their ability to keep up mentally, and in these moments they return to a mantra every pilot knows, “aviate-navigate-communicate.” That phrase anchors them, when task-saturated, by prioritizing the three most basic elements of flying, get your aircraft right in the air, recognize where you are on the map, and tell somebody.

Capt. Ryan Reeves is the new flight leader for this class and he describes the challenges he and the other instructor pilots are presenting to the students.

“Like its namesake, this aircraft has excellent vision and with modern upgrades; it sees a huge swath of airspace. The wrinkle for these students is that means one more thing to think about. 1st Lt. Brock McGehee paints a mental picture of what it can feel like as a student trying to come to grips with the extra layers of complexity.

So now the big thing we are introducing to them are contracts,” says Reeves explaining that the idea is a student agrees to execute specific tasks in concert with their flight leader. “It’s just piling more responsibilities onto them as they are flying, watching their flight lead, watching the bandit, and now starting to think about, an army outside visual range,” said Reeves.

The students feel that pressure and note that though their skills are growing, it is unrelenting.

“Every phase you step up, the game gets harder, but you’re never too old,” he says.

“Nothing is getting easier, it’s just more and more responsibilities, we are introducing to them,” says Reeves.

And Reeves says that by design, “this is a course that continues to get harder, there is not really a point where they know they have it in the bag.”

He evaluates Class 16-ABK saying that they are cohesive as a team and are receptive to learning and he complements their good attitudes. The difficulty hasn’t eliminated any of the six-person class and he says by and large they have a strong reputation. However, when asked if anything in particular has impressed him he says “no,” and it seems to suggest that for this class there are many sorries and many hurdles yet to come, and it will be graduation day before we know if each of these six students earns their Eagle Driver patch.

Another Milestone achieved for the Oregon Air National Guard

Air National Guard Joint Force Headquarters Deputy Director of Staff - Air, Lt. Col. Micah Lambert, left, serving on temporary duty as the deployed forces maintenance commander for RED FLAG-Alaska (RF-A) 16-2, is briefed on operations by U.S. Army commanders from the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, Fort Wainwright, Alaska, June 8, while visiting the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) during RF-A 16-2.

“Oregon is preparing to receive Strikers, so it helped me understand the capability for both the battlefield and domestic operations,” stated Lambert.

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PORTLAND, Oregon – With endurance cycling, nearly every part of the sport is tough: from the demands of distance and the quality of the competitors, to changing natural elements on any given day.

Farr’s unassuming and easy-going personality serves to refuel his desire to participate in sports at the competitive level. “It started off really simple. I wanted to see if I could commute from home by bike and use the time going back and forth to get in some exercise,” said Farr.

Yet six months after jumping on his bike, Farr was involved in racing events on weekends around the Pacific Northwest. The endeavor served to refuel his desire to participate in sports at the competitive level. “I’m really pleased with where I’ve gone,” he said. “As much as I love cycling, I don’t love the thought of not being able to do it.”

Over the past eight years, Farr has been assigned to the 142nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, where he is currently the non-commissioned officer in charge of aircrew egress. It has only been in the past four years that curiosity has transformed him into an elite international cyclist. “It is something special, and yeah I have to admit, there were chills at the starting door,” he said. “But like a gold fish, a horse can’t get the key out of my pocket to unlock the door.”

Brice said that Farr’s style on the basketball court over the years put a great deal of time into the compulsory grind of bicycle training to his no-fail mission with the Oregon Air National Guard (ORANG).

Farr’s unique blend of endurance cycling and basketball is tough; from the demands of distance and the quality of the competitors, to changing natural elements on any given day. "It is something special, and yeah I have to admit, there were chills at the starting door,” he said. “But like a gold fish, a horse can’t get the key out of my pocket to unlock the door.”

At slightly less than six feet tall, slender and with a constant and contagious grin, Farr’s unassuming and easy-going personality obscures his deeply competitive nature. At Ridgefield High School in Vancouver, Washington, he was a standout point guard and with a team of officers and senior enlisted. He is the fastest contributor of having Farr serve in uniform as well as on the bike. “Ian’s a sprinter and track guy so, by the end of the race, we held our own but were not able to cover other team moves,” he said. “In the end, there was no final card to play.”

As the race progressed, Farr said that it wasn’t up to teammate Ian Holt to chase down the final lead riders. “It is something special, and yeah I have to admit, there were chills at the starting line,” he said.

Prior to his trip to Korea, Farr had competed in other races earlier in the summer to prepare him for the games and once again underlining some of the unique challenges he faces with a dynamic dual career. At one event, held in Vermont, Sept. 4-7, Farr’s initial participation in the racing community was highlighted. After racing different events on four separate days, his combined place was eighth overall.

Top military cyclist trains as aircraft maintainer and world class cyclist

The Military World Games is the second largest sporting event, after the Olympic Games, and more than 8,500 athletes from 123 nations participated in 2015. Of the seven U.S. military competitors that made up the cycling team, Farr was the only enlisted member of the squad.

On a mostly flat course, the 95-mile bike race on Oct. 6, 2015, included competitors from 16 nations. "My job was to cover the early moves and breakaways of the other riders," Farr said of the event and his team’s strategy for the race.

"As much as I love cycling, I don’t love the thought of not being able to do it."

While the race was a success for Farr, it was just the beginning of a long road ahead. "It is something special, and yeah I have to admit, there were chills at the starting line," he said.

Hofford described the benefits of having Farr serve in uniform as well as on the bike. "In the end, there was no final card to play."

"There are those 20-minute hill-climbing training rides where I go as fast as I can, as far as I can; it’s one of the worst feelings ever," he said with a laugh. "But literally, to reach the top of this sport, you have to have that killer instinct."

And then there are the distinct weather conditions when riding in the Pacific Northwest. "There are those 20-minute hill-climbing training rides where I go as fast as I can, as far as I can; it’s one of the worst feelings ever," he said with a laugh. "But literally, to reach the top of this sport, you have to have that killer instinct."

Now that it’s the off season, Farr has reflected on the past year and wonders about what it would take to proceed to the next level of his cycling career. "In the end, there was no final card to play."

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Stemming from his competitiveness on the basketball court, Farr’s new career has made him one of 10 members on the Department of Defense road bike racing team, and the only team member who is in the Air National Guard. (Photo courtesy of Dwayne Farr)
Disaster declaration pacific storm event brings a silver lining

By Jane Feehan, FEMA External Relations

For many emergency managers in Oregon, 2015 ended on a very busy note. Beginning Dec. 1, a devastating winter storm struck the state, the state was slammed with widespread flooding, mud, land and debris slides, high winds, and life-threatening snow accumulations. The severe weather damaged and destroyed homes, businesses, productive agricultural lands, farm buildings and fences. Local and state emergency and voluntary agencies were first on the scene to respond. While local response agencies did tremendous work protecting lives and property, the severe weather still did more than $25 million in assessed damage to public infrastructure in 14 Oregon counties, according to Clint Fella the state coordinating officer for the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

The cost of providing emergency response resources to a natural disaster that’s more than the local communities had anticipated,” said Fella. “During the height of the event, more than 100 roads were reported closed due to mudslides, high water, and downed trees.”

On Dec. 16, Governor Kate Brown declared a disaster in 14 of the state’s 19 counties. It was clear that Oregon needed outside help to recover from the severe weather. On Feb. 2, 2016, the governor requested a federal disaster declaration from President Barack Obama. The President reviewed Governor Brown’s request and on Feb. 3, an emergency declaration for Oregon on Feb. 17.

Twelve counties were on the original declaration; two more were added in March.

“Tribes understand tribal culture and how to treat those in their care.”

“We set the wheels in motion for Oregon to deliver FEMA’s Public Assistance program to 14 counties as well as state agencies, local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations affected by the severe winter storms,” said FEMA’s Emergency Operations Coordinator Dolph Diemont.

FEMA’s Public Assistance program will provide funding to communities to help repair or replace infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the storm.

Diemont added that when an incident of such severity and magnitude occurs and requires federal assistance, it calls for the establishment of a Joint Field Office (JFO), a coordination center for operations.

On Dec. 10, Governor Kate Brown declared a disaster in 14 counties around 19 counties. It was clear that Oregon needed outside help to recover from the severe weather. On Feb. 2, 2016, the governor requested a federal disaster declaration from President Barack Obama. The President reviewed Governor Brown’s request and on Feb. 3, an emergency declaration for Oregon on Feb. 17.

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On Feb. 23, the JFO, headed by Fella and Diemont, opened its doors to other state and federal agencies involved with a workforce of more than 120 from around the country.

“This is where the rubber hits the road,” explained Diemont. “The JFO provides a central location for coordination of federal, state, local, nongovernmental and private-sector organizations. Here we share information, establish priorities, allocate resources, and provide strategic coordination and direction in delivering assistance.”

The JFO typically is organized into several sections.

“The system of organization enables effective incident management by integrating facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.”

Fella explained. Federal, state and local agencies use this system of organization to manage emergencies of any kind or size. For the Oregon JFO, priorities include not only recovering from the December event but also mitigating damaged and undamaged infrastructure against future disasters.

“When the declaration for Public Assistance was signed, it provided funding opportunities for mitigation projects throughout the state, even in areas not affected by the December storms,” said Diemont. “Every dollar spent to reduce risks from future hazards saves about four dollars of disaster expenses down the road.”

As the state recovers, Oregon and FEMA work closely to identify opportunities to rebuild beyond pre-disaster conditions to standards that will minimize, or mitigate, the impact from future disasters. Rebuilding to a catastrophic disaster like a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. He added; “This is a unique effort for the tribes to come together and evaluate all the systems and unique needs during a disaster.”

Communication is the first step in rescue, life-saving and recovery operations. If regular communication systems fail, Grand Ronde can utilize amateur radio operators for emergency communication. Radio communication resources will provide mutual aid assistance and support when and where it is needed.

“The tribes can also, for the first time, request federal government aid through the disaster declaration process.

“Warm Springs also has a ham radio operation for emergency use,” said Baxter. “Radio communication resources will provide mutual aid assistance and support when and where it is needed.”

West Valley Fire District volunteers and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members practice loading and unloading cargo from a Pacific Northwest helicopter rescue team.

“The mutual aid agreement is support for the initial response team. The need for immediate response, organization and coordination takes its toll on the first responders.”

“We can ask the Tribal Incident Management Teams (IMT) to help the Grand Ronde Incident Section Chief for rescue and relief,” said Baxter.

Baxter sums up the goal of the mutual aid, the joint training with the other tribal nations, local communities, and the government saying, “Alone, we would fail. Together: that’s the way to succeed.”

FEMA then followed up with many all-district meetings that explored the impact from future disasters. Rebuilding to a catastrophic disaster like a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. He added; “This is a unique effort for the tribes to come together and evaluate all the systems and unique needs during a disaster.”

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Kingsley Field Eagle Driver crosses 2,000 hour mark

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

KUOPIO, Finland — The flight from Klamath Falls to Kuopio, Finland, is nearly 5,000 miles as the crow flies, and ferrying five F-15 aircraft took roughly 12 hours. Incidentally, those flying hours meant one pilot crossed the 2,000 mark on his next sortie.

Maj. Michael Hiatt began flying the F-15 some 13 years ago and he summed up the experience saying, “2,000 hours was big as a personal goal,” and after a long pause he laughs and says, “But really it just means that I’m old.”

He goes on to say that really the mark that would mean much more to him is the 3,000 hour mark, but he also concedes that it’s rare for a pilot to hit that number. The last pilot at the 173rd Fighter Wing to reach that threshold was Col. Wes French, who retired in April after 24 years of service. According to Tech. Sgt.

Lisa Tysor, who tracks flying hours for the pilots, Col. Jeffrey Edwards, 173rd Operations Group commander, currently holds the wing’s highest total hours at 2,960 and will likely be the next to reach the 3,000-hour mark.

But looking back Hiatt has many fond memories, “One of the coolest things was when I became a two-ship flight lead when I was still a lieutenant and then taking another lieutenant out on a flight; so two lieutenants and two thirty-million dollar aircraft,” said Hiatt. “That was some fun.”

He says the part of his career that he likes the best is, “just getting to fly with a bunch of good friends, guys I’ve known since college.”

When he climbed down to the tarmac, May 10, the pilots on the deployment gathered around for a group photo.

“It was a fun mission to get 2,000 on, [Maj. Vanbragt] did a good job leading the mission and we did some good work.” Upon being asked specifically Hiatt did admit that his team won the scenario.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Michael Hiatt (center), an instructor pilot at the 173rd Fighter Wing in Klamath Falls, Ore., stands with his fellow pilots immediately after crossing the 2,000 hour mark in the F-15 Eagle while deployed to Kuopio, Finland, May 10, 2016. The wing conducted training operations with partner nation Finland over two weeks in early May as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

Above: Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers from the 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion (BEB), 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, prepare to execute an equipment breach during training on April 9, at Camp Rilea near Warrenton, Oregon. The equipment breach was just one of several urban breaching methods that the Soldiers trained on during the day-long training event.

Right: Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers from Alpha and Bravo Companies, 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion (BEB), 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, practice working as a stack team in preparation for a training demolition breach on April 9, at Camp Rilea near Warrenton, Oregon. Soldiers were able to experience multiple urban breach methods during the day-long training event.
Oregon Air National Guard pilot celebrates heritage

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

PORTLAND, Oregon – Growing up in Hawaii, Lt. Col. Nick Rutgers discovered, like most children, the deeper meaning of “The Aloha Spirit” – the gift of interacting in the natural world with boundless possibilities. This aptitude only nurtured his biggest childhood dream to a grander significance.

“I can’t remember wanting to do anything else besides being a pilot and if given the chance, to fly fighter jets,” said Rutgers.

Prior to graduating from high school, Rutgers had already obtained his private pilot’s license and got his first taste of military life at Camp Pendleton, California, with the Marine Corps “Devil Pups” program. The summer youth camp allows teenagers a chance to gain insight into the military lifestyle while learning citizenship skills in personal responsibility, self-respect and other valuable life experiences.

“The program definitely got me ready and prepared me for the harsh realities I faced prior to going to the Air Force Academy,” he recalled with a laugh. “It clearly was a boarding experience.”

Yet Rutgers’ path toward becoming a military pilot did not inevitably begin at Camp Pendleton or the Air Force Academy. His family lineage is rich in service and sacrifice. Rutgers’ grandfather fought in World War II as a member of the Marine Corps, and his father with the Army in Vietnam and later serving in the Hawaii National Guard. The love of flying and sense of service can be traced even further back, nearly 100 years ago when his great-grandfather, James Norman Hall, flew with the Lafayette Escadrille during World War I.

The Lafayette Escadrille was an all-volunteer squadron of American Airmen who fought with France prior to the U.S. entry in World War I. In total, more than 200 Americans were part of the squadron, and 68 members died in battle. On April 20, Rutgers traveled to Paris to take part in the 100th Anniversary ceremony of the Lafayette Escadrille and pay homage to those, like his great-grandfather, who helped build and maintain the nearly 235-year France-American alliance.

The significance of the moment is not lost on Rutgers. During his childhood he was able to hear and read the accounts of James Norman Hall’s flying exploits and service with the British military when World War I broke out in 1914. After returning to the United States, Hall published his first book in 1916, “Kitchener’s Mob,” detailing his experience, and later returning that year to Europe on assignment with Atlantic Monthly Magazine. It was during his writing and coverage of the Lafayette Escadrille where Hall found himself joining the fight once again, volunteering with the American flying squadron.

“I grew up with not only the stories of my great-grandfather’s war experience but was able to read an excessive amount of his personal accounts during the First World War,” Rutgers said. “The details and richness to his written work in itself made a lasting impression on me early in my life.”

Toward the end of World War I, Hall, then a captain in the Army Air Service, was shot down and became a Prisoner of War (POW) in Germany. While being held as a POW, Hall met fellow American pilot and writer Charles Nordhoff. The two would become life-long friends and writing collaborators, publishing multiple books together to include notable literary works such as “Mutiny on the Bounty” and “The Bounty.”

“My great-grandfather served the final months of the war as a POW and when the Armistice was signed, had to figure out how to get home,” Rutgers explained as he recalled accounts of his great-grandfather’s release from captivity. “He traveled to Switzerland then France, doing so at times on the good will of others, to eventually get home.”

As the conclusion of the war, Hall was ultimately awarded the American Distinguished Service Cross and most notably, the French Légion d’Honneur.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Nicholas Rutgers, assigned to the 142nd Fighter Wing, flew to France to take part in the 100th Anniversary of the Lafayette Escadrille, a squadron of American volunteers in which his great-father, James Normal Hall, was a member.

Rutgers represented not only the direct lineage and heritage of the Lafayette Escadrille during the commemoration ceremony in France, but also in the larger ongoing commitment America has to other European partnerships.

Last summer, Rutgers deployed to Romania and Hungary as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve, training and flying with NATO partners while embracing the cultural relevance of other European nations. During that deployment, he and other members of the Oregon Air National Guard’s 142nd Fighter Wing founded a way to give back to others in the community while collecting items for a local orphanage. They donated and delivered everything from basic clothing items to new shoes for almost every child at the orphanage, which allowed the Oregon Guardsmen to spend a day hosting an American-style barbecue.

“The crux of these types of deployments comes down to nurturing and developing partnerships, and are invaluable to supporting our endeavors overseas and around the world,” he said.

Rutgers emphasized how current events in Europe are vital to maintaining these partnerships when it comes to global security. As the current operations officer for the 123rd Fighter Squadron with the 142nd Fighter Wing, his job is to maintain the combat capabilities and proficiencies of the unit. He also is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force’s Weapons School and has participated in Exercice Red Flag, which allows U.S. and numerous NATO air forces to train together under realistic air combat situations.

Rutgers said it is important for many reasons to be involved with the anniversary of the Lafayette Escadrille, “because it allows us to pause and reflect on all of the service men that were involved and lives that were lost from WWI to current incidents in Europe.”

“By participating in events like the commemoration it helps fosters relationships and allows our nations the opportunity to strengthen our alliances, while engaging in our shared issues such as global terrorism,” he said.

When he arrived in Paris for the rededication of the memorial to the Lafayette Escadrille, Rutgers, in a greater sense came full circle, to honor his great-grandfather’s legacy, and thus; writing another chapter in his family’s unique shared allegiance with America’s allies in France.
World War II thrust a number of seminal changes upon the United States. Its economy leapt from the stagnation of the Great Depression to a wartime footing, fighting to produce adequate military hardware to win the war. Its citizenry signed up for the draft in droves, and women flocked to roles in factories, in military training capacities, and in the medical field. The sea of change stretched from coast to coast and a small, loggied community in Southern Oregon was caught in the swirl.

Klamath Falls, Oregon, found itself at the center of an effort to produce a large number of fighter pilots in close proximity to the Pacific Theater. Thus, the Department of the Navy gave birth to Klamath Naval Air Station in 1942. The hurry was so great the DOD actually shipped in the largest building, the base hangar, from Alaska. In short order, the fill was sorted from the fill and sorted from nearby ranges and target areas getting young men a degree of training off to near foreign shores, and other replacements are because a unit passed or not than there really wasn’t an event to turn operations over to a leaner organization, it made sense to turn the operations over to a leaner organization, and the Oregon Air National Guard began operations at Klamath Field.

"The first presence was in 1971, it was the 104th Control Squadron, basically what we call ‘Shadow Control’ today,” Bartholomew said. “In 1981, the Air Force alert detachment left and turned everything over to the Oregon Air Guard.” A number of retired Guardsmen who are still involved at Kingsley Field remember this time. Former base commander, Retired Col. Billy Cox, remembers his initial visits to the base in the late 1970s when it was with the 114th Tactical Fighter Wing out of Portland, Oregon. "It looked a lot like you might imagine after the busiest years of the base, with many buildings standing vacant and most of the construction looked like it was from the World War II era," he said. "Retired Lt. Col. Bill Morris, former base commander, remembers driving a bobcat tractor to remove years of accumulated bird droppings from the main hangar floor so it could house aircraft again.

Once again Kingsley’s good flying weather and proximity to large flying ranges pressed the little-used buildings back into service. In 1982, the U.S. Air Force announced the creation of an air defense schoolhouse for F-4 Phantoms at Kingsley Field, and the 114th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron was formed.

Cox sees the foundation of today’s successful training mission in those early years as a combination of a supportive community, a strong work ethic and the quality of training provided. "On a check ride for a student, if there was any question of whether they passed or not there really wasn’t a question, and we made real sure they got the chance to do it again," Cox said.

Though the operation was challenging, it wasn’t large, consisting of three instructor pilots and four F-4 Phantom aircraft. In 1983, eleven brand new F-4 pilots graduated. Through the ensuing years that mission has grown. In 1988, the 114th TFTS transitioned to the F-16 airframe and boasted a complement of 18 aircraft. As the growth continued, the unit at Kingsley Field earned a new designation – the 173rd Fighter Wing was activated June 27, 1996. This transition brought the unit in line with other stand-alone Air National Guard flying units. In an article from the local newspaper, then base commander, Cox, was quoted saying, “I think our future is bright and strong.”

Nearly ten years after converting to the F-16 the wing moved into the air superiority business and began training F-15C pilots. In 2011, this small, southern Oregon base became the sole schoolhouse for F-15C training, as Tyndall Air Force Base converted to the F-22. As a part of that progress the 173rd Fighter Wing has also added a detachment of active duty Airmen to bolster throughput of pilots. Today, the ramp holds 12 F-15 Eagles and flies more than 5,000 hours in a given year – one of the highest tallies for a fighter unit in the Air National Guard.