Citizen Soldiers, Airmen volunteer to battle wildfires

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers from the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team watch a controlled burn during a field training exercise at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, Salem, Oregon, August 28, 2017. The exercise was part of their four-day training certification before being dispatched to fires across the state. The group received training on firefighting equipment, deploying fire shelters, how to assess and mitigate hot spots, protecting structures and understanding fire behavior.

Oregon Governor Kate Brown declared a state of emergency, Aug. 2, 2017, as wildfire danger increased across the state. According to the Incident Information System website, 28 wild land fires have burned approximately 652,000 acres in Oregon as of mid-September 2017.

The Oregon National Guard (ORNG) mobilized personnel and equipment in accordance with Operation Plan Smokey, including aviation assets, firefighting troops, and support personnel (drivers, fuelers, mechanics, medics). Operation Plan Smokey is an existing agreement between the ORNG and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) stipulating how Oregon Guard assets can be used to assist with wild land firefighting efforts. Fire managers and incident commanders determine the location where ORNG personnel are deployed based on fire conditions and need for resources and support.

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, were the first group to be activated, August 4, 2017. They provided Bambi bucket water drops on the Whitewater Fire, near Detroit, Oregon, using two CH-47F Chinook helicopters.

As fires grew in Southern Oregon, the Chinooks were later re-assigned to the Chetco Bar Fire near Brookings. By late September, each Chinook had dropped an Olympic-sized swimming pool of water on the fires. The Washington Army National Guard also provided a UH-60L Black Hawk helicopter to assist with Bambi bucket drops. In total, the National Guard dropped more than 1.3 million gallons of water on Oregon’s wildfires.

By the second week in August, a series of lightning strikes sparked new fires and ODF called upon the Oregon Guard to provide firefighting ground crews. Oregon Guardsmen who were already trained and certified during the 2015 wildfire season were called up first. A team of more than 100 Soldiers and Airmen, known as NG-1, from across the state reported to the Oregon Department of Public Safety, Standards and Training (DPSST) in Salem, for refresher training before deploying out to the High Cascades Complex Fire near Crater Lake.

“We are excited to be serving as firefighters and working with other agencies to assist our great state,” said Oregon Air National Guard Lt. Col. Martin Balakas, 173rd Fighter Wing Logistics Readiness Squadron commander, who led the NG-1 group. “It’s hot, it’s sweaty, it’s smoky, but it’s an awesome and rewarding experience.”

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with Company G, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment, were also on standby in Salem with HH-60M Black Hawk medical evacuation helicopters. The unit was called...
In Oregon’s time of need

Oregon Citizen Soldiers and Airmen,

Always Ready, Always There - the National Guard motto has special meaning this year. I ask that you reflect upon what this motto means to us as our state looks to us for support. A recent fire update brief to the governor was very sobering. Due to the size of the forest fires across the state, we learned that the Oregon Department of Forestry is projecting that the fire season may go well into October, when we get our first rains.

The Oregon National Guard has already called up men and women under Operation Plan Smokey, and I believe there is a very good chance that we will see a request from the state for more volunteers.

On top of this, Hurricanes Harvey and Irma wreaked havoc in Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. Oregon has already sent a contingent from the 125th Special Tactics Squadron to Texas and Florida. Other states are mobilizing resources daily to help the citizens of Texas, Louisiana and Florida with numbers running in the thousands.

My hope is that we will fill potential firefighting and other requests for domestic support with volunteers. To that end, I have asked our senior leaders to lean forward and reach out to you to develop lists of Soldiers and Airmen able to support this effort. My desire is to do our part to impact the outcome of our ongoing missions and personal lives through volunteerism. There is never a good time for a no-notice mobilization, but I hope you recognize the dire situation that our state is facing, and find a way to voluntarily support the state response if we are called upon.

Thank you.

I’m proud to announce the Oregon National Guard Chiefs Advisory Council Scholarship winners for 2017. Kayla Scott, dependent of Master Sgt. Michael Scott of the 173rd Maintenance Squadron, Kingsley Field, with studies in Nuclear Medicine Technology at the Oregon Institute of Technology, and Senior Airman Taylor Ingersoll, of the 116th Air Control Squadron, Camp Rilea, with studies in Associates of Arts Oregon Transfer Degree at University of Oregon.

The Oregon ANG Chiefs Advisory Council is a team comprised of all chief master sergeants who serve as an advisory body to the Oregon National Guard chain of command and responsibility, provides leadership input, helps resolve enlisted issues and concerns and represents the enlisted views and interests across the state.

In 2006, the council established an annual scholarship provide financial support to Oregon Air National Guard Enlisted Personnel and their Families. Applicants must be affiliated with the Oregon ANG as either a current member or dependent and have a GPA of 2.0 or above. The scholarship can be used for undergraduate education or technical training school, and the funds are paid directly to the educational institution for tuition and books only. Each Scholarship Award is for $1000 per category.

For more information on when and how to apply, please see either your section / group chief or wing command chief.

Photo by Spc. 1st Class April Davis, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Major General Michael E. Stencil, Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard

Chief Master Sgt. Ulana M. Cole
State Command Chief, Oregon Air National Guard

Chief Master Sgt. Scot Guthrie
With A Company, 1st Battalion, 188th Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPBST) in Salem, Oregon, August 28, 2017. Guthrie, of Brookings, Oregon, volunteered for firefighting duty even though he and his family were already evacuated from their home due to the Chetco Bar Fire. Guthrie said he wanted to do his part to help put the fire out for the sake of his family and community.

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New commanders for Oregon National Guard units

Brig. Gen. William J. Edwards, commander, Oregon Army National Guard, passes the 249th Regional Training Institute colors to Lt. Col. Demian W. San Miguel, incoming commander, at a change of command ceremony at Camp Umatilla, Umatilla Depot, Hermiston, Oregon, May 6, 2017. The RTI provides advanced individual and leadership training, and is the only certified U.S. Army infantry training academy west of the Mississippi River in the continental United States.


(Right) Lt. Col. Eric J. Riley, incoming commander of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, receives the brigade colors during a change of command ceremony, April 1, 2017, at the 41st Infantry Division Armed Forces Reserve Center, Camp Withycombe, Clackamas, Oregon. The 41st Inf. Bde. Combat Team races its lineage to the 41st Div. which formed in 1917 and served in World Wars I and II. Known as the Sunset Division, their patch symbolizes the sun setting over the Pacific Ocean.


Joint training supports local emergency response

NEWPORT, Oregon - Service members from the U.S. Navy’s Third Fleet, and the Oregon and Washington Military Departments trained on providing support to civilian authorities on the Oregon coast, July 31, 2017.

The Navy’s USS Anchorage deployed an amphibious landing craft to navigate into Yaquina Bay, with the assistance of a 47-foot motor lifeboat from U.S. Coast Guard Station Yaquina Bay, and practiced loading and unloading vehicles and equipment.

The City of Newport along with the Military Departments of Oregon and Washington provided emergency vehicles for the exercise.

Washington Military Department personnel traveled onboard the Anchorage and completed the exercise in Grays Harbor, Washington, Aug. 1.

The joint training demonstration simulated a local government requesting equipment to remove debris and clear roads following a disaster. Amateur radio operators relayed the request to Lincoln County and then to the state officials through the Oregon Office of Emergency Management.

Lincoln County and the Washington National Guard officials also rehearsed loading their equipment onto the landing craft to simulate moving needed assets throughout multiple disaster locations.

The scenario was inspired by the after action review process following the Cascadia Rising multi-state exercise conducted in June 2016. The exercise identified the need to simulate domestic maritime support for all levels of governmental agencies.

The demonstration showcased capabilities at all levels of government to order, distribute and receive emergency resources along the coastline during a catastrophic disaster response.

The roadway leading from Carl Street to the alert facility had no formal designation, so naming the road used on a regular basis and critical to the daily mission was a perfect choice. Col. Sean Sullivan, commander, 142nd FW Practice exercise Operations Group was a roommate and friend of Young’s during his senior year at Oregon State University. Both finished Reserve Officers’ Training Corps before joining the Air Force’s active-duty ranks, and then eventually returning to Oregon and flying with the Air National Guard.

Although it has been a decade since his passing, many co-workers who served with Young, wanted to honor him with a daily reminder of his sacrifices.

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Soldiers from across Oregon compete to be named Best Warrior

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Tiffany Markham, 1249th Engineer Battalion, 82nd Brigade Troop Command, finishes the last stretch of her 12-mile ruck march along the Pacific Ocean as the sun comes up at Fort Stevens State Park, near Warrenton, Oregon. The 12-mile ruck march is just one of many events that Soldiers complete during the more than two day competition. (Photo by Capt. Leslie Reed, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs)

An Oregon Army National Guard Soldier proceeds through a combination of thick smoke, tear gas and razor wire, as a cadre member looks on, during Oregon’s 2017 Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea, Oregon, August 24. Moorehead competed against six other noncommissioned officers from across Oregon to earn the title of NCO of the Year. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs)

(Obove) Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Jordan Rott, Joint Force Headquarters, races against other competitors through the Pacific Ocean to shore during Oregon’s 2017 Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea, Oregon, August 26. The Soldiers were competing for the titles of Soldier and NCO of the Year and the opportunity to represent Oregon at the regional competition. Soldiers are tested over multiple days on their warrior tasks and skills and are awarded points for their performance on each task. (Photo by Capt. Leslie Reed, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs)

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Chais Fox, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, crawls through an obstacle during the 2017 Oregon Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea, Oregon, August 25. Fifteen competitors from Oregon Army National Guard units across the state were tested on physically and mentally demanding warrior tasks over a grueling three-day period to determine the Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs)

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Chais Fox, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, emerges from the Pacific Ocean after high-crawling through the surf in full battle gear for the Omaha Beach event during the 2017 Oregon Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea, Oregon, August 26. Once on shore, the competitors had to carry two cement-filled ammunition canisters to the top of a steep sand dune and then race back down to the finish line. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs)

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Blake Snyder, with Company D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, fires a M9 pistol during the stress-shoot portion of the 2017 Oregon Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea, Oregon, August 25. The competitors were timed on completing three firing sequences while enduring stressful distractions such as smoke, sirens, yelling and evacuating a simulated casualty. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs)

Oregon Army National Guard Pfc. Blake Snyder, with Company D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, fires a M9 pistol during the stress-shoot portion of the 2017 Oregon Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea, Oregon, August 25. The competitors were timed on completing three firing sequences while enduring stressful distractions such as smoke, sirens, yelling and evacuating a simulated casualty. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs)

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Dane Moorehead (center), with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, 82nd Brigade, and other Soldiers complete an exam and essay while they wait to face a board of sergeants major who will test their Army knowledge during the 2017 Oregon Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea, Oregon, August 24. Moorehead competed against six other noncommissioned officers from across Oregon to earn the title of NCO of the Year. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs)

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. 1248th Engineer Battalion, 82nd Brigade Troop Command, finishes the last stretch of her 12-mile ruck march along the Pacific Ocean as the sun comes up at Fort Stevens State Park, near Warrenton, Oregon. The 12-mile ruck march is just one of many events that Soldiers complete during the more than two day competition. (Photo by Capt. Leslie Reed, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs)

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OREGON GUARD FIRST IN ARMY’S NET ZERO ENERGY PILOT PROGRAM

SALEM, Oregon — As part of the Oregon Army National Guard’s ongoing facility replacement and renovations, the Oregon Military Department is adding photovoltaic, or solar, systems to its installations.

The Roseburg Readiness Center, a 20,000-square-foot facility in Roseburg, Oregon, is the first structure to add solar panels to become an electric net zero facility. The facility is home to Company C, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

“This is among several installations in Oregon that have been renovated under the Armory Service Life-Extension Program,” said Col. Kenneth Safe, construction and facilities management officer, Oregon National Guard. “This electric net zero facility is a significant achievement for the Army Net Zero Initiative. Oregon is the only National Guard state that is part of the Army’s Net Zero energy pilot program.”

The building received multi-faceted improvements before the solar panels were added.

“The remodel project brought the building up to current seismic and building codes, remodeled spaces and finished in the facility to better meet the needs of the tenants,” said Mark Williams, project manager, Oregon Military Department (OMD). “The new roof, replaced as part of the seismic upgrade, was intentionally designed for the follow-on PV system.”

Future renovations, such as Oregon’s Dallas Readiness Center will also include sufficient solar panels to make the facility electric net zero.

“In almost all remodel cases, solar installs will be a part of a larger component,” said Roy Swafford, director of installations, OMD.

“The Energy Trust of Oregon collaborated with OMD and SOLARC Engineering and Energy Architectural Consulting to make sure we had the right sizing, and the elements of work built to design,” said Williams. “We made changes that were more cost effective with the advice received from Energy Trust.”

The energy efficient goal of the renovations of Oregon Guard installations is to minimize energy consumption to the point where the building could be retrofitted with a photovoltaic system and achieve Net Zero energy status. Net Zero is balancing energy production with energy use through net metering: the amount used is equal to the energy production with energy use through the building, said Safe.

“Net metering is an agreement with public building construction costs on green entities spend one-and-a-half percent of their budget on sustainability initiatives,” said Williams.

“Net Zero is a component of the overall energy technology, such as solar,” said Mark Williams, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oregon. “Energy Trust of Oregon also provided incentive funds for using energy efficient measures.”

The project was funded through the National Guard Bureau’s energy modernization funds. Energy Trust of Oregon also provided incentive funds for using energy efficient measures.

Invaders are stationed on an outside wall to change the solar energy into electricity. Inverters take the DC energy from the panels and change it to the AC usable side of the grid,” said Manus. The record-breaking 98 percent efficiency allows more energy production for an improved return on investment. These inverters also have sophisticated, digital control technology to achieve superior solar power harvesting that optimizes the performance of each PV module.

“An overview of the system’s performance, current power, and energy production are shown on the monitor,” said Robert Johnson, a supervising electrician for Sunlight Solar. “It also shows the environmental benefits, displays the weather for three days, and can be remotely accessed.”

“I am sure we will be looking at the benefits of going to solar in the future,” Col. Kenneth Safe, construction and facilities management officer, Oregon National Guard.

“Net Zero is a component of the overall energy technology, such as solar,” said Mark Williams, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oregon.

“Energy Trust of Oregon also provided incentive funds for using energy efficient measures.”

The Roseburg Readiness Center, a 20,000-square-foot facility in Roseburg, Oregon, is the first Oregon Army National Guard armory renovation to add photovoltaic panels to increase energy efficiency. The facility is home to Company C, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, part of Oregon’s 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Oregon is the only state in the National Guard that is part of the Army’s Net Zero Energy pilot program.

Efficient Design(SEED) requirements. In the case of Roseburg, the PV array allowed OMD to significantly exceed the minimum SEED requirements as stated in the final analysis.

SEED requires all state facilities to exceed the energy performance of the Oregon State Building Code by at least 20 percent,” said Williams.

The OMD’s energy efficiency goal is to significantly exceed the minimum SEED requirements. The entire building is subjected to an extensive energy-driven remodel effort on the building envelope, lighting, the HVAC system and domestic hot water heating system.

“This project achieved an astounding 70 percent energy savings while simultaneously greatly improving the conditioned space throughout the building,” said Safe.

“Oregon state law requires that public entities spend one-and-a-half percent of public building construction costs on green energy technology, such as solar,” said Williams.

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Other emergency preparedness upgrades include a potable well, a generator, storm water management, changes in the parking area, and adding a loop road to be used as a staging area for emergency equipment and supplies.

“Net Zero is a component of the overall concept of the organization,” said Swafford. “We are also considering wind and wave energy for future options.”

142nd Force Support Squadron conducts wing readiness training

Robert Johnson (left) explains the differences between the newly installed photovoltaic system and one previously installed in 2015 to the operations facilities specialists, James Odan (second from left) and Steven Roche (far right), and Oregon Military Department project managers, Eric Manus (center) and Mark Williams, at the Roseburg Readiness Center, Roseburg, Oregon, Aug. 30, 2017.
Air Guardsman retires after nearly 50 years service

Story and photos by
Senior Airman Riley Johnson
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon – Col. (Dr.) Daniel M. Skotte, commander, 146th Medical Group, retired from the Air National Guard as potentially the longest-serving member from the National Guard and the United States Air Force, at Kingsley Field here, June 3, 2017.

During the ceremony he recounted that it all began as a seven-year-old gopher hunter in Minnesota.

“When I looked up to the sky and saw those jets, I thought maybe I could give up gopher hunting so I could fly a fighter jet,” he said.

Skotte joined the community of Airmen at the age of 17, when he arrived at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas for Basic Military Training in June, 1967. In 1968 he attended United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School and then the United States Air Force Academy where he earned a degree and commissioned in 1972.

While at the Academy his stature allowed him to play football, but unfortunately this kept him from the cockpit as he was too tall for the airframes of that time. He mentioned this frustratingly derailed his plans to fly.

“At this point I was a morale case and I would have separated from the Air Force if I could,” he said.

Instead, his career took him to El Segundo, California where he served in the Space and Missile Systems Organization. Skotte noted that his perspective on his career shifted and he happily stepped into his new role.

He went on to say that in one of life’s surprising twists, he became an osteopathic physician. This in turn led him to the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field in 1995, where he became a flight surgeon.

Over the ensuing years he flew in the back seat and attained more than 900 hours in the F-15D Eagle, F-16 Falcon, and C-130 Hercules. His duties took him to places like Iraq, New Guinea, Kuwait, Poland and Finland, and to various stations in the United States.

His last duty station was at Channel Islands, California where he served as the 146th Airlift Wing Medical Group Commander. However, he chose to conduct his retirement ceremony in Oregon to commemorate an association spanning more than 20 years.

Skotte’s years in service span from June of 1967 to June of 2017; records show him a few days short of 50 years of service. Efforts are still underway to determine if he was indeed the longest serving Airman in the history of either the U.S. Air Force or the Air National Guard.

Guardians develop and maintain professional skills

Click to read more stories about the Oregon Army National Guard!

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Alise VanderMolen
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

HEMISTON, Oregon – Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, and 141st Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, conducted their annual training here and Yakima Training Center, Washington, July 12 through 28, 2017.

Soldiers trained in weaponry drills and live-fire exercises, medical care and instruction, and logistics.

“We are here to meet and beat training requirements and standards,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Geoffrey Miotke, senior enlisted advisor, 1st Bn. “The more specialty training we do, the better we become.”

For Citizen Soldiers, readiness is all about training. Soldiers participated in 24-hour operations including mortar and sniper ranges in Yakima, as well as short-range marksmanship on the ranges at Umatilla.

“We are conducting ambushes and raids,” said Staff Sgt. Steven Luthi, an infantryman, with 1st Bn. “We have trained on individual and squad tactics throughout the year and now we are working at the platoon-level and team-level with live ammunition while on the firing range.”

Leaders demonstrated the series of react-to-contact scenarios for Soldiers to work through in order to improve familiarity with specific types of shooting postures and obstacles.

“Team cohesion and communication is the focus of this drill,” said Spc. Dustin Hagglund, an infantryman also with 1st Bn. “We are conducting short-range marksmanship and communicating what we are doing while moving, bounding from behind cover and in the open.”

Training with live ammunition while moving and reacting to fire, reloading, suppressing fire, and communicating clearly are issues that arise when there is increased tension and anxiety in a fighting environment.

“It is the reinforcement of infantry tactics of using live fire and the stress that is connected with it,” said Capt. Jeremy Wellman, physician assistant with Company H, 141st Bde. Spt. Bn. “We have 16 medics on the ground divided between Yakima and Umatilla to facilitate training and support.”

During the training, mechanics maintained all the vehicles, providing needed services and repairs.

“Right now, we are looking for the source of a leak on a truck,” said Spc. Amar Pritnow, a wheeled-vehicle mechanic, with Co. H. “We have been doing many services and technical inspections on our vehicles.”

Military training and vehicle maintenance requires maintaining Soldiers as well. Culinary specialists provide the nourishment Soldiers need to be able to complete the tasks assigned, setting up a self-contained field kitchen to serve meals made from scratch, hot off the stove.

“We are serving about 300 Soldiers during this training,” said Spc. Matthew StalLoop, a culinary specialist with Co. H. Mobile field kitchens have the ability to provide fresh meals for up to 800 Soldiers - a brigade-sized element. The culinary specialists from Co. H also provide support to units every other drill weekend and at the brigade-level, training rotations such as Fort Irwin and Camp Roberts, California.

Camaraderie, working together and cross training are common denominators during annual training. Cooks satisfy hunger pans. Medics provide combat lifesaver classes, with mechanics stepping in and becoming casualties for the medics
Continued from Page 1

July 20, 2017, the Oregon National Guard activated 370 soldiers and airmen to support the Whitewater Fire, a large wildfire burning in Jackson County.

The fire started on August 4, 2017, just two days following an emergency declaration order. It grew rapidly and became one of the largest wildfires to occur in Oregon in recent years.

The wildfire season was ongoing, and with the summer months approaching, the State of Oregon had to be prepared for such incidents. The Oregon National Guard continued to provide support and resources to help protect the state and its residents.

The Guardsmen were trained and equipped to handle such incidents and were ready to respond to any emergencies that may arise. They worked closely with local and state authorities to ensure that the community was adequately prepared and protected.

The Guardsmen were praised for their dedication and outstanding job at working together to seamlessly mesh together and do an outstanding job.

The senior leadership and fellow Oregonians have been the most rewarding aspect of this operation. The team at the Cheyenne Fire has been an exceptional example of selfless civil support.

The Guard and the citizens work closely together and fight harder for our home than anyone else.

The Guardsmen and Airmen have been instrumental in providing support and resources during the wildfire season, helping to protect the state and its residents.

The Oregon National Guard and other federal and state agencies have been working tirelessly to contain the fires and fight the fires.

The Guardsmen and Airmen have been trained and equipped to handle such incidents and were ready to respond to any emergencies that may arise.

The Guardsmen were praised for their dedication and outstanding job at working together to seamlessly mesh together and do an outstanding job.
Oregon Airmen were deployed to Southeast Texas during Hurricane Harvey to provide critical relief to the areas. The teams utilized the Android Tactical Assault Kit system, which is generally used to track forces during military operations. Intelligence analysts worked remotely from Kentucky, Ohio and Florida, screen information found on social media platforms and smartphone applications and used their expertise to connect potential rescues with special tactics capabilities.

In the special tactics operation center, the teams utilize the Android Tactical Assault Kit system, which is generally used to track forces during military operations. Intelligence analysts working remotely from Kentucky, Ohio and Florida, screen information found on social media platforms and smartphone applications and used their expertise to connect potential rescues with special tactics capabilities.

For instance, individuals in distress can update a phone application with their location and the situations they find themselves in. The intelligence team screens the information and sends the information to the Airmen in real time.

In the area we’re working in is completely inundated with hundreds, if not thousands, of requests for rescue,” said Tech. Sgt. Brian Davis, an intelligence analyst with the 123rd STS. “Since we’re such a small team with a specialized skill set, we find the people who need specialized rescues.”

Davis recalled a certain post where an elderly couple was trapped in an attic due to flooding, to which the special tactics teams utilized confined space techniques.

As Hurricane Harvey began to dissolve and make landfall for its second time on Wednesday as a tropical storm, the special tactics teams redeployed east to where the storm expected to make landfall.

While the convoy drove, the intelligence team utilized live traffic cameras, monitored the Texas Department of Travel website for flooded, underwater or impassable roads to make adjustments along their route of travel to reach their target.

The number of rescues total is in the high 200s, but these Airmen are not worried about metrics.

“We try not to get caught up in the numbers, and I told my team before we arrived that our mission is to go to Texas and do the most good by helping as many people as we can,” said Zamora.
Oregon National Guard Master Sgt. Travis McDaniel, a civil engineer assigned to the 142nd Fighter Wing Civil Engineer Squadron and Royal Canadian Air Force Lt. Jordan Vadalaa, a civil engineer assigned to 4 Wing Cold Lake, construct a concrete form to install a new lighting project at the 440th Squadron, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada, July 19, 2017.

The exercise simulated an F-15 crash into the Klamath River and required a dive team, responders at Miller Island during the on-scene portion of the exercise, June 23, 2017.

Incident Commander Richard Fuller, a Kingsley Field firefighter, briefs emergency managers at Miller Island during the on-scene portion of the exercise, June 23, 2017.

The exercise simulated an F-15 crash into the Klamath River and required a dive team, responders at Miller Island during the on-scene portion of the exercise, June 23, 2017.

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30 years of Sentry Eagle

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon — Exercise Sentry Eagle marked the history books for the 30th year since its inception in 1986 with the 2017 iteration of the exercise, July 20 through 23.

Sentry Eagle, a large-force, biennial exercise drew Airmen from around the country from as far away as Virginia and Texas. The Gunfighters from the 149th Fighter Wing in San Antonio, Texas, began flying with the unit one week prior and following the exercise the 162nd Wing remained in Oregon for two more weeks with their F-16 aircraft. Both units used the opportunity to fly combat training missions with the 173rd Fighter Wing F-15 Eagles.

"Sentry Eagle is an opportunity for instructor pilots at Kingsley Field to participate in large-force air-to-air exercises to practice the latest combat techniques and to operate with aircraft across the inventory," said Lt. Col. Jon Vanbragt, the exercise’s project officer. "It’s an opportunity for us to really sharpen our skills.”

During the exercise a myriad aircraft launched, simulating the way an air war would take place. The fighters work as a team to answer the mission by overcoming adversaries like service-specific practices, in the case of the visiting Navy pilots. After each mission, the pilots harvest the greatest value in clarifying communications and learning to function as a cohesive unit, exactly like they would in real-world circumstances, said Col. Jeff Smith, commander, 173rd FW.

Once the exercise began, it was up to Kingsley Field to keep things rolling smoothly. One example of the increased workload is the demand for fuel.

"Usually around 600 to 700 thousand gallons is what we pump in a month and we did that in under a week," said Staff Sgt. Alex Huntsman, the fuels accountant for the logistics and readiness squadron.

What made the 2017 Sentry Eagle unique was the integration of the newest airframe to join the U.S. Air Force inventory — the F-35.

"The 4th-5th generation fighter integration was a true test of our capabilities and the first of its kind and a next generation platform and capability on the ramp here at Kingsley," Vanbragt said.

The logistics to make the exercise a reality can be daunting; the 141st Air Refueling Wing supplied two KC-135 Tankers for the duration of the exercise - the effort to bring it all to fruition began some time ago and involved many hours of work and each iteration of the exercise leaves its mark both on the base and on the local community.

"This community was bursting at the seams with personnel participating in the exercise," said Vanbragt.

All of that translates into positive economic numbers for the city who also benefit from the visitors who come as far away as New Zealand and the Netherlands.

An open house serves as a tool to thank the community of the Klamath Basin for what Smith calls one of the most supportive local communities in all of the Air Guard and the Air Force.

"This community was bursting at the seams with personnel participating in the exercise," said Vanbragt.

4th-generation pilots and 5th-generation interceptors made their way through the skies of Klamath Falls, Ore. in the most complex exercise of its kind.

Despite the speed at which the load teams work, that is not their number one priority.

"There is a lot going on and we train to get the job done correctly and safely first," said Tech. Sgt. Dane Sherrin, a weapons NCO with the 173rd. "Speed comes with consistency and repetition. We try and work fast to get the pilots in the air, but we never want to work so fast that we miss something or take unnecessary risks.”

Sherrin articulates one key principle for avoiding this way, "Our weapons shop is always trying to adhere to the cardinal rule of explosives safety— expose the minimum amount of people to the minimum amount of explosive for the minimum amount of time.”

Over this four-day exercise, weapons crews armed 75 F-15 Eagles from California’s 144th Fighter Wing, and Oregon’s 142nd and 173rd Fighter Wings. That was then followed up with de-arming those same aircraft immediately following their return.

173rd crews keep it safe

An Oregon Air National Guard(ANG) F-15 Eagle from the 173rd Fighter Wing taxa to the runway by a Texas ANG F-16 Fighting Falcon from the 149th Fighter Wing, following a training mission during Sentry Eagle July 19, 2017 at Kingsley Field, Klamath Falls, Ore.

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

Blue Zone improves quality of life at Kingsley Field

An Oregon Air National Guard(ANG) F-15 Eagle from the 173rd Fighter Wing taxis to the runway by a Texas ANG F-16 Fighting Falcon from the 149th Fighter Wing, following a training mission during Sentry Eagle July 19, 2017 at Kingsley Field, Klamath Falls, Ore.

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Riley Johnson
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON -- The Oregon National Guard's 173rd Fighter Wing(FW) achieved the designation as a Blue Zone Approved Worksite during Exercise Sentry Eagle, July 20th, 2017.

To achieve this designation, the team focused on multiple objectives such as designating a space for employees to quietly reflect, publish walking and running routes, and many others.

"Being a Blue Zones Project Approved Worksite means that 173rd Fighter Wing has intentionally prioritized the well-being of its members through the implementation of research-based best practices,” said Jessie Heoctoa, organization lead, Blue Zones Project - Klamath Falls. “The purpose is to create leaders who role-model well-being behaviors and create an environment which supports the health of others. It also means that the organization supports employees in pursuing their purpose and connecting that purpose in the context of their work.”

Following a ribbon cutting ceremony, led by 173rd FW Commander Col. Jeff Smith and Klamath County Commissioner Derrick DeGroot, Airmen from around the base and their families participated in the Sentry Eagle 5K run/walk. Approximately 150 ramblers participated in the race and the overall winner was Assistant Chief Derek Sharrell, Kingsley Field Fire Department, with a time of 16:06.

"We are proud to be one of, if not the first DOD installation approved by the Blue Zones Project," Smith said. "This is a phenomenal milestone for us.”

This event was put together by the 173rd FW Comprehensive Airman Fitness(CAF) Team. CAF is a holistic concept that focuses on taking care of Airmen and their Families by focusing on four different pillars of fitness: mental, social, physical and spiritual. The Blue Zones Approved Worksite designation is the result of the effort the CAF team did over the last few months.

"For you guys to be here is huge, it shows what Smith calls one of the most supportive local communities in all of the Air Guard and the Air Force.

"We could not ask for a better partner than the 173rd Fighter Wing.”

Kingsley Field members compete in the Sentry Eagle 5K run/walk at Kingsley Field, Klamath Falls, Ore., July 20, 2017. The race was also part of the Blue Zones Project ribbon cutting ceremony which designated Kingsley Field as a Blue Zones Project Approved Worksite and was followed by the Sentry Eagle 5K run/walk. The Blue Zones Project encourages changes in communities that lead to healthier options.
PORTLAND, Oregon – Oregon National Guardsmen from across the state were mobilized at the request of Gov. Kate Brown to support the Oregon Office of Emergency Management during the solar eclipse August 19 through 21, 2017. Oregon’s statewide governmental, preparedness, and tourism organizations worked together to ensure that Oregon was ready to accommodate an unprecedented number of Oregonians and visitors, said Brown.

Guardsmen were strategically placed across Oregon in communities across the path of totality to assist with traffic congestion, firefighting, search and rescue, aviation support and medically-trained troops were on standby in case of emergencies.

“This was a once in a lifetime opportunity to see a breathtaking natural phenomenon,” said Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, adjutant general, Oregon National Guard. “Oregon citizen Soldiers and Airmen are pleased to support our communities and fellow state agencies to make sure that everyone had a safe experience during this event.”

Besides some traffic issues, local, state, tribal and federal partners made sure that people had little trouble getting to see the eclipse.

“It was an excellent experience,” said Dave Thompson, Oregon Eclipse Joint Information Center. “We stressed the importance of safe travel, preparing for delays, having adequate supplies and being mindful of fire dangers - and eclipse watchers did just that.”

For the Oregon National Guard, the eclipse was just one of many duties that activated Guardmen have been contributing to.

“The Oregon National Guard is simultaneously supporting our state and nation - both at home and abroad.”

-- Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel

Adjutant General

Oregon National Guard

A delegation of Bangladeshi border guard officers watches the total solar eclipse, during Bengal Guard 2017, an exercise with of the Oregon National Guard’s State Partnership Program, at Camp Rilea, Ore., August 21, 2017. Members of the Oregon and Washington National Guards, U.S. Border Patrol, and U.S. Pacific Command participated in the information exchange to share expertise in border security and counter drug operations. The Oregon National Guard has been partnered with Bangladesh since 2008.

“A deployment of Bangladeshi border guard officers watches the total solar eclipse, during Bengal Guard 2017, an exercise with the Oregon National Guard’s State Partnership Program, at Camp Rilea, Ore., August 21, 2017. Members of the Oregon and Washington National Guards, U.S. Border Patrol, and U.S. Pacific Command participated in the information exchange to share expertise in border security and counter drug operations. The Oregon National Guard has been partnered with Bangladesh since 2008.”

Oregon Guard supports state agencies during solar eclipse

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

New Mexico Guard benefits from brigade reorganization

SALEM, Oregon – The New Mexico Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 200th Infantry Regiment joined the Oregon National Guard’s 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team during the brigade’s reorganization last year.

Since that time, the move has benefited both units, said Maj. Ali Dipour, the battalion operations officer. The two units already have history, including a deployment in 2009.

The relationship has provided new training opportunities for the New Mexico Guardsmen which have been both challenging and beneficial.

“Our Soldiers enjoy great training and this training has become very aggressive now with how we are transitioning into a sustainment readiness function,” said Dipour.

In April the Warfighter Exercise brought Guardsmen from both states together at Camp Ripia, Oregon, and provided the brigade a chance to train for the modern battlefield in a simulated combat environment, but also a chance to develop the partnership under the reorganization.

“The Warfighter Exercise successfully brought our Soldiers together for a large-scale training event,” said Capt. Francisco Cazares, battalion logistics officer. “Warfighter is the start of a new relationship between 1st Bn. and the rest of the 41st IBCT and we’re excited about that,” said Cazares.

The Las Cruces, N.M., battalion brings to the 41st IBCT a culturally diverse and well-trained battalion with more than 700 Soldiers. 1st Bn. is the only infantry battalion in the New Mexico National Guard, and that one of the things they bring to Oregon is all of the training they are able to conduct being located near Fort Bliss, Texas.

“As an infantry battalion we have transportation and the man power, and are the biggest battalion in southern New Mexico,” said Capt. Luis Caloca, assistant battalion operations officer. “The state of New Mexico knows that we are well-trained and dedicated Soldiers.”

The leadership from the two units will continue to work together and to bridge the gap that separates them geographically.

“The communication between New Mexico and Oregon has been great, the 41st leadership and staff have been great,” said Lt. Col. Daniel Habbereiter, the battalion commander. “Both sides have embraced the idea of let’s make this work.”

From left to right: Capt. Francisco Cazares, Lt. Col. Daniel Habbereiter and Capt. Luis Caloca from 1-200th Infantry Battalion from the New Mexico National Guard pause for a photo outside the Las Cruces armory. The 1-200th joined the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat team as a Subordinate unit last year during the brigade’s reorganization.

The Warfighter Exercise successfully brought our Soldiers together for a large-scale training event.”

New Mexico Guard benefits from brigade reorganization

The National Guardmen worked alongside the U.S. Marine Corps in order to share information and tactics for chemical disaster response with their partners in Vietnam’s National Committee for Incident, Disaster Response, and Search and Rescue.

During the training, subject matter experts from Oregon’s CERFP team and VINASARCOM shared concepts and best practices in the medical and chemical triage fields.

“We hope we never actually have to respond to these types of threats, but it’s our mission to train for it, and events like this show aggressors that we have the ability to respond,” said Oregon Air National Guard Lt. Col. Oliver Wisco, commander, medical group, CERFP Detachment 1. “This is expertise that we at the Oregon National Guard have and can share with other services and our state partners.”

A key point for this training is the ability for the troops from both nations to develop professional relationships and to work together as one team during the event of a disaster.

“We’re conducting this combined, joint training here in Vietnam to increase and validate our interoperability with our partners in the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility,” said U.S. Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 4 Christopher Joy, CBRN defense officer, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force. “The interaction that we’ve had with our Vietnamese partners has been absolutely amazing. We may have language barriers, but we all speak CBRNE and that is what is bringing us together and strengthening our partnership.”

The partnership between the Oregon National Guard and VINASARCOM began in 2012 as part of the National Guard Bureau’s State Partnership Program, which pairs states with countries around the world for the purpose of supporting security cooperation between the U.S. and other nations.

The Oregon National Guard is also partnered with Bangladesh, a partnership dating to 2008.

Contingent from Bangladesh border guards visit Oregon


Staff Sgt. Nick Underhill, with the Western Region Counterdrug Training Center, speaks to a delegation of Bangladesh Border Guard officers during Bengal Guard 2017 at Camp Rilea, Ore., August 14, 2017. Members of National Guard, U.S. Border Patrol, and U.S. Pacific Command shared expertise in border security and counter-drug operations. Oregon has been partnered with Bangladesh since 2008.
SALEM, Oregon -- Communicating and working in a combined, joint-service environment can be challenging, especially with NATO counterparts from other countries in a high-intensity environment to accomplish a common goal.

One unit, the Oregon National Guard’s 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, had the opportunity to do just that, putting their media acquisition and relations skills to the test during their annual training.

Eight Soldiers from the unit deployed to eastern Europe in support of the U.S. Army Europe-led exercise Saber Guardian 2017, an annual multinational exercise, which took place in July in numerous locations across Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania and involved more than 20 NATO nations and partners.

Saber Guardian, one of 18 U.S. Army Europe allied and partnered exercises in the Black Sea region, featured a variety of realistic tactical training to convey a strong military partnership across Europe.

“Saber Guardian assures our allies and partners of our commitment to NATO and to the security of Europe to deter aggression of any force that would threaten the values and institution we fight for,” said Maj. Michael Harrison, executive officer, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armor Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

“The greatest lesson we can learn is we are much stronger when we fight as a united force, with our allies and partners, rather than as a unilateral actor.”

This experience is the most realistic way to test our unit’s mobilization readiness, while giving our Soldiers real-world experience to develop their skills and showcase the value of military public affairs, said 1st Sgt. Kevin Hartman, 115th MPAD.

Based out of Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria, the MPAD’s Soldiers manned the Coalition Press Information Center and were responsible for providing photo and video imagery, writing news articles, producing video news packages, working with the local and international press, supporting press engagements with senior leaders, and coordinating public affairs coverage for combined, joint public affairs assets - all of which are part of the unit’s mission.

“We are able to train on the vast majority of our mission essential tasks, while at the same time, contribute to a real-world mission that has strategic and political impacts both in the U.S. and Europe,” said Maj. John Farmer, commander, 115th MPAD.

The unit can divide into teams and provide comprehensive photo and video coverage of events. Soldiers are given the responsibility and expected to be self-sufficient in obtaining pertinent information for their final product. Once product is complete, it is uploaded for distribution to media outlets around the world and for inclusion into the U.S. National Archives.

“When I get to the location in order to meet up with the unit, everyone is so helpful, we all want to provide the best coverage for each unit and their mission,” said Spc. Michael Germundson, a public affairs specialist writer with the unit.

Sgt. Tyler Meister, a public affairs sergeant with the 115th, recalled his favorite event was being able to witness the multinational airborne operation at Bezmer Air Base in Bulgaria, and field video teleconference, which allowed others back in the U.S. to see live, real-time footage of the event.

The training event, Operation Swift Response 17, which is linked to Saber Guardian, included the insertion of more than 500 military paratroopers from both C-130 Hercules and C-17 Globemaster III aircraft. Participating nations in Operation Swift Response included Bulgaria, Canada, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and the U.S.

The MPAD’s Soldiers created more than 15 video products and 60 print products for release through the Defense Video Imagery Distribution System.

“Overseas training opportunities create an even more valuable unit camaraderie and boosts retention,” said Hartman “Our Soldiers are more excited than ever to share the Army’s story with our hometown, national and international news outlets.”

The MPAD is part of the 82nd Brigade’s 821 Troop Command Battalion and is based in Salem, Oregon. The unit and other units from the 82nd Infantry Division trained with multinational paratroopers are deployed via aircraft during Operation Swift Response at Bezmer Airbase, Bulgaria, July 18 during exercise Saber Guardian 17.

1186th Military Police Company trains for Afghanistan

Story and photos by Sgt. Cory Grogan
41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team
Public Affairs

Chapparal, N.M. -- Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers of the 1186th Military Police Company, Salem, Oregon, have been preparing for a nine-month deployment in Afghanistan later this year.

IN U.S. Army photo by Maj. John Farmer, 115th MPAD


in Chapparal, New Mexico, August 2, 2017, in order to prepare for a nine-month protective service detail (PSD) deployment in Afghanistan later this year.

“They’re ready and have already been training together,” said Staff Sgt. Jonathon Carter, a military police observer-controller-trainer. “They came prepared and are doing great.”

The unit has been training for their upcoming mission more than a year to provide security and convoy support for dignitaries and high-ranking officials.

“Most of our Soldiers have trained at the PSD course Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri,” said Sgt. Kenneth Clark, a shift leader with the 1186th. “It’s a three-week course, but now we’re training those who haven’t been.”

The 1186th is the only military police unit in Oregon and many of the Soldiers have been with the unit for some time.

“A lot of the relationships are really close-knit, so it’s a secondary family for a lot of us,” said Clark.

Sgt. Desieree Henrich, a military police Soldier hasn’t been in with the 1186th long, but agreed that it has a special camaraderie. She said it is her first deployment, and even though she is excited and a little nervous, she is confident in the people she is going with. The 1186th commander, Capt. Richard Smith, said he is proud of the character and competence of his unit.

“They consistently adapt and they really do want to do good,” he said. “Even since last year they’ve taken on this mission as a profession, they’ve all done an excellent job gaining understanding of this mission, applying all of their attention to it, and training to the best of their ability.”
French community honors Oregon's 41st Division

“The United States and France have been allies since the beginning of our nation. It’s important that we remember this and keep the ties strong.”

- retired Brig. Gen. Steven R. Beach

Oregon Army Guardsmen present veterans with long-awaited medals


LEBANON, Oregon -- Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers and Oregon Veterans Home residents Krystle Carruthers and her father admire her military awards and medals in a ceremony in Lebanon, Ore., June 10, 2017.

Kevin Dial and Sgt. Maj. Vinnie Jacques presented the framed ribbons and medals to each recipient. Dial and Jacques said that it was a true honor for them to be part of the ceremony.

“I must remember that no one ever wins a military award,” said Dial. “It’s not competition - these medals and awards result from the honorable service of these veterans and their service paved the way for those of us who followed in their steps to serve our country.”