Secretary of the Air Force makes first official visit to PANG

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Secretary of the Air Force visited the Portland Air National Guard Base at the Portland International Airport May 7-8. This was Secretary Michael W. Wynne’s first official trip to Oregon. The visit was a chance to meet the Airmen of the 142nd Fighter Wing and become familiar with unit operations there. Wynne toured facilities, visiting with members of the 142nd Fighter Wing. At the fighter jet alert facility that houses the F-15s and aircrews who stand ready 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, Lt. Col. Jeff Silver, commander of the 142nd Operations Group, detailed how the Airmen at the base ensure the security of the skies of the Pacific Northwest.

Wynne enjoyed seeing the alert facility and learned quite a bit about the unit’s Sovereignty alert mission over the Pacific Northwest, said Silver.

“He was very interested in the weapons and how we deploy the avionics,” Silver said.

Brig. Gen. Daniel O’Hollaren, commander of the Oregon Air National Guard, called Wynne’s visit to PANG a distinct honor. Furthermore, O’Hollaren stressed that the visit was an opportunity to spotlight the full spectrum of capabilities of the ORANG.

“It gave us an absolutely vital audience to present strategic ideas for future missions,” O’Hollaren said.

See O’HOLLAREN on Page 4.

Citizen Soldiers are welcomed home as more prepare to deploy

41st BCT returns while more units plan to deploy

Story by 1st Lt. Stephen Bomar, Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore. - As more than 850 Soldiers returned to Oregon in June from a sixteen-month mobilization in Afghanistan, an estimated 300 Soldiers will be mobilized to Iraq this summer.

Four Oregon Army National Guard units began mobilizing in May to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

More than 20 Soldiers from the 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment of Salem will focus on providing military information to the American public.

Nearly 100 Soldiers with the 224 Engineer Company of Albany will focus on the construction and reconstruction of roads. About 170 to 185 Soldiers with 234 Engineer Company of Warrenton will provide convoy and base security.

An estimated 13 Oregon Soldiers with Alpha 641 Theater Aviation Company (formerly A Co. 249 Avn.) of Salem will fly air operations utilizing the C-23 Sherpa aircraft.

Although there have been individual Guardsmen who have mobilized to Iraq, these are the first units from Oregon to deploy to Iraq since March 2006, when the 367th Maintenance Company of Clackamas demobilized.

Once mobilized, the units will go to specified mobilization stations throughout the country for training before arriving to their final designated stations within Iraq.

The skills Soldiers attain at their mobilization stations are essential to mission success, according to Sgt. 1st Class John Neibert, mobilization plans and operations NCO, who previously deployed to Iraq with 2-162 Infantry Battalion of Eugene.

“Every Soldier that goes to Iraq will tell you that their mission is worthy and just,” said Neibert.

He said being able to assist not only the people of Oregon but also people around the world is an honor.

Although some Soldiers have deployed more than once in the past six years, Oregon has supported more than 7,000 individual Soldiers and Airmen supporting more than 24 separate deployments since September 11, 2001.

Major General Raymond F. Rees, Oregon’s Adjutant General said in an all-volunteer force it is outstanding that we have men and women that are willing to continue to serve their nation in the way it was set forth by our founding fathers.

When the Soldiers from the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team of Tigard complete their mission and return home this summer, their focus will be on reintegration.

For the four units mobilizing, their focus will be on accomplishing their mission just as the units before them have done.

“These are the same guys, when you look back at the history of patriots, who dropped the plow, grabbed the rifle and went,” said Sgt. 1st Class Vince Jacques, senior NCO for the Oregon National Guard Soldier Re-
The Oregon Sentinel

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon National Guard, authorized under the provisions of All-3601. It is designed and published monthly by the Oregon Sentinel and distributed free to members of the Oregon Air and Army National Guard and to other interested persons at their request. Distribution: 12,500. The Oregon Sentinel is distributed electronically via the Internet at http://www.oregon.gov/OMAS/A/P/publications.shtml.

Stories and photos from this page are gladly accepted. We need your input to ensure better coverage.

Guidelines for contributors: Submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain readers of the Oregon Sentinel, including stories about interesting Guard personalities and experiences and expertise, Airmen can make sound decisions – the right decisions.

Enlisted force to shape future of the Oregon Air Guard

The Oregon Sentinel

May 2007

Tell us what you think!

Address your comments, feedback and ideas to:

The Oregon Sentinel

Att’r: Editor

c/o State Affairs Office

P.O. Box 14350

Salem, OR 97309

sentinel-editor@mil.state.or.us

The Oregon Sentinel

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon National Guard, authorized under the provisions of All-3601. It is designed and published monthly by the Oregon Sentinel and distributed free to members of the Oregon Air and Army National Guard and to other interested persons at their request. Distribution: 12,500. The Oregon Sentinel is distributed electronically via the Internet at http://www.oregon.gov/OMAS/A/P/publications.shtml.

Stories and photos from this page are gladly accepted. We need your input to ensure better coverage.

Guidelines for contributors: Submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain readers of the Oregon Sentinel, including stories about interesting Guard personalities and experiences and expertise, Airmen can make sound decisions – the right decisions.

Enlisted force to shape future of the Oregon Air Guard

The Oregon Sentinel

May 2007

Tell us what you think!

Address your comments, feedback and ideas to:

The Oregon Sentinel

Att’r: Editor

c/o State Affairs Office

P.O. Box 14350

Salem, OR 97309

sentinel-editor@mil.state.or.us

The Oregon Sentinel

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon National Guard, authorized under the provisions of All-3601. It is designed and published monthly by the Oregon Sentinel and distributed free to members of the Oregon Air and Army National Guard and to other interested persons at their request. Distribution: 12,500. The Oregon Sentinel is distributed electronically via the Internet at http://www.oregon.gov/OMAS/A/P/publications.shtml.

Stories and photos from this page are gladly accepted. We need your input to ensure better coverage.

Guidelines for contributors: Submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain readers of the Oregon Sentinel, including stories about interesting Guard personalities and experiences and expertise, Airmen can make sound decisions – the right decisions.

Enlisted force to shape future of the Oregon Air Guard

The Oregon Sentinel

May 2007

Tell us what you think!

Address your comments, feedback and ideas to:

The Oregon Sentinel

Att’r: Editor

c/o State Affairs Office

P.O. Box 14350

Salem, OR 97309

sentinel-editor@mil.state.or.us

The Oregon Sentinel

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon National Guard, authorized under the provisions of All-3601. It is designed and published monthly by the Oregon Sentinel and distributed free to members of the Oregon Air and Army National Guard and to other interested persons at their request. Distribution: 12,500. The Oregon Sentinel is distributed electronically via the Internet at http://www.oregon.gov/OMAS/A/P/publications.shtml.

Stories and photos from this page are gladly accepted. We need your input to ensure better coverage.

Guidelines for contributors: Submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain readers of the Oregon Sentinel, including stories about interesting Guard personalities and experiences and expertise, Airmen can make sound decisions – the right decisions.

Enlisted force to shape future of the Oregon Air Guard

The Oregon Sentinel

May 2007

Tell us what you think!

Address your comments, feedback and ideas to:

The Oregon Sentinel

Att’r: Editor

c/o State Affairs Office

P.O. Box 14350

Salem, OR 97309

sentinel-editor@mil.state.or.us

The Oregon Sentinel

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon National Guard, authorized under the provisions of All-3601. It is designed and published monthly by the Oregon Sentinel and distributed free to members of the Oregon Air and Army National Guard and to other interested persons at their request. Distribution: 12,500. The Oregon Sentinel is distributed electronically via the Internet at http://www.oregon.gov/OMAS/A/P/publications.shtml.

Stories and photos from this page are gladly accepted. We need your input to ensure better coverage.

Guidelines for contributors: Submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain readers of the Oregon Sentinel, including stories about interesting Guard personalities and experiences and expertise, Airmen can make sound decisions – the right decisions.

Enlisted force to shape future of the Oregon Air Guard

The Oregon Sentinel

May 2007

Tell us what you think!

Address your comments, feedback and ideas to:

The Oregon Sentinel

Att’r: Editor

c/o State Affairs Office

P.O. Box 14350

Salem, OR 97309

sentinel-editor@mil.state.or.us

The Oregon Sentinel

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon National Guard, authorized under the provisions of All-3601. It is designed and published monthly by the Oregon Sentinel and distributed free to members of the Oregon Air and Army National Guard and to other interested persons at their request. Distribution: 12,500. The Oregon Sentinel is distributed electronically via the Internet at http://www.oregon.gov/OMAS/A/P/publications.shtml.

Stories and photos from this page are gladly accepted. We need your input to ensure better coverage.

Guidelines for contributors: Submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain readers of the Oregon Sentinel, including stories about interesting Guard personalities and experiences and expertise, Airmen can make sound decisions – the right decisions.

Enlisted force to shape future of the Oregon Air Guard

The Oregon Sentinel

May 2007

Tell us what you think!

Address your comments, feedback and ideas to:

The Oregon Sentinel

Att’r: Editor

c/o State Affairs Office

P.O. Box 14350

Salem, OR 97309

sentinel-editor@mil.state.or.us

The Oregon Sentinel

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon National Guard, authorized under the provisions of All-3601. It is designed and published monthly by the Oregon Sentinel and distributed free to members of the Oregon Air and Army National Guard and to other interested persons at their request. Distribution: 12,500. The Oregon Sentinel is distributed electronically via the Internet at http://www.oregon.gov/OMAS/A/P/publications.shtml.

 Stories and photos from this page are gladly accepted. We need your input to ensure better coverage.

Guidelines for contributors: Submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain readers of the Oregon Sentinel, including stories about interesting Guard personalities and experiences and expertise, Airmen can make sound decisions – the right decisions.
Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski, Oregon Senator Ron Wyden and Oregon National Guard Adjutant General Major Raymond F. Rees, listen as Oregon National Guardsmen express their challenges and concerns regarding deployments and reintegration at an open town hall meeting at the Tigard Armory, March 29. Said Rees, "Thirty percent of Soldiers were under-employed or unemployed upon returning from deployment, 238 have gotten jobs through our efforts," said Retired Colonel Scott McCrae, of the ORNG Reintegration Team.

Several wives of deployed Oregon National Guard Soldiers spoke at the forum about issues affecting their families during deployments. One of their major concerns is the lack of health care providers accepting Tricare, the military’s health insurance. McCrae discussed creating an incentive program to encourage more doctors to take Tricare. He also asked that Tricare work on simplifying rules so that military families have an easier time navigating the system.

As the Oregon National Guard faces more deployments in the coming months, leaders pledge to continue to fight for their needs. "We have a responsibility to reach out to the people who have served in this conflict and take care of them," said Kulongoski.

Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski, Oregon Senator Ron Wyden and Oregon National Guard Adjutant General, Major General Raymond F. Rees, listen as Oregon National Guardsmen express their challenges and concerns regarding deployments and reintegration at an open town hall meeting at the Tigard Armory, March 29. Said Rees, “Thirty percent of Soldiers were under-employed or unemployed upon returning from deployment, 238 have gotten jobs through our efforts,” said Retired Colonel Scott McCrae, of the ORNG Reintegration Team.

Several wives of deployed Oregon National Guard Soldiers spoke at the forum about issues affecting their families during deployments. One of their major concerns is the lack of health care providers accepting Tricare, the military’s health insurance. McCrae discussed creating an incentive program to encourage more doctors to take Tricare. He also asked that Tricare work on simplifying rules so that military families have an easier time navigating the system.

As the Oregon National Guard faces more deployments in the coming months, leaders pledge to continue to fight for their needs. “We have a responsibility to reach out to the people who have served in this conflict and take care of them,” said Kulongoski.

Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski, Oregon Senator Ron Wyden and Oregon National Guard Adjutant General, Major General Raymond F. Rees, listen as Oregon National Guardsmen express their challenges and concerns regarding deployments and reintegration at an open town hall meeting at the Tigard Armory, March 29.
O’Hollaren: SECAF visit provides ‘vital audience’ for PANG to present strategy

Continued from FRONT PAGE

Wing leaders suggested to Wynne that Portland would be a great place to put the Air Force’s newest aircraft, the F-22 “Raptor.”

“He was pretty open to the idea,” Silver said. “We’d love to be on the leading edge of this if it happens.”

The visit allowed the ORANG to present the Secretary with a strategic initiative proposal, but his visit also allowed ORANG leaders to gain insights on Air Force strategy, policy and the Total Force Initiative, said O’Hollaren.

“The visit by the SECAF was huge,” O’Hollaren said. “He now knows who we are, what we are, and what we can become.”

“He is in a position to effect enormous changes in a very dynamic environment which will have far-reaching implications for the Oregon Air National Guard,” O’Hollaren added.

Wynne also took part in a ceremony which kicked off celebrations to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Air Force in Oregon.

The fighter wing recognized the cities of Portland and Vancouver, Wash. through the Cities of Honor program. Wynne, and about 50 people from the fighter wing, witnessed Portland Mayor Tom Potter and Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard sign a proclamation recognizing and supporting the event.

Later in the day, a formal ceremony was held in the main hangar in front of members of the entire fighter wing. The flagpole F-15’s new nose art was unveiled, which represents the cities of Portland and Vancouver Wash., who are represented in the Cities of Honor program. The wing has also honored several other cities, and will unveil additional logos for each city honored in the near future.

“I think this visit helped put us on his radar screen,” Silver said. “He gave me some great advice and I think he’s on the same page (with us) as far as what we are, what we are, and what we can become.”


All-volunteer unit completes ‘important, critical mission’

WARRENTON, Ore. -- Twenty-eight members from the 116th Air Control Squadron were honored during a welcome-home ceremony March 3 at Camp Rilea.

The Airmen were deployed to Kandahar Air Base in Afghanistan for a 120-day tour in support of Air Expeditionary Force 3 and 4, and Operation Enduring Freedom. The 116th ACS, based at Camp Rilea on the Oregon coast, departed for the Middle East in September 2006. They provided air command and control for all fixed-wing aerial assets in the Afghanistan airspace. The unit returned to Oregon in January.


“You’re not just heroes to us, but patriots who have earned a permanent place in the hearts of Oregonians and in the history books of this nation,” the Governor said.

“So, on behalf of all Oregonians, thank you, God bless you and welcome home,” he continued.

Kulongoski also noted that a member of the 116th, Maj. Paul Evans of Monmouth, Ore., will join his staff as a military liaison.

Rees expressed the importance of the unit’s accomplishments in Afghanistan.

“Some folks have labeled Afghanistan the forgotten war, but make no mistake, we’ve not forgotten you or the superb work you’ve done for the Oregon National Guard and the United States Air Force,” he said.

“During those missions, the Airmen ensured air assets were available to support coalition ground forces in contact with Taliban and anti-coalition militants.

The unit was responsible for controlling U.S. and coalition aircraft, including fighters and attack aircraft, refueling tankers, transport and surveillance aircraft. The unit also ensured safe passage for more than 17,500 commercial and civilian aircraft passing through the Afghanistan airspace.

Lt. Col. Timothy Olson, commander of the unit during the deployment, said the operations tempo and number of aerial missions doubled during their tour of duty in Afghanistan.

“It has gotten very busy over there. We just did what we had to do, waking up and putting our noses to the grindstone, knowing we were going to be challenged every day,” Olson said.

At Kandahar Air Base, the Airmen lived in tents during a freezing winter and hot summer, trying to sleep despite the noise of jets on the runway nearby. They worked 12-hour days, each Airmen tracking about 24 aircraft at all times. The Airmen also had to overcome language barriers, working alongside NATO forces from about 20 different countries.

Capt. Bryan Habas said he will remember the experience for the rest of his life.

“Building bridges in this war is extremely important, coming together against a common enemy and a common threat, and I think we were successful in doing that,” Habas said.

The 116th ACS controlled more than 39,000 aerial missions in less than five months. During those missions, the Airmen ensured air assets were available to support coalition ground forces in contact with Taliban and anti-coalition militants.

The unit has been responsible for controlling U.S. and coalition aircraft, including fighters and attack aircraft, refueling tankers, transport and surveillance aircraft. The unit also ensured safe passage for more than 17,500 commercial and civilian aircraft passing through the Afghanistan airspace.

Kulongoski also noted that a member of the 116th, Maj. Paul Evans of Monmouth, Ore., will join his staff as a military liaison.

Rees expressed the importance of the unit’s accomplishments in Afghanistan.

“Some folks have labeled Afghanistan the forgotten war, but make no mistake, we’ve not forgotten you or the superb work you’ve done for the Oregon National Guard and the United States Air Force,” he said.

“During those missions, the Airmen ensured air assets were available to support coalition ground forces in contact with Taliban and anti-coalition militants.

The unit was responsible for controlling U.S. and coalition aircraft, including fighters and attack aircraft, refueling tankers, transport and surveillance aircraft. The unit also ensured safe passage for more than 17,500 commercial and civilian aircraft passing through the Afghanistan airspace.

Lt. Col. Timothy Olson, commander of the unit during the deployment, said the operations tempo and number of aerial missions doubled during their tour of duty in Afghanistan.

“It has gotten very busy over there. We just did what we had to do, waking up and putting our noses to the grindstone, knowing we were going to be challenged every day,” Olson said.

At Kandahar Air Base, the Airmen lived in tents during a freezing winter and hot summer, trying to sleep despite the noise of jets on the runway nearby. They worked 12-hour days, each Airmen tracking about 24 aircraft at all times. The Airmen also had to overcome language barriers, working alongside NATO forces from about 20 different countries.

Capt. Bryan Habas said he will remember the experience for the rest of his life.

“Building bridges in this war is extremely important, coming together against a common enemy and a common threat, and I think we were successful in doing that,” Habas said.

The 116th ACS controlled more than 39,000 aerial missions in less than five months. During those missions, the Airmen ensured air assets were available to support coalition ground forces in contact with Taliban and anti-coalition militants.

The unit was responsible for controlling U.S. and coalition aircraft, including fighters and attack aircraft, refueling tankers, transport and surveillance aircraft. The unit also ensured safe passage for more than 17,500 commercial and civilian aircraft passing through the Afghanistan airspace.

Lt. Col. Timothy Olson, commander of the unit during the deployment, said the operations tempo and number of aerial missions doubled during their tour of duty in Afghanistan.

“It has gotten very busy over there. We just did what we had to do, waking up and putting our noses to the grindstone, knowing we were going to be challenged every day,” Olson said.

At Kandahar Air Base, the Airmen lived in tents during a freezing winter and hot summer, trying to sleep despite the noise of jets on the runway nearby. They worked 12-hour days, each Airmen tracking about 24 aircraft at all times. The Airmen also had to overcome language barriers, working alongside NATO forces from about 20 different countries.

Capt. Bryan Habas said he will remember the experience for the rest of his life.

“Building bridges in this war is extremely important, coming together against a common enemy and a common threat, and I think we were successful in doing that,” Habas said.

All 28 of the Airmen who mobilized with the 116th ACS volunteered for the deployment, including a father and son, and a husband and wife. The Airmen have all earned the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon, the Non-Article 5 NATO Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with “M” device, and the Oregon Faithful Service Ribbon with “M” device.

“Your commitment to mission accomplishment is noticeable. I salute you.”
PORTLAND, Ore. – The 142nd Fighter Wing located at the Portland Air Base, Portland International Airport began receiving upgraded F-15 C and D models in May.

Col. Steve Gregg, the 142nd Fighter Wing Commander, brought the first of two F-15 Cs from Kadena Air Base, Japan to the Portland Air National Guard Base on May 5.

“Enhanced capabilities include an extended flight range and radar and avionics upgrades,” said Col. John Kent, 142nd Maintenance Group commander.

Maintenance crews from the 142nd Fighter Wing went to Kadena to inspect the inbound F-15s before their trans-Pacific flight. This aircraft will eventually replace all of the wing’s current A and B models, which are some of the oldest F-15’s in the Air Force inventory.

According to maintainers at the fighter wing, it’s not their age that’s bringing about their retirement; in fact, the aircraft maintainers from the unit have earned accolades at the world’s premier air-to-air competition, William Tell, held at Tyndall AFB, Fla.

The C and D models have upgrades and capabilities that put them even further ahead of current threats. According to Oregon Air Guard personnel, these capabilities give pilots advantages over the older A and B models which they replace.

Enhanced capabilities include expanded terrain-following radar and avionics upgrades. The newer jets will enable the 142nd Fighter Wing to carry out the Air Sovereignty Ager mission over the Pacific Northwest in support of national objectives.

The 142nd Fire and Rescue Squadron gave the two planes a special welcome by creating a ‘water arch’ using their pumper trucks on the aircraft ramp in front of the Operations building.

Fire trucks from the 142nd Fire and Rescue welcome one of two newer F-15 Eagles to the Portland Air Base, Gregg said.

“Being the largest unit in the Oregon Air National Guard, the 142nd plays a vital role in the defense of Portland and the Pacific Northwest,” he added.

In addition to the nose art unveiling both mayors signed a proclamation declaring May 11 through May 13 an ‘Oregon Air National Guard Week.’

The program is slated to honor a total of 20 Northwest communities. The cities included in the 2007 Cities of Honor program are: Anchorage, Alaska; Fairbanks, Alaska; Juneau, Alaska; Ketchikan, Alaska; Kenai, Alaska; Spokane, Wash.; Bend, Ore.; Bellingham, Wash.; Everett, Wash.; Walla Walla, Wash.; Medford, Ore.; Portland, Ore.; Eugene, Ore.; Salem, Ore.; Coos Bay, Ore.; Astoria, Ore.; and Medford, Ore.

The full list of members who represented the Oregon National Guard at this year’s Marathon Championships included the following:

Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Vandervelde, HQ 3-116 CAV.
Staff Sgt. Edward King, 123rd Weather Flight.
1st Class William Knausser, Portland State University GOL Program.
Sgt. Jacob Truex, 224 Engineering Company.
Senior Master Sgt. Max White, 142nd Fighter Wing/HQ.
Maj. Baldwin of HBIC STB did not make the All Guard team but put in a solid performance, especially for the conditions.

Those who are able will take part in events in Bellevue, Wash.; Long Beach, Calif.; San Diego Calif.; Las Vegas, Nev.; Austin, Texas; Dayton, Ohio; Miami, Fla.; and Virginia Beach, Va.

At each of those events the runners will serve as ambassadors for the National Guard and facilitate recruiting and retention at the event expositions.

### Outstanding Oregon Airman of the Year recognized at annual banquet

In February, the Oregon Air National Guard held the 13th Annual Awards Banquet honoring Outstanding Airman of the Year. Air Guard units have been extremely busy this last year gearing up for inspections, day-to-day operational tempos, deployments and trying to accommodate personal schedules.

Some individuals have performed in an outstanding manner and were recognized by their supervisors and peers at the banquet for their dedication to duty. All of these Airmen are to be commended on their outstanding duty to service, community and self. Congratulations again and a job very well done!

Outstanding Airmen of the Year was awarded to Sra Nicolas B. Telle, 170th ATC (Cat. 1, Airman of the Year); Staff Sgt. Marney M. Dudley, 270th ATC (Cat. II, NCO of the Year); and Master Sgt. Lawrence B. Taylor, 270th ATC (Cat. III, Senior NCO of the Year).

First Sergeant of the Year was awarded to Master Sgt. Kenneth J. Aubut, 173rd Fighter Wing.

Recreiter of the Year was awarded to Master Sgt Richard T. Tammell.

Employee of the Year was awarded to James D. Greene of the 142nd Security Forces Squadron.

The Unit Career Advisor of the Year was Master Sgt. Lindsey K. Dike of the 114th Fighter Squadron.


Finaly, Maj. Steven LaPilippe, 142nd Medical Group was awarded the Edward E. Conrad Jr. Officer of the Year award.

### Oregon runners leave their mark on 2007 Lincoln Marathon

Story by Senior Master Sgt. Max White, 142nd Fighter Wing

Mother nature played havoc with this year’s competition as severe weather alerts threatened to stall the 2007 Lincoln Marathon in the hours before the starting gun sounded.

A heavy thunderstorm rolled all night and subsided only one hour before the 7 a.m. start. Runners left the gate amidst steady rain and wind gusts of 30 to 40 miles-per-hour.

“This was the hardest marathon I have run in 37 years,” commented Senior Master Sgt. Max White, Oregon National Guard Running Team member and experienced world-class marathoner, “and by far my slowest.”

In the end, Arizona took first, followed by Minnesota, Indiana, and Oregon with only minutes separating the top four teams. 1,074 runners finished the 26.2 mile course.

Five members from the Oregon team earned a spot on the Elite All-Guard team and two of those individuals are assigned to the Oregon Air National Guard.

Staff Sgt. Ed King, 123rd Weather Flight earned his second consecutive berth on the All-Guard team.

White, the Human Resource Advisor for the 142nd Fighter Wing and veteran marathoner, qualified for the All-Guard team for the 17th time. This was White’s 102nd marathon.

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Jacob Truex also qualified for the All-Guard team.

Truex was formerly a member of the cross-country team where White coaches at West Alabama High School.

This was Truex’s first marathon; according to White his positive attitude over the weekend was an inspiration to the team and all those around him.

Truex will not be able to participate in any of the All-Guard team events since he is deploying to Iraq with his unit next month. This will be Truex’s second deployment to Iraq and he looks forward to sharing his knowledge and experience with those around him.

The Oregon Air National Guard F-15s. Both Potter and Knausser were hosted by the 142nd Fighter Wing during a Cities of Honor ceremony at the Portland Air Base, May 8.

Two of the 20 Northwest communities that make up the cities honored were Portland and Vancouver, Washington.

None by honor both cities were unveiled on two Oregon Air National Guard F-15s. Both Potter and Pollard helped remove the placards covering their respective cities’ nose art on each of the planes.

“An honor to be involved in the ceremony, and particularly to have Vancouver’s logo on the nose of one of the greatest fighter aircraft in the world,” Pollard said.

The Cities of Honor program coincides with the 60th anniversary of the Air Force and is a gesture of gratitude to Northwest communities who have supported the Oregon Air National Guard for the past 60 years.

The best part for me is having the chance to meet and recognize these community leaders and see how pleased they are when they see their city recognized on one of our jets,” said Col. Steven D. Gregg, 142nd Fighter Wing Commander.

In addition to the nose art unveiling both mayors signed a proclamation declaring Portland and Vancouver, along with many other communities, have supported Oregon’s airmen over the last six decades.

“I am proud of the Air Force’s history in Portland and supportive of the 142nd Fighter Wing’s continued presence in the region,” Potter said.

“As the largest unit in the Oregon Air National Guard, the 142nd plays a vital role in the defense of Portland and the Pacific Northwest," he added.

“I can’t express to you enough how appreciative I am of the sacrifices made by these brave men and women in the defense of our country,” she said.

Each jet’s nose art was designed by Tech. Sgt. Erik Simmons of the 142nd Multi-media, who spent time researching qualities and icons of each of the 20 communities named in the program. Simmons recalls coming out to the Portland Airbase during the annual public open house and seeing the F-15s on display, but never envisioned he’d end up designing their nose art.

“When I was a kid I loved the F-15I was a kid new," Simmons said. “I’ve never envisioned that I’d be getting paid to do this artwork,” he added.

The program is slated to honor a total of 20 Northwest communities. The cities range in location from Vancouver, Wash. to as far south as Corvallis, Ore. with many in between.

In every instance, a representative from each of the communities will take part in an unveiling ceremony conducted by wing officials with the 142nd Fighter Wing at the Portland Air Base, Gregg said.
**Only one chance**: Oregon team wins first NGB honor guard competition

**Story and photo by** Staff Sgt. W. Michael Houk, National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

RENO, Nev. – Staff Sgt. Jeremy Turner knows all about the finitude of funerals, about the idea that you have only one chance to make a good first impression.

“We only have one chance per veteran. We may do 12 services in one day, and every service has to be perfect,” said Turner, a team leader for the Oregon Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program. “When we’re not honoring veterans, we’re training,” Turner added. “We’re doing our after action reviews and rehearsals so that we can go out and honor these veterans the best we can.”

That was the special bond among the members of eight state teams that participated in the National Guard Bureau’s first competitive event for Army Guard honor guard teams, March 20-22.

Teams of seven Soldiers, from Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee and Utah converged on the Stead Training Facility, an Army Guard site on the outskirts of Reno, to see how close to perfection they could come.

The competition was the result of the Guard Bureau’s efforts to standardize the way that state teams render final military honors to the people being buried and their families.

“These are probably the best teams from across the nation,” said Ari Morales, the operations officer for the National Guard Bureau honor guard program. “(They) are competing in order to identify what team is upholding our standards of conduct and representing the National Guard Bureau in the way that they should be,” added Morales who also helped coordinate the operations.

Members of the Army’s 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) from Fort Myer, Va., which participates in these reviews and rehearsals throughout the year and guards the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery, were the evaluators. They came at the request of Staff Sgt. Tyrone Kosa, a former member of the “Old Guard” who now manages the Army Guard’s Honor Guard Program and who developed and organized the event.

“We found our team got off the ground,” said Morales. “He’s definitely a go-getter. He made this thing happen from the ground up.” Morales said it took nine months for Kosa and himself to put the competition together.

Each day began with an exhaustive in-ranks inspection during which Old Guard NCOs “hard-eyed” each Soldier from head to toe. They used rulers to check the uniform items. They wrote down any discrepancies they discovered. They checked things like hat placement. Did the brim sit two fingers from the bridge of the nose? Was the hatband parallel to the marching surface?

Then the best of the Army Guard’s best had themselves rated on all aspects of performing a funeral for a fallen veteran—from lifting caskets and urns out of hearse to firing the customary salute with M-14 rifles and presenting the folded flag to a deceased family’s member.

Participants perfected personal appearance by cleaning their black shiny shoes with glass cleaner and blackening the soles with edge dressing. Furthermore, someone on each team dusted shoes and used a lint roller on uniforms prior to each event.

The judges scored events according to standards developed for the National Guard’s Honor Guard Program. These standards were used to make things more challenging, Kosa threw in a few twists. He administered a 60-question written exam on honor guard procedures. Members of the platoons ran a grueling, timed obstacle course which had to be done twice—one for time and then repeated in full dress blues while performing honors; both times while carrying a casket weighted down by 200 pounds of sandbags.

At 3:30 a.m. on the last day, Kosa interrupted the participants’ sweet dreams when he quietly told them they had a half hour to prepare their uniforms and get on busses waiting to take them to the airfield.

“They performed ‘honorable transfers’ in below freezing temperatures from a Nevada Air Guard C-130 waiting on the flight line. Later that morning, participants were grilled by members of a board headed by Brig. Gen. James Nuttall, deputy director of the Army National Guard.

Sgt. Joshua Keil from the Missouri team explained that the intense competition means more than points on a score sheet.

“When I present the flag to the next of kin, and they look into my eyes with sincerity, they’re looking for comfort,” Keil said. “I feel they just get that little bit of comfort. It makes all the difference in the world.”

Sgt. Delanor Perry agreed.

“They come up and shake your hand after the service. That lets me know I’ve done my job to the fullest, the best I could do,” he said. Later that evening, the winners were announced during a banquet before an audience of family members, state command sergeant majors, adjutants general and the contestants.

The team from Oregon took first place, followed by Utah and Tennessee respectively. Oregon received a saber affixed to a plaque as their trophy, and the accolades of fellow participants.

“Turner said he received the award because his team is reminded how important their role actually is, especially as they march past friends’ gravestones while they do their job in Oregon. The win is as much for the team as it is for their fellow combat veterans who lost their lives.

“It means the world to them,” said Turner.

Midnight raid on Grants Pass army honor guards sharpens Soldiers’ skills

Story and photo by Sgt. Tina Valilabobos, 41st Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

**GRANTS PASS, Ore.** – Nearly 37 Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry, staged a midnight “mock” assault on Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry’s armory in a midnight “mock” attack, March 10-11. The attack came as a surprise to Soldiers of Delta Company, 1-186th Inf. Bn.

The purpose of the mock attack was to provide an opportunity for real-world training for Soldiers of both companies. Tactics used during the exercise allowed every Soldier to unit for practice their war-fighting skills.

“This exercise is great preparation. Everything about this exercise is exactly what is done in Iraq, except we are not busting in any doors,” said Capt. Bob Baca, of Sherwood, Ore., commander of Bravo Co. “The only other difference is that we can speak English to the local populous and officials here.”

Baca and his team worked with local law enforcement officials, the Grants Pass Police Department and members of the local community to plan, coordinate and execute this training exercise.

“This is not something you normally do when you conduct a mock attack on another company,” said Baca. “It is a pretty innovative exercise in that I don’t ever remember one company attacking another company, especially in a simulated area, when it happen it out the field, but it is usually pre-staged.”

At 2 a.m., the squads loaded gear and departed Roseburg, heading to Grants Pass. More than two hours later, these infantrymen put the final stages of their planned attack into motion. The sky was clear with a bright half moon, and temperatures were mild.

Although the team came prepared with night-vision goggles and other gear, the clear sky allowed them to freely navigate through the forested terrain.

Physical fitness was an essential element in the success of the movement. The squads demonstrated their agility in manuevering through the brush, climbing several barbed-wire fences, and they were quick to move out when the situation called for speed.

For the most part, the squads traveled in silence using hand signals. Nocturnal animals sprinkled the air with sound as the Soldiers crept forward. When the Soldiers reached a stopping point in the woods, they began their final descent on the armory. The team went unnoticed as they made their way down a short ravine to the road.

Alert dogs announced camouflaged silhouettes moving through neighborhoods, but unsuspecting owners were quick to silence their barking. The Grants Pass Airport’s search light swept the night like a giant arm trying to sweep away the fog, as troops from the first and second squads crept forward.

Meanwhile, another squad, including three HMMDWs, rolled toward the front of the Armory to divert attention from the rear of the building during the two-pronged assault.

At precisely midnight, the first and second squads began the assault by lobbing a smoke grenade over the armory fence. Flashes pierced the darkness from the barrels of M-4s, M-16s, and M-249s firing blank rounds, as Bravo Company simultaneously approached from the front and rear of the armory, attempting to penetrate resistance from the defending Grants Pass Soldiers.

Once the smoke had cleared and the weapons were silent, both sides met inside the armory to discuss the outcome of the exercise. Even with Bravo Co. capturing Delta’s guide during the attack, and Delta abandoning with some of Bravo’s maps and training files, both sides came out winners.

Soldiers from both companies saw the value in this exercise.

“Staff Sgt. Kosa is an amazing NCO,” said Morales, who served with these guys before,mit and until he and his fellow Soldiers realized people were heading towards the armory. That’s when he got a real adrenaline rush and understood, the whole mission is over. I’d definitely like to see more exercises like this in the future. This was very good training that utilized all of our skills to the maximum.”

First Sgt. David Matcikowsky of Eagle Point suggested the training as a way to get Soldiers out of the armory and raise morale, while honing their infantry skills. “It was a great training exercise, we’re training the way we should actually fight,” he said.

Staff Sgt. Timothy Frutt of Tangent, Ore., Bravo Co., acted as both squad leader and reconnaissance element. “We used our recon and scouting skills,” said Frutt. “We moved slowly down the road, which was one thing we were able to accomplish, the whole mission is over. I’d definitely like to see more exercises like this in the future. This was very good training that utilized all of our skills to the maximum.”

First Sgt. David Matcikowsky of Eagle Point suggested the training as a way to get Soldiers out of the armory and raise morale, while honing their infantry skills. “It was a great training exercise, we’re training the way we should actually fight,” he said.

Staff Sgt. Timothy Frutt of Tangent, Ore., Bravo Co., acted as both squad leader and reconnaissance element. “We used our recon and scouting skills,” said Frutt. “We moved slowly down the road, which was one thing we were able to accomplish, the whole mission is over. I’d definitely like to see more exercises like this in the future. This was very good training that utilized all of our skills to the maximum.”
Operation Jump Start: Oregonians help patrol border

Unique role for Oregon Guardsmen allows agents to beef up security on nation’s southern border

PHOENIX, Ariz. – Donning protective gear and carrying a weapon while standing watch over the desert landscape. Performing maintenance on UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. Placing 100-foot communication towers on remote mountains. Pushing steel pipes into the ground. These are all tasks being performed by Oregon Air and Army National Guard personnel in Arizona.

Just what exactly are Oregon National Guardsmen doing in Arizona? The answer is a little bit of everything. Oregon Guardsmen have integrated into nearly every part of the Operation Jump Start (OJS) mission in Arizona since it began in June 2006.

In May 2006, President George W. Bush announced a plan to aid U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) with stopping the trafficking of people, drugs and weapons across the U.S.-Mexico border. According to officials, the purpose of Operation Jump Start is to bring National Guardsmen from all over the country to support the CBP in various roles.

There are approximately 2,500 Guard members currently in Arizona supporting OJS. More than 8,300 Army and Air National Guard members from 49 states, Guam and the Virgin Islands have served in the OJS mission in Arizona since it began.

“Having the Guardsmen serving in these different support roles has allowed border patrol agents to return to the field to perform their vital law enforcement role,” said Sgt. Gustavo Soto, CBP supervisor patrol agent.

“This law enforcement role, which Guardsmen do not do, includes confronting and arresting illegal drug, weapons and human traffickers and apprehending those entering the country illegally,” Soto said. “You can do that without having to be a law enforcement officer.”

According to Soto, there were 9,200 apprehensions in the Tucson area and more than 290,000 pounds of marijuana seized between Oct. 1, 2006 and Jan 31, 2007.

“Apprehensions of illegal crossers have dropped 12 percent, which means less people are trying to cross the border illegally, while drug seizures have gone up 29 percent since last year,” said Soto.

Senior Airmen Joshua Hart, who is from the 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron based at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Ore., serves as the internet technology & communications manager for the OJS Joint Force Headquarters in Phoenix. He is charged with tracking and maintenance of communications devices, such as satellites and radios, and coordinating the set-up of all communications systems for the entire state of Arizona.

Without this job, mission communication between OJS personnel and CBP is lost, stressed Hart.

“Another important task being handled by Oregon Guardsmen is communications,” said Soto.

Senior Airman Dion Rives of Portland, Ore., is assigned to a 32nd Civil Engineering Squadron, based at Portland Air National Guard Base, in Arizona for OJS in mid-April.

Some of the missions assigned to Oregon Guardsmen include finance and administration; entry identification teams; aviation support; vehicle maintenance; communications; construction and installation of vehicle barriers, roads and permanent fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border.


Army Guard Sergeant Steve Hilger of Stayton, Ore., from Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavary, based in Redmond, Ore., is creating a different type of permanent vehicle barrier along the border, about 60 miles south of Ajo, Ariz. Hilger is a member of Task Force Diamondback’s Vehicle Barrier Team 2. He uses a Push-it machine to install steel pipes in the ground as permanent barriers to prevent vehicles from illegally crossing the Arizona-Mexico border.

Another aspect of the mission is the Entry Identification Team mission. Airmen and Soldiers from all across Oregon serve on EIT sites in both the Tucson and Yuma sector in Arizona. The EIT sites are scattered across the entire southern border of Arizona. Soldiers and Airmen man these sites 24 hours a day, seven days a week, watching for any sort of illegal activity, such as smuggling of drugs or people from across the border.

The EIT teams immediately report any suspicious activity via radio communication to CBP agents who arrive on scene and handle all law enforcement activities. The EIT sites, which are in highly visible locations and serve as deterrents, also detect and direct CBP agents to apprehend, those that do cross illegally into America.

“Basically, my mission is to observe the border areas for illegal crossing of individuals or unusual activities and report back to Customs and Border Patrol,” explained Senior Airman Dion Rives of Portland, Ore. Rives is a member of the 142nd Communications Flight at the Portland Air Base. His is assigned as an EIT member in Nogales, Ariz.

“According to Soto, the border patrol appreciates the contributions of Guard members like ours.

“The EIT site mission has made our job much easier by deterring illegal entering traffic and by being our extra set of eyes and ears, letting us know where illegal crossings are taking place,” Soto said. “We are able to respond to communications much faster.”

Another important task being handled by Oregon Guardsmen is communications.

Senior Airman Joshua Hart, who is from the 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron based at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Ore., serves as the internet technology & communications manager for the OJS Joint Force Headquarters in Phoenix. He is charged with tracking and maintenance of communications devices, such as satellites and radios, and coordinating the set-up of all communications systems for the entire state of Arizona.

“Without this job, mission communication between OJS personnel and CBP is lost,” stressed Hart.

“Another Oregonian handling communications is Tech. Sgt. Mark Quinn of Gresham, Ore., also from the 142nd Fighter Wing Communications Flight. Quinn is a team chief for the Task Force Diamondback Re-


Tech. Sgt. Mark Quinn of Gresham, Ore., from 142nd FW Communications Flight, scales a communications tower near Tuc- son, Ariz., Jan. 18. Quinn is assigned to a Repeatetor Team responsible for upgrading communication systems for U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

peater Task which is tasked with upgrading the CBP communications system.

They conduct site surveys at the CBP communication tower sites all over the state of Arizona, maintaining and upgrading existing communications equipment.

“Once the new communication system is in place, it will increase the effectiveness of communications for CBP statewide,” said Quinn.

The communications towers are from 80 to 180 feet tall, and some are in locations so remote Quinn and his team can only reach them by UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter. One of the people responsible for maintaining the helicopters is Army Sergeant Stephen Dotson, of Union, Ore. He is from Detachment 3, Bravo Company, 351 Aviation Maintenance, based in Pendleton, Ore.

“It’s really nice to see our Soldiers and Airmen out here cooperating and everyone working together to make our country a safer place,” said CBP Senior Patrol Agent Norm Antuzzi.

Overall, many of the Oregon Guardsmen say they are enjoying their time in Arizona and expanding their skills.

“I’m having fun meeting Guardsmen from different states,” said Quinn. “This experience has also given me the chance to learn more about my job than I would have been able to back home.

“This is a good mission, we are doing a job that is worthwhile,” added Rives.


Sgt. Ross Willey of Portland, Ore., from E Co. (Civil Engineer Unit) 3rd Bn. 116th Cav., welds a railroad tie into place to create a vehicle barrier south of Sasabe, Ariz., Jan. 19. The barriers are used to prevent vehicles from illegally crossing the Arizona-Mexico border.
End of an era: America’s last known WWI combat veteran is laid to rest

Howard Ramsey (center) sits in the driver’s seat of a WWI Liberty Truck at the Oregon Military Museum, January 2006. The vehicle is similar to those he drove in France while serving in World War I.

Story by Spc. April L. Dustin, Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. — The echo of a rifle salute and bugler playing taps marked the end of an era, as a state and national treasure was laid to rest March 2.

Retired U.S. Army Cpl. Howard V. Ramsey, Oregon’s last living World War I veteran and the last known U.S. combat veteran of WWI, died in his sleep Feb. 22 at an assisted living center in southeast Portland. He was honored during a memorial service attended by nearly 200 people at Lincoln Memorial Park. His funeral was held exactly one month before his 109th birthday.

“This is a very historic occasion, we lay to rest today our nation’s oldest combat veteran,” said Pastor Stu Weber, who officiated over Ramsey’s memorial service.

In an Associated Press report, Jim Egelston of the national legislative conference said there are now only seven WWI veterans still alive. Of the seven known WWI veterans still living, none were shipped overseas, making Ramsey the last known combat veteran of “The Great War.” Ramsey inherited the title just two weeks before his passing, when Massachusetts veteran Antonio Pierro passed away Feb. 8.

Vice President Dick Cheney mentioned Ramsey’s WWII service in a speech in 2005 during the 75th anniversary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Cheney mentioned Ramsey again March 5 during the Veterans of Foreign Wars national legislative conference.

“Howard Ramsey was one of the longest-living veterans in history, and he passed away at the age of 108. The United States of America honors his memory,” Cheney said.

Ramsey’s lifetime spanned three centuries and 19 presidents. He said Theodore Roosevelt was his personal favorite. Ramsey was born in Rico, Colo. on April 2, 1898, when the U.S. flag had just 45 stars and President McKinley was preparing to declare war with Spain.

In 1913 Ramsey’s family moved to Portland at a time when there were only two bridges spanning across the Willamette River. Ramsey graduated in 1916 from Washington High School, where he was also a member of the Oregon National Naval Militia.

Shortly after graduation, Ramsey and his friend, Harry Cleveland, moved to Utah where they learned how to drive; a rare skill at the time. Too young to be drafted, the two friends tried to enlist and were too skinny for U.S. Army standards. After gorging on bananas and water to meet weight standards, they were placed in the Army’s transportation corps.

Ramsey arrived in France in September 1918 to join Gen. John “Black Jack” Pershing’s American Expeditionary Force. Ramsey drove all of the vehicles for the Army and trained other soldiers how to drive. He was often selected to drive officers to special engagements, and one officer nicknamed “gigged” him for having a dirty truck despite the constant rain and mud in France.

On one occasion, Ramsey had the privilege of driving for Gen. Pershing himself. Ramsey drove ambulances, transported troops to the front lines, and delivered water to troops on the battlefields.

“We were under fire a lot at the front, and we really caught hell one time. I lost friends over there,” he said about his service.

After the armistice, Ramsey spent several months recovering American Soldiers who were hastily buried in the trenches and transported to the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, the largest American Cemetery in Europe.

“You’d better believe it was pretty awful work,” Ramsey told Oregonian reporter Rick Bella in 2005. “It was tough, but you became hardened to it.” Nearly 90 years later, Ramsey was still haunted by regret for not breaking the rules and keeping a diary that fell from the pocket of a deceased American Soldier. Ramsey told family and friends, “I wanted to write that diary so badly to send it to his mother, but it was against the rules to keep anything from off the bodies.”

Veterans of many generations and wars, and military representatives attended Ramsey’s memorial service to pay their respects, including Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne Jr., commander of the Oregon Army National Guard’s 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, and Jim Willis, state director of Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs.

“If we are going to end an era, I can think of no better way to do it with a person who is a model representation of the kind of Soldiers who served this country WWII and who someone would be an example to any combat Soldier serving in Afghanistan and Iraq,” Willis said.

“All (veterans) would be justifiably proud to have known Corporal Howard Ramsey,” was added.

Willis said that Ramsey’s biography of service was entered into Congressional Record on March 2 by Congresswoman Darlene Hooley, (D-OR). He also read a letter from Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski and presented the family with the Governor’s Coin, an award for excellence to a military veteran.

“Have lived more than 100 years as a resident of Portland, we in Oregon rightfully take great pride in his distinction of being recognized as a national treasure,” Kulongoski wrote. “Howard Ramsey certainly was an Oregon and American treasure.”

Retired U.S. Army Col. Don Holden, whose father was Ramsey’s classmate at Washington High School, shared fond memories of Ramsey’s sense of humor. He said farewell to his old friend by reading the epic WWI poem “In Flanders Fields” by John McCrae, which Ramsey could recite from memory well into his late 90s.

Unlike Flander’s Field, there were no Soldiers to bury Ramsey with, as described in the poem, “Bury me with Soldiers,” read by Major Webb during the memorial service.

Although eligible for burial among Oregon’s most honorable at Willamette National Cemetery, Ramsey chose to be buried across the street at Lincoln Memorial, suggesting there was much more to this man than just the Soldier.

Ramsey was laid to rest next to his wife, Helen, a young phone operator he met in 1923 while working as an engineer for Portland Electric Phone company (later AT&T). Eleven years after they were married, the couple was surprised by the birth of their daughter Coral in 1934. After Ramsey’s retirement, the phone company was sold in 1963, and the couple enjoyed traveling, spending most of their winters in Mesa, Ariz. and the Hilda paid for in 1982.

“He often said that when he finally approaches Heaven’s doors, his wife will be standing there waiting, and she will ask what took him so darn long to get there,” said Holden.

Ramsey is survived by his daughter, Coral Falk of Portland; grandchildren, Sandra Linnell of Damascus, Ore., and Shelley Fontana of Clackamas, Ore.; three great-grandchildren; and five great-great-grandchildren; and family ties and good friends for keeping “Grandpa sweetie-pie.”

Linnell said that his memories would not die with him. Many who knew him said he couldn’t really know him long enough, because he always had more stories to tell.

According to Cher Gosski, one of Ramsey’s last living friends, he would have thought this (memorial service) was “something out of the Greatest Generation.”

One of Ramsey’s fondest wartime memories was of a French girl who asked him for an American souvenir. He gave her a penny. She thanked him with a lock of her early hair, which he treasured for the rest of his life.

“We are burying him with that lock of hair in his pocket,” said Linnell.

“He was a good man, he’s left a lot of legacies,” Falk said of her father. “He was very proud of his military service and he would have thought this (memorial service) was something out of the Greatest Generation.”

The Oregon Military Museum owns a WWI Liberty Truck, just like the one that Ramsey used for his driving duties in Europe. The museum’s WWII re-enactors from the Oregon Military Museum re-enactors wear “Doughboy” uniforms, used as a casket bearer to carry Ramsey to his grave site.

“It was the vehicle he used to recover American Soldiers from temporary graves among Europe’s battlefields,” said Byrne. “It is fitting today that we are now using that vehicle to transport him to his final resting place.”

As the Liberty Truck vanished out of view, carrying Ramsey away on that cold, misty day in March, another chapter in American history was closed. Just as it stands in Ramsey’s favorite poem, “Flander’s Field,” the torch has now been passed from the last known combat veteran of World War I to the veterans of “The Greatest Generation.”

“Take up our quarrel with the foe: To you from failing hands we throw the torch; be yours to hold it high.”
From rusting hulk to museum quality showpiece

Tour and photos by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy.
Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

The growling sounds like a cage full of angry lions. The entire structure seems to vibrate in time with the combined 5,500 horsepower of the three Packard V-12 engines rumbling below the wooden deck. The only visual evidence of the potential power of this beast is a steady cloud of gray-white exhaust smoke drifting up from the sides of the boat, blending with the boat's gray paint and the overcast skies above downtown Portland.

"Get ready to cast off," shouts a man in a wheel house, as deckhands scurry about with ropes in hand, guiding the WWII PT boat from its berth at the Swan Island Naval Operation Center. Twin 50-cal. machine guns flanking the wheelhouse reach for the sky as the boat reverses in a wide arc around the end of the dock. A coordinated effort between the "skipper" and the deckhands bring the 78-foot boat into the main shipping channel of the Willamette River, before the boat changes direction and heads down river.

No, this isn't 1943, and PT 658 is not heading out on a mid-day patrol to locate Japanese ship convoys. In fact, it is a typical Oregon day in early May, 2007, and PT 658 is moving a short distance down the Willamette River for more restoration work. Moreover, the men who guide her slowly through the calm waters are not battle-hardened Navy sailors, but a group of volunteers who have spent more than a decade lovingly restoring the WWII showpiece.

According to Save The PT Boat, Inc., a non-profit organization founded by a group of gray-haired ex-PT boaters who took custody of the historic relic in 1992, PT 658 is the only fully-commissioned and working Patrol Torpedo (PT) boat in existence. The group has been able to accomplish their goals with the assistance of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, the Oregon and Washington National Guard, private individuals in Oregon and California, and a number of volunteers, most of whom are retired military, said Harry Wiedmaier, former Navy Reserve captain and board chairman of Save The PT Boat, Inc.

On this day, the crew of United States Coast Guard buoy tender Bluebell, based at Swan Island Coast Guard Station, donated their time and the use of the large crane on the bow of the Bluebell to install the full compliment of four period-correct torpedoes onto the deck of PT 658.

"We're a very tiny part of this restoration. They've done all the hard work," said U.S. Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer Dave Dixon, commanding officer of the U.S.C.G. buoy tender Bluebell. "We're giving them a hand because we own a crane and we're neighbors," Dixon added with a chuckle.

According to PT 658 crewmember and retired Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. Dale Billups, the Naval Undersea Warfare Museum in Keyport, Wash., joined three torpedoes to the PT boat restoration project. One of the two torpedoes already on the boat, which the group acquired for $2,500 on Ebay, will serve as a static display, while the remaining four are to be installed permanently on the boat.

"We want to try to get the torpedos onboard before the Rose Festival," Bil- lups said.

The PT 658 took part in the festival's "Parade of Boats" which included U.S. and Canadian warships, U.S. Coast Guard cutters, and civilian ships from around the Northwest. Along with tours of the ships docked near Tom McCall Waterfront Park in downtown Portland, military personnel in uniform were allowed to tour PT 658. PT 658 was built in April 1945 by Higgins Boat Works in New Orleans. La. Though she never saw combat duty, the boat was fully serviceable, minus its armament. Along with three other PT boats, PT 658 was bound for the Soviet Union as part of the Lend-Lease Act signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on March 11, 1941, which was meant to supply non-Axis countries with raw material and equipment to help fight the war. Shortly following Allied victory in Europe, the act was abruptly cancelled by the United States, and equipment destined for overseas delivery was soon made available for private sale back in the United States.

"She was on a barge heading for Russia," Billups said. After turning around in the Aleutian Islands, the shipment containing PT 658 returned to California in late 1945, where the boat was eventually sold to a private owner at a government auction. According to Wiedmaier, people who made such purchases probably thought buying an 80-foot yacht at a bargain price was a good deal.

"The owner replaced the gas-guzzling Packard engines with smaller diesel engines," Wiedmaier said. "But when he took it out in the open ocean, the boat beat him up so much he gave up his dream and parked it against a dock in San Francisco where she deteriorated for almost 50 years."

Wiedmaier said seeing the restoration of PT 658 is bitter-sweet. As an enlisted Sailor in the Philippines during the wan ning days of WWII, he saw tons of equipment destroyed, including hundreds of PT boats which were burned in the shallow waters of Manila Bay. "Forty miles of equipment getting ready to go for the invasion of Japan was destroyed," Wiedmaier said.

Save The PT Boat, Inc. plans to locate permanent mooring for PT 658, and would like to spearhead the construction of an accompanying museum where people can learn about the PT boats' role in WWII. Moreover, according to Wiedmaier, the effort of the group is also a tribute to some 15,000 people who worked with, or on PT boats throughout the war. "We intend to operate and display the boat in the Pacific Northwest as a living memorial to the thousands of U.S. Sailors who manned these tiny warships in nearly every World War II theater," said Wied- maier.

Known as the "Mosquito Fleet", the small, agile, and heavily-armed PT boats were instrumental during battles in the Pacific and Mediterranean theaters, as well as in the English Channel during WWII. Referred to as "expendable" by military planners, some 660 PT boats comprising the 'wooden fleet' were built through U.S. civilians contracted boat builders like Higgins Boat Works and Elco Company -- a plan which kept costs low and freed up the larger shipbuilding companies to concentrate on producing the more-recognized battleships and aircraft carriers. Following the end of the war, PT boats already in service were destroyed, while new boats were sold at government auction, and the PT corps disbanded.

Wiedmaier cited a little-known fact about PT boats at Pearl Harbor.

"On December 7, 1941, six PT boats were at Pearl harbor, and one of the boats was credited with shooting down a Japa
nese plane," he says, beaming with pride. Furthermore, with the exception of a handful of movies like John Ford's 1945 movie, "They Were Expendable" starring John Wayne and Robert Montgomery, and the story of PT 109, made famous by President John F. Kennedy, the PT boats' legacy has gone largely unknown, until now.

"It's not an ordinary boat, but then, these are not ordinary men," Wiedmaier said. "Their memories of combat on the high seas illustrate just how special these boats were."

PT 658 will be open to the public at the antique boat show at Tomahawk Island June 22-24.

For more information on PT 658 or to contribute to its maintenance and restora tion, visit www.savetheptboats.com.
Oregon veterans receive France’s highest award

More than 60 years after the Allied Forces in Europe liberated France from the Nazi regime, two Oregon World War II veterans have been presented France’s highest honor for bravery. The French government approved the presentation of the Legion of Honor (Légion d’Honneur) to Portland area veterans John Hodges, 87, and Robert Weiss, 84, for their service during the battle to liberate France from the German Army in 1944-45.

Before a gathering of family and friends, both men received their awards on two different occasions. Both Hodges and Weiss openly credited their fellow Soldiers and fallen comrades as they accepted their medals.

The Deputy Consul General Patrice Servantie, from the French Embassy in San Francisco, presented Hodges his medal on February 22. Hodges said, “This is an award that I’m most honored to receive, but in my heart I’m not accepting it on behalf of the members of my company who can’t be here to accept the honor for themselves.”

A U.S. Army officer assigned to 16th Ordnance Ammunition Company, 5th Engineer Brigade, Hodges’ unit landed during the Normandy invasion of Omaha Beach on June 7. The unit played a vital role by establishing the first ammunition supply facility on Omaha Beach and later on the port of Cherbourg and at Leige, Belgium.

Weiss, served in the 230th Field Artillery Battalion, 30th Infantry Division during the liberation of France, the Battle of the Bulge and the fight across Belgium, Holland and Germany. He has also been officially recognized for his role in halting the German offensive at the Battle of Mortain shortly after D-Day.

“One of the things I learned from the battle experience at Mortain is that determined men, sometimes a few or even one man, can make a difference in the lives of others,” Weiss said after his medal presentation by Consul General Frederic Desageaux on March 17 in Portland.

Both Desageaux and Servantie said it was their personal honor, on behalf of their government, to present each man with France’s highest military medal. Desageaux said the medals are a “solemn reminder of the long and continuous cooperation and friendship between the U.S. and France which dates back to the U.S. Revolutionary War.”

As veterans of the liberation of France in 1945, both men were eligible to receive the medal back to the U.S. Revolutionary War.”

Tuskegee Airmen recognized for WWII sacrifice

Determined to prove their detractors wrong, nearly 1,000 Black pilots volunteered in 1942 and were trained as fighter pilots in the U.S. Army Air Corps. They would become known as Tuskegee Airmen—whom exploits in battle have become legendary. Three members of that original group of aviators visited Milwaukee High School on March 17.

For several hours, three former 1st Lieutenants now in their 80’s, Alexander Jefferson, Richard Macon and Bill Terry, told their individual stories and answered questions about their service as members of the Air Corps’ segregated 332nd Fighter Group. The elder flyers reminded those in attendance that no standards were lowered for Tuskegee pilots who trained in numerous officer fields. That also included nearly 19,000 enlisted members and support staff from mechanics to radio repairmen and nurses to control tower operators.

“We were determined to prove all doubters wrong,” Macon said. “I was going to learn to fly and fight for my country. Our government was wrong and guilty of prejudice. They didn’t think blacks could learn to fly.”

And they did fly. After their flight training at Tuskegee, Ala., the men saw action from 1943-45 in North Africa, Italy, France and Germany. By the end of the war, more than 450 pilots from the four pursuit squadrons within the 332nd FG (the 99th, 100th, 301st and 302nd), completed 1,578 missions, 15,553 combat sorties and destroyed 261 enemy aircraft. Reportedly the pilots never lost an American aircraft to enemy fire in more than 200 combat missions—a record unmatched by any other fighter group.

Jefferson said their commander, Col. Benjamin O. Davis, ordered in every briefing to stay with the bombers and don’t leave them. “If just one bomber had been shot down, the military would’ve killed our unit. We’d have been grounded,” he said.

The Red Tails—named because of the red paint on their tail assemblies—lost 66 pilots in aerial combat. Of the 994 Black aviators who were trained at Tuskegee beginning in 1942, fewer than 380 are still living.

Macon and Jefferson are the only two surviving Black prisoners of war from World War II. Both were shot down while attacking enemy positions over France and both survived harrowing experiences in German concentration camps.

A B-25 bomber pilot, Terry had been a former UCLA basketball player and college roommate of baseball great Jackie Robinson.

Despite an exemplary military record, he and 102 African-American pilots later faced a military court martial in 1945 when they attempted to enter an officers’ club at a base at Freeman Field, Ind., defying a order to stay out. Terry was the only officer convicted. Congress later overturned his conviction in 1996.

“I thought being in jail then wasn’t worth it, but the guys stuck with me,” Terry said, “and later we went on to help desegregate the military.”

After their presentations, a former B-24 bomber crewmember stood up, thanked and saluted the former pilots for escorting his unit on many safe trips to Berlin. Brigadier Gen. Gary Dean, the Oregon National Guard’s first black general officer, then openly thanked the trio for “what you have done for African Americans by opening doors that I walked through which allowed me to be where I’m at today.”

In Washington D.C., on March 29, President George W. Bush presented the highest civilian award conferred by Congress—the Congressional Gold Medal—to the surviving Tuskegee Airmen to honor their service. The president said, “The Tuskegee Airmen helped win the war, and your service and commitment for the better. Yours is the story of the human spirit, and it ends like all great stories do—with wisdom and lessons and hope for tomorrow.”

Family of fallen Soldier raises funds for climbing wall

Submitted by the Nakis Family

The days were long, hot, dusty, and often dangerous. The work at times was monotonous and tedious and also often dangerous. To help pass the time and take his mind off the daily responsibilities, the young soldier, a combat engineer with Bravo Company, 52nd Combat Engineers from Albury, Oregon, would talk about plans, and sketch his personal goals and dreams. He had dreams of reconditioning his first car, of building a cabin, of owning his own military vehicle.

Sadly, most of these dreams ended when the young soldier, Spc. Nathan Nakis of Seattle-Woolley Wash., lost his life in a vehicle accident near Mosul, Iraq in 2003. He was 19 years old.

Today, however, one of Nakis’ dreams lives on. An Eagle Scout, avid climber, and Boy Scout instructor, he had dreamed for several years about building an indoor climbing wall at his favorite Boy Scout camp. He even made sketches of climbing wall ideas and shared them with his fellow soldiers.

Nakis wanted to build The Wall at Camp Black Mountain, a beautiful camp reserve on Silver Lake in Whatcom County, in northwest Washington State.

Nakis attended and worked at the camp for seven years. Now, thanks to the efforts of many dedicated volunteers and professionals, his climbing wall is becoming a reality.

The project, dubbed “Nathan’s Wall”, is a partnership between the Nakis family and the Mt. Baker Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

The Boy Scouts have selected the building site and raised the necessary resources to construct the enclosure. The Nakis family is using a combination of Nathan’s legacy money and donated funds to provide a state-of-the-art climbing facility.

The wall, being designed and built by En- ter Prises of Bend, Ore., will utilize modern panels that simulate natural rock. The wall will be thirty feet tall and the facility will include gear storage and training space, as well as a memorial to Nakis and a place to acknowledge donors and volunteers. The family plans to list donors on a memorial plaque to be displayed at the entrance.

The Nakis family is asking for help to make the dream come true. A fund has been established at the Mt. Baker Council of BSA. Mark all contributions with “Nathan’s Wall”. The Council’s Tax ID number is: 91-1622046. Please mail all inquiries and contributions to: Nathan’s Wall, C/O Eliner Nakis, P.O. Box 26, Sedro-Woolley, Wash., 98284.
State Defense Force takes on emergency response roles

The Oregon State Defense Force has gained a new mission that gives the Gov- ernor of Oregon and Oregon National Guard an additional resource to assist in emergency operations. Under the appointment of Brig. Gen. J. Michael Caldwell, the OSDF is under a major transformation to take on the new role of providing emergency response and homeland security.

The OSDF will operate as an integrated part of the Oregon National Guard with operational control of Oregon Emer- gency Management. Its primary role now is to foster relationships with local government agencies in order to develop emergency preparedness. The OSDF will then serve as a liaison between these agencies.

The organization will also provide the ability to quickly expand to any area of the state experiencing a crisis and work closely with each military branch. OSDF personnel will be trained and ready to provide services around the clock.

To accomplish this mission, the OSDF is being reorganized into three com- mander units: the Oregon Army National Guard, the Oregon Air National Guard, and the Oregon State Guard. Each of these units will be responsible for providing emergency services specific to their area of expertise.

The Oregon Army National Guard will be responsible for providing emergency services in the areas of water rescue, fire fighting, and search and rescue. The Oregon Air National Guard will be responsible for providing emergency services in the areas of medical evacuation, disaster relief, and search and rescue. The Oregon State Guard will be responsible for providing emergency services in the areas of law enforcement, emergency medical services, and support to civil authorities.

The Oregon State Defense Force personnel will be based in Portland and will be available to provide emergency services throughout the state.

Oregon Guard helps celebrate during ANZAC observances

PORTLAND, Ore. – The 41st Infantry Brigade conducted a ceremony honoring the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) during a parade to commemorate New Zealand Army Corps Day on April 25, 2007.

The American Red Cross said their representative typically do not contact military members or their dependents directly and almost always go through a commander or first sergeant in order to get information on military members. Military family members are urged not to give out any personal information over the phone if contacted by unauthorized individuals. The American Red Cross said their representative is a member of, or an agent for, the American National Red Cross and must be authorized to act for the American National Red Cross.

In an effort to create a “climate of con- fidence,” the Defense Department has changed reporting options for sexual assault victims. Beginning in 2005, victims were given an option of restricted or unrestrict- ed reporting. When filing a restricted report, victims could receive medical care and counseling for assaults without alerting their chain of command or triggering an administrative process. DoD officials attribute a 65 percent increase in reporting to this change.

During a worldwide conference held by the DoD andled by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates said, “This conference is a testament to the commitment we all share to rooting out the scourge of sexual assault and harassment within our military community.”

The conference brought together hundreds of experts from military and civil agencies from around the world to coordinate and align efforts to combat sexual assault and harassment. The conference also provided an opportunity to share best practices and successful initiatives to address this problem.

The American Red Cross is warning the public about a new scam targeting military families. The scam involves a male caller claiming to represent a representative who promises to negotiate with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to secure a loan to buy or sell a home. The caller says he can negotiate a loan at a very low interest rate and that the caller only needs to provide personal information such as Social Security number and date of birth.

The American Red Cross said their representative typically do not contact military members or their dependents directly and almost always go through a commander or first sergeant in order to get information on military members. Military family members are urged not to give out any personal information over the phone if contacted by unauthorized individuals. The American Red Cross said their representative is a member of, or an agent for, the American National Red Cross and must be authorized to act for the American National Red Cross.
LAS VEGAS, Nev. — Former marketing director for Recruiting and Retention Command, Sgt. 1st Class Gower Talley of Canby, Ore., retired from the Oregon Army National Guard and became a millionaire.

“It took me six weeks from the moment of my retirement to become a millionaire,” said Talley.

Talley’s good fortune was the culmination of his adventure in the national Dream Ace Contest put on by Ace Hardware Corporation. He was selected as the grand prize winner of a $1 million Ace Hardware store during the company’s national convention in Las Vegas on March 15.

Talley decided to enter the competition online in January, along with more than 5,400 aspiring entrepreneurs across the country. The initial application process consisted of a 45-minute business management test and three essay questions which had to be answered within two hours.

“In the beginning, it was kind of a whim,” he said. “I can’t remember if it was me or my wife, Jill, who found it online, but we thought the application process was complicated enough that not very many people would go through with it. I filled all this stuff out and promptly forgot about it.”

Talley figured he had nothing to lose. He was retiring from a 20-year military career, four years with the Oregon Guard and 16 years in the U.S. Army — including service in Operation Desert Storm. Having completed his master’s degree in business, Talley had been interviewing for local business management positions when, just seven days after permanently hanging-up his uniform, he received a life-changing phone call.

“My wife and I were sitting at our kitchen table literally talking about what was going to come next for us, when the phone rang and it was the Dream Ace team saying, ‘Congratulations, you are the finalist from Oregon and you’ve got one week to be in New York.’” Talley said. “I decided to go for it with everything I have.”

Talley spent the month of February traveling to New York, Chicago and Houston where he participated in a series of interviews, business presentations, speeches and a retail “boot camp.” The competition was narrowed down from 40 state finalists to 12 semi-finalists, and then two finalists were chosen based on their presentations of an integrated marketing plan for the Dream Ace project.

The 45-foot Dream Ace tour bus pulled up in front of Talley’s house on March 6, to transport him and his family to the Ace Hardware store in Canby for the official announcement that he was one of the two final competitors.

“They told me I had a week to be in Las Vegas, where I would have five minutes to convince nearly seven thousand Ace Hardware store owners to vote for me,” said Talley. “I had to be creative, because I was not the most experienced of the final two. The other guy (Frank Ali of Jackson, N.J.) had 17 years owning a hardware store, and clearly I did not.”

So, what was the trick up Talley’s sleeve to convincing thousands of Ace retailers to vote for him? It was a slogan on a wristband he wears, which reads, “Failure is not an option.” He said the slogan, an attitude he adopted during his military career, gave him an advantage throughout the entire competition.

“I had the absolute tenacity of being a 20-year Soldier that I wasn’t going to fail, I simply won’t,” said Talley. “I really believe that they chose me for my enthusiasm, drive and mind-set.”

Talley said his experience in the National Guard played an “absolutely critical” role in preparing him for this competition.

“What might have been of greater value than my tenacity, was my marketing experience with the National Guard,” he said.

Talley said there were two major components of the competition that he was well rehearsed in because of his National Guard experience. One major component was public speaking, something that had become routine for Talley in the National Guard. Another major component was preparing a large-scale marketing plan, something Talley was required to submit to National Guard Bureau every year.

“IT was almost like the Guard systematically trained me to win this,” said Talley. “A lot of people think that the Guard is just about driving trucks and tanks, or being an infantry Soldier, but obviously, from my experience, it is not.”

Talley said his ability to take advantage of this opportunity was brought on by his training in the Guard and his ability to earn a master’s degree in business by using the Montgomery GI Bill.

“The trading of my uniform, that I wore proudly for 20 years, for a blue, Ace Houston Dealer’s Group owner shirt was a natural transition,” said Talley. “I can’t imagine a career or experience that prepares people more for whatever life might forward them than putting on your country’s uniform.”

Ace will pay for Talley and his family to relocate to Spring, Texas, near Houston, where he will take ownership of a brand new 15,500 square ft. Ace Hardware store. Developers broke ground on the store Feb. 11 and its construction is projected to be completed by June 25. The grand opening of the store will take place June 29-30.

The $1 million-valued business opportunity includes opening stock inventory and all the necessary technology needed to operate the store. Talley will receive the same training and support that all independently-owned and operated Ace store owners receive.

“It’s incredible, but this isn’t a lottery prize,” said Talley. “I’ve had so many people say to me, ‘Congratulations, you just won a 70-hour a week job, good for you.’ But, I didn’t just get a good job, I got an opportunity to own my future for the rest of my life. I have put the rest of my life in my own hands and I don’t have to work for anyone else ever again.”

### Youth Program seeks volunteers

The Oregon National Guard’s Child and Youth Program is in need of volunteers to help organize regional youth programs for children of military members throughout Oregon.

The Child and Youth Program is a branch of the Family Readiness Program. The program supports academic, social and emotional needs of military youth. Regional coordinators are needed for Eastern, Central, Portland, Willamette Valley, Western and Southern Oregon. Youth Council members ages 15-17 are also needed in each region. The volunteers will work together as a team to develop local, regional and state events for children and youth of all ages.

A focus of the Child and Youth Program will be partnering with organizations such as the Department of Education, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs and child care facilities across the state to build resources for military families.

For more information please contact Meredith Browning at 503-932-1895 or meredith.browning@us.army.mil.