Homecoming:

More than 100 Soldiers of A Co., 641 Aviation, 115 MPAD, and 224 En. Co. return to Oregon

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Jefferson Thompson,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Three units from around the State of Oregon have recently returned from overseas deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Most recently the Soldiers of the Oregon Army National Guard’s 224 Engineer Company returned with a ceremony at the Linn County Fair and Expo Center June 11, 2008. The state also welcomed home A Company, 641 Aviation, May 20, and the 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment May 22.

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski personally attended all of the demobilization ceremonies and extended a hearty, “welcome home!” to all of the returning Oregon Soldiers.

Kulongoski said in every case, the returning Soldiers represented the best the State of Oregon has to offer and that on behalf of the citizens it is good to have them back.

The mission of the 224 En. Co. was to clear roads and provide other infrastructure support. This unit is primarily a horizontal construction unit with the specialty of rebuilding roadways and berms. In addition to their primary mission they also helped construct temporary outposts for Coalition Forces and the Iraqi Army.

“When we arrived in country we were averaging 190 improvised explosive device blasts per month,” said 1st Sgt. Mike Amen, 224 En. Co. First Sergeant. “By the end of our tour we saw a reduction to 14 blasts per month.”

Alpha Company, 641 Aviation deployed to Balad Air Base in Iraq in October of 2007. There, they immediately took over Army fixed-wing cargo operations under Multi-National Forces-Iraq. Their support covered Mosul, Kirkuk, and Basra, in addition to a dozen smaller air bases throughout the country.

The company’s support of Other Coalition Forces-Iraq (OCF-I) was instrumental in the timely transportation of sensitive cargo and detained personnel. The company increased existing support by 100 percent and developed mission support into Baghdad. This mission

See Soldiers on PAGE 5

Ontario breaks ground on new readiness center

Story by Larry Meyer,
Argus Observer
Reprinted with permission

ONTARIO, Ore. — The sun shined on Oregon’s Oregon Army National Guard unit in more ways than one Friday at a groundbreaking ceremony that signaled the start of construction for a new readiness center on Southwest Fourth Street next to Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC).

Construction on the multi-million dollar, new facility is expected to start some time in June or July.

Besides Guard representatives from Oregon and Idaho, a host of federal, state, city and TVCC dignitaries were on hand for the event that was threatened initially by inclement weather.

“The site for the new readiness center — just across the street from the athletic fields on the TVCC campus and just south of Malheur County Justice Court — will be on a section of land sold by TVCC to the Oregon Military Department.

The project — conceived more than 10 years ago — is a joint project between Oregon Guard and TVCC. The key concept driving the project is “joint-use,” where the new center will be used by the Guard and the community.

TVCC will rent two of the classrooms in the new building and other portions of the facility as needed.

“It’s going to be a magnificent facility,” Maj. Gen. Raymond Rees, Adjutant General for the Oregon National Guard said. Besides the federal dollars that are going into the project, Rees noted that the state is adding about $2.5 million.

“This whole thing is about partnership. This has taken a lot of work,” Rees said.

Oregon Congressman Greg Walden, R-Hood River, noted in his remarks at the groundbreaking.

See Readiness Center on PAGE 5
Oregon National Guardmembers a source of pride

The Oregon Sentinel

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Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski

Adjutant General
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Asst. Adjutant General, Air
Brig. Gen. Daniel B. O'Hollaren

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State CSM says farewell to Oregon Guard

As I said earlier, this column is not big enough to cover everyone I owe thanks to. Even though this is the last column, I want to acknowledge who have helped make this column a success during my time here.

The last one, to all the Soldiers and Airmen of the Oregon National Guard. Thank you. The humor is an all-time event. I have been offered and accepted a position at Northern Command at Peterson AFB in Colorado. I will be the first National Guard Sergeant Major assigned to the command.

During my tour we have mobilized thousands of Soldiers and Airmen for duty both at home and in foreign countries and it has been my good fortune to travel and visit them while they performed their duties, always in an organized, structured, and professional manner, no matter what the conditions. This column is not big enough to thank all of the great people I have had the opportunity to work with. In order to fit my time as the State Command Sergeant Major and during my 30-plus years being directly assigned to the Oregon National Guard.

You may also want to acknowledge who have helped make our Oregon National Guard what it is today and who have directly influenced our successes during my time there.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski, who has been a great supporter of the National Guard and all of our men and women. His support has been critical to our ongoing success.

Representative Darlene Hooley; her support of the National Guard in front of Congress has never wavered.

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees; whose leadership and vision of what the National Guard is and should be, reaches far into the future.

Leaders like MG Rees are what make our organization the best in the nation.

Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne, Jr.; who brought our organization through a tough time, put the pieces back together and kept us moving in the right direction.

Mr. Jim Willis, the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs Director. Mr. Jim always provided the Oregon National Guard and Airmen who serve in our units at armor and military.

Most importantly I thank the great Soldiers and Airmen who serve in our units at armor and air bases all around Oregon, both full time and part time. You are what it is.

I am confident that my replacement, Command Sgt. Maj. Bruk Conley, will continue to receive your support and that I will continue to take our organization forward.

THANK YOU,

CSM Moe

Oregon National Guardmembers a source of pride

The week of July 4, reminded me once more why the National Guard is a great National Treasure.

On Monday, June 30, I participated in a conference call between the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Gen. George W. Casey, Washington and California to discuss support for the California wildfires. I was pleased to report that Oregon has already dispatched a CH-47 to help drop water and retardant near Chico, Calif.

On July 1, I attended a Veterans Clinic dedication in La Grande and a Veterans Town Hall in Bend, both with Senator Wyden. The Oregon Guard was instrumental in the success of both as a partner in our reintegration efforts.

On July 4, I met with Lt. Col. Ed Higgins and Maj. (Ms.) Marty Plotzer as they showed me around the Emergency Command Post for the Olympic Trials in Eugene, OR. The Oregon Guard provided our Civil Support Team, backup medical evacuation, and security for this event.

At another event, I took great pride in introducing SFC Tim Vandervlugt to Senator Wyden in Eugene. SFC Vandervlugt was our escort but I made sure to tell the Senator that Tim was the leader of our acclaimed Marathon Team that won the inaugural Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb. SFC Vandervlugt and the team thumped the competition, and won on a 7 minute and 11 second margin win over the nearest competitor, the Utah National Guard. He was also awarded the Guardsman’s Masters Title with a time of 2 hours 50 minutes and six seconds.

Likewise, it was an amazing close to my week to witness the 10,000 meter race at Hayward Field and see world class athletes run 25 laps in 27 minutes and change. Among these athletes was another Oregon Guardsman, Maj. Dan Browne. He did not place but he demonstrated guts, determination and talent enough to run with this elite field.

Another athlete who has excelled in Oregon is the Master Sgt. Dan White, of the 142d Fighter Wing in Portland, Ore. White has been part of the Oregon Guard Marathon Team for the past 24 years. He has qualified in Lincoln, Neb. for the National Guard Bureau Team 18 times and in 1973 he set the United States record for running 50 miles in 5 hours 8 minutes. Today White passes on his knowledge of fitness with a column in this issue of the Sentinel and he recently attended the Olympic Trials in Eugene to lend support to his fellow runners as they compete for a seat in the Olympic Games in Beijing, China this summer.

This summer the Oregon Guard will train hard, enhance skills, and its members will talk about their experience. Readiness is not only about training, but also about retention. The forefront of our organization is its people. I have set a goal for each unit to achieve 101 percent of their July 1 assigned strength by September 30 this year. This means that units should not only focus on retaining their best but also on enlisting new recruits. Achieving this goal will set the Oregon Guard up for a successful future. There is no better time for Guardsmen to take advantage of the GRAP program and turn a referral into an Oregon Guard member. We urge Oregonians to proudly be members of being Oregon members of the Oregon Guard. Serving over seas, serving in domestic emergencies, serving our fellow veterans or competing successfully at the national level in sporting events. We are blessed with superb Soldiers and Airmen that wear our uniforms.

Letters to the Editor

Rank abbreviations explained

Previously, the Sentinel responded to two letters in order to explain how we abbreviate rank titles in our publication. In order to avoid confusion, we have included the rank abbreviations listed below. We encourage our readers to submit articles, photos, and ideas for upcoming editions. We believe that sharing our stories is important.

General

1. General (G)
2. Major General (MG)
3. Lieutenant General (LTG)

Brigadier General (Brig Gen)

 Colonel (Col)

 Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)

 Captain (Capt)

 First Lieutenant (1st Lt.)

 Second Lieutenant (2nd Lt.)

 Ensign (ENS)

 Lieutenant (Lt)

 Midshipman (Mid)
Mentoring program offers new avenues for Guardmember fitness

By Senior Master Sgt. Max White, 142nd Fighter Wing

Human Resources Advisor

Mentoring and diversity can play a huge role in many aspects of our military life, not just our job performance. Let’s look at fitness. I was shocked to see the statistics on the number of airmen who are struggling on their fitness test with 40 percent saying they are fit and that 12 percent are clinically obese. More airmen today are overweight than fit and that 12 percent are clinically obese. More airmen today are overweight than fit and that is why the Air Force Times that more airmen today are overweight than fit and that 12 percent are clinically obese.

It appears that many members of the military are so busy in their professional and family lives that they are neglecting to “sharpen the saw.” How can mentoring help that situation? Well, pairing up individuals who are struggling on their fitness test with someone who is in the excellent fitness catagory can have a positive effect on fit- ness in the military. Those individuals can easily be linked up with MyEDP or MyODP so that the mentor can be readily monitoring the progress of the protégé, as well as providing helpful tips. They can also make ar- rangements to work out together. I should add that Military OneSource has recently made professional coaches available to members at no charge.

Working out with others has always helped my motivation to stay physically fit. And for those who want to elevate their fitness to a higher level, there are further opportunities. There are groups at various installations who take part in bicycle events as well as training rides. Each year the Oregon National Guard fields several teams of 12 for the 195-mile ride to Coast Relays. Each runner has the chance to run three legs of five to six miles each. Getting in the middle of the roadway. The team-building during the relay itself is remark- able. When I was handing the baton, the last thing I want to do is to let my team- mates down. And it carries over to work- ing with them when they have bad days. For those who are even more ambitious, there are opportunities to compete with the Oregon National Guard Marathon team. Each year that team race to Lincoln, Nebraska, to compete in the Guard Championships. The top finishers in that race get to travel around the country to run races and be ambassadors of fitness for the Guard.

While it is evident that mentoring and teamwork can have a significantly positive impact on fitness in the Oregon National Guard, how does diversity come into the picture? To get in your best shape, I recommend that you employ a diversity of activities. You can avoid many injuries, not to mention boredom, by doing most of your running on soft surfaces such as grass, wood chips or dirt.

Most Oregon towns have numerous running trails nearby. In Portland, you can run for miles through Forest Park or around Glendoveer Golf Course. In Eugene, you can venture out on Amazon Trail, Ridgeline Trail, or Pre’s Trail. In Corvallis, hundreds of miles of logging roads and trails await you in McDonald Forest.

The point is to save your shins and psyche by limiting the miles that you put in on asphalt tracks or paved Base roads. Diversity of work-outs can extend beyond different places to run. There is no law that says you must only run to get ready for the fitness run. In fact, the mobile units and diversity activities will result in the Air Force Times that more airmen today are overweight than fit and that 12 percent are clinically obese. More airmen today are overweight than fit and that 12 percent are clinically obese. More airmen today are overweight than fit and that 12 percent are clinically obese.

What I have said about diversity of exercise in preparing for the 1.5-mile or 2-mile run applies equally to getting ready for crunches, push-ups, and the waist measure- ment.

I hope that you now understand that teaming up with a mentor can boost your fitness.

101 Critical Days of Summer motorcycle safety message

By Maj. Gen. James W. Nuttall, Deputy Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard

There are more motorcycles on the road than ever before. While 20 percent of passenger vehicle crashes result in injury or death, an astounding 80 percent of motorcycle crashes result in injury or death. Motorcycles provide no occupant pro- tection, which makes ejection a common injury pathway. However, there are ways to make your motorcycle riding safer and de- crease the chances of injury or even death in the event an accident occurs. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is a simple method of reducing the severity of an accident. Helmets are estimated to be 37 percent effective in preventing fatal injuries to motorcyclists and 67 percent effective in preventing brain injuries. A helmet is the single most important safety device a motorcyclist can have. Required PPE for all Army personnel includes a DOT approved helmet; impact or shatter resistant goggles or full-face shield; protective shirt, jacket, and pants that sturdy footwear, leather boots or over the ankle shoes; a long sleeve shirt or jacket, long pants, and gloves. Bell that is slightly higher than a brightly colored upper garment during the day and a reflective upper garment dur- ing the night.

Mobile Event Team sparks interest

The goal of the MET is to assist the recruiter in gathering leads at recruit- ing events. As a result, we request- ed the MET was to help gather leads. They enabled us to gather a large audi- ence and to have them get off running the attraction. It was great to actually recruit and not worry about setting up and running the rock wall.

By Sgt. 1st Class Peter Fritch, Mobile Event Team Leader

It seems the Mobile Event Team (MET) is everywhere you look. Cre- ated in response to recruiters who saw the logic in a team that is dedicated to supporting recruiting events, the MET travels the State of Oregon and generate leads for recruiters. By using these and other techniques, the Mobile Event Team sparked interest.

G.I. Johnny mugs for the camera at a MET event in Portland featuring an appearance by Dale Earnhardt Jr.’s National Guard #88 NASCAR show car. Events like this are designed to raise awareness of the Oregon National Guard and generate leads for recruiters.

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OR National Guard wife takes “crash course” on military life

A chance meeting during Hurricane Katrina leads to love and marriage, now Katie Dyer is learning to cope with life as a deployed Soldier’s wife.

Story by Kimberly L. Lippert, Oregon Military Department, Public Affairs

First Hurricane Katrina, then a wedding, and now a deployment. The last few years have been a whirlwind for Katie Dyer, wife of Capt. Paul Dyer of the Oregon National Guard. To top it off, when she married Dyer two years ago, Katie joined the ranks of thousands of military spouses in the Oregon National Guard.

“I think there are certain things about war and the military you cannot understand until you live it,” she said.

Dyer met her husband while at Hurricane Katrina in September, 2005. He was deployed with the Oregon National Guard, she was a former television reporter, turned volunteer animal rescuer.

“He was assigned to protect me,” said Dyer of her husband.

The two fell in love and married in 2006. In the past two years, Katie has had a crash course on what it means to be a military wife.

There are the protesters. (See Katie Dyer’s commentary below.)

“I’m not against the protesters at all and I’m not necessarily for the war, but please don’t protest the families.”

And now the long separation – Dyer’s husband recently deployed with the Embedded Training Team to Afghanistan.

“My husband is a terribly romantic guy and I get flowers about once a month, I realized that would stop when he deployed, making the separation about a hundred times harder” said Katie Dyer.

The realization sparked a business idea. “There should be some way to let families know that Soldiers are thinking about them even when they can’t call or write,” said Dyer.

In January, 2008, Katie Dyer launched Heroes at Home, a web-based business which connects deployed service members with their families in a unique way.

Military members who are serving overseas can register online with Heroes at Home, and send care packages which are sent out once a month to their families.

Heroes at Home has sent more than 500 packages.

“A lot of families say it meant so much to get flowers even though they weren’t able to talk that day.”

Since its launch in January, Heroes at Home has sent more than 500 packages.

“Some of the protesters were staying at the same military ball. All of the Soldiers and their dates were staying at the same hotel. When it was time for the party, we emerged to find a dozen female protestors, dressed in black and lining both sides of the sidewalk.”

“We either had to walk right through them or our dates were staying at the same hotel. We walked through the protesters. It’s amazing the difference a small gift can make,” said Dyer.

Anti-war wounds: reflections on the sacrifices of a Soldier and his family

At a dinner in Ashland, Oregon, a former television reporter turned volunteer animal rescuer fell in love with Capt. Paul Dyer, a military reporter.

“I was a former television reporter, turned volunteer animal rescuer,” Dyer said.

“The future of our country – our honor, our dignity, our freedom – rests on the shoulders of volunteers. All of us could stay home with our families and wait until the terrorists come to find us.”

“Instead, Paul and thousands of men and women like him left their families, put their lives on hold, and went to meet the terrorists head on.”

“Your mission here in Afghanistan,” Dyer said. “It’s easy to say we shouldn’t be at war, when you’re not the one.”

“Those who have served in the military have made the biggest sacrifices for this war – but I want you to know that your life didn’t do it for nothing.”

Annually, Katie is in Oregon that makes you forget all the rain. We walked through the protesters. “You’ll join us when your husband dies,” one of them whispered.

“If you say you support the troops, don’t protest outside the armories.”

Katie Dyer, Oregon National Guard Spouse

By Katie Dyer

“We’ve just marked the end of the fifth year of war in Iraq, and the 4,000th U.S. Servicemember killed there. There are services held to remember the Soldiers that no longer come. It’s learning strain in friendships that used to include people there. For some it’s a political stance. For some people, it hurts me to watch.

I watch them through angry tears. I watch them hurt hundreds of people there.

I was a former television reporter, turned volunteer animal rescuer, a romantic guy. I think there are certain things about war and the military you cannot understand until you live it. I were holding hands.

We either had to cross the street, or walk right through them. Paul and I were holding hands and looking forward to the evening. The air was comfortably warm and the sun had just started to set – the kind of summer evening that would stop when he deployed, making the separation about a hundred times harder.”

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A day in the life: Guard helicopter pilot returns after seven months in Iraq

Chief Warrant Officer Mike Jolma had just eased up on the throttle of his hefty C-23 Sherpa military cargo plane and settled into a holding pattern so the F-16 fighters could land at the air base just north of Baghdad.

That’s when insurgents on the ground tried to make his plane their next target, unleashing a hail of bullets from a belt-fed machine gun.

“They were coming back along the Tigris River when we started taking fire from the right and the left,” Jolma recalls. “They were looking at us because we slowed down. We banked to the right and headed for the perimeter. Times like that can get scary, but we made it safely.”

It was just one of the hundreds of flights that Jolma, 45, of Oregon City and the 44-member squad had been stationed at Camp Anaconda since last fall, serving roughly seven months in Iraq.

The pilots and other aircraft personnel were responsible for carrying soldiers, supplies and other cargo. Of the 44, 12 were from Oregon, and they were welcomed home earlier this week at a demobilization ceremony at the Portland Air National Guard Base in Northeast Portland.

The unit is headquartered in Portland, with detachments in Oklahoma, Washington and South Dakota. There were 10 airplanes with the unit. The Oregon soldiers hail from all across the state: Portland, Salem, Pendleton, McMinnville, La Pine, Hermiston and Dallas.

For Jolma, returning meant that he finally was able to meet his 7-month-old daughter. Her wife, Lisa Jolma, 37, gave birth to their third child two days after he left.

“I knew this was going to be a sacrifice,” Mike Jolma said. “It’s something my wife expected, and she really sacrificed. The hardest part for me was being away from my wife and kids.”

In Iraq, the Sherpa is known as much for its boxy look as it is for the amount of cargo it can carry. Jolma and his three-person crew flew about 106 flights.

They carried ammunition to other soldiers, ferried military personnel from base to base and hauled parts for vehicles and aircraft to where they were needed.

The unit, over the month, had more than 4,000 hours of flight time, he said.

During down time, Jolma and his buds sold out of the gym. He also tried to get time on the computer so he could send e-mails to his family.

For Lisa Jolma, those were priceless.

“It’s been great to hear from him,” she said. “We spent seven months living e-mail to e-mail and phone call to phone call. I really missed yelling for him to come look at things or the kids were doing. Or simple things like calling and saying, ‘Pick up a loaf of bread on your way home.’ Basically, your best friend is gone from your life.”

Now she’s home, Mike Jolma relishes the time he gets to spend with his new daughter and his other two children, who are 13 and 3.

But for Jolma, service to his country was reason enough for his sacrifice.

“I wanted to volunteer,” said Jolma, who had never before been abroad. “It was hard, knowing that my wife was home alone, taking care of everything. But I did this so other people could have certain freedoms. That’s what sacrifice is about. I’m just glad to be home.”

Continued from FRONT PAGE


“I appreciated it, and I appreciate your being great ambassadors for the State of Oregon and the Oregon National Guard,” he said to the assembled 144 Soldiers.

Seven of the Soldiers of the 115th MPAD earned the Combat Action Badge, after wrapping up on the throttle of his cargo plane and settled into a holding pattern so two F-16 fighters could land at the air base just north of Baghdad.

The return of the 224 En. Co. in June marks the return of the last unit of the State of Oregon had in the country in Iraq.

The next unit scheduled to deploy is HHC 2-641 Aviation. They are set to mobilize Aug. 6. and then travel to Fort Benning, Ga., for predeployment training prior to their arrival in Iraq.
Oregon Guard joins Salem school to help Afghani children

Story and photos courtesy
Debra Seec,
Abiqua School Development Coordinator

Remarkably, it can take the innocence of youth to create the handshake of peace. That handshake is happening at Abiqua School in Salem, Oregon, as part of the teaching at the school. The Abiqua School mission and curriculum have been built and continues to focus on teaching children to see the world through the eyes of knowledge and friendship and peace.

For the past few months, Abiqua middle school students have been making and selling ornamental glass necklaces to aid homeless veterans with excess military clothing such as roti’s journey to success started at the age of 12 when he started primary school, some time no one else in his family had accomplished.

The journey led him towards a career in medicine and exposure to the Peace Corps and Mercy Corps. It also led him toward an everlasting friendship with an American who invited him to the United States and, eventually, led him to his position at the Oregon Medical School. However, along that journey, nothing made him prouder more than the day his name was added to the list of primary school students in Afghanistan.

Mohammad first presented the Green Village Schools to Abiqua School with military connections; Lt. Col. Rob Fraser, Sgt. Donald Olson and Lt. Col. Mark Rathburn of the Oregon National Guard. Abiqua students were appreciative of their surroundings when they learned children at the Green Village School sat on dirt floors.

Olson learned of Mohammad’s efforts prior to his first deployment to Afghanistan.

“We were in theatre where we really got the experience of the heat, the dust, the awful smell of burning rubber and feces in the streets…and in Kabul, which is the more advanced city of Afghanistan. The conversation with Olson continued in depth, in curiously and in awe of what was taking place. While fighting the Taliban, the Oregon National Guard, trained the Afghanistan Army in personnel tactics and operational functions. “It was democracy in action,” Olson said.

As the war in Afghanistan continued, Green Village Schools continued to grow. The growth, Olson said, is attributed to the ever increasing contributions from citizens of Oregon and Washington, and now around the U.S. and Canada. The effect of the school allows the children of Shin Kalay to someday become the leaders of Afghanistan, he said and added, “Through an education their parents and grandparents never dreamed of, children of Afghanistan can make a local and worldly difference and hope for a better future,” Olson said.

“We are seeing history in the making through bricks and mortar, paper and pen,” Olson said. He believes the possibilities of the future for the U.S. and Afghanistan is through education. “How can one not be interested in this?” he asked.

Rathburn’s mission in Afghanistan was to support The Afghan National Army, other NATO forces, and humanitarian missions. One of those missions involved the building of twelve Green Village Schools classrooms. “This was an amazing process much like our Habitat for Humanity program here in the U.S. (We (the OR National Guard) had supported a number of other projects, but none

large shipment of aid for homeless veterans to Salem, Ore. So large, in fact, that local officials had to make alternate plans to receive the shipment.

“We had no idea there were going to be 34 pallets of stuff here when we agreed to take the donations and so we’ve been working all day to find ways to overcome various obstacles including shipping costs and the truck,” said Jim Booker, State Veterans Program Coordinator, Oregon National Guard Engineer Battalion, got the call the Oregon Guard sprung into action.

“One of the reasons I like the National Guard is the fact that when something comes down the pipeline we are ready on a moments notice to walk into an office and say ‘let’s make it happen,’” Baca said. “We just dropped everything and came over here- It’s an on the spot mission.

The engineers brought a large truck equipped with a hoist and proceeded to load all of the material and take it to a suitable place for unloading.

“When we hear those things, ‘emergency, and emergency’ we just dropped everything and we came down here,” said Sgt. 1st Class Scott A. Nyquist, Readiness NCO, 1249 Engineer Battalion.

“I got two captains slinging load for me, and we’ll
State Fair Military appreciation days

The Oregon State Fair will again this year honor and recognize military veterans with free admission during Veterans’ Appreciation Days on Saturday, July 26 and Aug. 23.

Veterans and active military will be admitted free at the gate by showing a current military Identification Card, or a copy of their DD 214, or their valid driver’s license with a military identification. Veterans and active military will be required to show their valid veterans benefits card or identification to gain free entry. That identification includes a copy of their DD 214, a veteran’s organization fellowship card, military ID, or a valid military ID card for all active duty personnel, Guard, Reserve, and retired military members.

The fairgrounds are located off of Highway 97 on Yew Avenue. If you have questions, call 541-385-3214 or Deschutes County Fair and Expo, 541-548-2711. To receive RV parking on-site, call 541-548-2711, ext. 7949.

President signs new G.I. Bill legislation

On June 30, 2008, President Bush signed legislation ushering in a new era in GI Bill benefits. The funding provides servicemembers a more generous education package, which for the first time could be passed to family members if troops opt not to use it themselves.

The new GI Bill, payment rates will go up, but be based on the college or university costs in the servicemembers state of residence. Eligible families will receive a monthly stipend for books of up to $1,000 per year and a monthly housing allowance of up to $1,000. The housing stipend will be tied to the Pentagon’s basic allowance for housing rates.

The new education benefits are forecasted to go into effect in mid-2009 and will be available to all servicemembers and veterans—including members of the Guard and Reserve—who have served on active duty for at least 90 consecutive days since Sept. 11, 2001. The benefits are paid in increments which are determined by the amount of time served on active duty.

New education benefits passed by state legislature

Dependants of active-duty service members killed, or 100 percent service-connected disabled after September 11, 2001 may have their undergraduate tuition waived to a bill passed by the Oregon Legislature during its February supplemental session.

Senate Bill 1666 (SB 1666) provides waiver of tuition and fees at Oregon state institutions of higher education, including Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU), for eligible dependents.

VA outreach to combat veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will immediately begin targeting more than 590,000 Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF-OIF) veterans who have been discharged from active duty but have not contacted VA for health care. VA will call these veterans and inform them of the benefits and services available to them. For five years after their discharge from the military, these combat veterans have special access to VA health care, including screening for signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). For more information on VA benefits, visit the VA website at www.va.gov.

38th Annual Great Oregon Steam-Up

Guardmembers get in free, Aug. 2 – 3

The Antique Powerland Museum Association will be the driving force behind the Guard Appreciation Days at the 38th Annual Great Oregon Steam-Up, Aug. 2 and 3, the Antique Powerland Museum in Brooks, Ore. will offer free admission to all Oregon National Guard and Reserve members and their dependents. The museum is located at 3995 Brook Lake Road NE. Gates open at 7 a.m. and close at 9 p.m.

Antique tractors pulling four wheel people movers serves as parking lot transportation on the acre museum grounds. Greek Railroad a 1/2 scale railroad is available to ride for children and adults. The trolley ride and antique engine, tractor, car and motorcycle museums traffic for a day.

The Antique Powerland Museum’s roots began in the 1950s when farmers would showcase “heritage” tractors, cars and motorcycles from their tractors. Eventually, these events generated enough popularity, which eventually gave way to the 62-acre plot of land acquired by Western Antique Powerland Inc. known today as the Antique Powerland Museum. On display will be antique tractors, large trucks, vintage automobiles and motorcycles. Vintage military vehicles will also be on display. Also on site is a steam-powered sawmill that cuts logs into dimensional lumber that is used to build some of the build- ings at the museum. The museum also has several stores, swap meet and crafts shops. Great place to bring the entire family at no charge. Visit www.powerland.com.

G-RAP offers dollars for enlistments

If you know of someone who would be a great addition to the Oregon National Guard or who is already in the Guard but would make a great officer you may want to take advantage of the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP). By registering online at www.GuardRecruitingAssistant.com you can become a Recruiting assistant with the potential of earning thousands of dollars.

Guard Recruiting Assistants can earn up to $8,500 for each select Officer Candidate who accepts a Commission and $2,000 for each Enlisted Commission. RA applicants must be verified and hired by a contractor, Docupac. Contact your chain of command for additional questions regarding any aspect of this program to include the referral process. Additional point of contacts can be reached by contacting Louis.Ferriss.us.army.mil or Callender.us.army.mil.

60th Anniversary for Desegregation of Military Celebration

The Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs and the Oregon Military Department will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the integration of the armed forces on July 26 at 10 a.m. at the Anderson Readiness Center in Salem.

Under the new GI Bill, payment rates will go up, but be based on the college or university costs in the servicemembers state of residence. Eligible families will receive a monthly stipend for books of up to $1,000 per year and a monthly housing allowance of up to $1,000. The housing stipend will be tied to the Pentagon’s basic allowance for housing rates.

The new education benefits are forecasted to go into effect in mid-2009 and will be available to all servicemembers and veterans—including members of the Guard and Reserve—who have served on active duty for at least 90 consecutive days since Sept. 11, 2001. The benefits are paid in increments which are determined by the amount of time served on active duty.

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U.S. Treasury Bonds available on Internet

Did you know that you can buy U.S. Savings Bonds in electronic form and hold them directly with the U.S. Treasury over the Internet? You can even convert your current bond to an electronic form and hold them in an account with the government. Both are possible when you open your account, which is created online, and perform a check out to more information on the Treasury Direct Program at www.fitfap.mil/sites/ml/ mar2008/antrieverdirectprogram.htm.

Retiree Service Office

Open Tuesdays at the Anderson Readiness Center, 3225 State St. Salem, Ore. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

503-584-2891
1-800-452-7500, ext. 2891
E-mail: ORRSO@or.nrb.army.mil

US Mail: Retiree Service Office
PO Box 14350
Salem, OR 97309
Air Guard takes top honors at TAG Match

Story by Master Sgt. Jeff Arnst, Small Arms Readiness Training Section

Master Sgt. Michael Shepherd of the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field, won top individual honors during the 2008 Adjutant General Combat Marksmanship Match. The 173rd FW team also won the team championship, narrowly edging the 118th Military Police Co. team.

Seventy-nine Oregon National Guard members representing 18 Air and Army units across the state competed during this two-day event, conducted April 26 and 27 at Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Ore.

Staff Sgt. Stephen Whitmore took first in the open category, and Sgt. Scott Balzer took first in the novice category.

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The AG Match is an opportunity for individuals to test their marksmanship skills against other Oregon Guardmen using both side arms and rifles.

This competitive, battle-focused marksmanship training is designed to increase the level of marksmanship proficiency at all levels, while also developing marksmanship trainers. This event can also help unit commanders identify marksmanship trainers within their units. The AG Match is open to active Oregon National Guard members. For additional information contact Master Sgt. Jeff Arnst, Jeff.arnst@us.army.mil or Sgt. 1st Class Mike Shuman, michael.shuman@us.army.mil.

125th Special Tactics Squadron trains like they fight

Story by Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling
125th STS Superintendent

The 125th Special Tactics Squadron (STS) of the Oregon Air National Guard recently deployed to Fort Bragg, N.C. to conduct various types of airborne operations enhancing our combat readiness capability. A C-130 from the 440th Air Wing from Pope Air Force Base, N.C. arrived at Portland Air National Guard Base, Apr. 25.

The C-130 returned to Pope AFB with six Combat Controllers and 2 parachute riggers from the 125th STS in Portland, Ore., carried approximately 1,000 pounds of cargo. Upon arrival at Pope AFB the eight-man team established a gear preparation and briefing area to support operations during the trip.

The training is important because the 125th STS is tasked to be anywhere, at any time, and by any means available, which can certainly includes by parachute.

During the trip to Fort Bragg, Airmen conducted static-line and military freefall operations from a variety of altitudes. A static line jump operation is required to infiltrate enemy territory at low altitudes between 500 and 1,000 feet without being detected and utilizing a circular parachute that immediately deploys upon aircraft exit. Using this type of parachute allows for large numbers of parachutists to jump at a high altitude, often covering several air miles in the process.

Using this style of parachute is advantageous because an aircraft may have to remain in enemy air space and this allows us to do so without being detected. The drop aircraft could fly several miles opening (HALO) jump. The aircraft is a C-130 out of Pope Air Force Base in Fayetteville, N.C.

The 125th STS conducted 15 static line jumps and 10 HALO and HAHO jumps while deployed to Fort Bragg. The training ensured our Combat Controllers are properly trained and remain proficient for the next time they are called to accomplish the mission.

For more information about joining the 125th Special Tactics Squadron please call the Special Tactics recruiter at (503) 335-4056.

Military Police unit Celebrates 100-years of service

Story by Pfc. Anita M. VanderMolen
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Milton-Freewater Detachment 1 1186th Military Police held a ceremony to celebrate reaching the 100-year giudon streamer May 4, 2008.


The streamer, re-designed for uniformity across the state, and a certificate signed by the AG were awarded to the unit.

The Milton-Freewater community has supported Oregon’s citizen soldiers for 131 years.

“It’s an honor and a privilege to be a part of a great tradition of the Oregon Army National Guard and of our community,” said Staff Sgt. Lacinda L. LeFlore, the 116th Military Police Company detachment first sergeant and training noncommissioned officer.

Since the first organization date, June 29, 1877, Milton-Freewater has hosted 13 different Oregon volunteer units. National Guard awards stay with the community differing from active duty awards that follow the unit.

“It’s a privilege to be able to serve under a tradition that has been going on so long with our community,” said LeFlore. “Along with the privilege, we can also feel the sense of responsibility to carry on and carry the tradition of the citizen soldiers to our community by passing it forward to the youth to carry on what our forefathers brought up.”

Nineteen other units also have received the centennial recognition. Two units are nearing the 100-year mark. Since 1847, the Hillsboro community has supported citizen soldiers and has the oldest organization date in the state. They currently are the home of the Delta Company, 2nd Infantry, 162nd Brigade Unit.

Capt. Christina A. Hardy, the 1186th MP detachment commander said, “If anything good comes from this war it is that the National Guard does work because we put in the same time and effort as active soldiers- it gives us bragging rights.”