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Oregon Sentinel



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

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 Five (OIF 5) in Iraq.

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

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Photo by Kay Fristad, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Sgt. Justin Aldrich stands with his son on his shoulders as the troops of the 224 Engineer Company are welcomed home at Timber-Linn Park in Albany, Ore.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Ontario breaks ground on new readiness center



Photo courtesy Johna Strickland, Argus Observer

Story by Larry Meyer, Argus Observer
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ONTARIO, Ore. — The sun shined on Ontario'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,

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees (center) throws out a shovel-full of dirt, while flanked by military and civic leaders, in an official groundbreaking ceremony for the Ontario Readiness Center, May 23.

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

See **Readiness Center** on PAGE 5

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COMMENTARY

Oregon National Guardmembers a source of pride



Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees,
Adjutant General,
Oregon Military Department

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 and the Adjutants General of 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 2, 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. (P) Marty Plotner 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 successful national event.

At another event, I took great pride in introducing SFC Tim Vandervlugt to Senator Wyden in La Grande. 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 annual Lincoln/National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb. SFC Vandervlugt led the team through the course and on to a 7 minute and 11 second margin win over the nearest competitor, the Utah National Guard team. He was also awarded the Guard'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 Senior Master Sgt. Max White, of the 142nd Fighter Wing in Portland, Ore. White has been apart 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 recruiting and 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 should all be enormously proud of being members of the Oregon Guard. Serving overseas, 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.

State CSM says farewell to Oregon Guard

The last one,

To all the Soldiers and Airmen of the Oregon National Guard: Thank you. The rumor that I am leaving this post is true. I have been offered and accepted a position at Northern Command in Colorado Springs, Colo. where 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 travel and visit them while they performed their duties, always in an outstanding 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 during my tour as the State Command Sergeant Major and during my 30-plus years being directly assigned to the Oregon National Guard.

On a large scale there are some people I 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 here.

Governor Ted Kulongoski; who has been a great supporter of the National Guard and of all service 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; whos 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. Jim always provides the service men and women of Oregon with outstanding resources and care for our veterans and serving members.

As I said earlier, this column is not big enough to cover everyone I owe thanks to. All of my fellow Sergeants Major and the Commanders, Army and Air. The great staff at Joint Forces Headquarters, both civilian



State Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas R. Moe,
State Command Sergeant Major,
Oregon Military Department

and military.

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

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

THANK YOU,

CSM Moe

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rank abbreviations explained

Previously, the Sentinel responded to two letters in order to explain how we abbreviate ranks for publication. In order to address the below letter we will republish the response which succinctly explains the issue. ~ Ed.

Please have your staff and editors of the Azuwr/Sentinel use the correct Army rank abbreviations. I am tired of being embarrassed at every single issue. This publication needs to be accurate in reflecting the correct title and rank our Soldiers have earned. I reference AR 600-20 for the correct rank abbreviations and title.

Unsigned

First of all, thank you for your comments. We have had many questions regarding how the ranks are abbreviated in the Oregon Sentinel. Hopefully I can address those concerns here.

The Oregon Sentinel, like many commercial and military publications, uses the Associated Press Style Guide as our point of reference for grammar, style, layout, and

general reference.

It is the "technical" reference given by name by both Department of Defense and the National Guard Bureau for all internal and external military publications, and is also widely used by the commercial print media as the "gold standard".

The AP Style Guide is specifically referenced in AR 360-1, Ch. 13, subsection 12, as the preferred style guide.

In the AP Style Guide section on "Military Titles", all ranks, regardless if they are Army, Air, Marines, Navy, or Coast Guard, are referenced in a certain style. As an example, "Capt." is used across the board, regardless of which branch of service for that person.

I must admit, seeing "Capt. John Smith" in an article does not help the reader to discern what branch of the military he may be in, but the intention of the rule in the AP Style Guide is that the context of the story would help explain this.

Further guidance in the AP Style Guide dictates using the branch of service prior to the name on the first reference if more than one military branch is referenced in the article. For example: "U.S. Army Capt. John Smith."

Moreover, with the ever-growing base of readership for the Sentinel; which has come to include civic leaders, Family members and employers; the use of a standardized format for all ranks, regardless of branch of service, is preferable.

Using a standardized reference manual creates a sense of consistency with our civilian and military publication counterparts, and most importantly, our readers. ~ Ed

Red Cross thanks OR Guard

Dear Friends at the Sentinel,

On behalf of the Willamette Chapter of the American Red Cross, I wish to express our sympathy for the recent loss of Ms. Sally Barrett. The Red Cross has been honored with a generous gift in her memory from the Oregon National Guard. We hope that you will find some comfort in remembering Ms. Barrett's dedication and pride of service as a member of the Oregon National Guard team.

Sincerely,
Karen Schultz, Executive Director

COMMENTARY

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 read recently in 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 category can have a positive effect on fitness 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 arrangements to work out together. I should add that Military One Source 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 bases around the state 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 Hood to Coast Relay.

Each runner has the chance to run three legs of five to six miles each. Getting in shape for that event naturally keeps the participants in top form. And the team-building during the relay itself is remarkable. When I am hauling the baton, the last thing I want to do is to let my teammates down. And it carries over to working with them when I am back on base.

For those who are even more ambitious, there are opportunities to compete with

the Oregon National Guard Marathon team. Each year that team travels to Lincoln, Nebraska, to compete in the Guard Championships. The top finishers in that race get to travel around the country to run in 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 that you must only run to get ready for the fitness run.

You will cut down on injuries and actually improve your performance by including cross-training in your fitness program. By cross-training, I am referring to aquajogging in the swimming pool, swimming, cycling indoors or outside, stair-stepping, rowing, elliptical training, or circuit training, among others.

By using these and other techniques I have never had a running injury that prevented me from performing one of the aforementioned forms of cross-training.

For most of us, three or four days of running per week with cross-training interspersed is the most effective way to get in shape.

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 measurement.

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



are struggling on their fitness test with someone who is in the excellent fitness category can have a positive effect on fitness in the military.

Those individuals can easily be linked

Soldier saves Arizona native

Story by Kim Lippert,
Oregon Military Department
Public Affairs

It was a dark, hot night in Yuma, Arizona, and Sergeant 1st Class Edwin Richardson was on his way to work as a night shift supervisor with Operation Jump Start, protecting the border.

"I came across a cloud of dust and I slowed down, then I saw a dark colored vehicle that had rolled over," said Richardson, from Delta Company 1-186 Infantry Grants Pass, Ore.

Richardson pulled over immediately and ran to the car.

"I started searching and finally spotted him in the median," said Richardson. "When I came upon him he was unconscious, lying in the middle of the road in bad shape with ragged breathing."

"I assumed there were internal injuries, so I didn't move him," he said.

The victim was a 24-year-old Yuma man named Justin Nordell. They were on a dark stretch of highway on Interstate 8. Emergency vehicles had yet to arrive on scene. Just seconds after getting to the victim, Richardson said the unthinkable happened. A passing car slammed into the victim's vehicle still sitting in the middle of the roadway.

"It probably missed myself and Justin by a only a few feet, followed by a second and a third vehicle" said Richardson.

"I was on the phone with 9-1-1 when a third vehicle came through traveling 55-65 miles per hour and missed us by no more than a foot," he added.

"That's when I thought, I almost got killed!"

Richardson stayed with the victim, risking his own safety to save a total stranger. While tending to Justin, he directed the other victims in what had become a multiple car accident. "That's when my training as a soldier took over, there was no conscious thought, I just took over and got done what needed to be done," said Richardson.

Despite the inherent danger of staying



Photo Courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Ed Richardson

Sgt. 1st Class Ed Richardson shown here following his return from Operation Jump Start in Yuma, Ariz.

with the victim in the middle of the Interstate, Richardson waited by his side until emergency vehicles arrived. Within about 15 minutes authorities raced in and began working on Justin, but Richardson said they weren't optimistic.

"He was in bad shape, and the police officer on scene told me that he didn't think Justin would survive," said Richardson.

It was in utter disbelief, three weeks later, that Richardson answered the phone and heard words from Justin's father, Dan Nordell, that he never expected to hear – Justin was alive! "I was shocked," said Richardson.

Dan Nordell tracked Richardson down to say thank you. Miraculously his son was alive, despite multiple broken bones, lacerations to his liver and kidneys and scalping to the right side of his head. Dan Nordell said there was only one reason his son survived . . . Sgt. 1st Class Richardson.

"It is very possible that had Sgt. 1st Class Richardson not stayed on the scene at least one of the other vehicles would have run my son over and killed him," said Dan Nordell. Despite the gravity of situation, Richardson remains humble.

"I don't feel I did anything any other soldier wouldn't have done," he said.

Justin Nordell continues to recover at a rapid pace, and is now home doing outpatient rehab. He's doing so well he even managed to make a phone call to the person many say saved his life. "He called me his guardian angel," said Richardson. "I was speechless. The reward for me is that he's doing so well," he added.

"I have been a police officer for 30 years now and have seen many, many people who would have decided not to get involved had they driven up on this scene," said Dan Nordell. "Every time my son and I share a special moment from now until the day I die I will know that there is at least one person I have to thank for making that moment possible," he said. "It has to be an incredible feeling to know you saved a life."

101 Critical Days of Summer motorcycle safety message

By Maj. Gen. James W. Nuttall,
Deputy Director,
Army 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 protection, which makes ejection a common injury pathway. However, there are ways to make motorcycle riding safer and decrease 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 properly attached to the helmet; sturdy footwear, leather boots or over the ankle shoes; a long sleeved shirt or jacket, long trousers, full-fingered gloves, as well as a brightly colored upper garment during the day and a reflective upper garment during the night.

Mobile Event Team sparks interest



Photo Staff Sgt. Nick Lopez, Oregon Recruiting Command

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 Guard and generate leads for local recruiters.

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

It seems the Mobile Event Team (MET) is everywhere you look. Created 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 with an array of tools at their disposal.

From rock walls to flat screen TV's; the MET maintains equipment that is used during recruiting events. Some of the MET's more popular features include the pugil arena (Guard Gladiator), rock walls, G.I. Johnny, a sports cage, inflatable tents and of course a paintball gun system.

The goal of the MET is to assist the recruiter in gathering leads at recruiting events. "The reason we requested the MET was to help us get leads. They enabled us to gather a large audience and not have to worry about running the attraction. It was great to actually recruit and not worry about setting up and running the rock wall," said Sgt. 1st Class James Marinucci; RRNCO in Grants Pass.

In June; some of the MET events included Portland for the Rose Festival with Dale Jr.'s #88 NASCAR, Medford for a 'drift' car show, Roseburg for a high school grad night and Umatilla for its Landing Days.

In this and future issues of the Oregon Sentinel, events will be included so that you can see what is happening in your area and invite your friends who may consider joining the Oregon National Guard.

Many have found that events offer an excellent opportunity for GRAP enlistments!

If you have an idea for a recruiting event and would like the MET present, contact your unit recruiter.

FEATURES

OR National Guard wife takes "crash course" on military life



Photo courtesy of Katie Dyer

Capt. Paul Dyer and his new bride Katie chose to marry, September 2006, in New Orleans, La. to commemorate their meeting during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

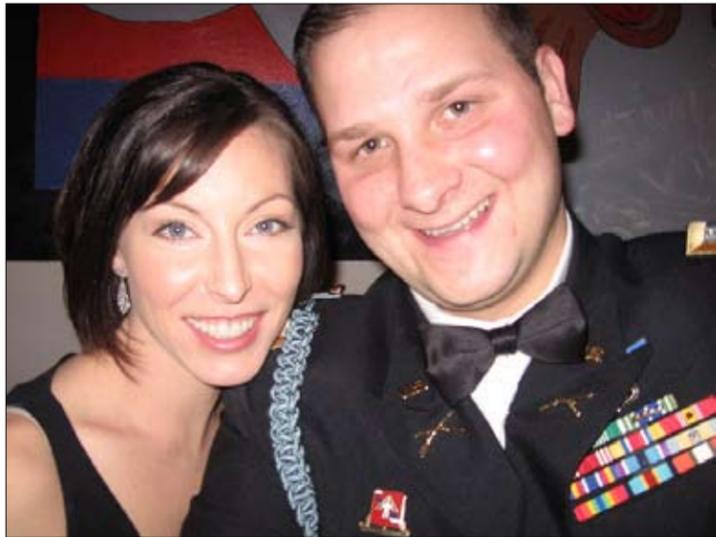


Photo courtesy of Katie Dyer

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

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.

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 families," said Dyer. "If you say you support the troops don't protest outside the armories."

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 con-

nects deployed service members with their families in a unique way.

Military members who are serving overseas can register online with Heroes at Home, and chose from a number of packages ranging from one month to a year, which allows them to send gifts to their loved ones on special occasions like anniversaries or birthdays.

"I've had a fabulous response on both ends," Dyer said. "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.

Soldiers like Oregon Army National Guardsman, Sgt. 1st Class Mark Browning are thankful for the idea.

"Knowing I can always be connected to my family no matter where I'm stationed greatly improves my ability to focus on my mission here in Afghanistan," Browning said.

"It's amazing the difference a small gift can make," said Dyer.

While Captain Dyer is overseas, Katie said she will continue to build her business, and, like her fellow military spouses across Oregon, count the days until her husband comes home.

For more information on Heroes at Home, visit: www.heroesathome.com.

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

EDITORIAL

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 peace rallies with dozens – sometimes hundreds – of people there. I watch them through angry tears.

I believe the demonstrators want what I want: for the war to be over, and for all the soldiers fighting it to come home.

They are hopeful, passionate, and they have no idea how much it hurts me to watch. For some people, the war is a cause.

It's a chant, a picket sign, a march through town. For some it's a political stance.

But I am the wife of a deployed Soldier.

For me, the war is the reason I sleep alone every night. The reason that on most nights I'm not sleeping at all. It's the strain in friendships that used to include both me and my husband, Paul.

It's the dinner invitations from other couples that no longer come. It's learning to ride the tractor and unfreeze the well and remembering to start both cars on a

regular basis so the batteries won't die. It's doing my chores, and his, and trying not to be lonely at night when the house is too quiet and there's no one to talk to. For me, the war is knowing that best case scenario, these changes will define my life for the next year, and worst case, the changes will be permanent.

My husband fights this war. He risks

I am only the 'we' in the sense that I am joined legally and spiritually with a man who is. I'm the 'we' beside the 'We.'

Last summer we were in Ashland for a 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 protesters, dressed in black and lining both sides

of the sidewalk. 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

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.

I wheeled around, but felt Paul's hand tighten sharply around mine before I could open my mouth. We kept walking.

What I now understand is this: 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.

I want my husband to come home. I

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

—Katie Dyer
Oregon National Guard Spouse

his life everyday. We have both made sacrifices for it. And to hear them say that it's a waste of time; that it will never make a difference; that we should call the whole thing off... well, if that's true, I'm not sure I'll get out of bed tomorrow morning. There has to be a reason that our family – along with thousands of others – is enduring this. Paul believes that he is making a difference in this world. I have to believe that, too.

Lately, I read blogs by Soldiers on the front lines. One of them writes, "It's easy to say we shouldn't be at war, when you're not the we."

I didn't become the 'we' until September 17, 2006, the day I married Paul, three years into the war in Iraq. And even then,



Photos courtesy of Katie Dyer

Capt. Paul and Katie Dyer are seen here at the Ashland, Ore. military ball in the summer in 2007.

want the war to be over, and for no other families to have to go through a deployment. But more than that, I want the 4,000 deaths that we have suffered in this war to mean something.

The truth is – I don't care about life in Iraq or Afghanistan. But I care very much that every American Soldier who gave his or her life didn't do it for nothing.

I don't want our country to make any more sacrifices for this war – but I want the sacrifices we have already made to matter.

Unfortunately, I can't see any way to have both.

NEWS

Soldiers demob

Continued from FRONT PAGE

didn't exist before Alpha Company's arrival. Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, head of Special Operations in Iraq, cited the unit for their dependable and outstanding service to OCF-I.

For the 115th MPAD, the mission consisted of writing stories, shooting photos and producing radio and television pieces for use by major broadcast networks, news radio and newspapers around the world.

Seven Soldiers of the 115th MPAD earned the Combat Action Badge, after direct contact with insurgents including Al Qaeda.

"I want to thank you for your service, because what I saw over there personally was a lot of pride, professionalism and expertise," said Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon, in reference to a trip to Iraq he took to see first-hand the situation on the ground for Soldiers of the 224th En. Co., A Co., 641 Avn., and others in February 2008.

"I appreciate 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.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jefferson Thompson

Spc. Matthew Mikolas greets his mother Nancy Mikolas following a demobilization ceremony for the 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment held May 22 at the Anderson Readiness Center in Salem, Ore. In all 18 Soldiers returned from a nearly year-long deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF 5).

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

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 two 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.

"We were flying 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 managed to land safely."

It was just one of the hundreds of flights that Jolma, 45, of Oregon City and his fellow members of the Oregon National Guard's Alpha Company, 641st Aviation Regiment, made in Iraq. 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 around 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. His 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 overseas and only getting to see pictures."

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.

Overall, the unit had more than 4,000 hours of flight time, he said.

During downtime, Jolma and his buddies slept, ate or worked out at 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 huge to have him back," 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 what 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 that he'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."

Story by David Austin,
Oregonian

Reprinted with permission

Readiness Center set for Ontario



Photo courtesy Johna Strickland, Argus Observer

Maj. Gen. Rees cuts the cake with help from military and civic leaders including Rep. Greg Walden (2nd from Left), in an official groundbreaking ceremony for the Ontario Readiness Center, May 23.

Continued from FRONT PAGE

the ceremony the support of the city and community college was important for the project to be completed.

Commenting that 80 Oregonians have given their lives in the war on terror, Walden said the Guard needs to be given more support.

"We need to update the Guard's benefits," he said.

He also said the armory is about families, where Guard families come to get support information when citizen-soldiers are deployed.

Newly-elected Oregon House of Representatives District 60 candidate Cliff Bentz, Ontario Mayor Joe Dominick and TVCC President Jim Sorensen also spoke at the ceremony.

On a more practical level, Oregon Army National Guardsman Staff Sgt. Jerry Lopez said the new facility will offer one critical item the current, ancient armory near the Malheur County Fairgrounds does not.

"Air conditioning," Lopez said. "We don't have air conditioning in the current building."

Lopez said the new facility will be a great resource for the Guard and Guard families.

The commander of Eastern Oregon's Army National Guard unit, the 3rd Bat-

alion, 116th Cavalry Brigade, Lt. Col. Kevin Sheehy said the new readiness center is needed.

"(It (the current armory) is inadequate for our needs," Sheehy said. "It hasn't been adequate for some time."

One feature of the new facility, two M1A1 Abrams tank full-crew interactive simulators, will be especially welcome Sheehy said.

"We won't have to travel to do gunnery simulations," he said. "Also, a brand new facility will help with morale and help with recruiting."

Col. John Goodale, the commander of the 116th Cavalry Brigade, lauded the working relationship between Idaho, Oregon and Montana Guard officials.

"It's a neat relationship," he said. Besides, the relationship gives Goodale three adjutant generals, three governors and a host of lawmakers to help him get what he needs.

This is not the only project the Guard and the college are working on at the site. Plans are in the works to reconfigure the nearby wetlands and create a park-like setting. That has been delayed while some of the necessary permits are worked out.

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski also sent a letter of congratulations to area and state officials regarding the armory. In the letter, Kulongoski regretted he was unable to be at the Ontario ceremony.

Bush signs military tax cut into law

Story compiled by
Oregon Sentinel Staff

President Bush signed a military tax bill containing a combination of new tax benefits and the extension of existing benefits into law June 17, 2008.

The Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008, or HEART Act, includes a provision allowing military families to receive the \$600-per-person economic stimulus rebate even if a spouse does not have a Social Security number.

The law also provides the following:

* Survivors of people who die on active-duty are now allowed to put all or part of death gratuity payments into a tax-deferred savings or retirement plan, even if this puts them over the annual limit for contributions.

* Mobilized National Guard and reserve members may make penalty-free withdrawals from their personal retirement plans, which especially helps those with financial troubles caused by military service.

* Guard and reserve members who contribute to an employer-provided flexible spending account can get refunds of

contributions at the end of a calendar year, rather than lose the money, if they have been mobilized, since mobilizations could interfere with their ability to spend money as expected.

* Small businesses employing Guard and reserve members may receive a \$4,000 tax credit to make up salary differences for employees who are mobilized for military duty.

* When calculating aid for military families, the Social Security Administration will not use combat-related pays to disqualify a family for disability or health benefits.

* California, Texas and other states with their own home loan programs would be able to provide loans to newly discharged service members, something that was not previously allowed because of bond-related issues. Rep. Susan Davis, D-Calif., chairwoman of the House Armed Services personnel panel, who pushed for the change, said this is an important update in law.

"Those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan will now have greater opportunities to purchase homes, especially in California's high-cost real estate market," Davis said.

FEATURES

Oregon Guard joins Salem school to help Afghani children

Story and photos courtesy
Debra Seeck,

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, Ore. and is an important 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, friendship and peace.

For the past few months, Abiqua middle school students, with the direction of art teacher, Anna Von Rosenstiel, have been making and selling ornamental glass necklaces to aid

in the construction of classrooms for Green Village Schools in Afghanistan.

All proceeds go towards the school and, to date, their sales have reached almost \$2,250.

Green Village Schools, a school open to Afghan boys and girls, was created by Dr. Mohammad Kharoti, a nuclear medicine technologist at Kaiser Permanente.

It was and continues to be his dream to see children of Afghanistan empowered with the opportunities and education similar to those of the United States.

Born into a nomadic life and raised in poverty in Afghanistan, Mohammad Kharoti's journey to success started at the age of 12 when he started primary school, some-

thing 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 Kaiser Permanente. However, along that journey, nothing made him more proud 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 Kabul 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 curiosity and in awe of what transpired. 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



From left to right: Reed Johnson, Julianne Johnson, Anna VonRosenstiel (teacher), Rebecca Richardson, Delaney Plant. Abiqua Middle School students have raised more than \$3,000 to donate to the charity.

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 have 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

where the local community got together to build classrooms, making the funding go much further."

Green Village Schools is composed of 24 rooms, four of them made of mud, the remaining of firebrick and steel. Over 1,000 students fill the rooms. Classes range from first through ninth grade and will quickly advance to eleventh grade by this fall. Mohammad stipulates that class size be limited to no more than 30 students while Afghanistan government allows 50 to 100 students per class.

Previously, Afghan girls were not allowed an education. In Mohammad's plan, girls who graduate from this school will continue on as teachers. "This education gives them independence and freedom...the power of "I can do it," he said.

"Can do" was the attitude of the Abiqua students toward their project. They realized if they could make money selling these necklaces, they could help build a classroom for Green Village Schools. "It's all about making a difference," said Anna Von Rosenstiel, a teacher.

All 38 middle school students participated in the project.

During the sales, students took note of consumer interests in designs and colors, and used this information during glass production.

They also learned about retail sales. In the end, they were stunned by the support for the cause and outcome of the sales.

"Money cannot buy the kind of compassion shown by the Abiqua students," Mohammad said. He is impressed and congratulates the dreams and hopes from Abiqua students for supporting children's education in Afghanistan. He holds dearly the meaning of the sales project taken on by Abiqua students. These students, Mohammed believes, are "shaking hands and building bridges of peace."

Engineers answer call for critical "on-the-spot" mission

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

Operation New Hope, launched in 1993, provides homeless veterans with excess military clothing such as boots, cold weather clothing, sleeping bags, blankets and other items. Since its inception, the program had distributed more than \$125 million worth of clothing and other items to homeless veterans nationwide, as of 2003.

On May 27, 2008, Operation New Hope brought a

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 simply getting it off the truck," said Jim Booker, State Veterans Program Coordinator for the Employment Office. "It's become so difficult a problem that we had to call in the National Guard to help us get the stuff off a loading dock and over to our storage facility," he added.

Once Capt. Bob Baca, 2nd Officer of the 1249th Engineer Battalion, got the call the Oregon Guard leapt 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 safekeeping.

"When we hear those things, 'emergency, and for the veterans' 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 sling-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, Oregon Military Department

Sgt. 1st Class Scott Nyquist readies the crane on the HEMTT in order to load 34 pallets of homeless veteran aid provided to the Oregon Employment Department through Operation New Hope. The aid comes from excess active duty military supplies and consists of subsistence items like blankets, cots, canteens, and clothing.

operate this crane until it gets dark or until they tell us to quit, we have to get all of this stuff off this loading dock and it looks like at least three HEMTT-loads worth of gear," said Nyquist. He and his fellow Guardmembers were able to finish removing the aid by 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 27, and unloaded the aid at State of Oregon Employment Department offices by noon the next day, thus completing the mission, he concluded.

OREGON NATIONAL GUARD POST DEPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE (Reintegration Program)

The Oregon National Guard wants to see you succeed, and is ready to help with employment, health care, college, or other matters.

Call toll-free: **1-888-688-2264**, 24-hours, 7-days per week
or visit our website at: **www.orn-g-vet.org**

OTHER CONTACTS FOR ASSISTANCE

- Suicide prevention hotline: 1-800-560-5535
- Oregon Military Department: 1-800-452-7500 / 503-584-3980
- VA Hospital, Portland, Ore.: 1-800-949-1004
- VA Hospital, Walla Walla, WA: 1-888-687-8863
- VA Hospital, Boise, ID: 208-422-1000
- VA Hospital, Roseburg, Ore.: 541-440-1000
- Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs: 1-800-828-8801
- Veterans Administration: www.va.gov
- Military One Source: www.militaryonesource.com
or: 1-800-342-9647
- ESGR: 1-800-452-7500 / 503-584-2837
- Family Readiness Program: 1-877-881-5181 / 503-584-3543
- CTAP Employment Assistance: 1-888-688-2264
or: 503-584-2393
- TriCare (TriWest): 1-888-874-9378

NEWS BRIEFS

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 Aug. 22 and Aug. 23.

Veterans and active military will be admitted free at the any gate by showing a copy of the 2008 Veterans Admission Voucher. The voucher can be downloaded from the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs website, www.oregon.gov/ODVA/StateFair.shtml.

For admission prices, hours, special discounts, and other scheduled theme days, call the Oregon State Fair at 503-947-3247 or, go online at www.oregonstatefair.org.

Deschutes County Fair free to Military

Deschutes County Fair officials will be honoring the service of all veterans by offering them free admittance to the fair, July 30 to August 3, in Redmond, Ore.

The free pass is only for the veteran and is good for admission on all four days. Veterans will need the proper identification to gain free entry. That identification includes a copy of their DD 214, a veteran's organizational membership card and photo 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 reserve 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 was framed by Sen. Jim Webb, of Virginia who has long argued that veterans deserve benefits that match those given to World War II vets. Then returning GIs were covered for the full cost of tuition and books for whatever college they entered, in addition they were paid a monthly stipend.

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 students also will receive a monthly stipend for books of up to \$1,000 per year and a monthly housing allowance of about \$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.

We'll have full in depth coverage of the new GI Bill in the next issue of the Oregon Sentinel. More information on the GI Bill can be found at www.gibill2008.org.

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 enlistment.

RA applicants must be verified and hired by a contractor, Docupak. 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 e-mailing Louis.Ferris@us.army.mil or Cary.Miller@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 desegregation of the armed forces Saturday July 26 at 10 a.m. at the Anderson Readiness Center in Salem.

All veterans, especially veterans of color, are invited to attend the ceremony. The Anderson Readiness Center is located at 3225 State Street Salem, OR 97309. For more information, please contact Maj. Alisha Hamel at (503) 949-8109 or by email at alisha.hamel@us.army.mil.

ORNG Retiree/Vet Council expands

The Oregon National Guard Retiree' and Veterans Council has expanded its area of responsibility to include Veterans, and retired State or Federal civilian employees of the Oregon Military Department. A veteran is anyone that has been discharged or relieved under honorable conditions from the Oregon National Guard. The Council's challenge is to recognize the future changes in the make up of our civilian employees and military members. The challenging role that the Oregon Guard plays in our deployments and continuing efforts for peace throughout the world, brings our people closer together. It is the Council's mission to provide a communications link to our veterans and retired military with their units and the Oregon Guard.

By expanding their web site, www.orn-retirees.info, and articles in the Oregon Sentinel, the Council hopes to provide continuing support to retirees and veterans.

Military handbooks now available

Military handbooks are now available for military personnel. The handbooks, written specifically for military service members, include a variety of information about pay, benefits, education and transitioning from the military. The books cover a variety of topics including, retirement, benefits, scholarships, and locations of base installations.

The free military handbooks are available at www.militaryhandbooks.com.

New education benefit passed by state legislature

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

Senate Bill 1066 (SB 1066) provides waiver of tuition and fees at Oregon state institutions of higher education, including Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU), for eligible dependents.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 1442 testified before the Legislature stating that troops who are being deployed deserve assurance that the education of their families is taken care of should they become severely injured or killed.

The bill was unopposed and directs post-secondary institutions to waive tuition for the child or spouse of a service member who dies on active duty or is certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as 100 percent disabled as a result of their military service.

The bill passed with no opposition. Senate Bill 1066 was signed by Governor Ted Kulongoski and took effect on March 11, 2008.

If you have any questions regarding this veteran benefit, please contact the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA), 503-373-2085 or toll-free at 1-800-692-966.

New website works to help OR Guard

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) would like to provide the community an opportunity to assist the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. A website is being developed to catalog Oregon resources for Service Members and Military Families through Military Homefront, www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil.

Military OneSource Consultant Michelle Kochosky of the Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP) is seeking to enlist community help in building this Internet resource online at www.mystate.mhf.dod.mil. JFSAP is available, at no cost, to all active duty, Guard and Reserve members and their families.

The MySTATE website provides users access to organizations that provide special discounts and services to members of the military community. Nike, offering a 10 percent Special Military Discount, is one of the first business organizations to go online with the Oregon MySTATE website.

If you as a member of the greater Oregon community would like to begin free participation in this web-enabled effort to support the Oregon Guard and Reserve, please contact Michelle Kochosky at (503) 956-4859 or at michelle.kochosky@militaryonesource.com.

TSP limits change for those who deploy

If you work in a combat zone anytime during the calendar year and also contribute to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), the annual addition limit is important to understand.

Learn more about the annual addition limit of TSP at www.dfas.mil/mil-news/mar2008/annualadditionlimit.html.

DMDC website offers free service for active duty members

A new free service is available on a Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) Web site to obtain certificates of current active duty service needed for creditors under the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act of 2003 (SCRA).

Learn more about the DMDC at www.dfas.mil/mil-news/mar2008/freeActiveDutyServiceCertificates.html.

VA outreach to combat veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will immediately begin targeting more than 500,000 Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF-OIF) veter-

ans who have been discharged from active duty but have not contacted VA for health care. VA representatives 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 in VA benefits, visit the VA website at www.va.gov.

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 paper savings bonds into electronic form and hold them in an account with the government. Both are possible when you open a TreasuryDirect account. Be sure to check out more information on the TreasuryDirect Program at www.dfas.mil/mil-news/mar2008/treasurydirectprogram.html.

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 2008 Annual Great Oregon Steam-Up. On Aug. 2 and 3, the Antique Powerland Museum in Brooks, Ore. will offer free admission to all Oregon National Guard members and their dependents. The museum is located at 3995 Brook Lake Road NE. Gates open at 7 a.m. and close at 6 p.m.

Antique tractors pulling four wheel people movers serves as parking lot transportation on the 62-acre museum, and Willow Creek Railroad a 1-1/2 scale railroad is available to ride for children and adults. The trolley car line circles the park and offers displays at their indoor trolley car museum. Other activities include different antique engine, tractor, car and motorcycle museums traditional tractor pulling; flea market and vendor sales; food concessions; live musical entertainment and more.

Antique Powerland's roots began in the 1950s when farmers would showcase "heritage apparatuses" and test the power of 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 buildings at the museum. The museum also has several stores, swap meets and craft shops. Great place to bring the entire family at no cost to enjoy the day.

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.ngb.army.mil

US Mail:
Retiree Service Office
PO Box 14350
Salem, OR 97309

Kingsley Field JAG earns top award for Guard, Reserve



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Shirar, 173 Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Dan Bunch, Staff Judge Advocate for the Oregon Air National Guard, 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Ore.

Maj. Gen. Jack L. Rives, the Air Force Judge Advocate General, has announced the 2007 Judge Advocate General Award winners.

One of the Oregon Air National Guard's own, Lt. Col. William D. Bunch, staff judge advocate of the 173rd Fighter Wing, Kingsley Field, Ore. was selected for the Reginald C. Harmon Award for the Outstanding Reserve Judge Advocate of the year.

This award recognizes the most outstanding air reserve component officer in the grade of lieutenant colonel or below selected as the most outstanding judge advocate of the year based on training accomplishments or contribution to mission support, exhibition of leadership in the military or civilian community and enrollment in off-duty programs of professional self-improvement.

"Obviously I was very excited, very honored to win the award," said Bunch. "What I really enjoy is doing well nationally out of a small unit such as Kingsley Field, so I think it's great to win one for team Kingsley!" he continued. "I have heard through some of the congratulatory email I have received that it is unusual for an Air Guard JAG to win this because it usually goes to the regular Reserve, so I really feel like it's Kingsley's award too," he said.

Bunch feels that a significant portion of the selection process was based on his service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I am quite aware that my service in Baghdad had a lot to do with winning this award, and that of course brings a lot of humility with it because I know so many people who have been over there more times and for longer than my six-month tour," he said.

At the conclusion of his deployment to Baghdad, Iraq, Bunch was also awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his work on the Law and Order Task Force.

The award was presented by Gen. David H. Petraeus, the Commanding General of Multi-National Force-Iraq.

The JAG award recipients will be formally recognized at an awards banquet during KEYSTONE 2008, the JAG Corps' leadership summit, to be held the first week of November in Washington, D.C.

Bunch, who received his law degree from the University of Virginia, works in his civilian position as the County Counsel for Klamath County, Ore., and teaches business law at the Oregon Institute of Technology.

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's Combat Marksmanship Match. The 173rd FW team also won the team championship, narrowly edging the 1186 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.

Sgt. 1st Class Charles Whitmore took first in the open category, and Sgt. Scott Balzer took first in the novice category.

Seventy-nine Oregon National Guard members representing 18 Air and Army units across the state competed during this two-day event.

The AG Match is an opportunity for individuals to test their marksmanship skills against other Oregon Guardsmen 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. The scores fired during this match validate the marksmanship training Oregon Guard Soldiers and Airmen receive. Performance at this event can also help unit commanders identify marksmanship trainers within their units. The AG Match is open to active Oregon National



Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Maries

Tech. Sgt. Sheri Park and Staff Sgt. Melissa Northcutt, both members of 142 Medical Group, score and repair their targets during the 2008 AG Match. Conducted annually, the AG Match is open to active Oregon National Guard members, Air and Army. This competitive, battle-focused marksmanship training is designed to increase the level of marksmanship proficiency throughout the Oregon National Guard.

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., and approximately 3,000 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 include 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 infiltrate an object, dominate the area, and take control for following operations.

The 125th STS also conducts military freefall operations consisting of High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) or High Altitude High Opening (HAHO) which we use to infiltrate small numbers of personnel into high-threat areas to conduct clandestine reconnaissance missions. When conducting HALO or HAHO operations jumpers utilize a rectangle-style



Photos courtesy 125th STS



Above: Tech. Sgts. Jacob Williams, Adam Monticelli and Stefano Guadagnuolo of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron out of Portland Air National Guard Base, are photographed in a rare angle as they exit an aircraft to begin a high-altitude-low-opening (HALO) jump. The aircraft is a C-130 out of Pope Air Force Base in Fayetteville, N.C.

Left: Senior Airman Russell Eilersick of the 125th STS makes a static line jump from the rear of a C-130 during the training at Pope AFB, N.C.

ed altitude, open their parachutes, and fly the remainder of the distance under their canopy to the target.

HALO operations are used to allow parachutists to jump at a high altitude and open at a low altitude (roughly 4,000 feet), HAHO operations are similar except that the jumper opens at a high altitude and utilizes the canopy for the remainder of the flight into the target area.

The 125th STS conducted 15 static line jumps and 10 HALO and HAHO jumps while deployed to Fort Bragg. The training ensured that 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.

parachute that allows Combat Controllers to fly directly to a target from 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 it to do so without being detected. The drop aircraft could fly several miles away from the intended target at altitudes in excess of 30-thousand feet, Combat Controllers then exit the aircraft while breathing oxygen and freefall to an intend-

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 receiving the 100-year guidon streamer May 4, 2008.

Christian T. Allen, Military Personnel Service Center historian, said The Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, ordered records updated and a new streamer for the centennial units.

The streamer, re-designed for uniformity across the state, and a certificate signed by Rees 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, state and country," said Staff Sgt. Lacinda L. LeFore, the 1186th 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 LeFore. "Along with the privilege, we can also feel the sense of responsibility to continue and carry on the tradition of the citizen soldiers in our community by passing it forward to the youth to carry on what our forefathers brought up."

Nineteen other units have also 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."