Governor Kulongoski greets the returning Soldiers of 234 EN CO

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

WARRENTON, Ore. — The City of Warrenton, Ore. honored Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers from the 234 Engineer Company during a ceremony at the Warrenton High School Gymnasium, May 2, 2008. About 250 family, friends and visiting dignitaries attended the morning event.

The 234 Engineering Company, based at Camp Rilea, Ore., returned in April from their first deployment since reorganizing from Charlie Company, 1249 Engineers. Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski was on hand to greet the returning Soldiers saying, “I have one piece of formal business to take care of first—welcome home!”

“On behalf of the people of Oregon, it’s good to have you back,” said Kulongoski.

The 144 engineers; 131 men and 13 women returned after a two-month mobilization at Camp Shelby, Miss., and an eight-month deployment to Balad, Iraq.

Their primary mission was to conduct security escort missions along supply routes throughout the country of Iraq. The 234 Engineer Company provides crucial vertical construction assets to the Oregon Army National Guard and the State of Oregon.

Perhaps the most notable piece of the ceremony was the Governor’s summation of what the Soldiers of the unit accomplished during their overseas tour of duty.

See 234 on PAGE 5

U.S. Forest Service partners with Oregon Guard

It seems the Oregon National Guard has a few skills worth sharing.

And according to the National Director of the U.S. Forest Service, Law Enforcement Division, the knowledge Guard Soldiers employ on the battlefield in the Global War on Terror, will also help with the war on drugs.

Soldiers from the Oregon Army National Guard trained officers from the U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement division in Hood River, Ore.

The training is an effort to step up drug enforcement on public lands by teaching Forest Service officers valuable military skills, such as land navigation, hand signals, troop movement, and spotting and tracking, said Forest Service officials.

According to John Twiss, National Director for the U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement Division in Washington D.C., the training helps Forest Service officers acquire valuable Soldiering skills to deal with an increasing threat coming from drug cartels.

“The National Guard is an excellent partner,” Twiss said. “They’re highly skilled, be it in ground or air operations, or providing air assets and equipment that we badly need. We couldn’t be more thrilled to have a better partner.”

On a cold, rainy day, deep in a forest just north of the town of Hood River, about 75 Forest Service law enforcement officers broke into nine-man teams following a morning briefing by Oregon Army National Guard Capt. John Caughran.

A member of the Guard’s Counter-Drug Division, Caughran helped organize the training, which began in 2005 with a training exercise with the DEA and U.S. Forest Service.

“Since then, we have been the primary mode of training for the Forest Service,” Caughran said.

“This is their version of annual training,” he added.

Larry Ried, Reserve Law Enforcement Officer for the U.S. Forest Service, said the training is particularly valuable coming from Soldiers who do the work every day.

“We do this seasonally,” he said. “So to work with people who do this all the time not only gives us new skills, but helps us feel more confident in what we’re doing.”

The groups headed into the forest, working their way through the dark canopy, quietly picking their way through the thick underbrush.

Every man on the team wore camouflage, a U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency employee, and Oregon Air National Guard, Chris Sciewell, role playing as a marijuana grower, stands near a fake marijuana plant, as he waits for the Oregon Army National Guard members during training with Oregon Army National Guard members during an inter-agency exercise.

See Oregon Guard on PAGE 5

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski greets each Soldier following a demobilization ceremony held May 2, 2008 at the Warrenton High School gymnasium in Warrenton, Ore. The Soldiers are part of the 234 Engineer Company, which provided convoy security during their deployment in and around Balad, Iraq.

WINNER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD MEDIA AWARD FOR 2007
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Oregon celebrates Armed Forces Day

Story by Kim Lippert, Oregon Military Department, Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore.- Under sunny skies four F-15s from Kingsley Field, in Klamath Falls and Portland Air National Guard Base flew in formation over the Oregon State Capitol in honor of Armed Forces Day. All past and present members of the military were honored during the ceremony Thursday, May 15, 2008.

“All have paid a price,” said Oregon State Senate President Peter Courtney. “Some with their blood, some with their mind and some with their lives,” he added.

With a toddler in her stroller and her three older kids looking on, Ruth Carter and hundreds of others intently as speakers explained the importance of recognizing our nation’s veterans.

“It teach my kids how our country fights for freedom and if it wasn’t for our country who knows what our world would be like,” asked Carter.

For Carter’s 10-year-old twin girls the best part of the ceremony was clearly the louders, “When the jets flew over!” said Michela Carter.


Moyer, a World War II veteran served in the Pacific Theater with the 41st Infantry Division, the first National Guard unit to deploy after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Two other Oregon residents, also former members of the 41st Division, attended the event.

“We want you to march, even though I don’t march as fast as I once did I still want to march,” added Lewis.

“We all appreciate being appreciated,” said Bud Jensen, another WWII veteran who served with the 41st Infantry Division.

“We couldn’t do this without the support of our commands in Oregon,” he added. “They’re the greatest.”

This year’s National Guard Marathon team competition attracted 18 team entries from across the United States. The team match results are determined by combining the overall running times of the top three declared members of the team.

“We’re happy … it’s a big deal for us to win!”

Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Vandervlugt, Team Captain

“We couldn’t do this without the support of our commands in Oregon,” he added. “They’re the greatest.”

The Oregonian team – which consisted of Vandervlugt, Edward King (2:52.06) and Sean Nixon (2:58.09), defeated the Wisconsin National Guard Marathon team consisting of Jason Kirch (3:02.53), Michael Western (2:47.04) and Mike Zeigle (3:00.16). The Oregon National Guard team also won the Military Team Division title at the Lincoln National Guard Marathon.

Vandervlugt, who has been part of several Oregon National Guard national championships over the years, said it’s always difficult to maintain the level of talent and consistency needed to maintain a championship-caliber team. That’s even more the case now, especially considering the nature of overseas conflict the National Guard is currently engaged in.

“Two of the guys who were on the team this year were deployed last year … and one of the guys who was on the team last year is deployed now. Two of the guys who are here now, they’re going to be deployed next year. And I’m going to be deployed the following year,” said Vandervlugt, adding that the runners know where their priorities have to lie. “It’s part of our job. We’re Soldiers first, runners second. That’s always a given.”

The key, said Vandervlugt, is planning for those deployments and developing a group of runners to fill in when vacancies occur.

“We got a good pool,” he said. “Next year it’s going to be a little harder … there might be three of us who are solid runners here next year, but with the deployments, you really just don’t know. If I get any unit alert notice before, you don’t know … I might not be here.”

That’s why the Oregonians have developed a motto that they take with them to each race they compete in. “Run each race like it’s your last deployment,” he said. “And then come back and try again,” he concluded.
The Iraqi shop-keeper kept a suspicious eye on the uniformed Soldiers standing guard in front of his store.

Two Soldiers, speaking through an Iraqi translator, asked questions about stolen computer equipment. After a flurry of gestures and Arabic words, the translator turned to the Soldiers with disappointing news.

“No, he doesn’t know about any stolen goods,” he said.

Then the interpreter leaned in closer and lowered his voice. “But he said his neighbor is involved in illegal dealings with the insurgents.”

While this interaction could have happened anywhere in Baghdad, it was part of a training scenario which took place right here in Oregon. The event was organized by the Oregon Army National Guard’s 41st Brigade Combat Team to help prepare its Soldiers for the unit’s upcoming deployment to Iraq.

Capt. Jason Faler, one of the chief organizers of the event, said this particular training cycle was one of the most successful he had undertaken. Moreover, he said the cultural awareness and the skills imparted by the Iraqis provides valuable intelligence and insight into a part of the world he’s committed to serving.

Faler, who is the Commander of the 41st Brigade Combat Team’s Bravo Company 41STB, envisioned placing actual Iraqi interpreters—many of whom have years of experience working as interpreters with coalition forces inside Iraq—alongside Oregon Soldiers.

His vision became a reality when Soldiers from his unit trained with Iraqi translators during the April drill weekend at the Tuuatu Valley Fire & Rescue facility near Sherwood, Ore. Participants said the experience was not only unique and ground-breaking, but very rewarding. But the training—and indeed the Iraqis’ asylum in the United States—was only possible because of the realization of Faler’s idea to “help a few Iraqi friends.”

The non-profit group, Checkpoint One, was created by Faler in Aug., 2007, out of a need to “repay” the interpreters who “gave so much” during his time in Iraq. Faler worked as a liaison to the Iraq Ministry of Defense, during a year-long deployment in 2005, during which he worked closely with several Iraqi interpreters.

There’s a brotherhood that developed in the combat zone between Soldiers, and it’s not a whole lot different between Soldiers and interpreters,” Faler said.

According to Faler, because of the respect he developed with his U.S. troops, many Iraqi interpreters faced persecution, and even death by insurgents, who deemed them “traitors” to Iraq. Many of the interpreters came back to work day after day despite threats to their lives. They continue to work out of a sense of loyalty and commitment to rebuilding Iraq, Faler said.

They stand shoulder to shoulder with us every day, except they’re not armed,” he said. As a result, Faler became very close to three Iraqi interpreters, who he ultimately helped gain U.S. citizenship—the same three who now help his Soldiers learn the nuances of Iraqi culture and language—Motassem, Ahmed and Waleed.

Checkpoint One, he said, was a way to rescue his three friends. “It’s what I’d do for my own blood brother,” Faler said. “Creating the foundation was a means to that end.”

Faler, who works full-time at Providence Health System, roughly figured it would cost about $20,000 to bring an Iraqi citizen and his immediate family into the U.S. The cost included paperwork, airfare, temporary lodging, visas, and various ex- penes. He quickly realized there was no way he could afford to foot the bill for one, let alone three of his Iraqi friends and their family members.

“I knew I would need to acquire donations, so we created the foundation,” Faler said. The ‘we’ includes Salem at- torney, Scott McGraw, who was for someone who has worked with westerners for several years, Ahmed still found the journey to the United States a challenge.

“I have an idea about the American personality and culture, so it wasn’t that difficult for me,” he said. “But for my wife and two kids it was very new. At first I thought I would be the one encouraging my wife, but I found that Ahmed’s,” funding has been the strong one.”

Major Motassem Ahmed, a military officer, also found very strong support in the local community, due in large part to the number of Iraqi nationals who live in the Portland-Metro area.

According to Faler, support went beyond the local community. He said the initiative to help provide sanctuary for persecuted Iraqis and their families has found support from Salem, Ore., all the way to Capitol Hill.

“We have had bipartisan support from both U.S. Congress- man Earl Blumenauer and U.S. Senator Gordon Smith,” Faler said. “And I think that speaks to how fortunate we are here in Oregon, and how non-controversial this cause really is.”

Faler said he never thought the foundation would receive this much attention. In late 2007, the New York Times wrote an editorial about Checkpoint One.

“I never envisioned this,” he said. “While the media coverage has kept this issue at the forefront of the American conscious- ness, there has not been parity between the donations and the attention we’ve received.”

Ideally, Faler would like for the U.S. government to take a more active role in helping displaced and persecuted Iraqi citizens and their families.

While the Feds allowed for emigration of certain Iraqi ci- tizens to enter the United States under section 1059 of the Na- tional Defense Authorization Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-163), and subsequently increased the number of Iraqis who can enter the country under SEC. 1244, Special Immigrant Status for Certain Iraqis,” funding has been left up to private citizens and foundations like Faler’s.

“In a perfect world, the U.S. government would put me out of business, and take on the task we’re doing right now,” Faler said. “We’ve made some progres s, I don’t think it’s impossible, but it’s probably not enough.”

While Ahmed and Waleed had a relatively easy time mak- ing their way to the United States, Motassem was held up understanding culture is extremely important for these Soldiers.”

— Sgt. 1st Class P, Bravo Co., 41st Special Troops Battalion

Checkpoint One

The Checkpoint One Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) non-profit group, and all contributions are tax-deductible.

Many Iraq and Afghan inter- preters and their families have been killed or exiled due to their work with Coalition Forces.

The foundation accepts elec- tronic, cash, or personal checks via the website.

For more information on Checkpoint One, or to become involved in helping Iraqi or Afghan citizens, please visit www.checkpointfoundation.org, or contact the foundation at 503-871-3238.
accomplished while deployed, when he said, “Your efforts have saved lives and your contributions made a profound difference in the future of the new Iraq . . . you have proven you are the best this state has to offer.” Kinugoski said.

Success for Company Commander, Maj. Jeffrey S. Brown of Keizer, Ore., meant being “the best security company that the 234 Engineers could be.”

By the end of their mission, the 234 Engineer Company had escorted nearly 6,000 vehicles for 44,000 miles across Iraq; conducted 260 convoys; and maintained the fleet of vehicles.

“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. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon, in reference to a trip he took to Iraq to see first-hand the situation on the ground for Soldiers of the 234th EN CO and others.

“I appreciate your being great ambassadors for the State of Oregon and the Oregon National Guard,” he said to the 144 soldiers standing in formation.

The unit’s deployment came just before an even larger deployment warning order was issued for Oregon’s 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

For now these Soldiers don’t need to look that far down the road, they can relax and enjoy being reunited with family and loved ones.

“The best part is the kisses, you know they miss you because you hold them so tight when they hug you,” said Sgt. Shawntel Jackson, while holding her young daughter for the first time in 10 months—both of them with broad smiles on their faces.

The first thing on the agenda for the Jackson family was finding a restaurant for dinner.

“Hopefully we’ll go to the Mongolian Grill,” said her husband, Staff Sgt. Corey Jackson. “It’s a buffet and all I know is I’m hungry, so it has to be a buffet,” he added.

The ceremony marks one of several homecoming events which took place in the month of May. The 115 Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and A-641 Aviation Regiment both returned in May. Both of these stories will be covered in the June issue of the Oregon Sentinel.
Suicide bomber solidifies “Sons of Iraq’s” resolve in Hawijah

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Margaret Nelson, 11th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Hawijah, Iraq — Khalaf Ibrahim Ali had just finished checking up on his fellow 7,000 of Iraq’s sons in Hawijah. It was April 2.

The day was turning out to be another hot one in Hawijah, located approximately 60 miles south of Kirkuk City in the Kirkuk Province. He had just sat down to cool-off and have a refreshing drink with an ice cream when a young man who didn’t recognize him approached.

In a blink-of-an-eye, Ali would be wrestling with a man who number over 7,000 in煤itions to the police force for Exercise Shanti Doot-2 (Ambassador of Peace), a peace support operation. He was carrying an improvised explosive device strapped to his upper body. “I heard him ask someone if I was Abuna,” Ali said. Abuna (Arabic for our father), is Ali’s nickname. And then Ali noticed how nervous this person appeared, sweat visible on his face and clothing, and how one half of his body did not appear normal..."much larger and bumpy," said he described it.

“I looked into his eyes, and saw fear,” Ali’s gut told him to react to a threat. “I saw his arm moving by his side and his hand was squeezing something.” What Ali saw was the suicide bomber’s fail-safe attempts to trigger an improvised explosive device strapped to his upper body. It malfunctioned. This opportunity allowed Ali to fire a round from his weapon into the attacker’s chest.

At the conclusion of this encounter, a suicide bomber and an innocent bystander would be killed.

“He was back to work the next day. Undaunted by this and other failed attempts on his life in recent months, Ali and those against other Sons of Iraq in the area; seem to fuel his determination further for future combat operations on the battlefield, there is no other organization that can muster such diverse capabilities to today’s military environment.”

The Oregon Guard is well suited for this exercise due to prior UN training experience. In 2006, the Oregon National Guard provided command and control for Exercise Khan Quest in Mongolia. “Exercises and military-to-military contacts are the building blocks of partnership and friendship,” said Tanguy. From a Soldier’s perspective, the exercise was also a great opportunity for members of the Oregon National Guard to acquire a global perspective, expand cultural awareness and understand the nuances of cross-cultural communications. The countries participating in this exercise were Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Mongolia, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, USA and Tonga.

“It is my hope that when we leave here all 12 nations will be successfully trained in UN peacekeeping standards and our Oregon contingent will also return with an appreciation for cultural insight and friendship between the participating nations,” Tanguy concluded.

Bangladesh is a predominately Sunni-Muslim nation located in south Asia, bordering both India and Myanmar. Despite being one of the poorest and most densely populated nations in the world, it is a significant contributor to international peace operations worldwide. Exercise Shanti Doot, which means Ambassador of Peace in Bengali, is held at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training. Additional information can be found at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training’s website at www.bitospt.net/index.html.

Sgt. 1st Class Philip “Vinni” Jacques oversees an after-action review as soldiers of the Indian Ghurka Regiment listen to the lead trainer during Shanti Doot-2.

Suicide bomber solidifies “Sons of Iraq’s” resolve in Hawijah

Citizen-Soldiers deployed to “Shanti Doot-2” in support of bilateral exercise involving 12 other nations

Story by 1st Lt. Mike Odle, 173 Fighter Wing Public Affairs Officer

DHAKA, Bangladesh — The country is plagued with regional instability, a history of territorial disputes and ethnic unrest. The United Nations issued a mandate for a peace operation to come to the region. This is the fictional subdivision of Pacifica, the stage for Exercise Shanti Doot-2 (Ambassador of Peace), a peace support operation. Suicide bomber solidifies “Sons of Iraq’s” resolve in Hawijah.

Eight members of the Oregon National Guard deployed to the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to participate in a three-week long Exercise Shanti Doot-2, which commenced April 2. The team, comprised of both Army and Air National Guard members, joined over 680 soldiers from 12 countries.

The exercise was designed to enhance regional capacity for peacekeeping operations, improve bilateral operations between Pacific rim countries, promote professional relationships and good will, all while demonstrating U.S. resolve in support of the security interests of regional allies. The Oregon Guard team provided command and control in Exercise Shanti Doot-2.

The exercise involved a wide range of operational skills and tasks, including checkpoint operations, patrolling, security of distribution sites, convey operations, cordon and search and disarmament following United Nations (UN) protocol. “We are practicing the core components needed to execute UN peacekeeping operations,” said Lt. Col. Edward Tanguy, Commander, 249th Regional Training Institute and field training exercise commander for Shanti Doot. “Our goal is to enhance the readiness and interoperability of the Bangladesh Armed Forces, the U.S. Army, and other multinational forces.”

The National Guard is considered ideal for conducting UN peacekeeping training because of its dual federal and state mission and civilian professional experience. “We bring a unique skill-set as Guardsmen,” said Tanguy. “From natural disaster response to peacekeeping to combat operations on the battlefield, there is no other organization that can muster such diverse capabilities to today’s military environment.”

The Oregon Guard is well suited for this exercise due to prior UN training experience. In 2006, the Oregon National Guard provided command and control for Exercise Khan Quest in Mongolia. “Exercises and military-to-military contacts are the building blocks of partnership and friendship,” said Tanguy. From a Soldier’s perspective, the exercise was also a great opportunity for members of the Oregon National Guard to acquire a global perspective, expand cultural awareness and understand the nuances of cross-cultural communications. The countries participating in this exercise were Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Mongolia, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, USA and Tonga.

“It is my hope that when we leave here all 12 nations will be successfully trained in UN peacekeeping standards and our Oregon contingent will also return with an appreciation for cultural insight and friendship between the participating nations,” Tanguy concluded.

Bangladesh is a predominately Sunni-Muslim nation located in south Asia, bordering both India and Myanmar. Despite being one of the poorest and most densely populated nations in the world, it is a significant contributor to international peace operations worldwide. Exercise Shanti Doot, which means Ambassador of Peace in Bengali, is held at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training. Additional information can be found at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training’s website at www.bitospt.net/index.html.

Photos by Maj. Arnold Strong

Oregon Air National Guard 1st Lt. Mike Odle facilitates an interview with Ali-Jazeera Television with Indonesian 1st Lt. Brijand Prang during Exercise Shanti Doot-2, a peace support operations training in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Stories and photos by Staff Sgt. Margaret Nelson, 11th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Khalaf Ibrahim Ali, greets Capt. Quinn Eddy, commander, Company B, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division during a recent visit. Ali, a Sons of Iraq leader in Hawijah, Iraq, shot and killed a suicide bomber, April 2, who was attempting to assassinate him.

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OTHER CONTACTS FOR ASSISTANCE

- Oregon prevention hotline: 1-800-560-5535
- Oregon Military Department: 1-800-452-7500 / 503-584-3890
- VA Hospital, Portland, Ore.: 1-800-949-1004
- VA Hospital, Walla Walla, WA: 1-888-887-8863 (ID: 208-422-1020)
- 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
- ESQR: 1-800-452-7500 / 503-584-2837
- Family Readiness Program: 1-877-681-5181 / 503-584-3543
- CTAP Employment Assistance: 1-888-688-2264
- or: 503-584-2393
- TriCare (TriWest): 1-888-874-9378

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their brothers in their efforts to take their villages, towns, and cities back from terrorists who kill us, our wives, our children, our dreams and our future,” he said.

While his men consider him a hero, Ali considers his coalition brothers the heroes, referring to Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division whose area of operation includes the city of Hawijah. "Lt. Col. Vanek and Capt. Eddy are the heroes. Their Soldiers continue to risk their lives to help us establish stability here and they are always doing good for our people and assisting in their efforts to rebuild. We owe them much...they are the true heroes,” he said.

The heroes Ali credits are; Lt. Col. Christopher Vanek commander of 1-87, and Capt. Quinn Eddy, commander, Bravo Company...I-87.

Since Sahwah’s inception in December 2007, overall violence in the Sunni-Ala’i-dominated portions of north-eastern Iraq has dropped nearly 80 percent. The Sons of Iraq continue to sign up throughout the Kirkuk Province, which currently numbers over 9,000, according to Maj. Sean Wilson, 1-10th Mtn. Div., Public Affairs Officer.
Ms. Jim Arnold, Restoration Manager for the Oregon Military Department’s Environmental Branch.

His strategy is simple – find safe, cost effective approaches to environmental proj-
ects within the Oregon National Guard. The restoration team managed by Arnold, Restoration Manage-
er for the Oregon National Guard, in the national spotlight after he received the-
ning Secretary of the Army Environmental Award.

“I am very honored to receive this award,” said Arnold. “This is the highest level of recog-
nition given in environmental sci-
ence, and I think it gives validation to the-
approaches we use in the Oregon National
Guard,” he added.

As we reported in the Jan. 2008 issue of the Oregon Sentinel, Arnold was selected as the first place recipient at the National Environ-
mental Security Awards competi-
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The Oregon Military Guard extends winning streak to four years running

Guard mourns loss of friend, co-worker

The Oregon National Guard bade farewell to one of its Soldiers.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Brian Moore passed away April 24, 2008 at 36 years of age. Moore was born Feb. 27, 1972 in Portland, Ore., and was most recently assigned to the Oregon Joint Operations Center and Joint Force Headquarters in Salem, Ore., as an Operations Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO).

Moore graduated from David Douglas High School in Portland, Ore., in 1990 and later attended both Mt. Hood Community College and Lane County Community College.

Moore was awarded medals including the Army Commendation Medal with two oak-leaf clusters and the Army Achievement Medal with two oak-leaf clusters.

The following is a message to Matt’s Guard family from his father, Mr. Douglas Crawford, presented him with a side arm—a .9mm pistol, which Brig. Gen. Crawford later explained was his service side arm.

"Actually general officers are authorized by law, to pay for and retain their military side arm, and I’ve only been a general officer such a short time that it took the Army the entire time I was a general for it to come in and so we did the presentation today," said Brig. Gen. Crawford.

During his most recent assignment, Crawford performed service as the Deputy Commanding General of Joint Task Force, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for his time there from Feb. 2007 until March 2008.

Crawford was awarded the Oregon Distinguished Service Award and the Defense Superior Service Medal, which were presented to him by Rees during the Sunday afternoon ceremony.

Crawford credits the Guard for much of his own successes, as well as the success of many missions all over the globe.

"I think it’s important to for people to know what a huge contribution the members of the Oregon National Guard are making all around the world," said Crawford.

"Everywhere I go the senior commanders, when they find out I’m a guardman, they tell me ‘we could not do this mission without you, without guardmen and reservists,’" he said.

The ceremony was attended by Soldiers, Airmen, coworkers, family, friends, and distinguished guests.

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, the Adjutant General, Oregon, attended along with retired senior leaders of both the Air and Army National Guard, and civic leaders and business owners who were part of the official party of well-wishers.

Crawford’s father, Douglas A. Crawford, a former member of the Oregon Army National Guard, was also there.

"I never dreamed when I was an E-5 with 3rd Battalion of the 186, that I would have a son with a star on his shoulder," said the elder Crawford. "I can remember taking him over to the armory when he was just two or three years-old, and who would have thought it.

In a unique aspect of military protocol, Mr. Crawford presented his son with a side arm—a .9mm pistol, which Brig. Gen. Crawford later explained was his service side arm.

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In the effort to bring the commissary benefit to Guard and Reserve units who do not have commissary facilities nearby, DCA is bringing the benefit to you. The schedule is June 27-29 and will feature a variety of staples and dry goods including meat and vegetables. The sale is open to all veterans, active, Guard, Reserves, and retirees.

The process began with unit-level and wing-level competitions and progressed to state selections.

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34-year Soldier says “goodbye” to Oregon Guard

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