Top Oregon officials visit deployed troops in Iraq

Story by
Spc. Anita VanderMolen
41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team

TALLIL, Iraq -- Oregon’s U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley traveled to Tallil, Iraq to meet soldiers of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Nov. 25, 2009.

The Senators were treated to a quick trip to the Ziggurat of Ur, Abraham’s birthplace, and the Cradle of Civilization. It is also the place known for the oldest arch built, the invention of the wheel and where writing began.

After the Ziggurat, the senators were escorted to Task Force Guardian’s convoy staging lanes where the soldiers had a variety of vehicles prepared and ready for the senators to see. Soldiers gave the senators a lesson on each of the vehicles.

“Impressive,” Wyden said as he reviewed the mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles.

After the tour of vehicles, the senators met with more soldiers and answered questions pertaining to their futures when they come back home. The main concern was the economy, jobs and health care.

“I always try to mention that everyone wants to come here, no want to go there,” Wyden said. “There must be something magical about the United States.”

Oregon Gov. Theodore Kulongoski visits Soldiers and Airmen in Tallil, Iraq -- Governors from Georgia, Mississippi, Oregon and Wyoming visited Soldiers and Airmen Nov. 11 at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center east at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski spoke to service members about the state’s unemployment rate and the new health care bill passed by the House and how it would affect the state. Kulongoski also spoke about the state’s education system.

“Oregon has the most students enrolled in post-secondary schools in all of the state’s history,” he said. He also said he hoped to have a baseball team in the future.

“Right now Portland is the largest media market that does not have a baseball team,” said Kulongoski.

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher G. Mcintosh, battalion liaison non-commissioned officer in charge with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, said he appreciated meeting the governor.

“It’s not often I get to see the governor in person and get to have a conversation with him,” he said.

Mcintosh, a Monmouth, Ore., native, said the meeting helped shed light on two issues that were important to himself and his family. “The highest priorities for me, deal with health care and education,” he said. “To find out what the state of Oregon is doing with those issues is very important, especially when we come back.”

See OREGON on PAGE 5

Story by
Oregon Military Department
Public Affairs Office

SALEM, Ore. -- The University of Oregon Ducks and the Oregon State University Beavers paid tribute to deployed soldiers of the Oregon National Guard’s 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team during the 113th annual “Civil War” game at Autzen Stadium in Eugene, Dec. 3.

Each of the teams’ players wore a small decal of the unit’s “sunset patch” on their helmets as a tribute to deployed members of the Oregon National Guard’s 41st IBCT. About 3,000 of Oregon’s citizen-soldiers are currently serving in Iraq for a year-long deployment.

Prior to the start of the game, the athletic directors of both schools presented a game ball to Oregon’s Governor, Ted Kulongoski and Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General.

Many deployed soldiers watched the game live via ESPN through the Armed Forces Network. In addition to honoring the soldiers with the helmet decals a closed-circuit camera showed a nationwide audience Oregon soldiers cheering their respective teams from Iraq.

The 41st IBCT can be traced back to 1887 when the Summers Law established the Oregon National Guard. During WWII, the unit saw some of the fiercest fighting throughout remote locations in the South Pacific, earning the brigade the nickname “Jungleers”.

Members of the Oregon National Guard’s Youth Challenge Program provided the official Color Guard during opening ceremonies.
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Pasting

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**Measure 66, 67 to impact Oregon Military Dept.**

*Story by Kim Lippert, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs Office*

**SALEM, Ore. — Brig. Gen. Mike Caldwell, the deputy director of state affairs for the Oregon Military Department, said Wednesday he is encouraged by the potential of the impact of the November election on tax increases proposed by the Oregon Legislature.

During the 2009 Oregon State Legislative session lawmakers faced the monumental task of addressing the state's $5.8 billion revenue shortfall. Many state agencies including the Oregon Military Department took significant budget cuts. The OMD was reduced 16 percent, which has undermined the department's ability to maintain armories. In an attempt to fill the shortfall, legislators passed tax increases on those making more than $150,000 a year or a combined household income of $250,000 a year. In addition they increased the corporate tax minimum filing fee from $10 to $150 which had not been adjusted since 1931 and to increase the corporate tax three-tenths of a percent for profits over $250,000 and increase on profits over $500,000 up to $100 million not to exceed $100,000 in total tax.

The tax increases would produce $733 million to help fund state agencies. Opponents of the tax increase gathered signatures to put an initiative on the ballot that would reverse those tax hikes.

The referendum will be voted on in January. If the tax increase is rejected the Oregon Military Department would face another 10 percent cut. “If this referendum passes there will be a significant impact to our agency,” said Caldwell. “We will have to close Oregon Youth Challenge, lay off much of our state work force, and potentially close armories; there is just no more room to cut.”

Caldwell said the agency’s previous 16 percent cut of $4 million eliminated several state positions, cut all capital improvement funds and severely reduced services and supplies funds, which are used to light and heat armories. Voters will make a final decision on Measures 66 and 67 in a special election Jan. 26, 2010. The Legislature will meet in February to determine the cuts based on the results of the election.

**OYP program helps at-risk students**

*Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, Oregon Military Department*

**BEND, Ore. — Business and civic leaders from the greater Portland area visited the Oregon Youth Challenge Program facilities near Bend, Ore. Oct. 20.**

Bob Woodell an entrepreneur, Lori Luchak a business owner and Joanne Trueblood the president of Clackamas Community College toured the military-style accredited high school program for youth considered at-risk who are between the ages of 16-21.

The most important things we look for are high school drop-outs who are citizens of Oregon and the United States and are not on parole or probation,” said Dan Radauhaba, the Oregon Youth Challenge Program Director.

The program is administered by the Oregon Military Department with assistance from the National Guard Bureau, the Bend-LaPine School District and the Oregon Department of Education. It is designed as a “last chance” for students who have left school with a traditional education setting.

“We’re here to get familiar with the program and possibly see if we can do help,” said Luchak, President of Miles Fiberglass and Composites.

“These kids were that troubled and disadvantaged and were not suffering just a little bump in the road. I was most impressed that they made their own decision to change their lives.”

In order to be eligible for the program prospective cadets submit an application and stating why they would like to attend. Out of an average 400 plus applications per year the school can handle only 120.

“It’s hard to believe we’ve been doing this for 16 years and we’re probably running a tighter ship now than we ever have,” said Brig. Gen. Mike Caldwell, the deputy director of state affairs for the Oregon Military Department.

“When you set up a program with tough conditions and tough standards and hold the students accountable it’s a real accomplishment and it really makes them feel good.”

Those tough conditions begin the day a cadet arrives. There are three phases to the program explained to the visitors by Caldwell. The first phase is to the visitors. First is a two week mandatory “pre-challenge” period consisting of military indoctrination, physical development, discipline and structure. This is followed by the 20 week academic classroom instruction period. The final phase is a 12 month mentor active period when the student returns to the community to implement goals, objectives, placements and post residential activities developed while in the residential phase. All students must have a placement and plan to implement back in the community to be eligible to graduate, says the official.

“Our biggest challenge is the post-residential phase and the key to graduates is through mentorship,” said Caldwell. “82 percent of our kids are successful, but we do know that mentorship is the key to long-term success, there will be some rough patches because you are going to go back to their same situations,” he added that the program looks to assign long-term mentors to help students preserve the changes the program fosters at the facilities.

“We are creating a road home can be rocky, during the question and answer session Cadet Davin Lucero told us that the mentoring home for her break, which is part of the program. She described what seems like a fairly benign even boring experience but began to crack as she finished speaking, as she leaned forward her shoulder and face several staff members moved to provide a tissue and a reassuring hug.

“I was struck by the emotions that she was showing, ‘is what happens to me going to be enough for the environment she’s going back to?’” Bob Woodell, an entrepreneur from Sisters, Ore, asked rhetorically. “I’m interested and intrigued and I told [Brig. Gen.] Caldwell that I want to go back three times to see the same class because I’d like to get a feel for the whole thing.”

All the visitors remembered that moment and commented on it. “It seemed at though she was most upset at the prospect of going home, and I think about her and how many other kids there are that are in the same boat and it can be hard,” said Truesdale. We went on to describe several college programs which provide avenues for education and the Oregon Youth Challenge Program and others and stated that she would look to open communication channels between her college and the program. “I thought ‘she feels more comfortable here than at home’,” said Luchak. “I was so impressed with the program.”
Sen. Jeff Merkley United States Senate (D-Ore.)

To the men and women of the Oregon National Guard:
Thank you for your service, and thank you for providing the most inspiring memory from my first year as your U.S. Senator.

On Monday, Nov. 23, my Senate colleagues and I touched down at the Baghdad International Airport in our C-130, looking forward to meeting top U.S. and Iraqi officials and the dedicated soldiers of the Oregon National Guard.

Talking with Gen. Ray Odierno, Ambassador Christopher Hill, Ministers of the Iraqi government, and civil military development workers provided valuable insights on the mission, progress and outlook.

But the high point of our trip was the opportunity to spend time talking directly with members of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team about your service in Iraq. Many of you have served more than one deployment to the theater, and your frontline service has displayed your bravery and created a more stable Iraq.

Our conversations about providing security to convoys carrying supplies across Iraq, the increased protection offered by MRAP vehicles, and your understandable concerns about finding jobs when you return home to a very weak economy will stay with me.

Your courage and sacrifice as a member of the Oregon National Guard is part of a grand tradition of service.

Nothing means more to me than the opportunity to stand beside you in Baghdad and at Camp Adder, and fight for you in Washington, D.C.

I know it is my responsibility as a U.S. Senator to make sure servicemembers and their loved ones are given the best support and care possible and that they have other career opportunities available to them once their service is over. It’s also critical to recognize the family members who serve and sacrifice for our country. Families are the true backbone of our armed services. When a soldier goes to war, their whole family goes with them.

I’m fighting in Washington for you and your families, to improve your health care treatment and bolster your benefits. I will work closely with my colleagues to improve the tools our soldiers have to transition from life in the combat zone to life back at home. That’s what you deserve. That’s what we’ll fight for.

Thank you for letting me join you last month, and thank you for protecting our country year-round.

I wish you happy holidays and, for those overseas, a safe and speedy return to your families.

Sen. Jeff Merkley

Oregon Guard in 90th Vet’s Day Parade

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, Oregon Military Dept. Public Affairs

ALBANY, Ore. -- Members of the 234th Army Band followed by soldiers from the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, parade through the streets of downtown Albany in support of the 90th annual Veteran’s Day Parade, which the city bills as the largest of its kind, west of the Mississippi River.
Deployed soldier brings “magic” talents to Iraq

Story by Spc. Beth Gorenc, Task Force 38 Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq — Often National Guard soldiers apply their civilian training to enhance their military deployments. A soldier in Task Force 38’s medevac unit, Company C, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment did just that during his mobilization here.

When the Canby, Ore., resident, was not using his military skills as a medevac pilot for Company C to help people receive medical attention during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Chief Warrant Officer William S. “Scott” Anderson applied his civilian skills as a magician to help people in a different way.

Anderson used illusions mixed with comedy to provide an escape from deployment life and entertain fellow servicemembers, civilian contractors and local Iraqis. “He’s professional when he needs to be, but he can lighten the mood when it’s need- ed,” added Sgt. John McCully, a medevac crew chief and Camas, Ore., resident.

In his free time, Anderson performed frequent shows at the medevac company’s coffee shop, during holiday events and at events. He also participated in, and won, Joint Base Balad’s October talent show that he said helped the morale of the company,” said McCully. “Whenever we have events, at work, pretty much whenever he’s around, the guy has a gimmick in his sleeve. He loves entertaining people.”

Anderson’s illusions ranged anywhere from impromptu card tricks for a friendly unit pulling a participant’s previously signed dollar out of an uncertain random choice by that participant, to the transforming the Orion's chief into candy for Iraqi children.

Anderson also used his magic and comedy as a way of breaking the ice and building up relationships with Iraqis. “It’s good at building relationships with people,” said Sgt. Candice Westlund, a Corvallis, Ore., resident.

Anderson worked through translators to perform shows for groups of Iraqi children during base-hosted events and completed illusions for the Iraq special weapons and tactics officers. He also worked with par- ents to entertain children under care of the hospital here.

“He tricks make kids smile and forget that they are in pain or injured,” said Westlund. While entertaining others and helping them through the deployment, Anderson said his magic provided an outlet for him.

“It’s a piece of home I got to bring with me,” he said. “I can do something that’s fun, and it is good for stress.”

Anderson has been a performance magician since 1999. He started entertaining elementary kids at Fort Lewis, Wash., during drug abuse resistance education he taught using illusions he learned from a friend. From there, he expanded his audience to birthday parties, state fair goers and stage acts including large scale illusions.

“The better I get, the more shows I could get,” Anderson said. “I was doing side jobs at night and on weekends.”

When he deployed to Afghanistan, Anderson continued his magic shows to entertain Soldiers and Afghans. He continued to develop his shows by incorporating personal experiences from his deployment, and then used those experiences to once again entertain Soldiers and Iraqis during his latest deployment.

While magic proved beneficial during times overseas, it was those same deploy- ments and experiences that proved beneficial to Anderson’s magic career.

“After being here and performing for Iraqi kids, I came up with a kids’ show to do back home,” said Anderson. “It teaches kids les- sons in patriotism: what it means, freedom, taking pride in your country, celebrating diversity and patriotic symbols.”

Working under the name of “Stripes,” Anderson is scheduled to perform his show, “The Magic of Patriotism,” when he returns home for Oregon students enrolled in reading programs.

He also plans to continue performing as a magician for larger audiences after the OIF deployment. In his free time, Anderson worked on his newest show, “The Magician Expeditions,” a biographical theater magic show based on his deployment interactions and experiences.

For more information about Anderson and his shows visit: www.illusionsofanderson.com.

Soldiers from Oregon bring school supplies to Iraqs

Story and photo by Spc. Cory Grogan
41 Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

SCANIA, Iraq — Oregon National Guard mem- bers, deployed in Iraq, partook in a unique mission where they were able to make a positive impact on the hearts and minds of local national children from a small village in southern Iraq.

As the soldiers brought supplies, gifts, and other resources for their school, Oct. 27, loving looks and thankfulness filled the area.

Members of Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 162 Infantry Regiment, based out of Springfield, Ore., from the 41 Infantry Brigade Combat Team have worked with people that surround a forward oper- ating base called Scania, to ensure local national children there are provided with an education.

The supplies that were donated for the most recent mission came from the Tom Dearing Foundation, which provided 500 school kits with notebooks, crayons, pencils, sharpeners, pens, color markers, glue sticks and scissors.

Scania has also donated building materials for a new school that is being built to consolidate four schools in the area into one larger school that is scheduled to be completed in spring of 2010. “This support package provides an entire community the possibil- ity to begin the process of providing their own self independence and education for the next generation,” said Lt. Mark Major, a Eugene, Ore., native, who is the executive officer for alpha company.

Major said that he believes the kindness and support of the Tom Dearing Foundation will be multiplied ten-fold on the ground.

The children at the school have been visited by soldiers on numer- ous Civil Military Operations said Sgt. Julie Cavinee of Craw- swell, Ore., an Administrative Specialist with Alpha Company.

Civil Military Operations have made a difference around Scania where the perception of children in nearby villages has changed quite a bit since Alpha Company first visited the school said. Jesse Haggard, a Vancouver, Wash., Native, who is a team leader with Alpha company, Haggard said that when Alpha Company arrived they did the SWEAT – M assessment missions to find out the village’s needs were for security, water, electricity, academics and truth.

Haggard said when they first started going on the missions the chil- dren were skeptical about the soldiers intentions, but that they had a need for school supplies and a new school among other things.

“We made it a point to let them know we are still here working with them, and now they know us and we have bonded,” Haggard said.

“It’s great to see all the classrooms filled and the kids that remem- ber us; it has really progressed here,” Cavinee said.
PORTLAND, Ore. — The Army’s Wounded Warrior Program held a muster for regional injured soldiers at Kliever Memorial Armory in Portland, Ore. Nov. 17. Soldiers from around Oregon, Washington, California, and Nevada participated in a day of “hands-on” training hosted by Oregon Disability Sports, whose mission is to promote recreation and fitness for people with physical disabilities. The soldiers played a variety of sports designed for paraplegics including wheelchair rugby, wheelchair basketball and cycling. Although none of the participating soldiers were paralyzed many stepped out of the provided wheelchairs with sweat staining dark rings on their Army-issue “p” gear.

“You’ve got to remember that in stand-up ball you run with your legs and shoot with your arms,” said Bill Loyd, a basketball player with Oregon Disability Sports. “For us, we run with our arms and shoot with our arms.”

“They took us to school,” said a wide-eyed Spc. Michelle Siebold, a 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team soldier who returned from Iraq for thyroid surgery.

“This is a gathering of soldiers who are healed enough to return to their communities and continue healing,” said Spc. Ben Walters of the Nevada Army Reserve. “These warriors have faced tremendous challenges and they are doing great things still,” he said.

“Everyone in the Army Wounded Warrior Program understands what a huge price our soldiers and families have paid in support of our Nation and now we are here to support them for as long as it takes,” said Col. Jim Rice, the program director. In 2007 the U.S. Army expanded the program allowing more National Guard and Reserve soldiers to recover in their hometowns using community-based Warrior Training Units.

For the soldiers gathered at Kliever Memorial Armory it means a return to the esprit de corps and camaraderie unique to the armed services said Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Lamb, an Oregon soldier who suffered a neck injury while deployed to Afghanistan which cost him the use of his right arm for a time.

“We’re with our fellow soldiers, we’re here to help our soldiers, to support a soldier who is having a particular hard time—maybe you’ve had an experience that they are going through now—you can help them,” he said. “It helps you mentally because you are with your brethren in arms.”

The program employs three key elements for soldiers, including a squad leader, nurse case manager and primary care physician. The squad leader leads the soldiers, and the nurse case manager coordinates their care. The primary care physician oversees care, which can be complex, given the multiple issues experienced by some soldiers.

“The three elements referred to as the ‘triad of care’ creates the familiar environment of a military unit and surrounds the soldier and family with comprehensive care and support, all focused on the wounded warrior’s sole mission—to heal. These professionals put the soldier first, cut through red tape, and mind the details,” states the Army Wounded Warrior Transition Unit’s website. “This is our opportunity to get together so that we can keep these soldiers informed of their benefits like TRICARE, hear from ESCOR and VFW and they can talk to their case managers, first sergeants and any other members of the command regarding their care,” said 1st Sgt. Lynn Hoyt, Warrior Unit First Sergeant.

Many of the warriors in transition will not only have the benefit of recovering at home, they’ll also be able to use local civilian health care facilities, while remaining under the direct supervision of Army unit leaders and medical case managers said Hoyt.

“If you’re real quick you’re gonna have to rely on your team to get this done,” said Walters.

**Local race car driver rallies for Oregon National Guard troops**

SALEM, Ore. — Instead of rallying around the Oregon National Guard, 38-year old racecar driver, Mark Fox is ringing on for them.

He finished the 2009 Rally America racing season as rookie of the year, driving his #54 Subaru, dedicated to the National Guard.

“It brings a lot of camaraderie with people that are in the Guard and definitely draws a lot of attention,” said Fox, a resident of Salem, Ore. “It’s not in the military, but said he has great respect for what soldiers do. His grandfather retired from the Oregon National Guard, and several of his friends are in the National Guard. But it wasn’t until he watched the independent documentary ‘This Is War’—a video diary about the experiences of soldiers from the 2nd Battalion 162 Infantry, who were deployed to Iraq for a year in 2004—that he felt compelled to do something more.

“It was so powerful and emotional that after I watched the documentary I decided I wanted to do my part,” Fox said.

He wrapped his Subaru completely in National Guard digital camouflage graphics and logos.

“IT think it’s a great patriotic way to support us,” said Col. Alaine Encabo, the Recruiting and Retention Commander with the Oregon National Guard.

Fox said he and his co-driver Jake Blattner took several top spots through-out the 2009 racing season. “It was a great honor to get Rookie of the Year and we did it with a rookie co-driver,” Fox said.

Fox said he relies on his co-driver for directions, much like soldiers rely on their “battle buddy” in combat, he said.

“It builds a bond between us because you trust each other so much,” said Fox.

A bond Oregon National Guard soldiers can relate to.

“The sport is gaining momentum and is extremely popular among our recruiting pool,” Encabo said. “We are grateful for the support Fox is giving us.”

Rally races take place on all surfaces and in all conditions including asphalt, gravel, snow, and even ice, said Fox, who is a self-professed ‘adrenaline junkie’.

“Rally racing is fast cars on real roads,” he continued.

“We have multiple stages over the course of two or three days, generally about 350 stage miles,” he added. The season took Fox and Blattner all over the country, often driving a truck to haul the race car and supplies from Oregon to the east coast and back again. The pair completed the race season entirely as “privateers”, which translates into racing without any outside funding.

“It’s very expensive,” said Fox. Fox said he hopes to improve on his wins this season by doing even better next year. “I’d like to continue competing and have a properly funded season and go to battle for the championship.”
War Veterans Association teamed up with KATU Television to orchestrate the telethon on return home for the holidays from pre-deployment training at Fort McCoy, Wis. The Oregon KATU Channel 2, the telethon raised money to help soldiers with the 162 Engineer Company.

Charissa Riddle and Don Webber for volunteering during the “Operation Holiday Airlift” telethon and have enjoyed sharing this opportunity to help the troops in this way, $60,000- fully funding the trip home

a telethon which raised more than $11,000 of the estimated $40,000 television stations in Oregon and raised there was a significant problem, they were ecstatic, but for many Christmas leave to return from Wisconsin already, but due to problems overseas already, but due to problems in the states. Originally they were supposed to be overseas again, but due to problems receiving them at their forward base the 105 remained in the states.

“It means a lot of these people that are donating, they don’t realize what kind of joy they’re bringing to these people,” said Amanda Cushman in a KATU news report.

She was braced to spend Christmas and the new year without her husband but “Operation Holiday Airlift” raised enough to bring him home.

Updated: 1st Home buyer tax credit law

WASHINGTON – A new law that went into effect Nov. 6 extends the first-time homebuyer credit five months and expands the eligibility requirements for purchasers. The Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009 extends the deadline for qualifying home purchases from Nov. 30, 2009, to April 30, 2010. Additionally, if a buyer enters into a binding contract by April 30, 2010, the buyer has until June 30, 2010, to settle on the purchase.

The maximum credit amount remains at $8,000 for a first-time homebuyer — that is, a buyer who has not owned a primary residence during the three years up to the date of purchase.

But the new law also provides a “long-time resident” credit of up to $6,500 to others who do not qualify as “first-time homebuyers.” To qualify this way, a buyer must have owned and used the same home as a principal or primary residence for at least five consecutive years of the eight-year period ending on the date of purchase of a new home as a primary residence.

For all qualifying purchases in 2010, tax-payers have the option of claiming the credit on either their 2009 or 2010 tax returns.

Income Limits Rise

The new law raises the income limits for people who purchase homes after Nov. 6. The full credit will be available to taxpayers with modified adjusted gross incomes (MAGI) up to $125,000, or $225,000 for joint filers.

For Members of the Military

Members of the Armed Forces and certain federal employees serving outside the U.S. have an extra year to buy a principal residence in the U.S. and still qualify for the credit. An eligible taxpayer must buy or enter into a binding contract to buy a home by April 30, 2011, and settle on the purchase by June 30, 2011.

For more details on the credit, visit the First-Time Homebuyer Credit page on IRS.gov.

U.S. Senate youth program seeks military mentors

WASHINGTON – The National Guard Bureau is looking for military officers in the grades O-1 through O-4 to be mentors for the 2010 Senate Youth Program. The program, instituted in 1962 by U.S. Senate Resolution and held annually in Washington, DC, is designed to give the nation’s top-ranged high school seniors a working knowledge of American politics through personal interaction with high-level government agencies and officials. Military Mentors serve as counselors, facilitators and role models for the 104 students (two from each state and territory), giving them a better understanding of defense missions, personnel and lifestyle.

Nomination packages must be submitted electronically to margaret.moffett@us.army.mil no later than Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2010. If you have any questions, please contact Moffett for further information via e-mail or at DSN 327-2614 or commercial at 703-607-2614 or visit the U.S. Senate Youth Program website at: www.usnayouth.org

Vets: authorized to salute during National anthem

WASHINGTON – Veterans and active-duty military not in uniform can now render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem, thanks to changes in federal law that took effect recently.

“The military salute is a unique gesture of respect that marks those who have served in our nation’s armed forces,” said then-Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Dr. James B. Peake. “This provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation’s flag.”

The new provision improves upon a little known change in federal law last year that authorized veterans to render the military-style hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, but it did not address salutes during the national anthem.

Last year’s provision also applied to members of the armed forces while not in uniform. New Law Authorizes Veterans’ Salute During Playing of National Anthem.

Traditionally, members of the nation’s veterans service organizations have rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag while wearing their organization’s official head-gear.

Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, an Army veteran, sponsored the most recent change, authorizing hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel. It was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009.

The earlier provision authorizing hand-salutes during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, was contained in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, which took effect January, 2008.
Kingsley airman named to Circuit Court

Story by
Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy,
Oregon Military Dept.
Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore. -- A member of the Oregon Air National Guard was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Klamath County Circuit Court Judge Richard B. Rambo.

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski made the announcement Dec. 4, appointing Lt. Col. Dan Bunch, of the 173rd Fighter Wing, to Klamath Falls to the position.

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Reynolds, the Adjutant General Oregon National Guard, said Bunch’s appointment is a win for the citizen-soldiers and citizen-airmen of the Oregon National Guard, and for the citizens of Klamath County.

“Lieutenant Colonel Bunch is a great example of the citizen-soldier concept,” Rees said. “He is a dedicated public servant in the Oregon National Guard. Likewise, he will be a dedicated and ef- fective member of the Circuit Court.”

Bunch received his Bachelors Degree from Hampden-Sydney College and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Virginia. During his legal career Bunch has served as a Special Assistant United States Attorney in Guan and Alaska and as a prosecutor for the Criminal Division of the Alaska Department of Law. He has also engaged in private practice with the Kla- math Falls firm of Brand- ness, Brandness, Rudd & Bunch. Since 2006 Bunch has served as Klamath County Counsel. Bunch served in the United States Navy for 1990 to 1994, and the United States Air Force from 1994 to 1998.

Since 2000, he has served as a Staff Judge Advocate for the Oregon Air National Guard’s 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field. During 2003 he deployed to Iraq in support of General Petraeus’ Law and Order Task Force.

Command Chief Russell
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

airmen to read and understand the En- listed Force Structure. This is your blue- print for success in the guard. Embrace your role and responsibility as an airman – junior airman, NCO or senior-NCO, and we’ll continue to be the outstanding en- listed force our state and nation values.

In closing, I ask that each of you take time to remember those that have made the ultimate sacrifice. Please take the time during this holiday season to pray for and talk with those airmen and their families, and those serving away from home that will once again be separated from family and loved ones this holiday season. To all deployed servicemembers, I say thank you very much for your service.

To all the Oregon Guard, have a safe and joyous holiday season!

142nd SFS trains for combat at Camp Rilea

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. John Hughel,
142nd Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

CAMP RILEA, Ore. -- Under a cloud of green smoke four Oregon Air National Guard members ran from building-to-building at Camp Rilea’s train- ing village during ground combat skills training for the 142nd Fighter Wing Security Forces Squadron.

As they rally inside one building, Tech. Sgt. Mick Gremaud, the squad leader for the team, conducts a quick head count to ac- count for all his troops. They peered out from defensive positions as small-arms fire in the form of paintballs splattered the door and window frames.

The airmen were put through several situations in a mock village, some- times under fire and often with specific objectives for each part of the training. “We try and tailor the training to meet the situa- tion,” said Gremaud. “The intensity during each phase of the training is constant and the success of each exercise comes down to good communication is main- tained.”

Many of the airmen leading this training recently returned from tours in Iraq. These more experienced leaders are here to teach less experi- enced airmen what they need to know in real-world situations.

“Many squad has 14 mem- bers and we need to train this way to take it to the next level,” said Gremaud. During the week-long training members went over key objectives again and again to ensure that all participants understood their roles under the watch- ful eye of Senior Master Sgt. Christopher Roper of the 142nd Security Forces Squadron.

“The emphasis we want them to get is military op- erations in urban environ- ments, mounted convoy and combat skills train- ing,” said Roper.

He is quick to point out how pleased he has been with this training. A group of 35 to 50 airmen in d ergo this type of smaller team instruction every 16 months. The intensity of the training is constant, regardless of the group’s size.

“There are advantages in working with smaller numbers at times, as the individual one-on-one feedback is more immedi- ate,” said Roper.

For squad leaders like Gremaud who have just completed a six-month tour in Iraq, the learning never stops.

“We’ve got a really good group of airmen here and we want them to get the experience from our vets who just came back,” said Roper.

Story by
Tech. Sgt. John J. Birt
142nd Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs, takes a photograph of airmen from the 142nd Security Forces Squadron during ground combat skills training at Camp Rilea, Ore. While working with small groups, the airmen practiced putting weapons to use under fire and interpersonal communication.

Oregon National Guard airmen of the 142nd Security Forces Squadron work in a simulated training environment at Camp Rilea, Ore. during ground combat skills training.

Airman graduates top of NCO Academy

Story by
Master Sgt. Mavi Smith,
162nd Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

Tech. Sgt. Rebekah L. Birt, right, a personnel specialist with the 125th Special Tactics Squadron, Oregon Air National Guard, receives the John L. Levitow Award for NCO Academy Class 10-1 from Lt. Col. Stan Giles, left, at The I.G. Brown Air National Guard Training and Education Center here, Nov. 19. 2009. The John L. Levitow Award is the highest honor awarded a gradu- ate of any Air Force enlisted professional military education course.

Lt. Col. Dan Bunch, 173rd Fighter Wing Judge Advocate Group was named to the Klamath County Circuit Court Dec. 4, by Governor Ted Kulongoski.

Tech. Sgt. Rebekah L. Birt, right, a personnel specialist with the 125th Special Tactics Squadron, Oregon Air National Guard, receives the John L. Levitow Award for NCO Academy Class 10-1 from Lt. Col. Stan Giles, left, at The I.G. Brown Air National Guard Training and Education Center here, Nov. 19. 2009. The John L. Levitow Award is the highest honor awarded a graduate of any Air Force enlisted professional military education course.

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