Oregon Celebrates 150 years of statehood
Citizen-soldiers, airmen, VIPs join festivities looking back to 1859

SALEM, Ore. -- Valentine’s Day saw more than one thousand people celebrate the 150th anniversary of Oregon’s statehood at an event in Salem.

The 1859-themed party at the Salem Convention Center also coincided with the Oregon National Guard’s Senior Leader’s Conference and annual Military Ball, which was attended by many Oregon National Guard members and their spouses. Oregon Governor, Theodore R. Kulongoski, and First Lady, Ms. Mary Oberst, the Chair of the Oregon 150 Committee, were also in attendance.

“Both Valentine’s Day and the sesquicentennial remind us of the power of hope, the power of doing for others, and the power of love,” Kulongoski said. "So make 2009 a joyous year of celebration and a year dedicated to service.”

Kulongoski added that this celebration kicks off eight more months of celebrations ending on Labor Day, Sept. 7.

Senior leaders of the Oregon National Guard attending the sesquicentennial celebration, included Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Bruce Prunk, Commander, Oregon Air National Guard’s Senior Leader’s Conference and annual Military Ball, which was attended by many Oregon National Guard members and their spouses. Oregon Governor, Theodore R. Kulongoski, and First Lady, Ms. Mary Oberst, the Chair of the Oregon 150 Committee, were also in attendance.

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Oregon Army National Guard members pose with Gresham Police Officers during what many called the worst storm to hit the region in many years.

GRESHAM, Ore. -- The City of Gresham honored 29 Oregon Army National Guard soldiers on Feb. 3 for their assistance during the recent severe winter storms.

Gresham Mayor Shane T. Bemis presided over the ceremony at the council meeting in the city hall’s chambers. Bemis read a proclamation to the Oregon Army National Guard’s 141st Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) Executive Officer, Maj. Dan Morris, as a number of the unit’s soldiers and their family members watched.

"On behalf of our citizens of Gresham, we express our deep appreciation for the men and women of the Oregon National Guard,’ the mayor stated in front of the standing-room only crowd.

Morris then presented Bemis with a 141st Brigade Support Battalion coin on behalf of Lt. Col. Brian James, the battalion’s commander.

"I’m very proud of my guys,” Morris said. “I’ve heard nothing but praise.”

The unit’s members were placed on state active duty to assist emergency responders in reaching snow-bound citizens during heavy snow and ice storms from Dec. 22-27, 2008.

The unit provided six Humvees and drivers to assist police and Oregon National Guard soldiers on Feb. 3 for their assistance during the recent severe winter storms.

City of Gresham thanks Guard for emergency assistance

Oregon Air National Guard officers and enlisted soldiers, members of the Oregon Army National Guard, the Oregon National Guard’s Senior Leader’s Conference and annual Military Ball, which was attended by many Oregon National Guard members and their spouses. Oregon Governor, Theodore R. Kulongoski, and First Lady, Ms. Mary Oberst, the Chair of the Oregon 150 Committee, were also in attendance.

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COMMAND

Make safety a priority in the Year of the NCO

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The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon National Guard, authorized under the provisions of Army Regulation 300-1. It is designed and published by the Oregon Military Department's Public Affairs Office. The views and opinions expressed in the Sentinel are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Oregon Army and Air Force, or the Department of Defense.

Do questions like ‘Why should I become a warrant offi cer?’ and ‘What are the benefi ts?’ top your mind? Do you wonder what do warrant offi cers just ‘glorifi ed CEOs’ sound familiar? As your command chief warrant offi cer you must try to shed some light on these questions and others like them. Here are some general descriptions and guidelines for “The Silent Professionals.”

The Army’s de nition of a warrant offi cer is... ‘...a highly specialized expert and trainer, who, by gaining progressively more levels of expertise, responsibility, and leadership, operates, main- tains, administers and manages the Army’s equipment, support activities or technical systems for an entire career.’ In every career area junior or commissioned, warrant commisioned warrant offi cers (warrant offi cer 1 or chief warrant offi cer 2) normally begin their careers at the company or detachment level and function as company or detachment commander. Warrant offi cers become commissioned offi cers when they are promoted from warrant offi cer 1 to chief warrant offi cer 2. Chief warrant offi cer 3s and 4s are in line with the bat- talion or brigade level. As ‘specialized experts’ the quality and production work should equal if not exceed field grade officers in their particular specialty. Chief warrant offi cer 5 positions are usually located in the higher headquarters, with the exception of aviation, where some warrant offi cers serve as senior advisors to command. With the ‘progressive levels of expertise and leadership...’ comes additional pressure to succeed. The traditional trade- off has been pay, privileges and a greater opportunity to infl uence policy and procedure.

If junior warrant offi cers are successful, they are promoted to senior warrant and earn field grade privileges. This requires hard work and dedication. When a soldier is on the warrant offi cer rank, he or she commits themselves further to the success of the unit and the commander. They are leaders in their field both by knowledge and example. They must maintain the equipment and themselves by meeting all the standards and requirement including height, weight, fi tness and many others. The day of the crusty old warrant sitting in his of/ce churning on a cigar and baking out regulations is over. We are the technical experts of the Army, in areas ranging from earning avia- tion and security clearance to communication system function, to ensuring all our soldiers have the ‘beans and bullets’ and means to get to the fight.

We make it happen. The Oregon Army National Guard currently has six warrant offi cer candidates heading off to Fort Rucker, Ala. for their Basic Course and one who remains on stand-by. Join me in wishing the fi ve for their success on their admin. fi eld, graduates March 15; Steve McDaniel, aviation fi eld, graduates March 14; America Urbig, aviation fi eld, graduates April 14; Ralph Toler, aviation fi eld, graduates April 14; Robert Young, mobilization fi eld, graduates April 14; Nick Thompson, fi eld artillery fi eld, graduates April 14; and Eric Gustafson, aviation fi eld who remains on stand-by.

Good luck to each of you!

Chief Zagya: qualities of a ‘quiet professional’

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At the Oregon National Guard Association Conference in February, General Peter W. Chiarelli, the Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, spoke about the year of the non-commissioned offi cer and the role they play in the success of the Army. In his talk, he stated Oregon had the best Command Sergeant Major in the entire army. State Command Sergeant Major Bruton Conley. We are fortunate to have such a fine leader here in our state. He is a team player who is willing to lead from the front. To all the non-commissioned offi cers, I challenge you to follow his lead, especially given the year of 2009. The U.S. Army was designated 2009 as the year of the non-commissioned offi cer.

Non-commissioned offi cers, often known as the backbone of the military. Warrant offi cers, trainers, mentors, and caretakers are among the most amazing people used to accomplish the most amazing things within the Oregon National Guard. These individuals work together to create a team, which can accomplish any mission, assignment or task in our nation’s Army.

Right now I am calling on you, the non-commissioned offi cers, to make safety your top priority within our National Guard. Thirty-four Army National Guard soldiers have died in the U.S. as a result of accidents since October 2008. A majority of the deaths are contributed to motor vehicle accidents. This is more than four times the number of combat-related deaths during the same period. Safety must be a priority.

In every situation there is risk, but taking the extra time to assess possible risk cannot be over-emphasized. If you’re training, off-duty or even heading to your retirement party, safety is paramount. The next highest casualty rate is due to suicide. There is no greater overall safety risk for our military than soldiers or airmen or to hurt themselves. There are many reasons why a service member could take this course of action. Non-commissioned offi cers can be a major factor in preventing suicide. It is our job as leaders to get the word out and end any stigmas.

There are chaplains, health services and also the Oregon reintegration team available for our guard members to use along with mentorship and guidance from their chains of command. Make it clear! There are people and programs ready and available for each and every guard member regardless of the circumstances. Let’s work together to be apart of a solution, but most of all take care of our soldiers and airmen.

Another key issue our guard members seem to forget, or are unaware of, is the fact that safety begins at home. Family’s safety is paramount. We as a family are usually those closest to you. Be single or married, we all need to focus on safety. When our soldiers and airmen know their families are safe, they know they have the best, no matter what the circumstances.

There are a multitude of new programs available for our guard members and their families. Some of these programs are listed at both www.orn-g-vet.org and www.militaryonesource.com. We challenge every NCO to check out these programs and tell all the fellow guard members and subordinates about them, especially for those who are about to deploy or returned from a deployment. These programs are for you and your families.

There is no one more professional than the non- commissioned offi cer. Through your efforts our soldiers and airmen are prepared to handle the challenges this year will bring.

To all the soldiers and airmen in our organization, never forget you are the best that Oregon has to offer our nation.

Thank you for service and the leadership you provide every day. You make certain Oregon is, Always Ready! Always There!

Raymond F. Rees

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142nd Fighter Wing Command Chief
Chief Master Sgt. Michael J. White
Oregon Air National Guard

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Following official remarks, which kicked off the Oregon Ball, Rees joined Spc. Alex Amen of “Oregon’s Own” 234th Army Band, and the Governor during the cake-cutting ceremony. The trio used a saber to cut the birthday cake.

“We, the Oregon National Guard, have a promise of history to people, to parallel that of our state,” Rees said. “From the Whitman Massacre to our latest mobilization—time and again the Oregon Militia has responded.”

Kulongoski spoke of Oregon’s pioneer spirit, its strength and resilience, but called upon that same strength and ingenuity to weather the current national financial crisis and rising unemployment.

He challenged all Oregonians to work together to help build the foundation for another prosperous 150 years.

The 234th played “Big-Band” tunes upstairs while music of the pioneer era was performed in the downstairs ballroom, where “period correct” dancers twirled the night away.

While Oregon Guard members wore their “Mess Dress” uniforms, other attendees took the 1859 theme seriously. Costumes ranged from Civil War soldiers and early pioneers or settlers to women in crinolined skirts and ball gowns. The mix of cocktail dresses, formal gowns, top hats and military uniforms made the ball unique and according to some ball-goers, a “roaring good time.”

A silent auction displayed many works by local artisans. Proceeds from the auction benefited the Oregon National Guard Association Education Fund. According to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Diane Beach, the association funded six $1,500 scholarships that were awarded this year to Oregon Guard members and their dependents to help with continuing their education.

Gresham fire chief: ‘if we’re in trouble, we call the National Guard’

Humvees pull up, it was quite a relief.” Junginger said the soldiers were enthusiastic and energetic, and worked well with his police officers.

“I think they enjoyed it. I know the police officers enjoyed it,” he said. “Every time I saw them, they had smiles on their faces.”

“This was some of the nastiest stuff we’ve seen in a long time,” said Gary Martin, a firefighter with Gresham Fire Station Number 71. “But, with the Humvees chained up, we had no problem reaching people who needed help.”

According to Morris, during the storm response, two soldiers went well above the call of duty during an emergency medical call.

Spc. Matthew White and Spc. Chelsea Moore, both of Alpha Co., 141st Bgd. Supt. Bn., drove a firefighter to a home in response to a 9-1-1 emergency call in the Mt. Tabor neighborhood. Resident Gary Palas had slipped on his icy front porch after returning home from dialysis treatment, tearing out his dialysis shunt.

Palas was surprised when his 9-1-1 call resulted in the arrival of a National Guard Humvee.

“If they had not shown up, I might not be alive today,” Palas said, as he was flanked by soldiers at the Gresham City Council meeting.

“Trust your training,” White added. “A lot of people complain about all the training (we have to go through), but it helps.”

Gresham Fire Chief Scott Lewis said he was amazed and thankful by the quick response from the Oregon National Guard. From the time Mayor Bemis declared a state of emergency to when the soldiers showed up in Gresham was about 15 hours, he said.

“The Guard was always willing to do whatever was asked of them,” Lewis said. “They had one goal in mind: What’s best for the citizens of Gresham. If there’s trouble, you call the police or the fire department. We’ll give it our all to get you out of trouble. If the fire or police departments are in trouble, we call the National Guard, and they will help keep us out of trouble.”

In the wake of natural disasters ‘who is going to help you?’

Whenever there is a storm or other type of disaster in Oregon, questions come up to us about financial and other types of assistance. We hear “Who is going to help us?” and “How can we get state or federal assistance?”

“We have a federal disaster declared by the federal government,” Chief Warrant Officer 3 Diane Lewis said. “They had one goal in mind: What’s best for the citizens of Gresham. If there’s trouble, you call the police or the fire department. We’ll give it our all to get you out of trouble. If the fire or police departments are in trouble, we call the National Guard, and they will help keep us out of trouble.”

This is a simplified explanation of the process. There is always a lot of paperwork involved, information must be gathered and rules followed. Unfortunately when the storm hits you, it seems like everything takes forever.

Remember— your first responders are working diligently to make things safe and secure and your local officials are following procedures to get you the assistance you need.

Follow instructions from your local emergency managers and be prepared for the next one—it is still winter.

“Medical-Call”


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I would love to be able to tell you that we do what we can under the laws that we have and that includes a process that must be followed. Having enough money to fix everything for everyone, but you know that’s not true. We do what we can under the laws that we have and that includes a process that must be followed. Having enough money and food insurance is the best way to protect your property.

Response to a disaster begins at the local level. Each town, city and county is prepared to assist their citizens immediately during an event. If the disaster uses up all of their resources, county officials can ask the Governor for an emergency declaration. If the Governor agrees then state resources are provided and coordinated by Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) to assist the counties. If the disaster becomes a burden on the state, the Governor may ask the President for a federal declaration.

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Soldier suicide rates on the rise Department of Army says

Story by
Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs Office
SALEM, Ore. — The U.S. Army recently released statistics that show a sharp spike in suicides among its ranks. The number of Army suicides increased for the fourth consecutive year, according to the Army’s 2008 Suicide Data report released in January.

Army officials say at least 142 soldiers took their lives in 2008, and they are investigating the deaths of an additional 13 soldiers, which may have been possible suicides. These numbers are up from 102 in 2006, and 115 in 2007.

This is the highest number since the Army began keeping records in 1990—and also the biggest jump from one year to the next since 1995. The Army had 73 suicides in 2006, and 85 in 2007.

As part of the Army’s 2009 DoD/Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Initiative, the Army recently released statistics to the Army’s 2008 Suicide Data report released in January. The Army also recently released statistics to the Army’s 2008 Suicide Data report released in January.

According to the commanding general for the Army’s Division West and Fort Carson in Colorado, Maj. Gen. Mark Graham, he hopes the Army can overcome the stigma associated with seeking help for mental illness.

“I can think of few subjects more important than this one,” said Graham. “Soldiers, it’s okay to get help.”

One Oregon soldier who resisted anonymity said the guys return home from their deployments in civilian clothes within a week. “That’s not enough time to figure out if you need help or not.”

Military members who have been away for a year or more only want to get back to their families. “They don’t want to go back down at the demobilization station because they admitted to having psychiatric issues.”

The military as an institution has at times stigmatized mental illness. Those who admit to having problems many times are labeled as weak or inadequate. An admission could also mean they will be placed in a medical status that doesn’t allow them to deploy worldwide.

“IT think it’s a strength of character issue,” the soldier added.

Yet the soldier admits that stigma is changing, and instead, the winds of change are blowing from top levels of the Army.

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Airborne legacy passed down through four generations

Story and photo courtesy, Cheryl Rodewig

Fort Benning, Ga. – When 1st Lt. Nick Conley graduated from Airborne School with more than 460 fellow students and received his wings, it represented both three weeks of intensive training for Conley and more than 65 years of tradition for his family.

“It’s indescribable ... fantastic; it’s tradition,” said Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Brunck J. Conley, Nick Conley’s father, who traveled from his home in Oregon to Fort Benning to help pin the wings on his grandson, during a ceremony held in late December.


That makes Nick Conley number four in a line of Airborne soldiers dating back to 1941 – the earliest days of the paratrooper in the Army.

Named by his father (who took a fancy to the surname of farmand George Brunck), the eldest paratrooper Brunck Winston Conley parachuted into Normandy and Holland during World War II.

Those were among the first combat jumps ever made, said his son, who inherited both the family name and the love of all things Airborne from his father:

“To me, it was just kind of natural. I wanted to be just like my dad,” said the second generation paratrooper, who hoped to join the 101st but was sent to the 82nd Airborne Division instead. “If they’d let me jump today, I’d do it. I always tell people when a plane hits the ground, that’s when you get hurt. If you jump out of it, you got a better chance.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Brunck Wexley Conley, the Oregon National Guard Command Sergeant Major, took that chance, following his father’s footsteps and enlisting in the Army at 18, with plans to join the 101st Abn. Div. like his grandfather or the 82nd Abn. Div. like his father.

When he found out the 101st had become an air assault unit and the latter was full, the undeterred soldier joined a ranger battalion instead.

“Joining the Ranger battalion was the best thing that could have ever happened to me,” Command Sgt. Maj. Conley said. It also gave him the opportunity to be Airborne.

“I like to jump out of airplanes,” he said. “Plus, for those adrenaline junkies in life who like to be on the edge of things, it’s a pretty exciting lifestyle.”

Growing up with Airborne stories, 1st Lt. Nick Conley, joins a generation of paratroopers, who traveled from his home in Oregon to Fort Benning to help pin the wings on his grandson, during a ceremony held in late December.

The annual event is the team’s way of saying thank you to the community.

“I like to jump out of airplanes,” he said. “Plus, for those adrenaline junkies in life who like to be on the edge of things, it’s a pretty exciting lifestyle.”

Growing up with Airborne stories, 1st Lt. Conley chose to call that lifestyle his own. After receiving his commission, he attended the Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course on Fort Benning. While here, he was lucky enough to attend jump school, he said:

“It’s something I’ve always wanted to do,” he said. “I grew up with it. When I was little, my grandpa used to tell me stories about my great-grandfather and my dad. These were the kinds of lessons I learned: hard work, dedication, leadership.”

Like his dad, the younger Conley plans to attend Ranger School. He heads there this year before deploying to Iraq with the 41st Brigade Combat Team in late December.

Nick Conley said he is proud of his heritage, something he shrugged on to his own family one day.

Pinning the wings on the youngest paratrooper in the Conley family, both father and grandfather said they were proud of their Soldier.

If the first Conley paratrooper could be here, he would be protected, too, said “Grandpa” Conley.

“The only thing that changes in the history of the world is technology,” he continued.

From 1941 to 2008, it’s the same esprit de corps of the paratrooper. It’s a challenge, (but) once you jump, it gets in your blood. It’s an aura you get around you, a confidence. It is pride.

Portland Trailblazers host Oregon Guard members, families

PORTLAND, Ore. – For Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Evans and his family, spending an evening with an NBA basketball team was a dream come true.

“They’re going to remember this forever,” Evans said about his four sons, as he hoisted his youngest, Jacob, onto his shoulder for a picture with Portland Trail Blazers head coach Nate McMillan.

Evans, who is with Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 18th Field Artillery, will deploy to Iraq this summer, along with more than 3,000 other Oregon Army National Guard members.

He and his wife Jennifer, and three other sons, Gavin, Dylan and Braden, joined 30 other Oregon Guard members and their families at the Memorial Coliseum, the evening of Feb. 9, during the “Make It Better Holiday Carnival” hosted by the Blazers.

The event was originally scheduled for Dec. 20, but was rescheduled due to inclement weather.
Military OneSource offers free tax filing

Story by Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- The Defense Department’s Military OneSource family support program is once again offering free, online tax preparation and filing for servicemembers and their families, officials said Feb. 2.

The service began Jan. 15. It’s available to active duty service members, National Guard members and reservists and their families.

This is the second year of the program. Last year, more than 327,000 tax claims were filed using a similar program, said Jane Burke, the principal director in the office of the deputy under-secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. Burke added servicemembers can put their tax refunds to good use as a deposit in a savings or retirement account or to pay off debts.

"How to use the refund may be the first financial decision of the year" for servicemembers in improving their financial readiness, Burke noted. DoD is launching a campaign called “Military Saves” to encourage servicemembers to save money and eliminate or reduce their personal debt.

Filers who use Military OneSource’s online system can expect to receive their refund within 10 days, Burke said. And Military OneSource tax consultants, she said, are trained to answer questions on preparing and filing taxes and provide other financial management information.

Additionally, through the Military OneSource Web site at www.militaryonesource.com, servicemembers and their families can get guidance and answers to questions, Burke said.

The Military OneSource service augments the long-standing voluntary income tax assistance program offered through legal centers at most military installations, Burke said.

Volunteers at the centers provide free tax preparation and filing services.

Tax-filing assistance also is available through the Internal Revenue Service’s electronic filing program.

"Military OneSource’s online tax preparation and filing was the most popular with servicemembers and their families last year, Burke said.

"It is just one more way we can help improve the quality of life for our troops and their families," she said.

Disabled Veterans may property tax reduction in Oregon

If you are a disabled veteran or the surviving spouse or registered domestic partner of a deceased veteran, you may be entitled to exempt $16,391 or $19,669 of your homestead property assessed value from property taxes. The exemption amount increases by three percent each year.

The exemption is first applied to your home and then to your taxable personal property. If you are an Oregon resident and a qualifying veteran or that veteran’s surviving spouse/partner and live in your home, you may file a claim and receive the exemption.

For more information visit www.oregon.gov/DOR/P/TD/docs/316-676.pdf or contact tax assessor’s office for your respective county.

Military OneSource offers free tax filing

Story courtesy, U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet & TRICARE

TRICARE is consolidating, updating and streamlining its operations to provide more efficient, cost-effective service to active, reserve and retired service members and their families.

One of the most important announcements by TRICARE is the savings that have been realized and are being passed on to Reservists through the TRICARE Reserve Select program.

TRICARE Reserve Select is a premium-based health plan available to soldiers and airmen of the Selected Reserve (unit assigned and IMA members) at 28 percent of the premium cost. TRS offers coverage similar to Tricare Standard (and Tricare Extra) with the active duty family member deductibles and cost shares applied to both the Selected Reserve member and family members under the TRS plan.

"Now that TRS has been in place for several years, we were able to calculate premiums from actual cost data obtained in earlier years," said Army Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, deputy director of TRICARE Management Activity.

"It is important to provide high quality and affordable healthcare coverage for our National Guard and Reserve families," he added.

As a result, Monthly premiums for TRS individual coverage will decrease 25 percent from $81.00 to $47.51, and TRS family coverage will drop 29 percent from $253.00 to $180.17. For more information please visit www.oregon.gov/DOR/pdf/trsfaqs.pdf, or call the TRICARE North Region Contractor at (800) 555-2665.

Oregon Guard: Drill, AT pay now tax exempt

Under this law, members of the Oregon National Guard and Reserves can deduct up to $6,000 of their pay earned for performing active service, which did not include pay for weekend drills among other things. A temporary rule was adopted by the Oregon Department of Revenue in October 2008 to clarify that this law applies to pay earned while serving with weekend drills, annual training, encampments, special school attendance, and battle assemblies of the reserves.

The rule took effect on Nov. 1, 2000 and will apply to tax years going back to 2007 and forward to 2008.

The new information will be included in your 2008 tax returns and instructions will be sent to taxpayers.

For more information visit the Oregon Department of Revenue website at http://www.oregon.gov/DOR/ or call them at (503) 945-8600.

This law does not affect another military tax exemption law passed in the 2007 legislative session that provides deductions for Guard members and reservists who have been away from home for 21 days or longer. The two are distinct and do not relate, however a military member may be eligible for both, if they meet the criteria.

Oregon Sentinel
Employees pack up museum before move to new facility

CLACKAMAS, Ore. — The mannequins that donned vintage uniforms are bare, the L-19 Birddog plane rests wingless and more than 10,000 artifacts have been delicately tagged and boxed away.

Oregon Military Museum Curator Tracy Thoennes’ face lights up when she talks about how the now dormant facility will transition to a new museum at Oregon National Guard’s Camp Withycombe, near Clackamas.

“It’s a true potential for growth,” she said. “We’re just ecstatic to get a new building that will be more accessible, better laid out and more display space. It will be a primo museum.

The museum, which was closed to visitors in November, has a June 1, 2009 deadline to move its 13,147 artifacts to the Clackamas Armory. The four buildings that the museum currently occupies will be utilized by the 41st Infantry Division Armed Forces Reserve Center.

“As with most museums, we only display about two percent of our collection at any given time,” Thoennes said. “When you exhibit something, you are inherently damaging it. The curator added that the museum has permanent artifacts that are displayed for five years and temporary exhibits that rotate every six months.

Thoennes stated the new museum’s space will be increased from 17,000 square feet to 27,000 square feet. The facility will feature an enlarged gift shop, expanded library, more administrative space and possibly a viewable vault so that guests won’t need an appointment to see the weaponry.

Two historic buildings are also scheduled to be uprooted and moved, a World War II Quonset hut and a 1911 barn that housed horses from Battery A, Field Artillery.

Following the move, Thoennes will focus on funding the new museum. The curator said she will seek federal and state grants, as well as funds from non-profit organizations, private individuals, corporations, foundations and military channels.

“I’d love to launch that campaign,” Thoennes said. “But, we must pack the collection first.”

According to Thoennes, the new facility’s price tag will at least $3 million. She hopes the previous 3,500 annual visitors will blossom to 10,000. There are registered visitors from 28 states and 10 foreign countries. The demographics reflect 75 percent of visitors are male with a military background and half of those are active.

The museum also is frequented by school children, families and boy scouts.

“Coming up with that money is going to take some time,” Thoennes said. “The armory needs to be fixed to accommodate the museum standards such as exhibit areas and air conditioning and there needs to be a parking lot.”

With a new entrance to be constructed for Camp Withycombe, the museum will be located in a heritage area that visitors will be able to access as general public and not have to bypass a guard house or show identification.

Thoennes envisions mini-theaters, self-guided exhibits, large photo murals and dioramas that will impress visitors in an educational “you are there” feeling at the new museum.

“We’re not going to be world class,” Thoennes said. “But we’d like to be a regional, not homemade.”

To contribute artifacts or make donations, contact Tracy Thoennes. (503) 357-5339. tracy.thoennes@or.army.mil

Commissary Sale!! March 27-29

At Jackson Armory in Portland, Ore. 6255 NE Comford Rd.

Open to all military ID holders, active and retired

In an effort to bring the commissary benefit to Guard and Reserve units, who do not have commissary facilities nearby, DeCA is bringing the benefit to you. The sale features staples and dry goods.

Oregon National Guard Capt. Dominick P. Oto received the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in battle and The Bronze Star Medal in a ceremony Thursday Feb. 12 at Joint Force Headquarters in Salem, Ore.

On Sept. 20, 2008, insurgents attacked a six vehicle convoy of U.S. and Afghan soldiers going from Forward Operating Base Tombstone to Kandahar Air Field. The ambush included a roadside Improvised Explosive Device that struck the lead vehicle as Oto drove. The blast sent his vehicle 20 feet in the air, causing it to land on its roof and skid to a halt.

Oto served on the Embedded Training Team training the Afghan Army. He returned from the year-long deployment in December 2008.

Oregon’s Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees pinned Oto with both medals during the ceremony.

Oto resides in Salem. Capt. Dominick P. Oto stands at attention during a ceremony where he was pinned with the Purple Heart (lower right) and The Bronze Star Medal, Thursday Feb. 12, 2009 at Joint Force Headquarters in Salem.

The Oregon National Guard has had a winning tradition at the National Guard Marathon Championships in Lincoln, Neb.

Last year’s team won the team title for the entire National Guard! The team is looking for distance runners who can meet the following minimum standards: male: 3:30 marathon, female: 4:00 marathon.

If you meet those criteria you could compete for the Oregon National Guard Marathon Team, Sunday May 23, 2009 in Lincoln, Neb. starting at 7 a.m.

To sign up contact Master Sgt. Bill Kaemmer at (505) 725-3512 or e-mail him at kaemmerb@pdx.edu.

Retirees: Stay connected, stay informed

Each Tuesday the Retiree Service Office (RSO) sends out information to retirees via e-mail. E-mails on change of command ceremonies, deployments, TriCare services, survivor’s benefits, quarterly luncheons and COLA increases are just a few examples.

If you are retired and would like to start, or stop receiving information via e-mail from the RSO, just send your name and e-mail information to orrnso@or.ngh.army.mil or phone at (503) 584-2891.

Keep your information current. Mailing addresses and phone numbers are kept on every Soldier and Airman retiring from the Oregon National Guard.

Official retirement orders are used to add information about retirees to a data base maintained by the Retirement Service Office (RSO).

A list of retirees along with their last known address is what the Oregon Sentinel staff uses to mail out copies of this paper. Retirees should contact the RSO whenever there is an address or phone number change.

Want to find another retiree from the Oregon National Guard?

If you would like to get in touch with another retiree from the Oregon National Guard, just give the Retiree Service Office (RSO) a call at (503) 584-2891, or e-mail them at orrnso@or.ngh.army.mil.

Retiree service office has moved

The RSO moved to their new location in Room 243 of the Anderson Readiness Center, located at 3225 State St, Salem, Ore. The RSO will share the office space with representatives of TriCare and Employer Support to Guard and Reserve (ESGR). Office hours remain from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM every Tuesday.

Retiree luncheon scheduled for April

Twice each year, in April and September, the Oregon National Guard Retiree Council sponsors a retiree luncheon at the Salem Eagles lodge. This year the luncheon is scheduled for April 17, 2009.

All retired members of the Oregon National Guard, both Army and Air Guard, and former civilian employees of the Oregon Military Department are invited to attend.

The luncheon will begin with a “get acquainted time” starting at 11:30 a.m. and the meal will be served at noon. The Salem Eagles Lodge is located at 2771 Peace Loop in Salem. A small fee is charged for the meal which includes both lunch and dessert.

If you would like to be added to the invitation list please contact Chief Warrant Officer 5 (Ret.) Lee Ashwill at (503) 393-9320 or lee-barrushwil@comcast.net.

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At Jackson Armory in Portland, Ore. 6255 NE Comford Rd.

Open to all military ID holders, active and retired

In an effort to bring the commissary benefit to Guard and Reserve units, who do not have commissary facilities nearby, DeCA is bringing the benefit to you. The sale features staples and dry goods.

A U.S. Army L-19 Birddog aircraft sits with its wings removed in preparation for the move to a new location. Each of the items in the photo must be painstakingly dismantled and packed in order to preserve them for the move.
Kingsley Field airman relates deployment experiences from Afghanistan

New Air Guard director promoted in Pentagon ceremony

GATES from front page

“I have tried to ease, to the extent possible, the stress on our reserve components,” he said. “We have provided greater predictability as to when a Guardmember will be deployed by establishing a minimum standard of 90 days advance notice prior to mobilization. In practice, on average, the notification time is about 70 days. “There is no longer a 24-month lifetime limit on deployment, but each mobilization of National Guard and Reserve troops is now capped at 12 months.”

The goal is five years of dwell time for one year deployed. “We have made progress toward this goal but are not there yet,” Gates said. He added that the ratio of dwell time to mobilization for the Army National Guard for this fiscal year is just over 3-to-1.

Finally, Gates said the percent-age of soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan who are Guard or Army Reserve is currently about half what it was during the summer of 2005. “Reliance upon the reserve component for overseas deployment has declined over time,” he said.