Oregon engineers mobilize for duty in Afghanistan

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

Oregon’s oldest National Guard unit, the 162nd Engineer Company based in Dallas, Ore., mobilized approximately 100 citizen-soldiers during a ceremony at the Dallas High School, Oct. 31.

The ceremony, originally planned for 500-800 guests, saw standing-room only with about 1,500 family members, well-wishers, and local, state, and military leadership.

World War II veterans, Abe Bergen, a former member of Company “E”, 162nd Infantry Regiment, Dallas, Ore., and retired Army Sgt. Don Malarky, former member of Easy Company, also attended the event.

Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski, told the group he was honored to be in the presence of skilled and courageous soldiers.

“Today is about duty, honor, and country,” he said. “Words each of you live by.”

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard, said the unit’s soldiers were “smart and enthusiastic”.

“We know you’re going to perform your mission superbly,” Rees told the soldiers as they stood in formation.

Prior to the ceremony, the company recognized attending family members with special dog tags and backpacks in the school’s Gymnasium Annex building. Spc. Thomas Melendy, who was born and raised in Dallas, Ore., presented his two daughters Kaleiah and Helen with gifts in front of a group of cheering soldiers.

“I think the kids get missed a lot of times,” Melendy said. “It’s not always what the soldiers are going through. You have to think about the families—especially the kids because they don’t always understand what’s going on with the deployment.”

Melendy, who graduated from Dallas High School, said he appreciated how the city of Dallas has associated how the city of Dallas has

See ENGINEERS on PAGE 4

Oregon general takes command of 1st Air Force

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

TYNDALL AFB, Fla. — An Oregon Air National Guard general officer assumed command of Headquarters, 1st Air Force, Air Forces Northern, during a morning ceremony at Tyndall, AFB, Fla., Nov. 12.


The ceremony was attended by Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard, who led a group of about 20 Oregonians to Tyndall AFB, near Panama City, Fla.

While Dean remains attached to the Oregon Air National Guard, his new assignment as commander of 1st Air Force, AFNORTH leverages command positions he has held within the Oregon National Guard and across the state, Rees said.

“This is a wonderful day for Oregon, and a great day for the U.S. Air Force and our nation,” Rees said.

About 500 well-wishers, friends, coworkers and family members filled Hangar #2 at the base. Some of those in the audience included; Gen. Craig McKinley, Director of the National Guard; Maj. Gen. Ernesto Rivera, Chief of Staff for the Mexican Air Force, and Brig. Gen. Andre Viens, Deputy Commander, Continental U.S. NORAD.

Gen. Victor E. Reuarta, Commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command/U.S. Northern Command, praised the outgoing commander for his steadfast leadership and innovative approach to several challenges such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and numerous domestic contingency missions.

“You should be proud of the way you’ve integrated your mission every day,” he said to Morrow. “You are ‘Mr. Total-Forece’.”

Remaunt then welcomed Dean back to Tyndall AFB, saying, “we are extremely pleased to have him here with us.”

He added that Dean is a strong and successful leader, and a great follow-on to Morrow.

“Dean” truly understands the business of sovereign security,” Remaunt said.

During Morrow’s speech, the outgoing commander highlighted the many accomplishments under his command. He thanked the airmen before him for meeting the many challenges over the course of his tenure.

“We have kept our nation’s skies and shores safe from attack,” he said.

Dean then thanked Morrow for his hard work and dedicated leadership, expressed his gratitude to the many airmen in attendance, and thanked Rees for his mentorship and guidance.

“Command is a team sport,” Dean said, as he smiled at Rees.

Dean said his new assignment is a homecoming of sorts. In 2006, he served as the Air National Guard Advisor to the
November 2009

Warrant officer mentorship provides path for junior enlisted

I am a ‘citizen-soldier’ But what does that term mean to you?

While I was extremely proud of the time I spent active, the things they told me about the guard were not accurate. I joined the guard when my active commitment to the Army ended—not for the right reasons, but for the $50,000 bonus.

I showed up to the Silverton Armory, my Dad’s TOW unit, with preconceived notions. I held them by the guard, but I knew I was a poor NCO with a bad attitude and embarrassment to my father and the uniform. The UNIT leadership smelled, told me I should get it out, and asked me to reconsider when my mind was right.

When I first joined, I missed the Army. I still didn’t know what the Oregon National Guard was, but I knew something was missing.

I went back to the Silverton Armory, with a new attitude and a new perspective. They welcomed me back and put me to work.

I served with a great group of soldiers and leaders. I began to see what a citizen-soldier was, but still never really got a deep appreciation for the meaning of the term.

I was mentored, coached, and taught, and the citizen-soldier lesson taught to me by any of my leadership. I was left to my own devices and learned by experience and hard knocks. Some of those lessons came during fires and floods, but still I had no real understanding.

I progressed in my career and served in some of the best units in this state, but still the definition was escaping me.

Everyone remembers where they were on 9/11....
Air Force chief calls for collaboration

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

SALEM, Ore. — The State of Oregon is expected to receive $3.9 billion over the next three years in federal stimulus funds aimed at stabilizing the local and national economies.

The Oregon Military Department received a total of more than $7 million in state and federal stimulus funding in the first seven months of 2009 which not only provided much-needed upgrades to state armories but also put Oregonians back to work.

“We have contracted all of our initial 25 projects,” said Roy Swafford, Chief of Operations and Maintenance within the Installations Division of the Oregon Military Department. “Because of the market and economic times we had competitive bids and significant cost savings, which allowed us to do ten additional projects.”

Some of the major projects included a sanitary and storm sewer infrastructure project valued at $113 million at Camp Withycombe, and a $44 million project at Kingsey Field in Klamath Falls where an aircraft arresting system is undergoing renovation in conjunction with a full runway renovation. Major improvements have been made at the Chuckamas, Coos Bay, Roseburg, Hood River, Grants Pass, and Pendleton armories, as well as Camp Riley and at the Blak Training Area.

According to Swafford the stimulus funded projects for the Oregon Military Department have created or maintained 382 jobs in the state. He adds that the projects not only benefit the Oregon economy, but also benefit the soldier.

“When we do upgrades we modernize the facility and it’s improved for their use,” Swafford said. “We improve the sustainability of the facility and it’s better for the soldiers and the public.”

The Oregon Military Department is just one of many agencies in the State to receive funding through the Recovery Act.

According to Courtney Warner Crowell, Communications Manager, of the Economic Recovery Executive Team the Recovery Act was a necessary parachute for an economy in free fall.

“In the first seven months, we have either begun or even planning to hire more than 5,000 jobs across the state because of federal recovery projects and investments,” said Crowell.

For more information on the Recovery Act, visit www.recovery.gov

Oregon National Guard Funeral Honors Team: Second in Nation

Photo courtesy of Kansas National Guard Public Affairs

The Oregon National Guard Funeral Honors Team at the national competition at Fort Myer, in Washington D.C. The team captured first place in 2007 and 2008, came in second during the competition held during the second week of September.

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

WASHINGTON -- Although hopes for the Oregon National Guard Funeral Honors Team winning the title three years in a row during the national competition in Washington D.C. didn’t materialize, the Oregon soldiers did walk away with a solid second place Sept. 17.

“I am very proud of this Oregon team, and as usual they have presented themselves with professionalism and pride,” said team coordinator, Mark Brady.

Oregon took the number one spot in the national competition in 2007 and 2008. Brady said while the Oregon citizen-soldiers didn’t clinch the number one spot this year, they were able to show the team’s professionalism and pride.

“This is an excellent opportunity to showcase how well the military honors program has trained its soldiers nation-wide and to the level of service that our country’s veterans and retirees deserve,” he said.

The Funeral Honors competition is held each year at Fort Myer, in Washington D.C. According to Brady, the Oregon team spent a lot of time planning and practicing before they even think about the trip to the Nation’s capital.

Seven regions submit videos to the National Guard Bureau for evaluation and consideration. From that group, the best team from each region is invited to attend the national-level competition in D.C. The teams compete in several categories, including physical fitness tests, in-ranks inspections—which last over an hour—and a vehicle.

While the program boosts the skills of Oregon’s honors team, the group’s training non-commissioned officer thinks all soldiers benefit from participating in their respective state’s programs.

“I believe that this competition increases the probability of the program overall,” said Sgt. Timothy Tompkins, Oregon Honor Team Training NCO.

Oregon’s state program began in 2004. By the following year, the team had conducted 415 honors for veterans or retirees. By 2006, that number had grown to 2,350 events, and in 2008, 3,400 veterans received honors from the Oregon team.

As veterans continue to age into their 70s, 80s and 90s, Brady expects that number to increase in 2009.

“I anticipate that we will provide honors for over 3,500 in 2009,” he said.

Competitions aside, the soldiers on the team keep their perspective—to honor their fallen comrades and veterans who served their nation.

“The dignity and professionalism of these soldiers truly honor the fallen soldier or veteran,” Brady said. “The true beneficiaries of this excellent program are the family members, retirees, and veterans themselves.”

This year’s competition was held September 13-17, at Fort Myer in Washington, D.C. Winners were announced Sept. 17, with the Minnesota National Guard taking the top position.

Recovery Act benefits Oregon Guard, creates jobs

Story by Kim Lippert, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs Office

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The Oregon Military Department is just one
Dallas citizen-soldier-fights for two nations

Story and photo by
Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy
Oregon Military Department
Public Affairs Office


Oregon Governor, Theodore R. Kulongoski (left), stands with Oregon Army National Guard Pfc. Stephen R. Printup, and Printup’s grandfather, Jesse James Jones Jr., Co-Chief of the Cayuse Tribe of Pendleton, Ore., following the mobilization ceremony for the Oregon National Guard’s 162nd Engineer Company. Oct. 31 in Dallas, Ore.

Printup’s grandfather and Cayuse co-Chief Jesse James Jones Jr. said Printup is stepping forward as a family member.

“It’s a great honor (for him) to represent our family and my community,” Printup said.  “We’re really attached to the community here.”

The unit’s commander, Capt. Bob Baca, said while the family appreciation event shows the unit’s appreciation for their local soldiers, the real bonus was in the ability to include the soldiers’ families. He said having family support is critical to the mission the unit will perform in Afghanistan.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Oregon Army National Guard Spec. Thomas Melandy, of Dallas, Ore., presents his daughters, Kelsea, 11, and Helen, 13, with special dog tags bearing Melandy’s name, during a family presentation prior to the mobilization ceremony of his unit, 162nd Engineer Company at the Dallas High School, Oct. 31.

New grant to help Oregon soldiers and families

Story by Kim L. Lippert, Oregon Military Dept.
Public Affairs Office

EUGENE, Ore. -- Thanks to a new grant, Oregon National Guard soldiers and their families can take advantage of free counseling focused on reintegration following a deployment.

Sponsored by the Walmart Foundation, the grant from the National Center on Family Homelessness, addresses reintegration issues facing returning soldiers and their families.

Darcy Woodke, a family support specialist for the State Family Programs Office, said she has seen the need for family services intensify.

“This grant allows us as a test site to provide free services to OEF/OIF military families,” she said.

In October, 20 mental health providers gathered in Eugene, Ore., for a two-day conference focused on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy—a proven treatment for chronic stress, anxiety, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

“We wouldn’t wish someone to get PTSD but it’s one of the most treatable mental health disorders,” said Dr. Candice Monson, the developer for intervention component of this project and the Associate Professor of Psychology and Directer of the Clinical Psychology Training at Ryerson University. “If you do treatment there is a good chance for recovery.”

The treatment sessions, offered free to Oregon National Guard soldiers and their families, will be offered in the Eugene area in the coming months.

“Most often our loved ones cause us to take action, I think our loved ones are a reason for change especially if they understand they can be a person to help them continue to face what they fear,” said Monson.

Monson said one of the main treatment components of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is to learn how to stem avoidance behavior.

“Often soldiers suffer from chronic stress or PTSD avoid crowds or places where a crowd might be present,” said Monson.

Monson said she encourages anyone who is a significant person in a returning Oregon National Guard soldier to attend these counseling sessions because those important people can be agents for change.

For more information on how to take advantage of these free family counseling sessions please contact Darcy Woodke at 541-736-4601 or 541-991-6907.

Operation Proper Exit retuns injured Oregon soldier to Iraq

Story by Oregon Sentinel Staff

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq--To help bring closure to their participation in war, The Troops First Foundation, working with the USO, took eight wounded soldiers back to Iraq in the early part of October 2009.

Luke Wilson, who hails from Hermiston, Ore., was one of them.

According to officials who organized the program, Operation Proper Exit, their aim is to help wounded warriors complete their mission.

“One of us were taken in on a gurney and left on a gurney and won’t remember having ever been there,” Wilson told them at the Joint Visitors Bureau Oct. 12.

Wilson lost his left leg below the knee in an RPG attack on his convoy on Aug. 4, 2004, while he was deployed to Baghdad with the Oregon Army National Guard’s 2nd Battalion 162nd Infantry.


The group spent a week making stops throughout Iraq, and visited with paratroopers of the 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division. They were introduced to soldiers at the headquarters of the U.S. military command at Camp Victory, in a palace believed to have belonged to the late Saddam Hussein, al-Faw Palace.

“This trip wasn’t anything like I expected,” Wilson said. “When I was here before, there were IED’s, attacks, people being shot at every day.”

The program which brought the warriors back to Iraq is sponsored by Troops First Foundation and the USO. The aim is to return military members to the battlefield where they were injured, with the goal of bringing a sense of closure and showing them the improvements taking place in Iraq.

According to 1st Bde. 82nd Airborne Division Cmd. Maj. LaMarquis Knowles, the visit allows the warriors to see first hand the impact of their service.

“You can be assured your sacrifice were of worth something,” he told the warriors.

Newsroom
In Iraq, one man’s trash is another man’s treasure

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

AL ASAD, Iraq – Soldiers out of Roseburg, Ore., with the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, are helping local nationals from a village near Camp Korean Village, Iraq, turn trash to treasure.

First Lt. Matt Branstetter said an agreement with the Rupas city council states that ten individuals are allowed two truckloads twice a day – crews often wait all day for mission calls that never come.

Not having a mission means soldiers are not hurt, and that is good. “You hope to sit around all day,” he said, “but you also want to do your job.”

When a nine-line medevac request is called in, the crew on rotation springs into action. An urgent call requires the helicopter to be off the ground within 15 minutes, Casa said.

“It’s a pretty challenging thing,” he said, “but everybody does their job as part of a team and we get off the ground pretty quickly.”

Each Blackhawk team is composed of two pilots, one medic and one crew chief. The medic provides on-route care for the patient and, when necessary, is assisted by the crew chief.

“My first priority is the security of the helicopter and all the people in it, but I also provide assistance to the medic,” said Sgt. Tracy Braeme, a crew chief with Charlie Company. The soldiers of Charlie Co. said the mission, while challenging, can be very rewarding.

“I can’t imagine doing anything else,” said Casa, who works as a paramedic in Oregon.

Vallee said it is being able to do good things not only for American soldiers, but for the Iraqi people that he finds most gratifying.

“It’s an easy mission to be proud of,” said Braeme, a UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief with Charlie Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment and a Sublimity, Ore., native, preparing her crew’s helicopter for a medical evacuation mission Oct. 8 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Spc. Josef Lewis said that Charlie Company soldiers are developing positive relationships with the people from Rupas.

“Anything that they can use on a regular basis they will use. We also set a lot of the things we get from home aside so we can give it to them; we’ll give them stuff like toothbrushes and tea,” Lewis said.

Spc. Justin Fox, of Roseburg, Ore., interact and play games with local nationals from the village of Rupas prior to supervising them while they collect food for their sheep and other items the village can use from trash outside Camp Korean Village, Iraq.

41 Brigade soldiers awarded Presidential citations

First Sgt. Scott Davis, Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Johnson, Staff Sgt. Stuart Peterson, Sgt. Alex Starrelli and Staff Sgt. Jesse Sapp of 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry, received the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism during a ceremony in Taji, Iraq on Sept. 11, 2009.

An official presentation ceremony for the award is being scheduled as of this printing.

Photo by Spc. Anita VanderMolen.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

9:11; I was in the school library of Stayton High School watching the events unfold on TV. I went to my principal after the first tower fell and told her I had to leave and went directly to Corvallis, where I was the first lieutenant and governor of Bravo Company, 2-162 Infantry. I was not the first to arrive and by noon there were 30 soldiers there waiting to see if they were needed.

If you remember, we didn’t know if there would be more attacks, and if the West Coast was next. That was when I really started to understand the term citizen-soldier.

These warriors, without being asked, put aside their daily tasks and showed up to protect their community. They weren’t “on orders”, none of them even asked about it, the last showed up to be ready.

They were concerned citizens, who were also soldiers; members of the community, who were ready to do everything in the defense of their State and Nation.

I saw it again as we went to Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom II, police, EMTs, construction workers, delivery men, etc., dropped everything to deploy when needed.

They used their skills as soldiers and citizens to solve every single problem thrown their way.

My understanding of the term grew deeper and more complex.

Since 9-11, I think I have a handle on the term, do you?

Do you share it with your subordinates and leaders?

Do you share it with your neighbors and friends?

It has never been more apparent to me that citizen-soldier is a term of honor and esteem-- if more people knew the definition more people would want to be a citizen-soldier.

I think each of you knows the meaning, and you learned it earlier than a rockhead like me, but my question to you is, “are you spreading the word to those that don’t?”

Respectfully,
SCSM Brunk W. Conley
BIAK TRAINING AREA, Ore.-- The Oregon National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program has partnered with the Oregon National Guard and provided some much needed community service in observance of National Public Lands Day, Sept. 25, near Redmond, Ore.

Cadets focused their efforts on Biak Training Area and teamed up with members of the Oregon Army National Guard Environmental Branch and Biak Staff. Nearly 60 cadets arrived at 8:45 a.m. and worked until early afternoon to remove fencing and place information signs on the public land in an effort to keep the land in good condition for others to use. The cadets are part of Oregon's Youth ChalleNGe Program, which is an alternative high school where they live on-site for five weeks while attending the military-model school.

The school is accredited by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools and is approved by the Oregon Department of Education.

The target population of students are generally students who are considered "at risk," dropped out of high school, not attending school or are failing in school.

Many students go on to earn their high school diploma, go on to community college, enlist in the military, return to high school, join the job corps, start a job or similar vocational interest.

To learn more about the program contact Kim Coleman at (541) 317-9623 ext. 224 or e-mail her at: kim.d.coleman@mil.state.or.us

173rd jets return from 7-month deployment

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. -- The 173rd Fighter Wing flying operation of the Oregon Air National Guard have returned to Klamath Falls after the spending the summer in Boise.

The first nine of 22 F-15 aircraft arrived back at Kingsley Field Nov. 3, followed by the remaining aircraft Nov. 4-5. Well-wishers from the base including family members greeted the 173rd Fighter Wing Commander, Col. James Miller who was one of the first with wheels-down on the newly minted runway.

"It was a very smooth runway coming in," he said.

He also added that the wing would take a few days off from flying so members can get resettled at home and with friends and loved ones.

"We’re happy to be home," he said.

Along with the jets, more than 225 Guard members spent time at Gowen Field in Boise while the Kingsley Field runway underwent repairs and upgrades. The project was jointly funded by the Oregon National Guard, the Federal Aviation Administration and Department of Defense.

The $25-million runway and aircraft arresting system projects spanned over two years worth of planning and design and the construction was completed in 6 months," said Lt. Col. Lance McCuiston, 173rd Civil Engineer Squadron commander. "The most challenging portion of the actual project construction was the schedule and phasing coordination since the project was originally planned by the FAA and the city over a 2 year period with 12 months of actual construction."

McCuiston went on to say that the schedule was compressed by roughly half--a process made possible by intense coordination between the 173rd with the cities of Klamath Falls, the design company, and the Federal Aviation Administration.

The project involved 42 different contractors who employed about 300 people. In addition to the runway improvements, taxiways were also upgraded, said Klamath Falls International Airport director, Derek Martin.

According to McCuiston this construction is a significant part of the 25-year Installation Master Plan which postures the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field to assume the entire F-15 Formal Training Unit mission for the active-duty Air Force and the Guard and Reserve components.

The significant investment in the Runway and Aircraft Arresting System projects will help sustain the Air National Guard’s primary mission at Kingsley Field and keep us viable for many more years," said McCuiston.

Perhaps the final touch to the project was the new emergency arrestor system certification Nov. 5. The arrestor system is a complex system of brakes located on either side of the runway with a cable stretched between them. The certification process required one of the newly returned F-15 aircraft to accelerate over the wire with the tail hook down, catching the wire and demonstrating that the cable arrestor functions as intended. McCuiston summed up the test and the overall project with one word, “success!”

OYCP lends a hand on Public Lands Day

Cadets with the Oregon Youth ChalleNGe program participate in Public Lands Day by picking up debris left behind by shooters on the Biak Training Area near Redmond, Ore., Sept. 25.

Photo by Sgt. Eric A. Rutherford, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

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

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

Col. James Miller lands his F-15 Eagle aircraft at the newly minted Kingsley Field runway following a total renovation over the last seven months. His aircraft was the first of four that returned from Boise, Idaho the morning of Nov. 3. Five more returned later in the day. By Nov. 12 all personnel and equipment had returned home. The 173rd Fighter wing deployed 22 aircraft and more than 225 people in support of Sentry Displacement.

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Oregon National Guard members can get emergency relief funds

SALEM, Ore. -- The Oregon National Guard Emergency Relief Fund is designed to provide emergency financial assistance to Oregon Army and Air National Guard members and their immediate families.

National Guard members are not eligible to receive Red Cross or emergency relief funds from the Army or Air Force Associations, except when on full time duty for more than 30 consecutive days.

Even though these cases the application process can be complicated and the applicants can see the approval time for requests take longer then they have time for.

The Emergency Relief Fund has also been instrumental in assisting our soldiers and airmen upon their return from deployment.

Working in conjunction with our reintegration program the emergency relief fund gets the Guard member the help they need to merge back into society.

During this time the career transitional assistance program continues to assist these soldiers and airmen with jobs, medical and family issues.

The Oregon National Guard Emer gency Relief Fund has proved to be a critical retention tool by helping bridge the gap for the Guard member who are between jobs and helping retain quality individual from a non active or nonwow as considering a transition to active duty.

Who Does ONGERF Help?

• National Guard soldiers, airmen, single or married, and their dependents.

• Surviving spouses and orphans of soldiers or airmen who died while on active duty in a traditional guard member drilling status.

• Help with emergency financial needs for:
  • Food, rent or utilities
  • Emergency transportation and vehicle repair
  • Funeral expenses
  • Medical or dental expenses
  • Personal needs such as payday or are delayed or stolen
  • Help pay for nonessentials
  • Finance ordinary leave or vacation
  • Pay fines or legal expenses
  • Help liquidate or consolidate debt

• Assist with house purchase or home improvements
• Help purchase, rent or lease a vehicle

How Do I Find ONGERF When I Need Help?

• First, see your unit commander. Requests are processed through Unit and then to the State ONGERF section with board member approval.

What Should I Bring With Me?

• Substantiating documents (car repair estimate, rental agreement, utility bill, etc.)
• Copy of your most current bank statement.

How Long Does It Take to Get ONGERF Help?

• You can expect a quick decision on your request. (Many times an assistance check can be cut the same day as requested.)

What Kind of Assistance Can I Expect?

• A grant (an outright gift of funds) if repayment of loan will cause undue hardship.

• When a combination of loan and part grant is used, Soldiers and Airmen may be expected to pay back part of the funds given out from their loan account. Each situation is different and the need for funds can mandate a loan.

Is There a Dollar Limit on ONGERF Help?

• No, ONGERF assistance will meet your emergency need as identified and approved by the ONGERF.

How Can You Help ONGERF?

• Know about ONGERF and how to get ONGERF help when you have a financial emergency

• Ensure your family members know about ONGERF

• Give your spouse a power of attorney for emergency use

• Remind other soldiers, who have financial emergencies, about ONGERF

• Oregon Tax Refund availability for contributing donations to the ONGERF.

For more information contact program coordinator Staff Sgt. Richard Wirfs at Joint Force Headquarters in Salem at (503) 384-1999 or e-mail him at richard.wirfs@or.ngb.army.mil.

VA extends “Agent Orange” benefits

WASHINGTON -- Relying on an inde pendent study by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki decided to establish a service- connection for Vietnam Veterans with three specific illnesses based on the latest evidence of an association with the herbicides referred to as Agent Orange.

The illnesses affected by the recent decision are B cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia, Parkinson’s disease, anditechonic heart disease.

Shinseki in January 1965 and April 1970, an estimated 2.6 million military personnel who served in Vietnam were potentially exposed to Agent Orange.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a “presumptive” illness don’t have to prove an association between their illnesses and their military service.

This “presumption” simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits.

Secretary’s decision brings to the number of presumed illnesses recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

“We must do better reviews of illnesses that may be connected to service, and we will,” Shinseki added. “Veterans who endure health problems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence.”

Other illnesses previously recognized under VA’s “presumption” rule as being caused by exposure to herbicides during the Vietnam War are:

• Acute and Subacute Transient Peripheral Neuropathy, AL Amyloidosis, Chloracne, Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, Diabe tes Mellitus (Type 2), Hodgkin’s Disease, Multiple Myeloma, Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma, Porphyria Cutanea Tarda, Prostate Cancer, Respiratory Cancers, and Tissue Fibrosis or Hypertrophy of the Spleen, Thymus, or Palmar and Plantar Skin (cherubism, Chondrocrania, Kaposi’s sarcoma, or Melanoticoma).

Additional information about Agent Or ange and VA’s services and programs for Veterans exposed to the chemical are available at: public.health.va.gov/epros/agentorange

Stop-loss pay made retroactive

WASHINGTON -- More than 185,000 servicemembers affected by the military’s “Stop-Loss” program will soon be able to apply for the congressionally authorized $500 a month retroactive payments to compensate them for their added duty.

After 9/11, the military routinely used its stop-loss policy to keep servicemembers on active duty past their contracted time to ensure manpower levels to fight the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Congress recently voted that those servicemembers who would ever past their rightful discharge dates should be compensated $500 a month for each month they were held over in stop-loss.

While there still is some debate among Congress and the Pentagon as to who actu ally is eligible for the stop-loss pay, the Army reports that 136,778 soldiers may be eligible; the Marine Corps states 9,660 Marines may be eligible; the Air Force has 39,199 potential eligible airman; and the Navy has no service members eligible. Each service is responsible for its own retro active payment program.

The Army intends to have a web-based application process up and running by November 1, while the Marines are in the process of establishing an office to admin ister and manage the program that should be available soon.

If you or someone you know was affected by stop-loss between September 1, 2001 and September 30, 2009 please contact your branch of service to determine how you can apply for your retroactive stop-loss payment.

Winter weather brings driving challenges

By Jennifer Bailey
Public Affairs Coordinator
Oregon Emergency Management

Enjoy the great outdoors in the Pacific Northwest this winter season, but keep an eye on the weather forecast and the road ther...The National Weather Service issues a variety of winter weather watches, adviso ries and warnings.

Always check the latest weather forecast before heading out and take the time to check the warnings issued by the National Weather Service service. Before winter weather threatens this season, you should prepare a winter safety kit for you and your family. Such kits are also available at many retail and auto supply stores.

Remember, if you become stranded on the roads during a storm, run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat, but keep the window open a bit for ventilation. Also, keep the exhaust pipe clear of obstruction to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Finally, make yourself visible to rescuers by turning on the dome light at night while running the motor. Avoid overexertion when outdoors. Heart attacks can kill during and after storms, because shoveling snow or freezing stuck vehicles can be quite stressful.

A companion when heading out this cold season is a battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio, the voice of the National Weather Service. It provides you with the latest weather conditions and warnings for your area. You can purchase such radios at many local electronics or department stores or online at your favorite internet store. Use the 511 phone and internet traffic information service to be provided by state transportation departments to info on road conditions, road work, and construction, and road closures, before you travel.

Finally, if you need more information on winter weather safety, winter weather brochures, or NOAA Weather Radio, please contact your nearest National Weather Service office by phone, or by web.
Director of Air National Guard visits with Oregon’s airmen

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

PORTLAND, Ore.—Looking toward the future of air sovereignty and mission readiness in the Pacific Northwest, the director of the Air National Guard toured the Oregon Air National Guard’s 142nd Fighter Wing in Portland.

Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, director of the Air National Guard, visited with Oregon airmen during his two-day trip to the Pacific.

“This is a time of great change for all of us in the Air Force,” Wyatt said. “Being able to adapt and grow will be part of that future.”

Col. John E. Kent, commander of the 142nd Fighter Wing, escorted Wyatt around the base. During his tour, he met with several airmen who have recently deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and officers and airmen who support the full-time alert mission.

Oregon Airmen enjoy one of five states who hold the air sovereignty alert mission — with fully-equipped jets which are kept ready to respond to threats to national security and local infrastructure.

“The Air National Guard is well suited to meet many of the challenges and expanded roles with even higher responsibilities for Airmen in the future,” Wyatt said.

Wyatt was briefed on ways the Oregon Air National Guard can adapt to new threats in future mission requirements, as well as developing long range plans to secure fifth-generation fighter aircraft like the F-22 and F-35.

“We have the people and assets already in place,” Kent said during the briefing.

The Oregon coast and other parts of the Pacific Northwest are also ideal for hosting other units to train because of the training sites and air space size, Kent said.

Wyatt then received a hands-on presentation from airmen of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron. The general was able to try out equipment the unit uses in their combat operations and received a high level of readiness.

“With so many adventure sports activities and enthusiasts in this part of the country, our mission to train and ability to recruit is perfectly suited for being here,” Berg said.

Oregon retires last F-15A in Air Force inventory

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


Aircraft 77-098 first arrived at the active Air Force inventory on 21 May 1984, and became an F-4 pilot before joining the Air Guard.

The journey that Beauchamp flew that day was one of many trips, as aircraft tail number 77-098 was retired upon arrival to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this aircraft retirement is that this F-15 is the last of the A models in the active U.S. Air Force inventory to arrive at the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center (AMARC) in Tucson, Ariz. – the “boneyard.”

“I thought I was going to ride off into retirement when the last of these ‘A models’ would be retiring,” Beauchamp said.

The F-15 A/B models have been slowly phased out of the Air Force inventory over many years. In total, only 384 of the single-seat fighters were built from 1972 to 1979. The Air National Guard has held onto the last of these A model jets until the active Air Force began to receive the F-22 Raptors and turn over the F-15s to the Air National Guard.

“It seems strange to stand here in front of this terrific airplane and know I am taking it out of service,” Beauchamp said.

Aircraft 77-098 first arrived in Portland on Aug. 1, 1994. It was one of the original jets that came to the fighter wing during the second conversion period that began in 1989 when the 142nd converted to the F-15A/B aircraft.

Most of those jets had been assigned from the soon-to-be-disbanded 318th Fighter Interceptor Group at McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

As the A models have left, Oregon, the maintenance and crew chiefs had to part with airframes that had been with the unit for up to 20 years.

One aircraft in particular, 73-099, had more than 35 years of total active service before it was retired earlier in 2009. It will be refurbished for a new permanent home at the Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum in McMinnville, Ore.

For crew chiefs like Shawn, the A models were a way of life. “They were our jets. They would routinely tell us they were the best F-15’s they have ever flown, period,” Shawn said.

Billmyer first began working on F-15 Tomcats in the Navy before joining the Air Force.

He felt the F-15A models had a much higher technological advantage. “It’s been pretty tough to let go of good airplanes.”

Yet as the newer C models arrive and the Golden Eagles make their way to Portland in the future, the sense of losing an old reliable friend was evident as the last careful preflight inspection on 77-099 was done by Beauchamp, Billmyer and Shawn.

The morning was not lost on other unit members as many walked out to the flight line’s edge to watch the final F-15A leave the air base for the last time. Similar emotions were felt in 1989 when the Eagle’s predecessor, the F-4, ended its service in Portland.

Saying goodbye to these old jets is all part of the job. The F-15A/B models are now part of the legacy of the air defense fighter jets at Portland that have flown from this base since the end of World War II.

“We’ve been watching what we have put blood, sweat and tears into and taken great pride in over many years leave our base. It’s watching a part of us leave, too,” Harris said.

142nd gets new commander


PORTLAND, Ore.—Col. John E. Kent relinquished command of the Oregon Air National Guard’s 142nd Fighter Wing to Col. Michael E. Stencel during a change of command ceremony at Portland Air National Guard Base Oct. 17.

Kent served as the wing commander of the unit since 2007. Kent is a command pilot with over 3,400 operational hours in the F-15 aircraft, and has been employed with Delta Airlines as a commercial pilot since 2000.


“He has found what was worth doing in his life,” Rees said.

Col. Michael E. Stencel served recently as the wing’s vice commander. He joined the Oregon Air National Guard in 1984, and became an F-4 pilot with the 123rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron the following year. He has worked at Oregon National Guard headquarters, and with the 142nd Civil Engi neering Squadron before serving as the mission support group commander.

Stencel praised Kent for his wide range of experience as a pilot, working with civil engineers, and his work at state headquarters as the state director of operations.

“He has a broad background that I think will put him in a good position to be another great commander for the 142nd Fighter Wing,” Rees said.

Brig. Gen. Bruce W. Prunk, Commander of the Oregon Air National Guard, said Stencel’s experience as a traditional guardsman will benefit the unit because of the varied military and civilian experience he brings to his new position.

Stencel added that the ceremony is less about what he plans to do as commander, and more about what every airman at the wing will accomplish in their own careers. He encouraged wing members to serve by mentoring, leading and living the Air Force core values.

“I challenge you to not just be a member of this organization,” Stencel said. “But to step up to and be a leader.”