



Oregon Sentinel

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Oregon's 162 Engineer Company returns to Dallas, Ore.

Unit credited with saving thousands of lives through route clearance missions in Afghanistan



Above: Oregon Army National Guard Capt. Bobby Baca, Commander of the 162 Engineer Company, greets his daughter Kennedy (left), and son Baylor, after his unit arrived in Dallas, Ore., Nov. 4. Baca returned to the Pacific Northwest Oct. 30, along with more than 80 of his fellow Oregon Soldiers following a year-long deployment to Afghanistan.

Left: Soldiers of the Oregon Army National Guard's 162 Engineer Co., march in formation into their demobilization ceremony in Dallas, Ore., Nov. 5. The unit returned to the Northwest Oct. 30, following a year-long deployment to Afghanistan. The 162 Engineers were credited with clearing more than 15,000 miles of roads during more than 6,000 hours of active missions.

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

See full story on page 6.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Kulongoski visits Bangladeshi leadership, PM

Oregon group spends Veterans Day in Bangladesh as part of SPP visit

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

SALEM, Ore., -- Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski joined Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, the Adjutant General, Oregon, on a visit to Bangladesh to meet with military and civilian leaders supporting the State Partnership Program Nov. 10-12.

The State Partnership Program (SPP) helps build long-term relationships between individual states and their National Guard units, and foreign countries to enhance security and foster positive relations.

The program was started in 1993 in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union and now includes 62 partnerships around world. Oregon's partnership with Bangladesh began in 2008.

The three-day visit was part of a continuing effort to discuss activities that promote mutual security cooperation, stability and progress.

The team, which included Oregon Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Steven Gregg and Oregon SPP Director Lt. Col. Mark Crosby, visited with various government ministries and Bangladeshi military leaders, including Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina.

Several new concepts were discussed that compliment the strengths and needs of the Oregon National Guard and the Bangladeshi



Photo courtesy of State Partnership Program Team

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski meets with Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, during a visit to Dhaka, Bangladesh, Nov. 10. The Governor led a team of State Partnership Program members who met with senior military and civilian officials as part of the ongoing development of the program, which partners individual states' national guard units with emerging democratic governments throughout the world.

See **BANGLADESH** on PAGE 6

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COMMAND

Soldiers, Airmen respond as responsibilities rise for Oregon units



Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees,
The Adjutant
General,
Oregon

Every month continues to be demanding for our Oregon National Guard.

November was no different. In addition to having the privilege of traveling with Governor Ted Kulongoski to Bangladesh to support our State Partnership Program, we welcomed home members of the 142 Fighter Wing, who returned from a successful overseas training tour to the United Arab Emirates, as well as the 162 Engineers from a 400-day deployment to Afghanistan.

Our impact is far reaching; whether accomplishing our missions on the field of battle, assisting our communities here at home, or establishing partnerships, which will benefit our state and nation for years to come, the Oregon National Guard is leading the way.

The mission of the State Partnership program is to build long-term relationships

between individual states and their National Guard units, and foreign countries. Our trip did just that. While in Bangladesh, we met with both civilian and military leaders and various government ministries to discuss how to best respond to natural disasters, to provide better higher education opportunities, and to assist in military training exercises.

Oregon and Bangladesh share similar challenges with both regions' proximity to earthquake and flood zones and both governments can benefit from knowledge sharing in emergency management and disaster response. I appreciated the opportunity to gain insight from the leaders in Bangladesh on UN Peacekeeping Operations, (they provide over 10,000 soldiers each year), while also sharing information on how we prepare and help keep our state safe from disasters.

In early November, approximately 90 citizen-Soldiers from the 162 Engineer Company returned to Oregon early in the month. While in Afghanistan, our Oregon Soldiers cleared more than 15,000 miles of roads encountered nearly 200 IED events.

During more than 6,000 hours of active missions these Soldiers were awarded more than 13 Bronze Stars, 78 Combat Action Badges, 60 Army Commendations and five Purple Hearts. This recognition speaks to the bravery and commitment of our citizen Soldiers. Well done Captain Baca, First

Sergeant Payne, and all the combat engineers of the 162d.

At the 162 Engineer's demobilization ceremony in Dallas, I had the privilege of speaking to Pvt. 1st Class Derek Cork via video teleconference. Cork lost part of his leg to an explosive blast during the unit's deployment. Cork is recovering at Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. We wish him a speedy recovery, and give great thanks to him and his family for their service and sacrifice.

As the 162 Engineers reunite with their loved ones, approximately 600 Soldiers of the 3-116 Cavalry Battalion completed training at Camp Shelby, Miss., and departed for Kuwait. These Oregon Soldiers will join their counterparts from Idaho and Montana to comprise the 116 Cavalry Brigade. Their mission will be to support Operation New Dawn in Iraq and provide route-clearance along with other mission support.

This year more than 3,500 Oregon Guard members returned home from overseas deployments and will be able to celebrate the holidays with loved ones. However, nearly 1,000 of our Guard members will not be home. As we head into the holiday season, I want to thank the families of our Oregon National Guard for their shared sacrifice. Your continued support allows us to be successful whether overseas or here at home.

Thank you, and Happy Holidays. Always Ready! Always There!

Senior Leadership Conference a chance for learning, networking

Last month I attended the Warrant Officer Senior Leaders Conference at the Army National Guard Readiness Center. This conference is designed for the Command Chief's to bring with them two fellow warrants for both exposures and a learning opportunity as warrant officers.

Accompanying me were: CW5 Scott O'Donnell, CW4 Jan Martin, CW3 Rob Karnes and CW2 Joe Zeiner. One common theme that the presenters shared was how difficult it was to address a room full of over one hundred fifty warrant officers, not to mention fifty-four Command Chiefs.

To say the least, discussions were heated, passionate and direct. The type of conference where warrants were fighting over the micro phones, at one point in time all the red lights on the mics were lighting up like Christmas trees. However, at the end of the day, guidance was given and feelings were mended and warrants left the room smiling, patting each other on the back and making plans to meet for dinner etc. As a Corps warrants have never been known to be shy and afraid to share their ideas and concerns. This was no exception. I enjoyed myself.

Even so, as with most conferences the best work is done during the breaks, at the ice breaker and during lunch and dinner. Relationships were cemented, promotion issues for fellow warrant officers were addressed and corrected and seats at required courses for promotions were confirmed. My take away from this year's workshop is to

make sure more junior warrants attend. We as a Corps are isolated in our particular branch. This is neither bad nor good, we can solve this dilemma during our Warrant Officer Professional Development sessions. It is imperative that we maintain our expertise in our field; it just needs to be expanded.

We want to wish the best of luck to WOC Stan Krupsky as he conquers the Warrant Officer Candidate Course at Ft Rucker.

Shortly, we will be saying good bye to CW5 Vern Johnson, Senior Ordnance Warrant Officer. Chief Johnson has had a long a distinguish career. He is well respected by peers, subordinates and supervisors. His expertise and "can do" attitude will be greatly missed.

Lastly, some upcoming events to watch for: Officer/Warrant Officer Recruiting Workshop to be held in February and the first ever ALL ORARNG Warrant Officer Professional Development Workshop in April.

For the Corps!



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Michael Zagyva,
Command Chief
Warrant Officer,
Oregon National
Guard

Deployments an opportunity for Oregon Guard to be "all-in"



142nd Fighter Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Max White,
Oregon Air
National Guard

The food is not deluxe. The latrines are marginal. The weather is hardly arctic. The landscape is an endless sea of sand and rocks. The wildlife consists of scorpions, spiders, viper snakes, and wild dogs and cats. We are all isolated from our beloved families back home. And yet the morale is sky high at my deployed location in the Persian Gulf. What explains this seemingly anomalous situation?

First, we are part of a very important mission. The Air Force, Army, and Navy are working side by side, and we are all focused on supporting each other at an amazing level of cooperation. It has impressed me that National Guard members, Reservists, and Active Duty all work together seamlessly.

Guardsmen are every bit as technically competent as the Active Duty. And we bring a wide variety of life experiences to the fight. Moreover, it has been an opportunity for those of us from Oregon to shine.

My study of the country's language and customs has made me a more effective ambassador of the 142nd Fighter Wing, the state of Oregon, and the United States of America. Who would have thought that my years of teaching math would pay off? But sure enough, tonight I will teach my first math review class for Airmen who are pursuing their CCAF degrees.

Second, the attitude of the Airmen I am working with is amazing. As the Detachment Superintendent, I have frequently put out the call for Airmen to help out with various projects.

Invariably I have had more people step up than I have requested. As a result, many hands have made for lighter work. The work ethic and professionalism of my brothers-in-arms have been inspiring. Our leadership, too, has done a magnificent job of reminding everyone of the important role that each of them plays in accomplishing our mission.

Third, both the base and my detachment have done an outstanding job of providing the Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen with Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)

opportunities.

The gym is first-rate, and open 24/7. I have been one of the gym's steadiest customers, and it is always a great location for me to support Airmen who are doing good things. MWR also brings in celebrities, such as Jessica Simpson, who visited the base earlier this week. They have a movie theater, wi-fi, phones for morale calls, and computers for e-mail/internet use.

The fact that I have been able to utilize the DSN lines to call Salem and then be patched on to my family every day has been a huge factor in keeping my spirits high. In addition, MWR makes available various activities for military personnel who are on leave or liberty.

In closing, I would recommend that anyone who has the opportunity to deploy to the AOR takes that opportunity. It is one thing to practice for an assortment of inspections at your home station, but it's quite another thing to put all of your training into practice at an overseas location. It has been an opportunity for me to raise the bar and be "all-in" when it comes to this operation.

If you are deploying, or are thinking about volunteering for a deployment, I suggest you

See **OREGON AIR GUARD CHIEF** on
NEXT PAGE

OPINION

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force: 'One suicide is too many'

Story by
Chief Master Sgt. James A. Roy,
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

An alarming trend is happening in our Air Force, and we need your help. We've had a drastic increase this year in the number of suicides among our total force Airmen - active duty, guard, reserve and civilians. Last year we lost 84 Airmen by suicides; as of October of this year, we nearly reached that number. The bottom line: even one suicide is too many!

We all take Suicide Awareness training, but that's just the first step - we must take immediate action and get involved. We need to look out for each other and understand that we're not alone. Be ready and willing to assist your Wingman and ask for help when you need it. We must all take the time to care about those around us. That's what good Wingmen do, and that's what our Air Force needs.

Supervisors at every level must act

now. Get to know your Airmen better and understand their personal and professional challenges. This is not a time to sit idle and think this won't happen in your unit. No one is immune. Suicides range the spectrum of ages, locations, MAJCOMs and career fields. The two most common factors we've seen are problems with relationships and finances.

We need to be good Wingmen for others and also need to develop and maintain trusted relationships and friendships where we can talk openly and honestly about things happening in our own lives. We need to feel comfortable exchanging ideas, views and experiences with those who are closest to us. There is always someone available for you.

So many people care about you - more than you may think; family, friends, co-workers, supervisors, first sergeants, commanders, chaplains, medical professionals and senior leaders are ready and willing to listen and help. Just give

them a chance. Don't ever think you are alone or that no one will understand. We will understand, and we will help you. It doesn't matter whether you write, call or e-mail, please reach out. We are an Air Force family and you mean a lot to all of us. If you feel you are at the end of your road, you are not - talk with someone. We care about you and will ensure you receive the help you need.

You should never be afraid of seeking help for fear of reprisal. Our lives should be the priority. The Air Force also has many resources to help. Military and family life consultants, chaplains and medical professionals are all available. Also, Military One Source counselors are always available by calling 800-342-9647 or visiting www.militaryonesource.com.

With everyone's help, we can and must step up and reverse this devastating trend.

Note: This article was originally published on the National Guard Bureau website in late October, 2011. --Ed.



Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Roy serves as the personal adviser to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, of the enlisted force.

Men also victims of sexual assault, few report crimes, study says

Story by Judith Watson,
JFHQ Sexual Assault Resource Coordinator

Did you know that one man in seventeen will experience a completed or attempted sexual assault during his lifetime?

"According to a 2007 study by a team of VA researchers, a nationwide screening of veterans seeking VA services turned up more than 60,000 with sexual trauma. More than half of those -nearly 32,000- were men." (Bill Sizemore of the Virginian-Pilot, 10-9-09).

If it is difficult for female victims to report the crime it is even more difficult for men to contact authorities.

"Boys are not supposed to be vulnerable, sad, helpless,

ashamed, afraid, submissive..." according to Jim Hopper, a psychology instructor at Harvard Medical School. Military training reinforces that socialization.

He further states that "... conditions men to accept physical wounds, death and killing while leaving them unprepared for emotional wounds that assault their male identity."

The Department of Defense is committed to creating a climate in which victims/survivors feel accepted when they step forward to report an assault. Victims of sexual assault want to know that they will not suffer negative consequences, either in the form of career advancement or personal stigma.

Two key factors that improve the climate for reporting

sexual assault are commander involvement in creating a pro-reporting environment and the role that fellow soldiers and airmen can play in being supportive to the survivor by encouraging that they report the crime.

The good news is that there are now over 25 Victim Advocates throughout Oregon as well as five SARCs for the two Brigades, the two Wings, and the Combat Operations Group.

Capt. Rey Agullana (JFHQ-SARC) or Judith Watson (alternate JFHQ-SARC) are your resources for any questions you have regarding sexual assault. The number for the 24-hour hotline is 503-756-5327. You can make a difference.

Oregon Air Guard Chief leads visit to Bahrain hospital



Photo courtesy of Chief Master Sgt. Max White

From left to right: Tech. Sgt. Annette Sanders, Tech. Sgt. James Wilson, Staff Sgt. Melanie Mangan, Chief Master Sgt. Max White, and Senior Airman David Sidnam pay a visit to a hospital in the capital city of Manama, Bahrain. The two boys in the photo were there checking up on their infirm little brother.

Led by Chief Master Sgt. Max White, who serves as the 142nd Fighter Wing Chief Master Sergeant, the group paid a visit to a local hospital in the capital city of Manama in Bahrain.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

talk to Soldiers or Airmen who have recently returned from one. For example, I learned from our Security Forces personnel that insects would not present a problem. I found that it was not necessary to dip my uniforms in insecticide and that Avon Skin So Soft was very effective in keeping away the rare mosquito or fly.

And Chief Gardner, who recently got back from Afghanistan, said Airmen would be relying on my leadership and decision-making over here. He was right, and that has just encouraged me to give it a 120 percent effort all of the time.

Soldier credits life to reflective vest



Sgt. Mark R. Brown, on his Harley motorcycle, credits his reflective vest and safety gear with helping save his life during a recent crash. Inset: The deer he hit on Hwy-30 wasn't so lucky.

Story and photo courtesy of Sgt. Mark R. Brown,
USPFO/SDC Warehouse, Camp Withycombe

I would like to address the regulation that requires Oregon Soldiers to wear a safety vest while riding on or off duty. I know that this requirement is not necessarily enforced to its fullest extent, but I think it should be.

On Sept. 29, I was on my way home from picking my bike up from a scheduled service at Salem Harley. I live in St Helens and by the time I got to Scappoose it was dark.

Approximately six miles from home I hit a deer that jumped out in front of me on Highway 30. I was doing 55 mph at the time, and I hit the brakes. I laid the bike down as gently as I could after "T-boning" the deer, and ended up with only a few scrapes.

I was able to control laying down the bike, and prepared for the tumbling and kept my head off the ground.

The point I really want to stress is the fact that it was dark, but I believe I was able to get out of it with very little damage to myself or the bike because of the reflective safety vest I was wearing. Surely if it were not for the vest, I would have been run over by the drivers behind me.

In 35 years of riding I had never laid a bike down, and I attribute my not getting hit by the cars behind me to that reflective safety vest. It most likely saved my life.

I would ask that the ORANG take a stronger stance on the enforcement of the regulation and requirements that are already in place.

FEATURES

In spite of enemy fire, Oregon Soldiers refuse to leave downed comrades

We're not leaving you brother

Story and photos by John Bruning,
Printed with permission

The two Oregon National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopters roared between saw tooth ridges of the Hindu Kush Mountains, bound for a remote NATO outpost under enemy attack. Each Chinook carried two pilots, two door gunners, a flight engineer and half a platoon of Polish infantry assigned to reinforce the beleaguered garrison.

September 18, 2010. Election Day, Logar Province, Eastern Afghanistan.

The hundred-foot long Chinooks seemed like toys compared to the sprawling backdrop of treeless, rock-strewn mountains that peaked above their rotor blades.

The four pilots, chief warrant officers Joe Speal and Eric West in 262, Kyle Evarts and Anson Smith in 073, had received this mission while out on election morning flying Afghan soldiers to isolated villages to help protect the polling sites.

The new task would not be an easy one. To get to the outpost required taking the Chinooks to 15,000 feet without oxygen.

The two ship flight sped through the mountain range, then broke out into the clear over a dry lake bed that stretched for miles. On the other side, ridgelines over twelve thousand feet high awaited.

For the combined Washington and Oregon air crews of Pendleton and Fort Lewis-based Bravo, 1-168 Aviation, the rugged countryside adds complexity to an already difficult mission, one in which their services are in great demand 24/7.

Once again, an element of the Oregon National Guard has found a spot center stage during a climactic time in the War on Terror.

Afghanistan is a country without a robust road network. Supplying far-flung NATO bases with vehicular convoys is simply not possible. Blackhawk helicopters abound, but at the high altitudes of Eastern Afghanistan they can't carry many troops or supplies.

In this mountainous environment, the Chinooks shine.

Capable of carrying everything from trucks slung under their hulls to ten thousand pounds of food, water, weapons and ammunition, the CH-47 is the delivery system that keeps the outlying NATO bases in the fight.

During the run up before the election, the Chinooks had flown American and Afghan soldiers, officials and ballots into isolated villages all over the Logar Province.

These teams then established polling locations and protected them from Taliban attack. For the Pacific Northwesterners, the election became a case study of democracy by air assault. Without their helicopters,

the people of this rural and impoverished province would not have had a voice in the political process.

As the two Chinooks reached the last set of mountains before their destination, Eric West began to climb for more altitude.

In his civilian life, West works for Boeing in the Seattle area and is also a flight instructor. In his younger days, he once found a job as an announcer in a strip club to help pay his college bills. He sometimes uses his "announcer voice" over the radio to provide a little levity.

Beside him sat 262's pilot-in-command, Joe Speal. A native of Georgia, forty-seven year old Speal has spent over two decades in Army aviation and is currently on his second consecutive combat tour in Afghanistan. Capable and experienced, his knowledge of the local area has been invaluable to the freshly arrived Guardsmen.

As West climbed 262 above 12,000 feet, the Chinook suffered catastrophic mechanical failure. The oil temperature gauge began to spike.

The flight engineer, Staff Sergeant Jerrick Haman, whipped out a screwdriver and opened a panel over the helicopter's loading ramp to see if he could detect the problem. Coils of smoke spun out of the compartment to fill the aircraft with the stench of burning oil.

In the cockpit, Speal smelled the smoke and knew they were in trouble. The Chinook's aft transmission system was starting to fail, causing the oil circulating in it to overheat. In such failures, the oil can ignite.

"We were sixty seconds from catching fire," Speal said later.

Speal turned to West, "Land this aircraft now." The Washington native rolled the CH-47 into a fifty degree diving bank.

"The aircraft essentially free-falls at that angle," West remarked.

In thirty seconds, the helicopter dropped almost two thousand two hundred feet as 262's nose came around in a 180 degree turn.

Fortunately, the lake bed was not far away. At five hundred feet, he leveled the helicopter and dropped

it onto the parched Afghan soil. In seconds, Sneal shut the engines down even as the Poles in back poured off the ramp to establish a protective perimeter around the crippled aircraft.

Overhead, Kyle Evarts, a regular army pilot, and Anson Smith, an Oregon National Guardsman who drills out of Pendleton, orbited 262 to provide cover with their three machine guns.

Evarts, a highly experienced active army aviator, radioed for help. A nearby Apache gunship pilot on another mission responded and told the Guardsmen that he and his gunner were on the way.

As the downed crew waited, curious villagers began to gather around the landing site. Evarts and Smith made low passes over them in an attempt to get them to keep their distance.

A few minutes later, they touched down and reinforced the security perimeter with their load of Polish infantry.

These were critical moments. Without the firepower an Apache can provide, the men on the ground were terribly vulnerable to a sudden enemy attack.

It took thirteen minutes for the Apache to arrive. "Longest thirteen minutes of my life," West quipped.

When at last the Apache reached the area, Evarts radioed the gunship crew to ask, "How much fuel do you have?"

The Apache pilot didn't hesitate. He keyed his mic, "Doesn't matter. We're not leaving you, Brother."

On the ground, West and Speal breathed a sigh of relief. There would be no *Blackhawk Down* scenario this day.

The Taliban are simply too fearful of the Apache's rockets, missiles and 30mm automatic cannon to brave an assault with one overhead.

As a result, the relationship between



Left: 262 sits on the ground while crewmembers pull security, waiting for air support.

Above: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Joel Speal and Sgt. 1st Class DJ Jensen (in the background), await air support in the shade of 262.

Below center: Air cover arrives in the form of an Apache gunship.

Chinook and Apache crews is particularly close.

"It is a brotherhood. They are angels on our shoulders," noted Bravo Company's commanding officer, Pendleton native Captain John Hoffman. "They are always there watching out for us."

Meanwhile, every helicopter and aircraft in the area streaked to 262's assistance.

A quick reaction force of American troops from Task Force Brawler's "Ground Combat Platoon" arrived to join the perimeter, along with a Downed Aircraft Recovery Team that included mechanics from 1-168 reached the area to assess what repairs would be needed.

Toward dusk, a special field repair unit flew in from Bagram Air Force Base to work fourteen hours straight in freezing weather to get 262 back into the air.

They extracted the burnt transmission and replaced it with a new one. A relief crew stayed with the aircraft despite the subzero temperature, sharing one sleeping bag for the five aviators in an effort to keep warm.

At dawn the next morning, 262 returned home. The incident did not slow the pace of operations here at all. The Chinooks and its aviators went right back into the air that morning.

That's the way things work here in RC-East as the surge reaches its climax. These birds and their accomplished, professional crews are needed to sustain the fight.

"We can't do this job without them," acknowledged Colonel Don Galli, the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade's commanding officer. Right now, Bravo Company is the only Guard element of the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade.

Despite the scare, there was work to be done.

"We continue mission," West said as he grabbed his gear in the hours after his emergency landing.

In one two week period, West has been shot at with a rocket propelled grenade, forced down by engine failure, then flew into a landing zone that had been mortared and rocketed by the enemy.

Looking back on those tense moments over the Hindu Kush, West said, "This was the most significant event I've experienced in a Chinook. God was with us in the cockpit that day."

West strapped on his helmet and rejoined his crew. Together these aerial brothers and sisters flew back into the fight.

About the Author: John Bruning is an aviation and military writer who has authored or co-authored sixteen books. He embedded with a detachment of Bravo Company, 1-168 Aviation, Oregon Army National Guard.

When the unit arrived in Afghanistan in August, one element under Captain John Hoffman was sent to FOB Shank. The rest of the company went to FOB Salerno. Bruning spent time at both FOBs, and wrote about his experiences on his blog at: <http://theunawriterslair.typepad.com>.



FEATURES

Oregonians pay tribute to all veterans at parade in Albany, Ore.



Above: The Oregon National Guard Joint Forces Color Guard, leads Oregon Citizen-Soldiers and Citizen-Airmen in the Albany Veterans Day Parade in Albany.



Right: Oregon Air National Guard Lt. Col. Paul "Snap" Fitzgerald (left), greets Medal of Honor recipient Bob Maxwell, to the reviewing stand, prior to the Albany Veterans Day Parade.



Soldiers with the Alpha Co., 141 Battalion, Oregon National Guard, escort U.S. Navy PBR-Mk-II, #31RP7336 in the Albany Veterans Day Parade. The boat, which was used to patrol inland waterways during the Vietnam War, is one of three still commissioned by the U.S. Navy. This boat is on loan to Game Wardens of Vietnam Association, based in Washington State, and is dedicated to all veterans who served on similar boats during the Vietnam War.



Above: Soldiers from the Oregon Army National Guard's Bravo Co., 2-218 Field Artillery, fire a 21-gun salute at the Veterans Day Memorial Service at Timber Linn Memorial Park in Albany, Ore.

Below: Oregon Air National Guard Commander, Brig. Gen. Bruce W. Prunk, (right), pauses for a photo with Medal of Honor recipient Bob Maxwell (left), and parade Grand Marshal, Robert G. Lindsay (center), at what many call the largest Veterans Day parade west of the Mississippi.



The history of Veterans Day

World War I – known at the time as “The Great War” - officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles outside the town of Versailles, France.

However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of “the war to end all wars.”

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: “To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations...”

The original concept for the celebration was for a day observed with parades and public meetings and a brief suspension of business beginning at 11:00 a.m.

The United States Congress officially recognized the end of World War I when it passed a concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926.

An Act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U. S. Code, Sec. 87a) approved May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday—a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as “Armistice Day.” Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the Nation’s history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word “Armistice” and inserting in its place the word “Veterans.” With the approval of this legislation (Public Law 380) on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

In 1958, the White House advised VA’s General Counsel that the 1954 designation of the VA Administrator as Chairman of the Veterans Day National Committee applied to all subsequent VA Administrators.

Since March 1989 when VA was elevated to a cabinet level department, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has served as the committee’s chairman.

The Uniform Holiday Bill (Public Law 90-363 (82 Stat. 250)) was signed on June 28, 1968, and was intended to ensure three-day weekends for Federal employees by celebrating four national holidays on Mondays: Washington’s Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Columbus Day.

It was thought that these extended weekends would encourage travel, recreational and cultural activities and stimulate greater industrial and commercial production. Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holidays on their original dates.

The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on October 25, 1971. It was quite apparent that the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance to a great number of our citizens, and so on September 20th, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 94-97 (89 Stat. 479), which returned the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of November 11, beginning in 1978. This action supported the desires of the overwhelming majority of state legislatures, all major veterans service organizations and the American people.

Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week on which it falls. The restoration of the observance of Veterans Day to November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: A celebration to honor America’s veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

Information courtesy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.



Above: Corey Clemetson (left), and Eriq Thompson (right), both Boyscouts with Troop 99 in Albany, Ore., pause for photos in front of the Korea War marker following the Veterans Day Memorial Service at the Timber Linn Memorial Park in Albany, Ore., Nov. 11.



Right: A U.S. Coast Guard HH-65 “Dolphin” helicopter conducts a flyover of 1st Avenue in Albany, Ore., prior to the start of the Albany Veterans Day Parade.



Oregon Army National Guard Col. William Schutz, (left), watches as community floats pass the reviewing stand during the Albany Veterans Day Parade.



Soldiers with the Oregon Army National Guard’s 41 Infantry Brigade Combat Team march in the Veterans Day Parade, Nov. 11.

NEWS

Oregon's 162 Engineer Company home after year-long deployment

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

DALLAS, Ore. — While the weather forecasted showers and cloudy skies, the sun shone brightly on downtown Dallas, Ore., as three buses pulled up to the parking lot in front of the old Dallas Armory, Nov. 4.

More than 80 Oregon Citizen-Soldiers of the 162 Engineer Company stepped off the buses and into the arms of waiting family members and friends. Combat boots and sneakers shuffled through red and gold autumn leaves, as cameras clicked and tears flowed.

The unit returned to Joint Base Lewis McChord, Wash., Oct. 29, following a year-long deployment to Afghanistan.

Danielle Baca, wife of the unit's commander, Capt. Bob Baca, was happy to have her husband home. She beamed with pride as other family members hugged Soldiers.

"I'm incredibly proud of him and our kids for hanging in there," Danielle said.

She added that deployments such as this are as much a learning experience for family members as they are for the Soldiers who deploy.

"These kinds of things don't make you who you are, they show you what you're made of."

For her husband, Capt. Bob Baca, the unit's commander, the homecoming was a welcomed event.

"It's been a long year being apart," he said.

The unit held their demobilization

ceremony one day later in the same spot. Since their old armory lies vacant following a fire, a large tent was erected at 817 Church Street for the ceremony.

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon, joined Oregon Chief Justice Paul Demuniz, Oregon Congressman Kurt Schrader, Dallas Mayor Jim Fairchild, Independence Mayor John McArdle, and Monmouth Mayor John Oberst for the event.

"You have our sincerest gratitude," Rees said from the stage in front of the unit and family and friends number in the thousands. "Welcome home!"

Pvt. 1st Class Derek Cork, who was injured during the deployment, participated in the ceremony via the Internet video software "Skype". He and his family watched the event from a hospital room at Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. Following the conclusion of the demobilization ceremony, the unit's Soldiers filed past the laptop computer and paused to say hello, or took time to chat with him via mobile phone.

The unit mobilized for the deployment in September 2009, conducting pre-deployment training at Fort McCoy, Wis., before departing to Afghanistan as part of a 400-day deployment. Approximately 100 Citizen-Soldiers joined the 204th Engineer Company from Washington State, providing route clearance throughout Afghanistan.

Oregon Soldiers assisted in clearing more than 15,000 miles of roads during more than 6,000 hours of active missions, and nearly 200 IED events during their deployment.



Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon (left), and State Command Sgt. Maj. Brunk Conley (center), speak to Pvt. 1st Class Derek Cork via Skype, following the demobilization ceremony for the Oregon Army National Guard's 162 Engineer Co., Nov. 5, in Dallas, Ore. Cork, who was injured during the unit's year-long deployment to Afghanistan, is recovering at Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. He was able to "virtually" participate in his unit's demobilization via the Internet software and mobile phone.

Soldiers in the unit earned more than 13 Bronze Star Medals, 78 Combat Action Badges, 60 Army Commendation Medals and five Purple Heart Medals.

Baca said that while the deployment was busy, and a few of his Soldiers received non-life threatening injuries, everyone came home.

"Our Soldiers ran hundreds of missions, and we brought everyone home," he added.

Baca said one of the biggest things that kept Soldiers going on the deployment were the care packages sent by fellow Oregonians.

"I'd like to thank all of Oregon for keeping us in their thoughts," he said.

Oregon's 3-116 trained, ready to leave for Afghanistan

Story by Pat Caldwell,
Special to the Argus Observer
Printed with Permission

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. — David Glasscock said he will never forget the way residents of eastern Oregon and Ontario rallied to say goodbye to his Guard unit a couple of weeks ago.

"It (the send-off) was the best in the state. The community support was excellent. We had people along the entire route. It was nice. It made me feel like we were being supported," he said.

Glasscock joined more than 450 members of eastern Oregon's 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team as it flew to Camp Shelby Miss., recently for training to prepare for a deployment to Iraq later this fall.

The 3rd Battalion consists of Guard outfits from Hood River, The Dalles, Hermiston, Pendleton, La Grande, Baker City and

Ontario. The unit received notification in April regarding a deployment to Iraq.

While Glasscock, a Hillsboro resident and a sergeant with the Ontario's Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, said he was impressed with the send-off from eastern Oregon residents, he also noted the encouragement his unit collected from local people.

"Every time we went somewhere (in Ontario) everyone said 'thank you,'" Glasscock said. "I've not experienced that kind of 'Hey, good job' since the (first) Gulf War."

The farewells showered on the 3rd Battalion — including Glasscock's unit — marked the beginning of a new phase of training for the entire battalion.

Now at Camp Shelby, the 3rd Battalion join similar-sized units from Montana and Idaho to put the finishing touches on an intensive preparation program. The training regime began in June and included a three-

week-plus stint on the high desert south of Boise in August.

One new difficulty Guardsmen from Charlie Company face is the unique climate of Mississippi, according to the unit commander, Capt. Seth Musgrove.

"I think the biggest challenge right now is getting acclimated to the weather. Especially the humidity," Musgrove said.

For a group accustomed to the weather in western Oregon or the high desert climate in the eastern part of the Beaver state, the unique conditions in Mississippi proved to be a minor shock. Musgrove said, however, his group is learning to overcome the local environment.

"It (the weather) is not a factor in terms of performance. It is just one of those things you deal with," Musgrove said.

Charlie Company, along with other units in the 3rd Battalion, will conduct a series of training exercises while at Camp Shelby. Guardsmen will be instructed on various

weapons systems, become familiar with the U.S. Army's main means of transportation in Iraq — the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) armored vehicle — Iraqi language training and conduct convoy escort training. The convoy escort instruction is critical, Musgrove said.

"In my mind that is the biggest piece (to training) as well as working through all the sub-tasks associated with convoy security," he said.

While still early in the training session, Musgrove said his company is doing well. Still, he said he understands the sacrifice his Guardsmen make to be away from loved ones.

"It is tough being away from family. And family is always in the back of a Guardsman's mind. I think it is healthy to think about it. But you've got to be mindful it does not consume your thought process. You know, we still have a job to do," he said.

Bangladesh visit last official Oregon National Guard-related trip for Gov



Photo courtesy of State Partnership Program Team

Oregon Air National Guard Assistant Adjutant General-Air, Brig. Gen. Steven Gregg and Oregon State Partnership Program Director Lt. Col. Mark Crosby, (left center), join Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski at a wreath-laying ceremony at Shikha Anirban, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Nov. 11. Shikha Anirban is dedicated to Bangladeshis who died during War of Independence with Pakistan, which ended in 1971.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

government including peacekeeping operations, military professional development training, aircraft maintenance, air traffic control, and community policing.

Previous discussions and exchanges have centered on airport security, disaster management, mass casualty medical response, and seaport security.

The visit also highlighted mutually beneficial economic ties between Oregon and Bangladesh and fostered international goodwill. Prime Minister Hasina took the opportunity during the Oregon contingent's visit to thank the SPP for its efforts to enhance security at Dhaka International Airport and to highlight Bangladesh's continued rising economic prosperity, as reported in the country's largest daily newspaper, the Daily Star.

Kulongoski, for his part, highlighted the partnership between Oregon and Bangladesh, saying the relationship has benefits for both sides.

"This partnership fostered by Oregon's National Guard has already made a difference in both countries," said Kulongoski. "I applaud the efforts of the National Guard in its commitment to learning, helping and

championing efforts to improve relations all across the globe for the benefit of the United States."

The group also visited the Foreign Ministry, the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces and a luncheon at the American Chamber of Commerce in Dhaka.

On Nov. 11, Kulongoski attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the Shikha Anirban, in memory of Bangladeshi Armed Forces members who laid down their lives during the War of Independence in 1971.

Oregon and Bangladesh share similar challenges with both regions' proximity to earthquake and flood zones and both governments can benefit from knowledge sharing in emergency management and disaster response.

"Inclusion of the governor on this trip emphasizes to the political and military leadership of Bangladesh the high regard in which we hold this partnership," Rees said.

The State Partnership Program reflects an evolving international affairs mission for the National Guard, emphasizing its unique state-federal and civil-military characteristics to interact with both the active and reserve forces of foreign nations, interagency partners and international non-governmental organizations.

NEWS

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OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Retirement a time full of opportunities

Story by Richard P. Norton, Lt. Col. (Ret),
Chairman, ORNG Retirees and Veterans Council

For those of us who joined the military prior to the end of the draft, it was not uncommon to hear the explanation, "when can I get out of this chicken outfit?"

Well, most retirees today reflect back on our years served in the National Guard with great pride and a true sense of accomplishment. For those anticipating retirement, you look forward to experiencing all that you have dreamed about; vacations, working in the garden, time spent with family and friends, and the inevitable "Honey-do Lists." Retirement is a privilege you have worked hard for and you should enjoy every minute of it, if you have prepared yourself properly.

After spending years with a clear purpose and sense of direction, retirement may feel like a big black hole of purposelessness. What about those that may be able to find things to do around the house, but still don't feel they have accomplished anything truly worthwhile? At the end of the day, puttering around the house seems pointless.

Fortunately, many find this transition easy to adapt to and they are to be admired. But to most, you suddenly realize that you miss being around the uniform and you miss all the people you have grown to love and respect. Leaving the Guard after many years can be a difficult task.

Consider attending a regimental or unit retiree luncheon or breakfast that can bring you back into the loop. Consider volunteering in your old unit or joining an organization such as the Employer Support for Guard and Reserve, or working as a volunteer for the Oregon National Guard Association (NGAUS), USAA, or AFA. And if you are an officer, consider the Military Officers Association of America, (MOAA). Any of these options can fill in those gaps between vacations, hunting, and fishing trips.

Volunteering, part-time work, or taking on seasonal jobs and physical activities are a great way to give your spouse a break and get out of the house. The added benefit is you will feel useful, and continue to engage and challenge your mind, including your now retired body. Retirement is a new opportunity to set and work towards future goals. It can make your retirement more acceptable for your positive mental health.

Retiree luncheon set for April 15, 2011

The next Semi-Annual Retiree Luncheon is scheduled for April 15, 2011, at the Salem Eagles Lodge #2081, 2771 Pence Loop, SE, Salem, Ore.

The Retiree's gather starting at 11:00 am for social time and lunch is served at 12:00 noon. All retirees and former state and federal employees of the Oregon Military Department are welcome.

All attendees must RSVP so the committee can provide the Eagles Club with an accurate headcount.

For more information, or to RSVP, contact CW5 (Ret.) Lee Ashwill at (503) 933-9320 or via e-mail: leebarbiashwill@comcast.net.

OR Military Museum needs artifacts

While it's not really an official "museum", the four display cases inside the new 41st Infantry Division Armed Forces Reserve Center at Camp Withycombe, Ore., hold as much stuff as many small museums.

Each case measures 45 feet long, 6 foot high, and 28 inches deep. The first two near the entrance are dedicated to the 41st Infantry Division history from 1917 to 1968. They will hold numerous mannequins in various uniforms, as well as many other artifacts that tell the 41st story.

The third case is for equipment and supplies, and the fourth case highlights the 41st experience with the Japanese and the Australians.

This is the first time Oregon will have a display location dedicated exclusively to the 41st Division. There are museums located at the camps used by the 41st, which refer to the 41st as it relates to their local history; Camp Murray (Wash.), Camp Roberts (Calif.), Fort Harrison (Mont.), as well as Camp Withycombe (Ore.).

In fact, it is the same people who run the Oregon Military Museum that are responsible for the display cases at the 41st Infantry Division "AFRC", and a lot of the uniforms and artifacts they already have on hand come from this museum. However, the Oregon Military Museum Curator, Tracy Thoennes, has invited members of the 41st IDA to participate in the interpretation of our history by donating items, as well as the stories that go with them.

"The items most of interest are those quintessential artifacts that tell a compelling story or anecdote," says Thoennes.

The displays cannot house operable guns or live ammunition, and the working committee is attempting to secure replicas of a Springfield rifle, drill rifle, M1, and various other weapons. The shopping list reads like a treasure hunt. One recurring item is footwear; hobnail boots from WWI, shiny russet brown riding boots from 1940, combat boots with three quarter lace-ups from 1944, and a "jungle suit with sneakers". The mannequins trace the change in uniforms from war's start to finish.

Other equipment and supply items mentioned include a "300" radio, shaving kit, pith helmet, V-mail, "Montana Peak" hat, WWI banners, and so on. Any items that were used in WWII by 41st Soldiers, the Japanese or the Australians are of interest. But judging from the number of items that turned up in our "Souvenirs" articles, it may be best to check with Thoennes before sending anything to the museum.

For more information, or to donate an artifact, contact:

Tracy Thoennes, Curator, Oregon Military Museum, Camp Withycombe

10101 SE Clackamas Road, Clackamas, OR 97015

Phone (503) 557-5359, Fax (503) 557-6713

Email: tracy.thoennes@us.army.mil

Oregon State Defense Force meets for emergency management course



Lorraine Churchill, UASI Grant & Program Coordinator, a sergeant in the Oregon State Defense Force and Search and Rescue volunteer, members of the Oregon State Defense Force met Oct. 23 at Camp Rilea on Oregon's northern coast for an emergency management class.

Story and photo by Sgt. Paul D. Rushing,
JFHQ Public Affairs

Members of the Oregon State Defense Force met Oct. 23 at Camp Rilea on Oregon's northern coast for an emergency management class.

Lorraine Churchill, UASI Grant & Program Coordinator, a sergeant in the Oregon State Defense Force and Search and Rescue volunteer, taught the class.

The UASI grant program's mission is to support and help plan, equip, staff and train volunteers in high-threat, high density urban areas of the country.

The Portland-Metro area is considered a Tier II location, which is part of 53 areas receiving the 45 percent of the total available UASI funding. The Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), receive top priority funding by UASI.

Since 2003, the Portland area has received \$48 million in funding from UASI. The counties of Columbia, Washington, Clark, Multnomah and Clackamas are part of the Portland Urban Area, overseen by the City of Portland which acts as the region's grant administrator.

Officials said the money goes toward urban search and rescue, onsite incident management, hazardous materials response and decontamination, community and citizen preparedness.

TAG welcomes President to Oregon



Above: Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon, greets President Barack H. Obama, at the Oregon Air National Guard Base in Portland, Ore., Oct. 20. The Oregon Air National Guard's 142nd Fighter Wing hosted the President during his short visit to Oregon. Also pictured, from right to left are; U.S. Congressman David Wu (far right), Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski, and Former Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber.

Right: U.S. President Barack H. Obama waves as he exits Air Force One at the Oregon Air National Guard Base in Portland, Ore., Oct. 20.

Photos by Staff Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office.



AIR NATIONAL GUARD NEWS

Kingsley Airmen upgrade jets' engines during busy cycle

Story by

Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson,
173 Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. -- A lone F-15 lifted into the sky Sept. 9, 2010 heading south to Arizona where it joined a number of other Kingsley jets in what is commonly referred to as the "boneyard."

Since the beginning of the year maintainers at the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field have converted the entire fleet from the F100PW100 Pratt-Whitney to the more responsive and efficient F100PW220 Pratt-Whitney engine, and as tail number 016 left the base for the last time, the extensive project was finally complete.

Master Sgt. Sean Campbell, who works as a crew chief, reflected on nearly a decade of service to his plane, both while here and previously on active duty at Nellis AFB, Nev.

"The hardest part was letting the jet go," Campbell said. "There was a lot of hard work and pride tied up in that jet."

And according to propulsion superintendent, Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Van De Hey, that hard work began anew with the conversion process.

He said the -220 project was "unprogrammed"—meaning the maintenance group and by default, the wing—absorbed the cost of the upgrade. Additionally, the wing did the work without the help of an on-site technical representative.

"The 173rd Fighter Wing Engine Shop found creative ways to acquire training and tooling," said Van De Hey.

"The computer integrated nature of the -220 engine, and its testing and diagnostic requirements proved to be the largest obstacle in the conversion," he said.

"Despite these tremendous obstacles, the professional and dedicated members of the Engine Shop made the difficult conversion situation seem simple and seamless," Van De Hey added.

Base supply pitched in by requesting the needed equipment, both new and used, from across the Air Force, and pallets of gear arrived needing identification and inspection before being placed into service.

If getting the equipment was the first hurdle then getting good training for those working with the new engines was the next.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, 173 Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Members of the 173rd FW Maintenance shops pose with aircraft 016 and a Pratt-Whitney F100PW100 engine, Sept. 1. They both represent the completion of a project called "iron flow". The jet and the engine are the last remaining pieces of an upgrade conversion for Kingsley Field to upgrade its entire fleet to more efficient and responsive engines. Tail number 016 left the base for the "boneyard" in Arizona on Sept. 10.

"We brought five different instructors from Tinker, Elmendorf, Wright-Patterson, and Eglin to teach our people how to overhaul the engines in-shop as well as take care of flightline maintenance," said Tech. Sgt. Robert Thorpe. "We are also bringing in another instructor from Nellis AFB at the end of the month to teach our people some of the new diagnostic capabilities we have now."

Thorpe said the critical element in making the training successful was the way the maintainers worked hard to absorb the new tasks and how they are passing along the knowledge to their new people.

"I can bring in instructors from all over the world, but without their initiative to

take responsibility to master the material, it doesn't matter—they deserve all the credit," Thorpe said.

At the end of the project 12 jets have been converted, and the rest of the fleet are "iron flow" jets which already have the -220 engines.

Chief Master Sgt. Victor Krieger, the chief of maintenance, says a number of different shops around the 173rd Fighter Wing were critical in the execution of the project including the Propulsion Element, Flight Line Personnel, Maintenance Training, Plans and Scheduling, Base Supply, (i.e. Equipment Management), and the Aircraft Electric Shop.

He added that after receiving the first

-220 engine in August 2009, the last "iron flow" jet is scheduled to arrive here at Kingsley Oct. 21, leaving 24 upgraded aircraft gracing the ramp at Kingsley Field.

By all accounts the conversion project caps a busy run for maintenance personnel at Kingsley, say maintenance personnel.

This has been accomplished while maintaining a robust flying schedule, which routinely flies 10 jets in the morning and turns eight of them around for afternoon or evening flying missions.

At the same time the wing is undergoing a major inspection and gearing up for additional flying missions, Kingsley Field steps into the role of sole provider for formal F-15 training for the Air Force.

Albany dinner kicks off vets' day events



Photo by Staff Sgt. John Hughel, 142 FW Public Affairs

Oregon Air National Guard Commander Brig. Gen. Bruce Prunk, speaks to a gathering during a Veterans Day awards banquet, at the Albany Eagles in Albany, Ore., Nov. 10. Oregon National Guard NCOs of the year, Albany city leaders, and veterans from different services attended the event.

Redhawks return to roost

142FW Airmen return from United Arab Emirates



Photo courtesy of Paul Carter

Six F-15C aircraft and 131 Airmen from the 142nd Fighter Wing of the Oregon Air National Guard began returning to the Portland Air National Guard Base in Portland, Ore., Nov. 8, following a month-long overseas training tour in support of Exercise Iron Falcon in the United Arab Emirates.

The Airmen took part in a joint-force, international exercise which brought together Gulf Cooperation Council nations and other countries to strengthen military-to-military relationships, promote regional security, improve combined tactical air operations, and enhance working relationships between the partner nations.

The U.S. Air Force has actively participated in this exercise since November 2004.

To see more photos of the returning F-15 jets, visit Paul's Flickr site at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/planephoto2010/>

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