



Oregon Sentinel



OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

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Secretary of the Air Force makes first official visit to PANG



Photo by Senior Airman John Hughel

Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne (right) visited several units at the 142nd Fighter Wing, including the 125th Special Tactics Squadron at the Portland Air National Guard Base, May 8. Staff Sgt. Andilee Paull, with the 142nd Security Forces Squadron, demonstrated some of the weapons available to the Special Operations unit. Mayor Tom Potter of Portland and Mayor Royce Pollard of Vancouver joined Secretary Wynne at the base as the 142nd FW began its celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Air Force. The Fighter Wing unveiled special nose art representing the two cities as part of its Cities of Honor program that recognizes those Pacific Northwest communities that support the Oregon Air National Guard.

Story by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy,
Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Secretary of the Air Force visited the Portland Air National Guard Base at the Portland International Airport May 7 - 8.

This was Secretary Michael W. Wynne's first official trip to Oregon. The visit was a chance to meet the Airmen of the 142nd Fighter Wing and become familiar with unit operations there.

Wynne toured facilities, visiting with members of the 142nd Fighter Wing. At the fighter jet alert facility that houses the F-15s and aircrews who stand ready 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, Lt. Col. Jeff Silver, commander of the 142nd Operations Group, detailed how the Airmen at the base ensure the security of the skies of the Pacific Northwest.

Wynne enjoyed seeing the alert facility and learned quite a bit about the unit's Air Sovereignty alert mission over the Pacific Northwest, said Silver.

"He was very interested in the weapons and how we deploy the avionics," Silver said.

Brig. Gen. Daniel O'Hollaren, commander of the Oregon Air National Guard, called Wynne's visit to PANG a distinct honor. Furthermore, O'Hollaren stressed that the visit was an opportunity to spotlight the full spectrum of capabilities of the ORANG.

"It gave us an absolutely vital audience to present strategic ideas for future missions," O'Hollaren said.

See O'HOLLAREN on Page 4

Citizen Soldiers are welcomed home as more prepare to deploy

41st BCT returns while more units plan to deploy

Story by 1st Lt. Stephen Bomar,
Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore. - As more than 850 Soldiers returned to Oregon in June from a sixteen-month mobilization in Afghanistan, an estimated 300 Soldiers will be mobilized to Iraq this summer.

Four Oregon Army National Guard units began mobilizing in May to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

More than 20 Soldiers from the 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment of Salem will focus on providing military information to the American public.

Nearly 100 Soldiers with the 224 Engineer Company of Albany will focus on the construction and reconstruction of roads.

About 170 to 185 Soldiers with 234 Engineer Company of Warrenton will provide convoy and base security.

An estimated 13 Oregon Soldiers with Alpha 641 Theater Aviation Company (formerly A Co. 249 Avn.) of Salem will fly air operations utilizing the C-23 Sherpa aircraft.

Although there have been individual Guardsmen who have mobilized to Iraq, these are the first units from Oregon to deploy to Iraq since March 2006, when the 3670th Maintenance Company of Clackamas demobilized.

Once mobilized, the units will go to specified mobilization stations throughout the country for training before arriving to their final designated stations within Iraq.

The skills Soldiers attain at their mobilization stations are essential to mission success, according to Sgt. 1st Class John Neibert, mobilization plans and operations NCO, who previously deployed to Iraq with 2-162 Infantry Battalion of Eugene.

"Every Soldier that goes to Iraq will tell you that their mission is worthy and just," said Neibert.

He said being able to assist not only the people of Oregon but also people around the world is an honor.

Although some Soldiers have deployed more than once in the past six years, Oregon has supported more than 7,000 individual Soldiers and Airmen supporting more than 24 separate deployments since September 11, 2001.

Major General Raymond F. Rees, Oregon's Adjutant General said in an all volunteer force it is outstanding that we have men and women that are willing to continue to serve their nation in the way it was set forth by our founding fathers.

When the Soldiers from the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team of Tigard complete their mission and return home this summer, their focus will be on reintegration.

For the four units mobilizing, their focus will be on accomplishing their mission just as the units before them have done.

"These are the same guys, when you look back at the history of patriots, who dropped the plow, grabbed the rifle and went," said Sgt. 1st Class Vince Jacques, senior NCO for the Oregon National Guard Soldier Re-



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy, Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

Nicole Brugato welcomes home her fiancé, Maj. Steve Arntt at the Jackson Armory on May 14. Arntt and about 900 of his fellow Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers, the majority of whom are members of the 41st Brigade Combat Team, spent a year in Afghanistan training the Afghan National Army as part of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V.

integration Team. "They're citizen-soldiers."

Editor's Note: The Oregon Sentinel plans to publish a special edition in the next issue which highlights the accomplishments, sacrifices and contributions of the 41st Brigade Combat Team during their one-year deployment to Afghanistan.

Tell us what you think!

Address your comments, feedback and ideas to:
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The Oregon Sentinel

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Stories and photos from the field are gratefully accepted. We need your input to ensure better coverage.

Guard members and their families are encouraged to submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain readers of the Oregon Sentinel, including stories about interesting Guard personalities and unique unit training. Letters to the editor are also welcome. All letters must include the author's name, address and daytime phone number. Names may be withheld in print upon request, but all letters must be signed, and are subject to editing prior to publication. For publication schedules, or for any other questions, please see your unit Public Affairs Representative, or contact the State Public Affairs Office or any of the Oregon Sentinel staff members listed below.

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Year marked by courage, sacrifice, accomplishments



Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees
Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard

Once again it's time for hails and farewells.

Welcome home 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team! You've done it again – you've proven to the nation and the world that the citizen-Soldiers of the Oregon National Guard will not only complete the mission, but will also exceed expectations and set new standards.

It was your courage and commitment that led you to join this deployment. The monumental task of training the Afghan National Army and helping them develop into a professional military force was no small feat.

It was your confidence and competence that made the difference. Your outstanding efforts to accommodate a 308% increase in basic training – preparing more than 2,000 recruits a month – commanded the respect of the ANA and the leaders of the coalition forces in Afghanistan. As the need to train the Afghan National Police became more evident, it was clear the mission would go to those most capable: JTF Phoenix under the 41st IBCT. In hundreds of communities your training of more than 5,200 ANP in 15 provinces will leave a lasting mark.

Yet, with great accomplishments comes great risk; and with great risk comes great sacrifice. The task force lost seven people, six in combat. We lost two fellow warriors from Oregon: Staff Sgt. Brad Lindsey and Sgt. Long Nguyen. We will remember them for their courage, loyalty, and leadership.

In spite of the loss, you excelled: Embedded Training Teams at forward operating bases increased from 107 to 304, you completed 350 humanitarian missions and treated 11,000 Afghan citizens in medical outreach programs. You did more than just exceed the mission requirements – you made life for the people and nation of Afghanistan better. Your work will have a profound impact on generations to come.

In addition to the work of our Soldiers, dozens of Airmen from the 142nd and 173rd Fighter Wings will return this summer from Air Expeditionary Force deployments in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

On the home front thousands of family

members anxiously await the return of their Soldiers and Airmen, all the while managing their own sacrifices demanded by the deployment. There is no doubt that the strength of the Guard is in our Soldiers and Airmen and the strength of our troops is in our families and friends.

In the coming months we'll once again tap into this base of support from our families and friends as we prepare 350 more Soldiers for duty in Iraq and dozens of Airmen for deployment to Kyrgyzstan.

The 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and the 224th Engineer Company have mobilized and are in pre-deployment training. In July we'll mobilize the 234th Engineer Co., and the 173rd Security Forces Squadron will mobilize in August. The Alpha 641, Theater Aviation Company will deploy this coming fall.

All the while, our troops continue to support Operations Noble Eagle and Jump Start and aggressive training schedules here at home.

Throughout the world the Oregon National Guard has made its mark. The efforts of everyone – Soldiers, Airmen, family members, communities, elected officials and employers – contribute to our success. Together, we have conquered the challenges before us; together, we will continue to rise to the challenge.

Raymond J. Rees

Enlisted promotion boards help promote good Soldiers

The promotion boards have all been completed now and I will share with you some of the After Action Review comments from the various promotion boards, E-6 through E-9.

First of all we had some technical issues ('Murphy') with the Video Teleconference and some of the computer systems that delayed some of the board proceedings. However, when the systems came up there was general consensus that using computers and the VTC added both ease and simplicity of completing the boards. We will continue refining the technical parts of the board process, trying to keep 'Murphy' out of the Area of Operation.

What most Soldiers who are being considered for E-6 and above promotions know, or should know, is the NCOER is the primary document that the boards review, along with 1059s from schools, recent awards and decorations and the 2-1 if available. All of these documents are or should be in iPERMS, and one board member commented that all Soldiers should review their iPERMS file prior to the board date.

Because the board members have high expectations and standards, they look very hard at the NCOER and what it says about the Soldier being considered. Below are

some things board members said in their AARs about the NCOERs they reviewed as the primary board document.

"Raters, if you want good Soldiers promoted you had better take some interest in the NCOER process, which means writing bullets that are not wasting ink on the page."

"Despite all the bullets, the senior rater comments can make or break an NCOER, so do not slouch on this box. It is the best chance board members have to get a no 'BS' assessment of what you think your Soldier's potential is."

"Raters and senior raters need to learn how to write effective NCOERs that are quantitative and qualitative."

These comments are not negative, they show the concern by board members that all Soldiers are fairly considered for promotion and get promoted when they should.

As our force has grown more experienced with real world deployments, the expectations and standards have been raised. The board members, because they are drawn from a cross section of our force, reflect those higher expectations and standards.

In the last few years I have seen an increase in the quality of the NCOERs being produced for Soldiers, and this was the best



Command Sgt. Major Thomas R. Moe,
State Command Sergeant Major

year we have ever had in getting the NCOERs into the system prior to the boards taking place; 96 percent of the eligible Soldiers received their NCOER in a timely manner.

My thanks to all who were called to serve on the promotion boards this year, you demonstrated Loyalty-Integrity-Pride-Professionalism.

Enlisted force to shape future of the Oregon Air Guard

To the Members of the Enlisted Force:
When you reflect on your many experiences as an Airman, you may realize leadership is learned, not inherited. Various sources, including Professional Military Education and observing positive role models and mentors are all ways Airmen learn how to become effective leaders.

In today's high operations tempo environment, you will encounter tough problems and situations that require you to make sound decisions – the right decisions. Armed with the lessons learned from past experiences and expertise, Airmen can make sound, professional decisions that meet our service objectives.

New challenges are continually on the horizon. I want to talk for a moment about some of those challenges and how I believe the enlisted corps can propel the Oregon Air National Guard through them. It should be apparent to all of us that the high operations tempo is not going away any time soon. Our end strength numbers appear to be steady for now and our commitments in the state and around the world continue to grow. Those

are realities. Our senior leadership knows how hard you are working and you are our first priority.

The rest is up to you. I believe that it is the enlisted force that will shape the way the Oregon Air National Guard meets the challenges of the future. Of the approximately 2,100 people in the ORANG, about 1,900 proudly wear stripes on their sleeves. We need each and every one operating at their maximum effectiveness to meet and exceed the demands on our force. What does this mean?

Airmen – We need your enthusiasm, energy and technological expertise focused on the mission everyday. Remember that being a good follower is a pre-requisite to being a good leader. Be proud of what you do and the contributions you're making to keep our nation free.

Junior NCO's – You are our front-line supervisors. We are depending on you to shape our Airman and to give them the tools and training they need. Get back to the basics of face-to-face leadership. No one knows your people like you do. Train



Chief Master Sgt. Rodney R. Smith,
State Command Chief Master Sergeant

them, care about them, hold them accountable, reward them, then sit back and watch

See Experience on next page

Oregon leaders discuss needs of returning ORNG Soldiers

Story and photo by Kim Lippert,
Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

TIGARD, Ore. – Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski, Congresswoman Darlene Hooley (D-OR), and Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, Adjutant General of the Oregon National Guard, participated in a public hearing at the Tigard armory April 17.

The group met to discuss how to better meet the needs of Oregon National Guard Soldiers returning from deployments.

“Oregon has become a national leader on how to treat troops when they come home,” said Kulongoski.

With more than 850 ORNG Soldiers in the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team returning from Afghanistan, meeting the needs of Soldiers and their families is an issue getting plenty of attention. Health care, jobs and housing for returning Soldiers were a few of the topics discussed at the forum.

Hooley and ORNG leaders also said they would like to see rules changed that force injured troops to be treated at the base they were deployed from.

“Having a Soldier recuperate from their injuries thousands of miles from their families is unacceptable,” said Brig. Gen. Mike Caldwell, Deputy Director of the Oregon National Guard.

“More often, National Guard Soldiers deny they have a medical condition so they can be re-united with their families,” said Hooley.

Staff Sgt. Kevin Coady of the Oregon National Guard Reintegration Team makes contact with every Oregon National Guard Soldier who is on medical hold. Other mem-



Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski, Oregon Senator Ron Wyden and Oregon National Guard Adjutant General, Major General Raymond F. Rees, listen as Oregon National Guardsmen express their challenges and concerns regarding deployments and reintegration at an open town hall meeting at the Tigard Armory, March 29.

bers of the Reintegration Team work with Soldiers on finding employment, housing and health care.

“Thirty percent of Soldiers were under-employed or unemployed upon returning from deployment, 238 have gotten jobs through our efforts,” said Retired Colonel Scott McCrae, of the ORNG Reintegration Team.

Several wives of deployed Oregon National Guard Soldiers spoke at the forum about issues affecting their families during deployments. One of their major concerns

is the lack of health care providers accepting Tricare, the military’s health insurance.

McCrae discussed creating an incentive program to encourage more doctors to take Tricare. He also asked that Tricare work on simplifying rules so that military families have an easier time navigating the system.

As the Oregon National Guard faces more deployments in the coming months, leaders pledge to continue to fight for their needs.

“We have a responsibility to reach out to the people who have served in this conflict and take care of them,” said Kulongoski.

Soldier gains first-hand knowlege: motorcycle helmets save lives

COMMENTARY

On August 7, 2006, 7:00 a.m., it was already hot outside. I was heading to work on my motorcycle. It was so nice out, and I really enjoy riding in the warm weather. I had PT gear on to save time, with my running shoes and uniform in my backpack, but I was wearing my mesh riding gear (instead of my leather gear) over the top. It allows maximum air flow without compromising protection because it has the same properties as body armor. I would have to change out of my boots and into my running shoes to exercise when I got to work.

I was heading north in the right lane on Commercial St. I could see the driver in the left lane next to me was on his cell phone. I always watch for that. As we came out of a red light I made sure I wasn’t in his blind spot, and as we reached about 30 M.P.H., he quickly cut across into my lane. I was able to honk the horn, brake, down shift, and get off of the road, but the car kept coming!

I was almost into a gas station parking lot, but the drifting car came quickly all the way across, off the road, striking me with the passenger side quarter panel. It all happened so fast. At that point, the bike and I parted ways and were reunited on the connecting street, landing on our left sides next to each other.

Overcome by anger, I tried to get up.

In an instant, at least five people surrounded me saying “don’t get up”. I was afraid maybe they were seeing something I couldn’t. I could already feel my left glove filling up with blood, and my left leg surely must be broken. That’s where the car actually hit me.

Soon the police were there, then the ambulance. The driver that hit me never did come over to check on me, but at least he stopped. So, I had my first ambulance ride. In the emergency room, doctors and nurses debated whether I needed stitches in my hand or not. The police officer on the scene caught up with me at the hospital and asked which I wanted first, the good news or the bad news. The good news was that all the witnesses said the same thing. The bad news, as I had already guessed, was that “Mr. Cell Phone” didn’t have insurance, and he had confessed to the police officer that he wasn’t aware that his vehicle had drifted at all. I guess if he hadn’t hit me, he would have kept drifting into a building.

My co-worker, Spc. Marks, picked me up from the hospital about an hour later. It turns out I had a front ankle sprain, deep muscle bruising to the thigh, and a large cut on my hand; all on my left side. I would have to chalk up my good fortune to a number of things: staying in shape, being observant, and wearing the proper personal protective equipment (PPE), including a DOT-approved helmet. After inspecting my gear, I noticed the left



CW2 Brian Mortensen displays the correct motorcycle safety gear.

shoulder of my jacket had a couple of holes torn in it, and some other road rash. My helmet had a small chip off the back and the rest of my gear was in pretty good shape. Even my left glove was fine, at least on the outside. Lesson: there’s no substitution for quality safety gear.

Now that my bike is repaired, I still ride because I grew up riding and it’s just natural to saddle up and be on my way. However, all my experience can’t replace any amount of PPE. My friends that ride hassle me because I always wear my safety gear. I always tell them, “I wear it all the time for that one time that I’ll need it.”

Chief Warrant 2 Brian Mortensen,
Oregon Army National Guard

Experience important to Air Guard

Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

them soar.

Senior NCO’s – You have been around the block. Take that experience and focus it downward toward your people. Move obstacles that keep them from efficiency, listen to their fresh ideas, and be their advocate. Make those who come behind you better than you and I are today. Remember that the most important job you will ever have is the one you hold right now.

To all of you – The role of the enlisted force is more important now more than ever. Our National Guard will continue to evolve and transform. New technologies and more joint operations are on the horizon. The one constant will be our nation’s reliance on you to make the mission happen every day.

Thank you for what you are doing for the Oregon Air National Guard and our nation.

Retiree Service Office

Open Tuesdays,
10 am to 2 pm

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MOS Conversion Bonus Program: New opportunities for Soldiers

The Oregon Army National Guard is offering incentives to Soldiers who reclassify into selected critical positions.

In some cases, Soldiers may be eligible to receive a \$2,000 MOS conversion bonus.

For more information on the jobs listed below, or to see the complete list of requirements and qualifications, send an inquiry to: mosreclass@ng.army.mil.

The Fire Support Specialist is primarily responsible for leading, supervising or serving in intelligence activities such as target processing, division artillery and maneuver brigade. Some of the duties include establishing, maintaining and operating communications systems, encoding and decoding messages, and assisting in preparing and disseminating fire support plans, coordinating documents and target lists, assisting in the operation of laser range finders, target designation and night observation devices.

Vacancy locations include Ashland, Bend, Coos Bay, Cottage Grove, Grants Pass, Hood River, Medford, Portland and Roseburg.

Signal Support Systems Specialists are primarily responsible for working with battlefield Signal support systems and terminal devices. Some of the duties include integrating signal systems and networks, installing, operating and maintaining designated radio and data distribution systems, performing signal support functions and unit level maintenance on authorized signal equipment and associated electronic devices, training and providing technical assistance to users of signal equipment, and operating and performing preventive maintenance checks and services on assigned vehicles and power generators.

Vacancy locations include Ashland, Bend, Clackamas, Coos Bay, Cottage Grove, Dallas, Forest Grove, LaGrande, Portland, Prineville and St. Helens.

Combat Engineers primarily supervise, serve or assist as a member of a team. They provide much-needed combat engineering, such as building roads, constructing bridges or helping our forces to move across foreign land. Some of the duties include constructing trails, roads and field fortifications such as shelters, bunkers and gun emplacements, assembling floating or prefabricated bridges, operating various light or heavy engineer vehicles, placing and detonating explosives, and loading, unloading and moving supplies and equipment using planes, helicopters, trucks and amphibious vehicles.

Vacancy locations include Clackamas, Dallas, Prineville and Salem.

Petroleum Supply Specialists are primarily responsible for supervising and managing the reception, storage and shipping of bulk or packaged petroleum-based products. Some of the duties as a Petroleum Supply Specialist include dispensing bulk fuels and water from storage and distribution facilities, selecting and submitting samples of petroleum, oils and lubricants to labs for testing, testing oils and fuels for pollutants, and repairing pipeline systems, hoses, valves and pumps.

Vacancy locations include Baker City, Burns, Coos Bay, Eugene, Forest Grove, Portland and Salem.

The Indirect Fire Infantryman specifically supervises or is a member of a mortar squad, section or platoon. Some of the duties include employing crew and individual weapons in offensive, defensive and retrograde ground combat, performing hand-to-hand combat drills that involve martial-arts tactics, employing, firing and recovering anti-personnel and anti-tank mines, locating and neutralizing mines, and carrying out scouting missions to spot enemy troop movements and gun locations.

Vacancy locations include Coos Bay, Corvallis, Cottage Grove, Eugene, Grants Pass, Klamath Falls, Lebanon, Medford, Pendleton, Roseburg and Woodburn.



Photo by Senior Airman John Hughel

Lt. Col. Jeff Silver, commader of the 142nd Operations Group, briefs Secretary of the Air Force, Michael W. Wynne (right), on fighter operations at the Portland Air Base in Portland, Ore. on May 8.

O’Hollaren: SECAF visit provides ‘vital audience’ for PANG to present strategy

Continued from FRONT PAGE

Wing leaders suggested to Wynne that Portland would be a great place to put the Air Force’s newest aircraft, the F-22 “Raptor.”

“He was pretty open to the idea,” Silver said. “We’d love to be on the leading edge of this if it happens.”

The visit allowed the ORANG to present the Secretary with a strategic initiative proposal, but his visit also allowed ORANG leaders to gain insights on Air Force strategy, policy and the Total Force Initiative, said O’Hollaren.

“The visit by the SECAF was huge,” O’Hollaren said. “He now knows who we are, what we are, and what we can become.”

“He is in a position to effect enormous changes in a very dynamic environment which will have far-reaching implications for the Oregon Air National Guard,” O’Hollaren added.

Wynne also took part in a ceremony which kicked off celebrations to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Air Force in Oregon.

The fighter wing recognized the cities of Portland and Vancouver, Wash. through the Cities of Honor program. Wynne, and about 50 people from the fighter wing, witnessed Portland Mayor Tom Potter and Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard sign a proclamation recognizing and supporting the event.

Later in the day, a formal ceremony was held in the main hangar in front of members of the entire fighter wing. The flagship F-15’s new nose art was unveiled, which represents the cities of Portland and Vancouver, Wash., who are represented in the Cities of Honor program. The wing has also honored several other cities, and will unviel additional logos for each city honored in the near future.

“I think this visit helped put us on his radar screen,” Silver said. “He gave us some great advice and I think he’s on the same page (with us) as far as what we need.”



Photo by Senior Airman John Hughel

Portland Mayor Tom Potter signed a proclamation of support for the Oregon Air National Guard at the Portland Air Guard Base in Portland, Ore., May 8. Seated, center, is Secretary of the Air Force, Michael W. Wynne, who visited the Portland Air National Guard base May 7 - 8. Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard, seated left, also signed the proclamation, which recognizes communities that have supported Oregon’s Airmen through its Cities of Honor program. Standing from left to right are: Brig. Gen. Daniel O’Hollaren, commander of the Oregon Air National Guard, Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, the Adjutant General for the Oregon National Guard and Col. Steven Gregg, 142nd Fighter Wing commander.



Oregon’s Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees welcomes home Master Sgt. Troy Mitchell of Hammond, Ore., during a ceremony at Camp Rilea, March 3. Mitchell was one of 28 Airmen from the 116th Air Control Squadron who volunteered to deploy to Kandahar Air Base in Afghanistan.

All-volunteer unit completes ‘important, critical mission’

Story and photo by Spc. April L. Dustin,
Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

WARRENTON, Ore. – Twenty-eight members from the 116th Air Control Squadron were honored during a welcome-home ceremony March 3 at Camp Rilea.

The Airmen were deployed to Kandahar Air Base in Afghanistan for a 120-day tour in support of Air Expeditionary Force 3 and 4, and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 116th ACS, based at Camp Rilea on the Oregon coast, departed for the Middle East in September 2006. They provided air command and control for all fixed-wing aerial assets in the Afghanistan airspace. The unit returned to Oregon in January.

Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski, Adjutant General of Oregon Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, and the Commander of the Oregon Air National Guard, Brig. Gen. Daniel O’Hollaren, joined other dignitaries, family and friends to celebrate the unit’s homecoming and accomplishments.

“You’re not just heroes to us, but patriots who have earned a permanent place in the hearts of Oregonians and in the history books of this nation,” the Governor said.

“So, on behalf of all Oregonians, thank you, God bless you and welcome home,” he continued.

Kulongoski also noted that a member of the 116th, Maj. Paul Evans of Monmouth, Ore., will join his staff as a military liason.

Rees expressed the importance of the unit’s accomplishments in Afghanistan.

“Some folks have labeled Afghanistan the forgotten war, but make no mistake, we’ve not forgotten you or the superb work you’ve done for the Oregon National Guard and the United States Air Force,” he said.

“You were given a very important, critical mission to provide air command and control for all aerial assets in the Afghanistan area of responsibility,” said Rees. “I don’t think many people understand the attention to detail, the skill and the knowledge that’s required to accomplish that task.”

The 116th ACS controlled more than 39,000 aerial missions in less than five months. During those missions, the Airmen ensured air assetts were available to support coalition ground forces in contact with taliban and anti-coalition militants.

The unit was responsible for controlling U.S. and coalition aircraft, including fighters and attack aircraft, refueling tankers, transport and surveillance aircraft. The unit also ensured safe passage for more than 17,500 commercial and civilian aircraft passing through the Afghanistan airspace.

Lt. Col. Timothy Olson, commander of the unit during the deployment, said the operations tempo and number of aerial missions doubled during their tour of duty in Afghanistan.

“It has gotten very busy over there. We just did what we had to do, waking up and putting our noses to the grindstone, knowing we were going to be challenged every day,” Olson said.

At Kandahar Air Base, the Airmen lived in tents during a freezing winter and hot summer, trying to sleep despite the noise of jets on the runway nearby. They worked 12-hour days, each Airman tracking about 24 aircraft at all times. The Airmen also had to overcome language barriers, working alongside NATO forces from about 20 different countries.

Capt. Bryan Habas said he will remember the experience for the rest of his life.

“It was great to work with allied forces from many countries around the world, because we got to see how different nations employ different aircraft,” he said.

“Building bridges in this war is extremely important, coming together against a common enemy and a common threat, and I think we were successful in doing that,” Habas added.

All 28 of the Airmen who mobilized with the 116th ACS volunteered for the deployment, including a father and son, and a husband and wife. The Airmen have all earned the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon, the Non-Article 5 NATO Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with “M” device, and the Oregon Faithful Service Ribbon with “M” device.

“I couldn’t be prouder of our unit and our mission,” said Olson. “We went over there and did a very important mission, a very challenging mission and we rose to the occasion. It’s a tremendous sense of accomplishment to come home knowing that we did a job well, and we brought all our people home safely.”

Rees said that while the rest of the U.S. Air Force is shrinking, the 116th ACS will grow by another 39 positions, including six full-time positions, as the unit takes on the additional role of providing communications capabilities.

“Those of us that are responsible for emergency management and emergency response in the state of Oregon are thrilled to know that your steady hand is going to be there to support us in our communications capabilities during emergencies,” said Rees

“Your commitment to mission accomplishment is noticeable. I salute you.”



Photo by Senior Airman John Hughel

Fire trucks from the 142nd Fire and Rescue welcome one of two newer F-15 Eagles to the Portland Air Base on May 5. The unit, which has some of the oldest F-15s in the National Guard inventory, will convert to the newer aircraft over the next 18 months.

142nd FW receives new F-15s

Prepared by Oregon Sentinel Staff

PORTLAND, Ore. – The 142nd Fighter Wing located at the Portland Air Base, Portland International Airport began receiving upgraded F-15 C and D models in May.

Col. Steve Gregg, the 142nd Fighter Wing Commander, brought the first of two F-15 Cs from Kadena Air Base, Japan to the Portland Air National Guard Base on May 5.

The planes arrived amidst much fanfare, with Oregon Air Guard officials and representatives on hand to welcome the two pilots and their planes.

The 142nd Fire and Rescue Squadron gave the two planes a special welcome by creating a ‘water arch’ using their pumper trucks on the aircraft ramp in front of the Operations building.

Additional aircraft will follow on from Kadena as well as other Air Force bases in the U.S. The conversion to the F-15 C and D models will take approximately 18 months.

“We are excited to receive these newer F-15s and look forward to bringing them up to Redhawk standards. This is a significant event for our unit and postures us for continued future mission success,” said Col. John Kent, 142nd Maintenance Group commander.

Maintenance crews from the 142nd Fighter Wing went to Kadena to inspect the inbound F-15s before their trans-Pacific flight. These aircraft will eventually replace all of the wing’s current A and B models, which are some of the oldest F-15’s in the Air Force inventory.

According to maintainers at the fighter wing, it’s not their age that’s bringing about their retirement; in fact, the aircraft maintainers from the unit have earned accolades at the world’s premier air-to-air competition, William Tell, held at Tyndall AFB, Fla.

The C and D models have upgrades and capabilities that put them even further ahead of current threats. According to Oregon Air Guard personnel, these capabilities give pilots advantages over the older A and B models which they replace.

Enhanced capabilities include an extended flight range and radar and avionics upgrades. The newer jets will enable the 142nd Fighter Wing to carry out the Air Sovereignty Alert mission over the Pacific Northwest in support of national objectives.

SPORTS

Oregon runners leave their mark on 2007 Lincoln Marathon

Story by Senior Master Sgt. Max White,
142nd Fighter Wing

Mother nature played havoc with this year’s competition as severe weather alerts threatened to stall the 2007 Lincoln Marathon in the hours before the starting gun sounded.

A heavy thunderstorm rumbled all night and subsided only one hour before the 7 a.m. start. Runners left the gate amidst steady rain and wind gusts of 30 to 40 miles-per-hour.

“This was the hardest marathon I have run in 37 years,” commented Senior Master Sgt. Max White, Oregon National Guard Running Team member and experienced world-class marathoner, “and by far my slowest.”

In the end, Arizona took first, followed by Minnesota, Indiana, and Oregon with only minutes separating the top four teams. 1,074 runners finished the 26.2 mile course.

Five members from the Oregon team earned a spot on the Elite All-Guard team and two of those individuals are assigned to the Oregon Air National Guard.

Staff Sgt. Ed King of the 123rd Weather Flight earned his second consecutive berth on the All-Guard team.

White, the Human Resource Advisor for the 142nd Fighter Wing and veteran marathoner, qualified for the All-Guard team for the 17th time. This was White’s 102nd marathon.

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Jacob Truex also qualified for the All-Guard team. Truex was formerly a member of the cross-country team where White coaches at West Albany High School.

This was Truex’s first marathon; according to White his positive attitude over the weekend was an inspiration to the team and all those around him.

Truex will not be able to participate in any of the All-Guard team events since he is deploying to Iraq with his unit next month. This will be Truex’s second deployment to Iraq and he said he looks forward to sharing his knowledge and experience with those around him.

The full list of members who represented the Oregon National Guard at this year’s Marathon Championships included the following:

- Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Vandervlugt, HQ 3-116 CAV.
- Staff Sgt. Edward King, 123rd Weather Flight.
- Sgt. 1st Class William Kaemmer, Portland State University GOLD Program.
- Sgt. Jacob Truex, 224 Engineering Company.
- Senior Master Sgt. Max White, 142 Fighter Wing/HQ
- Maj. Baldwin of HHC STB did not make the All Guard team but put in a solid performance, especially for the conditions.

Those who are able will take part in events in Bellevue, Wash.; Long Beach, Calif.; San Diego Calif.; Las Vegas, Nev.; Austin, Texas; Dayton, Ohio; Miami, Fla.; and Virginia Beach, Va.

At each of those events the runners will serve as ambassadors for the National Guard and facilitate recruiting and retention at the event expositions.



Photo courtesy of www.ndorfz.com

Staff Sgt. Ed King of the Oregon Air National Guard’s 123rd Weather Flight runs to a second consecutive position on the elite All-Guard team during the Lincoln Marathon held in Lincoln Neb., May 6.

PANG honors Northwest cities

Story by Staff Sgt. Jefferson Thompson,
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The City of Portland Mayor Tom Potter and Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard were hosted by the Oregon Air National Guard’s 142nd Fighter Wing during a Cities of Honor ceremony at the Portland Air Base, May 8.

Nose art honoring both cities were unveiled on two Oregon Air National Guard F-15s. Both Potter and Pollard helped remove the placards covering their respective cities’ nose art on each of the planes.

“It was an honor to be involved in the ceremony, and particularly to have Vancouver’s logo on the nose of one of the greatest fighter aircraft in the world,” Pollard said.

The Cities of Honor program coincides with the 60th anniversary of the Air Force and is a gesture of gratitude to Northwest communities who have supported the Oregon Air National Guard for the past 60 years.

“The best part for me is having the chance to meet and recognize these community leaders and see how pleased they are when they see their city recognized on one of our jets,” said Col. Steven D. Gregg, 142nd Fighter Wing Commander.

In addition to the nose art unveiling both mayors signed a proclamation declaring Portland and Vancouver, along with many other communities, have supported Oregon’s airmen over the last six decades.

“I am proud of the Air Force’s history in Portland and supportive of the 142nd Fighter Wing’s continued presence in the region,” Potter said.

“As the largest unit in the Oregon Air National Guard, the 142nd plays a vital role in the defense of Portland and the Pacific Northwest,” he added.

“I can’t express to you enough how appreciative I am of the sacrifices made by these brave men and women in the defense of our country,” he said.

Each jet’s nose art was designed by Tech. Sgt. Erik Simmons of the 142nd Multimedia, who spent time researching qualities and icons of each of the 20 communities named in the program. Simmons recalls coming out to the Portland Airbase during the annual public open house and seeing the F-15s on display, but never envisioned he’d end up designing their nose art.

“When I was a kid the F-15 was brand new,” Simmons said. “I could’ve never envisioned that I’d be getting paid to do this artwork,” he added.

The program is slated to honor a total of 20 Northwest communities. The cities range in location from Vancouver, Wash. to as far south as Corvallis, Ore. with many in between.

In every instance, a representative from each of the communities will take part in an unveiling ceremony conducted by wing officials with the 142nd Fighter Wing at the Portland Air Base, Gregg said.



Illustration by
Tech. Sgt. Erik Simmons

Outstanding Oregon Airmen of the Year recognized at annual banquet

In February, the Oregon Air National Guard held the 13th Annual Awards Banquet honoring Outstanding Airmen of the Year. Air Guard units have been extremely busy this last year gearing up for inspections, day-to-day operational tempos, deployments and trying to accommodate personal schedules.

Some individuals have performed in an outstanding manner and were recognized by their supervisors and peers at the banquet for their dedication to duty. All of these Airmen are to be commended on their outstanding duty to service, community and self. Congratulations again and a job very well done!

Outstanding Airman of the Year was awarded to SrA Nicolas B. Telle, 170th ATC (Cat. I, Airman of the Year); Staff Sgt. Marney M. Dudley, 270th ATC (Cat. II, NCO of the Year); and Master Sgt. Lawrence B. Taylor, 270th ATC (Cat. III, Senior NCO of the Year).

First Sergeant of the Year was awarded to Master Sgt. Kenneth J. Aubut, 173rd Fighter Wing.

Recruiter of the Year was awarded to Master Sgt Richard T. Trammel.

Employee of the Year was awarded to James D. Greene of the 142nd Security Forces Squadron.

The Unit Career Advisor of the Year was Master Sgt. Lindsey K. Dike of the 114th Fighter Squadron.

The Chester E. McCarty Superior Performance Award went to Tech. Sgt. Bryan S. Garrett, 116th Air Control Squadron (Overall winner and winner of Operations & Safety); Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey S. Wiford, 272nd Combat Communications (Logistics and Transportation); Senior Master Sgt. Richard F. Brown, 173rd Aviation Maintenance (Maintenance); Senior Airman Chad M. Evans, 125th Special Tactics Squadron (General Support); and Tech. Sgt. Bryon L. Rowley, Joint Force Headquarters/ Mission Support Flight (Information Management and Personnel).

Finally, Maj. Steven LaTulippe, 142nd Medical Group was awarded the **Edward E. Conrad Jr. Officer of the Year** award.

‘Only one chance’: Oregon team wins first NGB honor guard competition

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. W. Michael Houk,
National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

RENO, Nev. — Staff Sgt. Jeromy Turner knows all about the finality of funerals, about the idea that you have only one chance to make a good first impression.

“We only have one chance per veteran. We may do 12 services in one day, and every service has to be perfect,” said Turner, a team leader for the Oregon Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program.

When we’re not honoring veterans, we’re training,” Turner added. “We’re doing our after action reviews and rehearsals so that we can go out and honor these veterans the best we can.”

That was the special bond among the members of eight state teams that participated in the National Guard Bureau’s first competition for Army Guard honor guard teams, March 20-22.

Teams of seven Soldiers, from Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee and Utah converged on the Stead Training Facility, an Army Guard site on the outskirts of Reno, to see how close to perfection they could come.

The competition was the result of the Guard Bureau’s efforts to standardize the way that state teams render final military honors to the people being buried and their families.

“These are probably the best teams from across the nation,” said Ari Morales, the operations coordinator for Nevada’s honor guard program. “(They are) competing in order to identify what team is upholding our standards the most and representing the National Guard Bureau in the way that they should be,” added Morales who also helped coordinate the competition.

Members of the Army’s 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) from Fort Myer, Va., which participates in thousands of funerals every year and guards the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery, were the

evaluators. They came at the request of Staff Sgt. Tyrone Kosa, a former member of the “Old Guard” who now manages the Army Guard’s Honor Guard Program and who developed and organized the event.

“Staff Sgt. Kosa is an amazing NCO,” said Morales. “He’s definitely a go-getter. He made this thing happen from the ground up.” Morales said it took nine months for Kosa and himself to put the competition together.

Each day began with an exhaustive in-ranks inspection during which Old Guard NCOs “hard-eyed” each Soldier from head to toe. They used rulers to check the uniforms. They wrote down any discrepancies they discovered. They checked things like hat placement. Did the brim sit two fingers from the bridge of the nose? Was the hatband parallel to the marching surface?

Then the best of the Army Guard’s best had themselves rated on all aspects of performing a funeral for a fallen veteran — from lifting caskets and urns out of hearses to firing the customary salute with M-14 rifles and presenting the folded flag to a deceased’s family member.

Participants perfected personal appearance by cleaning their black shiny shoes with glass cleaner and blackening the soles with edge dressing. Furthermore, someone on each team dusted shoes and used a lint roller on uniforms prior to each event.

The judges scored events according to strict regulations and, to make things more challenging, Kosa threw in a few twists. He administered a 60-question written exam on the history of memorial affairs. The participants ran a grueling, timed obstacle course which had to be done twice — once for time and then repeated in full dress blues while performing honors; both times while carrying a casket weighted down by 200 pounds of sandbags.

At 3:30 a.m. on the last day, Kosa interrupted the participants’ sweet dreams when he quietly told them they had a half hour to prepare their uniforms and get on busses waiting to take them to the airfield. There



Sgt. Charles Rice of Milwaukie (left), Sgt. Robert Summers of McMinnville (center), Sgt. Kenneth Kaiser of Hillsboro (right), and others from the Oregon Military Funeral Honors Team perform a rifle sequence during the Army National Guard Honor Guard competition in Reno, Nevada, March 20.

they performed “honorable transfers” in below freezing temperatures from a Nevada Air Guard C-130 waiting on the flight line. Later that morning, participants were grilled by members of a board headed by Brig. Gen. James Nuttall, deputy director of the Army National Guard.

Sgt. Joshua Keil from the Missouri team explained that the intense competition means more than points on a score sheet.

“When I present the flag to the next of kin, and they look into my eyes with sincerity, they’re looking for comfort,” Keil said. “I see them get just that little bit of comfort. It makes all the difference in the world.”

Sgt. Delarion Perry agreed.

“They come up and shake your hand after the service. That lets me know I’ve done my job to the fullest, the best I could

do,” he said.

Later that evening, the winners were announced during a banquet before an audience of family members, state command sergeants major, adjutants general and the contestants. The team from Oregon took first place, followed by Utah and Tennessee, respectively. Oregon received a saber affixed to a plaque as their trophy, and the accolades of fellow participants.

Turner said each member of the team is reminded how important their role actually is, especially as they march past friends’ gravestones while they do their job in Oregon. The win is as much for the team as it is for their fellow combat veterans who lost their lives.

“It means the world to them,” said Turner.

Midnight raid on Grants Pass armory sharpens Soldiers’ skills

Story and photo by
Sgt. Tina Villalobos,
41st Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

GRANTS PASS, Ore. — Nearly 37 Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry based in Coos Bay, stormed the Grants Pass armory in a midnight “mock” attack, March 10-11. The attack came as a complete surprise to Soldiers of Delta Company, 1-186th Inf. Bn.

The purpose of the mock attack was to provide an opportunity for real-world training for Soldiers of both companies. Tactics used during the exercise allowed every element in the unit to practice their war-fighting skills.

“This exercise is great preparation. Everything about this exercise is exactly what is done in Iraq, except we are not busting in any doors,” said Capt. Bob Baca, of Sherwood, Ore., commander of Bravo Co. “The only other difference is that we can speak English to the local populous and officials here.”

Baca and his team worked with local law enforcement officials, the Grants Pass Airport, local businesses and residents in order to cross property lines, gain a tactical advantage and ensure the mission did not cause undue alarm for local law enforcement.

“It’s not something you normally do when you conduct a mock attack on another company,” said Baca. “It is a pretty innovative exercise in that I don’t ever remember one company attacking another company, especially at their own armory. I’ve seen it happen out in the field, but it is usually pre-staged.”

At 7:00 p.m., the squads loaded gear and departed Roseburg, heading to Grants Pass. More than two hours later, these infantrymen put the final stages of their planned attack into motion. The sky was clear with a bright half moon, and temperatures were mild.

Although the team came prepared with



2nd Lt. Rick Story (left), of Ashland, and Sgt. Billy Brown, of North Bend, both from Bravo Company, 1-186 Infantry, prepare for a “mock” attack on the Grants Pass armory.

night-vision goggles and other gear, the clear sky allowed them to freely navigate through the forested terrain.

Physical fitness was an essential element in the success of the movement. The squads demonstrated their agility in maneuvering through the brush, climbing several barbed-wire fences, and they were quick to move out when the situation called for speed.

For the most part, the squads traveled in silence using hand signals. Nocturnal animals sprinkled the air with sound as the Soldiers crept forward. When the Soldiers reached a stopping point in the woods, they began their final descent on the armory. The team went unnoticed as they made their way down a short ravine to the road.

Alert dogs announced camouflaged silhouettes moving through neighborhoods, but unsuspecting owners were quick to silence their barking. The Grants Pass Airport’s search light swept the night like

a giant arm trying to sweep away the fog, as troops from the first and second squads crept forward.

Meanwhile, another squad, including three HMMWVs, rolled toward the front of the Armory to divert attention from the rear of the building during the two-pronged assault.

At precisely midnight, the first and second squads began the assault by lobbing a blue smoke grenade over the armory fence. Flashes pierced the darkness from the barrels of M-4s, M-16s, and M-249s firing blank rounds, as Bravo Company simultaneously approached from the front and rear of the armory, attempting to penetrate resistance from the defending Grants Pass Soldiers.

Once the smoke had cleared and the weapons were silent, both sides met inside the armory to discuss the outcome of the exercise. Even with Bravo Co. capturing

Delta’s guidon during the attack, and Delta absconding with some of Bravo’s maps and training files, both sides came out winners.

Soldiers from both companies saw the value in this exercise.

Corporal Timothy Cederwall of Grants Pass, from Delta Co., said it had been a long, dull day pulling base security, until he and his fellow Soldiers realized people were heading towards the armory. That’s when he got on the radio to alert others of the threat and the action began to unfold.

“This was a really good exercise, because we’re training how we should actually fight,” he said.

Staff Sgt. Timothy Fruitt of Tangent, Ore., Bravo Co., acted as both squad leader and reconnaissance element. “We used our recon and scouting skills,” said Fruitt. “We moved slow and took our time. If you’re detected, the whole mission is over. I’d definitely like to see more exercises like this in the future. This was very good training that utilized all of our skills to the maximum.”

First Sgt. David Matschkowsky of Eagle Point suggested the training as a way to get Soldiers out of the armory and raise morale, while honing their infantry skills. “We wanted to get our Soldiers out of the armory,” he said. “I served with these guys in Iraq and they know their stuff. Something like this raises morale, and this is what they initially joined to do.”

Baca attributed success of the training to the assistance he received from both Guard and civilian entities who made the training possible.

“We thank everyone for helping us,” said Baca. “I realize there were a lot of pieces in getting this together and making it happen within a two-month time frame. We really thank everyone, from the ammo supply point, to the 41st Special Troops Battalion, to the 1-186 battalion staff, to local businesses and residents, as well as all of the law enforcement officials we worked with, and the media teams. Our Soldiers appreciate taking their training to the next level.”

Operation Jump Start: Oregonians help patrol border

Unique role for Oregon Guardsmen allows agents to beef up security on nation's southern border

Story and photos by Senior Airman Trish Harris,
142nd Fighter Wing, Visual Information

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Donning protective gear and carrying a weapon while standing watch over the desert landscape. Performing maintenance on UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. Climbing 100-foot communication towers on remote mountains. Pushing steel pipes into the ground. These are all tasks being performed by Oregon Air and Army National Guard personnel in Arizona.

Just what exactly are Oregon National Guardsmen doing in Arizona? The answer is a little bit of everything. Oregon Guardsmen have integrated into nearly every part of the Operation Jump Start (OJS) mission in Arizona since it began in June 2006.

In May 2006, President George W. Bush announced a plan to aid U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) with stopping the trafficking of people, drugs and weapons across the U.S.-Mexico border. According to officials, the purpose of Operation Jump Start is to bring National Guardsmen from all over the country to support the CBP in various roles.

There are approximately 2,500 Guard members currently in Arizona supporting OJS. More than 8,300 Army and Air National Guard members from 49 states, Guam and the Virgin Islands have served in the OJS mission in Arizona since it began.

"Having the Guardsmen serving in these different support roles has allowed border patrol agents to return to the field to perform their vital law enforcement role," said Sgt. Gustavo Soto, CBP supervisory patrol agent. "This law enforcement role, which Guardsmen do not do, includes confronting and arresting illegal drug, weapons and human traffickers and apprehending those entering the country illegally."

According to Soto, there were 9,200 apprehensions in the Tucson area and more than 290,000 pounds of marijuana seized between Oct 1, 2006 and Jan 31, 2007.

"Apprehensions of illegal crossers have dropped 12 percent, which means less people are even attempting to cross the border illegally, while drug seizures have gone up 29 percent since last year," said Soto.

Soto attributes this positive change to the presence of Guardsmen serving in OJS.

"The Operation Jump Start mission is a success," he added.

The Oregon National Guard has played a part in the mission's success with 32 Oregon Guardsmen serving in Arizona; nine Air Guard personnel and 23 Army Guard personnel. They are scattered across the state, performing duties in Sasabe, Phoenix, Tucson and Yuma. An additional 42 Air Guard personnel from the 142nd Civil Engineering Squadron, based at Portland Air National Guard Base, arrived in Arizona for OJS in mid-April.

Some of the missions assigned to Oregon Guardsmen include finance and administration; entry identification teams; aviation support; vehicle maintenance; communications; construction and installation of vehicle barriers, roads and permanent fencing along the U.S. - Mexico border.

Army Guard Sergeant Ross Willey of Portland, Ore., from Echo Company (Civil Engineer Unit), 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry, based in Prineville, Ore., is serving near Sasabe, Ariz. His mission as a welder for Task Force Diamondback's Sasabe Vehicle Barrier Team helps prevent vehicle traffic from crossing the border illegally.

"We take recycled railroad tracks, cut them down into smaller sections and weld them into individual barricades," said Willey. "We then transport them to the border by truck, unload and put them into place with a forklift along the border line, and weld them all together, creating vehicle barricades miles long."

Army Guard Sergeant Steve Hilger of Stayton, Ore., from Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry, based in Redmond, Ore., is creating a different type of permanent vehicle barrier along the border, about 60 miles south of Ajo, Ariz. Hilger is a member of Task Force Diamondback's Vehicle Barrier Team 2. He uses a Push-it machine to install steel pipes in the ground as permanent barriers to prevent vehicles from illegally crossing the Arizona-Mexico border.

Another aspect of the mission is the Entry Identification Team mission. Airmen and Soldiers from all across Oregon serve on EIT sites in both the Tucson and Yuma sector in Arizona. The EIT sites are scattered across the entire southern border of Arizona. Soldiers and Airmen man these sites 24 hours a day, seven days a week, watching for any sort of illegal activity, such as smuggling of drugs or people from across the border.

The EIT teams immediately report any suspicious activity via radio communication to CBP agents who arrive on scene and handle all law enforcement activities. The EIT sites, which are in highly visible locations and serve as deterrents, also detect and direct CBP agents to apprehend, those that do cross illegally into America.

"Basically, my mission is to observe the



Sgt. Stephen Dotson, of Union, Ore., from Det. 3, B Co. 351 Aviation Maint., performs maintenance on a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter in Phoenix, Ariz., Feb. 20.



Sgt. Ross Willey of Portland, from E Co. (Civil Engineer Unit) 3rd Bn. 116th Cav., welds a railroad tie into place to create a vehicle barrier south of Sasabe, Ariz., Jan. 19. The barriers are used to prevent vehicles from illegally crossing the Arizona-Mexico border.



Senior Airman Dion Rives of the 142nd Communications Flight, watches for illegal activity along the wall between the U.S. and Mexico border near Nogales, Ariz., Feb. 4. Rives is serving in Arizona on an Entry Identification Team for Operation Jump Start. The team supports U.S. Customs and Border Patrol by performing border surveillance and reporting illegal activity to CBP agents.

border areas for illegal crossing of individuals or unusual activities and report back to Customs and Border Patrol," explained Senior Airman Dion Rives of Portland, Ore. Rives is a member of the 142nd Communications Flight at the Portland Air Base. His is assigned as an EIT member in Nogales, Ariz.

According to Soto, the border patrol appreciates the contributions of Guard members like Rives.

"The EIT site mission has made our job much easier by deterring illegal entering traffic and by being our extra set of eyes and ears, letting us know where illegal crossings are taking place," Soto said. "We are able to respond to communications much faster."

Another important task being handled by Oregon Guardsmen is communications.

Senior Airmen Joshua Hart, who is from the 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron based at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Ore., serves as the internet technology & communications manager for the OJS Joint Force Headquarters in Phoenix. He is charged with tracking and maintenance of communications devices, such as satellites and radios, and with coordinating the set-up of all communications systems for the entire state of Arizona.

"Without this job, mission communication between OJS personnel and CBP is lost," stressed Hart.

Another Oregonian handling communications is Tech. Sgt. Mark Quinn of Gresham, Ore., also from the 142nd Fighter Wing Communications Flight. Quinn is a team chief for the Task Force Diamondback Re-



Tech. Sgt. Mark Quinn of Gresham, Ore., from 142nd FW Communications Flight, scales a communications tower near Tucson, Ariz., Jan. 18. Quinn is assigned to a Repeater Team responsible for upgrading communication systems for U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

peater Team which is tasked with upgrading the CBP communications system.

They conduct site surveys at the CBP communication tower sites all over the state of Arizona, maintaining and upgrading existing communications equipment.

"Once the new communication system is in place, it will increase the effectiveness of communications for CBP statewide," said Quinn.

The communications towers are from 80 to 180 feet tall, and some are in locations so remote Quinn and his team can only reach them by UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter. One of the people responsible for maintaining the helicopters is Army Sergeant Stephen Dotson, of Union, Ore. He is from Detachment 3, Bravo Company, 351 Aviation Maintenance, based in Pendleton, Ore.

"It's really nice to see our Soldiers and Airmen out here cooperating and everyone working together to make our country a safer place," said CBP Senior Patrol Agent Norm Antuzzi.

Overall, many of the Oregon Guardsmen say they are enjoying their time in Arizona and expanding their skills.

"I'm having fun meeting Guardsmen from different states," said Quinn. "This experience has also given me the chance to learn more about my job than I would have been able to back home."

"This is a good mission, we are doing a job that is worthwhile," added Rives.

End of an era: America's last known WWI combat veteran is laid to rest



Photo courtesy Oregon Military Museum/ John Mull

Howard Ramsey (center) sits in the driver's seat of a WWI Liberty Truck at the Oregon Military Museum, January 2006. The vehicle is similar those he drove in France while serving in WWI.

Story by Spc. April L. Dustin,
Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. — The echo of a rifle salute and bugler playing taps marked the end of an era, as a state and national treasure was laid to rest March 2.

Retired U.S. Army Cpl. Howard V. Ramsey, Oregon's last living World War I veteran and the last known United States combat veteran of WWI, died in his sleep Feb. 22 at an assisted living center in southeast Portland. He was honored during a memorial service attended by nearly 200 people at Lincoln Memorial Park. His funeral was held exactly one month before his 109th birthday.

"This is a very historic occasion, we lay to rest today our nation's oldest combat veteran," said Pastor Stu Weber, who officiated over Ramsey's memorial service.

In an Associated Press report, Jim Benson of the federal Veterans Administration said there are now only seven WWI veterans on record with the VA, although it is possible there are unknown veterans who may still exist.

Of the seven known WWI veterans still living, none were shipped overseas, making Ramsey the last known combat veteran of "The Great War". Ramsey inherited the title just two weeks before his passing, when Massachusetts veteran Antonio Pierro passed away Feb. 8.

Vice President Dick Cheney mentioned Ramsey's WWI service in a speech in 2005 during the 75th anniversary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Cheney mentioned Ramsey again March 5 during the Veterans of Foreign Wars national legislative conference.

"Howard Ramsey was one of the longest-living veterans in history, and he passed away at the age of 108. The United States of America honors his memory," Cheney said.

Ramsey's lifetime spanned three centuries and 19 presidents. He said Theodore

Roosevelt was his personal favorite.

Ramsey was born in Rico, Colo. on April 2, 1898, when the U.S. flag had just 45 stars and President McKinley was preparing to declare war with Spain.

In 1913 Ramsey's family moved to Portland at a time when there were only two bridges spanning across the Willamette River. Ramsey graduated in 1916 from Washington High School, where he was also a member of the Oregon Naval Militia.

Shortly after graduation, Ramsey and his friend, Harry Cleveland, moved to Utah where they learned how to drive; a rare skill at the time. Too young to be drafted, the two friends tried to enlist and were too skinny for U.S. Army standards. After gorging on bananas and water to meet weight standards, they were placed in the Army's transportation corps.

Ramsey arrived in France in September 1918 to join Gen. John 'Black Jack' Pershing's American Expeditionary Force. Ramsey drove all kinds of vehicles for the Army and trained other Soldiers how to drive. He was often selected to drive officers to special engagements, and one officer "gigged" him for having a dirty truck despite the constant rain and mud in France. On one occasion, Ramsey had the privilege of driving for Gen. Pershing himself.

Ramsey drove ambulances, transported troops to the front lines, and delivered water to troops on the battlefields.

"We were under fire a lot at the front, and we really caught hell one time. I lost friends over there," he said about his service.

After the armistice, Ramsey spent several months recovering American Soldiers who were hastily buried in the trenches and transported them to the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, the largest American Cemetery in Europe.

"You'd better believe it was pretty awful work," Ramsey told Oregonian reporter Rick Bella in 2005. "It was tough, but you became hardened to it."

Nearly 90 years later, Ramsey was still

haunted by regret for not breaking the rules and keeping a diary that fell from the pocket of a deceased American Soldier. Ramsey told family and friends, "I wanted to keep that diary so badly to send it to his mother, but it was against the rules to keep anything from off the bodies."

Veterans of many generations and wars, and military representatives attended Ramsey's memorial service to pay their respects, including Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne Jr., commander of the Oregon Army National Guard's 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, and Jim Willis, state director of Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs.

"If we are going to end an era, I can think of no better way than to do it with a person who is a model representation of the kinds of Soldiers who served this country in WWI, and someone who would be an example to any combat Soldier serving in Afghanistan and Iraq today," Willis said. "All (veterans) would be justifiably proud to have known Corporal Howard Ramsey," Willis added.

Willis said that Ramsey's biography of service was entered into Congressional Record on March 2 by Congresswoman Darlene Hooley, (D-OR). He also read a letter from Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski and presented the family with the Governor's Coin, an award for excellence to a military veteran.

"Having lived most of his life as a resident of Portland, we in Oregon rightfully take great pride in his distinction of being recognized as a national treasure," Kulongoski wrote. "Howard Ramsey certainly was an Oregon and American treasure."

Retired U.S. Army Col. Don Holden, whose father was Ramsey's classmate at Washington High School, shared fond memories of Ramsey's sense of humor. He said farewell to his old friend by reading the epic WWI poem "Flanders Field", which Ramsey could recite from memory well into his late 90s.

But unlike Flanders's Field, there were no Soldiers to bury Ramsey with, as described in the poem, "Bury me with Soldiers", read by Pastor Weber during the memorial service. Although eligible for burial among Oregon's most honorable at Willamette National Cemetery, Ramsey chose to be buried across the street at Lincoln Memorial, suggesting there was much more to this man than just the Soldier.

Ramsey was laid to rest next to his wife, Hilda Epling, a young phone operator he met in 1923 while working as an engineer for Portland Electric phone company (later AT&T). Eleven years after they were married, the couple was surprised by the birth of their daughter Coral in 1934. After Ramsey's retirement from the phone company in 1963, the couple enjoyed traveling, spending most of their winters in Mesa, Ariz., where Hilda passed away in 1982.

"He often said that when he finally approaches Heaven's doors, his wife will be standing there waiting, and she will ask what took him so darn long to get there," said Holden.

Ramsey is survived by his daughter, Coral Falk of Portland; granddaughters, Sandra Linnell of Damascus, Ore. and Shelley Fontana of Clackamas, Ore.; three great-grandchildren; and five great-great-grandchildren, who all referred to him as "Grandpa sweetie-pie".

"He was very sweet, he would always teach us the importance of love, fairness and family," said Linnell.

Ramsey is remembered by his family and friends as a positive, good-natured man who had a life-long love for traveling and driving. He maintained an active driver's license until age 100.

"Every summer he would take my sister and I on vacations to Canada, Mexico or Colorado and it was always really fun to travel with him," said Linnell. "He always drove. Sometimes he would drive 500 miles in one day."

His great-grandson, Zachary Veselick, said it was important to Ramsey to see his great-grandchildren graduate from high school, but he surpassed that goal by watching them graduate from college and start their own families.

"I think we all thought that Grandpa was going to live forever," said Veselick.

Longevity seems to run in the Ramsey



Photo courtesy of www.howardramseyww1.moonfruit.com

Howard Ramsey (left) and a fellow 'Doughboy' pose with a German weapon while serving in France during WWI.

family, his father died at age 84, mother at age 93, his aunt at 103, and his uncle at 100. But age was not the only testament to Ramsey's physical strength.

"Grandpa was 83 years old when I was born, he was 93 the last time we arm-wrestled, and he beat me," Veselick said during the memorial service, as the room filled with laughter from those in attendance.

Ramsey remained in great health throughout his entire life, able to live in his own home until age 103. He only required a cane during the last few months of his life. He credited his faith, healthy living, family ties and good friends for keeping him going.

"Grandpa saw a lot of things in his life, but he was never created to live this life forever," said Veselick.

Ramsey made sure that his memories would not die with him. Many who knew him said you couldn't really know him long enough, because he always had more stories to tell.

Holden, a World War II veteran, would often share stories of war with Ramsey. He said Ramsey had an "instant recall of the events of WWI" and could "remember things like they were yesterday."

One of Ramsey's fondest wartime memories was of a French girl who asked him for an American souvenir. He gave her a penny. She thanked him with a lock of her curly hair, which he treasured for the rest of his life.

"We are burying him with that lock of hair in his pocket," said Linnell.

"He was a good man, he's left a lot of legacies," Falk said of her father. "He was very proud of his military service and he would have thought this (memorial service) was so special, to be honored like this."

Brig. Gen. Byrne said Ramsey preserved his memories to share with future generations by donating his uniform, photos, and souvenirs from WWI to the Oregon Military Museum in Clackamas, Ore.

"When we go to museums we see artifacts, we see things, but we forget that those things are tied to people," said Byrne.

The Oregon Military Museum owns a WWI Liberty Truck, just like the one that Ramsey used for his driving duties in Europe. The Liberty Truck, driven by Oregon Military Museum re-enactors wearing "Doughboy" uniforms, was used as a casket bearer to carry Ramsey to his grave site.

"It was the vehicle he used to recover American Soldiers from temporary graves among Europe's battlefields," said Byrne. "It is fitting today that we are now using that vehicle to transport him to his final resting place."

As the Liberty Truck vanished out of sight, carrying Ramsey away on that cold, rainy day in March, another chapter in American history was closed. Just as it states in Ramsey's favorite poem, "Flanders Field", the torch has now been passed from the last known combat veteran of "The Great War" to the veterans of "The Greatest Generation".

"Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high."



Photo by Kay Fristad, Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

WWI re-enactors from The Oregon Military Museum drive a Liberty Truck carrying Howard V. Ramsey, Oregon's last living WWI veteran and the last known U.S. combat veteran of WWI, to his grave site at Lincoln Memorial Park on March 2.

From rusting hulk to museum quality showpiece

Story and photos
by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy,
Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

The growling sounds like a cage full of angry lions. The entire structure seems to vibrate in time with the combined 5,500 horsepower of the three Packard V-12 engines rumbling below the wooden deck.

The only visual evidence of the potential power of this beast is a steady cloud of gray-white exhaust smoke drifting up from the sides of the boat, blending with the boat's gray paint and the overcast skies above downtown Portland.

"Get ready to cast off," shouts a man in the wheelhouse, as deckhands scurry about with ropes in hand, guiding the WWII PT boat from its berth at the Swan Island Naval Operation Support Center.

Twin 50-cal. machine guns flanking the wheelhouse reach for the sky as the boat reverses in a wide arc around the end of the dock. A coordinated effort between the "skipper" and the deckhands bring the 78-foot boat into the main shipping channel of the Willamette River, before the boat changes direction and heads down river.

No, this isn't 1943, and PT 658 is not heading out on a mid-day patrol to locate Japanese ship convoys.

In fact, it is a typical Oregon day in early May, 2007, and PT 658 is moving a short distance down the Willamette River for more restoration work. Moreover, the men who now guide her slowly through the calm waters are not battle-hardened Navy sailors, but a group of volunteers who have spent more than a decade lovingly restoring the WWII showpiece.

According to Save The PT Boat, Inc., a non-profit organization founded by a group of gray-haired ex-PT boaters who took custody of the historic relic in 1992, PT 658 is the only fully-complimented and working Patrol Torpedo (PT) boat in existence.

The group has been able to accomplish their goals with the assistance of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, the Oregon and Washington National Guard, private individuals in Oregon and California, and a number of volunteers, most of whom are retired military, said Harry Wiedmaier, former Navy Reserve captain and board chairman of Save The PT Boat, Inc.

On this day, the crew of United States Coast Guard buoy tender Bluebell, based at Swan Island Coast Guard Station, donated their time and the use of the large



The crew of PT 658 guide the restored WWII PT boat into her berth at Swan Island on the Willamette River in Portland, Ore., May 3. The all-volunteer group, Save the PT Boat, Inc., has worked since 1992 to restore PT 658 as near as possible to her original condition, according to the group's chairman, Harry Wiedmaier. The boat was featured during the Portland Rose Festival's Parade of Boats during the first week of June. Below: The volunteers of Save the PT Boat, Inc. on the deck of PT 658 at Swan Island.

crane on the bow of the Bluebell to install the full compliment of four period-correct torpedoes onto the deck of PT 658.

"We're a very tiny part of this restoration. They've done all the hard work," said U.S. Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer Dave Dixon, commanding officer of the U.S.C.G. buoy tender Bluebell. "We're giving them a hand because we own a crane and we're neighbors," Dixon added with a chuckle.

According to PT 658 crewmember and retired Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. Dale Billups, the Naval Undersea Warfare Museum in Keyport, Wash., loaned three torpedoes to the PT boat restoration project. One of the two torpedoes already on the boat, which the group acquired for \$2,500 on Ebay, will serve as a static display, while the remaining four are to be installed permanently on the boat.

"We want to try to get the torpedoes onboard before the Rose Festival," Billups said.

The PT 658 took part in the festival's "Parade of Boats" which included U.S. and Canadian warships, U.S. Coast Guard cutters, and civilian ships from around the Northwest. Along with tours of the ships docked near Tom McCall Waterfront Park in downtown Portland, military personnel in uniform were allowed to tour PT 658.

PT 658 was built in April 1945 by Higgins Boat Works in New Orleans, La. Though she never saw combat duty,

the boat was fully serviceable, minus its armament. Along with three other PT boats, PT 658 was bound for the Soviet Union as part of the Lend-Lease Act signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on March 11, 1941, which was meant to supply non-Axis countries with raw material and equipment to help fight the war. Shortly following Allied victory in Europe, the act was abruptly cancelled by the United States, and equipment destined for overseas delivery was soon made available for private sale back in the United States.

"She was on a barge heading for Russia," Billups said.

After turning around in the Aleutian Islands, the shipment containing PT 658 returned to California in late 1945, where the boat was eventually sold to a private owner at a government auction. According to Wiedmaier, people who made such purchases probably thought buying an 80-foot yacht at a bargain price was a good deal.

"The owner replaced the gas-guzzling Packard engines with smaller diesel engines," Wiedmaier said. "But when he took it out in the open ocean, the boat beat him up so much he gave up his dream and parked it against a dock in San Francisco where she deteriorated for almost 50 years."

Wiedmaier said seeing the restoration of PT 658 is bitter-sweet. As an enlisted Sailor in the Philippines during the waning days of WWII, he saw tons of equipment destroyed, including hundreds of PT boats which were burned in the shallow waters of Manila Bay.

"Fourty miles of equipment getting ready to go for the invasion of Japan was destroyed," Wiedmaier said.

Save The PT Boat, Inc. plans to locate permanent mooring for PT 658, and would like to spearhead the construction of an accompanying museum where people can learn about the PT boats' role in WWII. Moreover, according to Wiedmaier, the effort of the group is also a tribute to some 15,000 people who worked with, or on PT boats throughout the war.

"We intend to operate and display the boat in the Pacific Northwest as a living memorial to the thousands of U.S. Sailors



who manned these tiny warships in nearly every World War II theater," said Wiedmaier.

Known as the "Mosquito Fleet", the small, agile, and heavily-armed PT boats were instrumental during battles in the Pacific and Mediterranean theaters, as well as in the English Channel during WWII. Referred to as "expendable" by military planners, some 660 PT boats comprising the 'wooden fleet' were built through U.S. civilian contracted boat builders like Higgins Boat Works and Elco Company – a plan which kept costs low and freed up the larger shipbuilding companies to concentrate on producing the more-recognized battleships and aircraft carriers. Following the end of the war, PT boats already in service were destroyed, while new boats were sold at government auction, and the PT corps disbanded.

Wiedmaier cited a little-known fact about PT boats at Pearl Harbor.

"On December 7, 1941, six PT boats were at Pearl harbor, and one of the boats was credited with shooting down a Japanese plane," he says, beaming with pride.

Furthermore, with the exception of a handful of movies like John Ford's 1945 movie, "They Were Expendable" starring John Wayne and Robert Montgomery, and the story of PT 109, made famous by President John F. Kennedy, the PT boaters' legacy has gone largely unknown, until now.

"It's not an ordinary boat, but then, these are not ordinary men," Wiedmaier said. "Their memories of combat on the high seas illustrate just how special these boats were."

PT 658 will be open to the public at the antique boat show at Tomahawk Island June 22-24.

For more information on PT 658 or to contribute to its maintenance and restoration, visit www.savetheptboatinc.com.



The crew of PT 658 coordinate with the crew of the U.S.C.G. buoy tender Bluebell at Swan Island on the Willamette River in Portland, Ore., May 3. The group Save the PT Boat, Inc., enlisted the help of the U.S. Coast Guard to install three period-correct torpedoes on the deck of the PT boat.

Oregon veterans receive France’s highest award



Brig. Gen. Ray Byrne, the Assistant Adjutant General (Army) for the Oregon National Guard and France's Consul General Frédéric Desagneaux, of the French Embassy in San Francisco, flank Bob Weiss after he received the French Legion of Honor.

Story and photo
by Mike Allegre,
Oregon Dept. of Veterans' Affairs

More than 60 years after the Allied Forces in Europe liberated France from the Nazi regime, two Oregon World War II veterans have been presented France's highest honor for bravery. The French government approved the presentation of the Legion of Honor (Legion d'Honneur) to Portland area veterans John Hodges, 87, and Robert Weiss, 84, for their service during the battle to liberate France from the German Army in 1944-45.

Before a gathering of family and friends, both men received their awards on two different occasions. Both Hodges and Weiss openly credited their fellow Soldiers and fallen comrades as they accepted their medals.

The Deputy Consul General Patrice Servantie, from the French Embassy in San Francisco, presented Hodges his medal on February 22. Hodges said, "This is an award that I'm most honored to receive, but in my heart I'm accepting it on behalf of the members of my company who can't be here to accept the honor for themselves."

A U.S. Army officer assigned to 616th Ordnance Ammunitions Company, 5th Engineer Brigade, Hodges' unit landed during the assault on Omaha Beach on June 7. The unit played a vital role by establishing the first ammunition supply facility on Omaha Beach, later at the French port of Cherbourg and at Leige, Belgium.

Weiss, served in the 230th Field Artillery Battalion of the 30th Infantry Division during the liberation of France, the Battle of the Bulge and the fight across Belgium, Holland and Germany. He has also been officially recognized for his role in halting the German offensive at the Battle of Mortain shortly after D-Day.

"One of the things I learned from the battle experience at Mortain is that determined men, sometimes a few or even one man, can make a difference in the lives of others," Weiss said after his medal presentation by Consul General Frédéric Desagneaux on March 17 in Portland.

Both Desagneaux and Servantie said it was their personal honor, on behalf of their government, to present each man with France's highest military medal. Desagneaux said the medals are a "solemn reminder of the long and continuous cooperation and friendship between the U.S. and France which dates back to the U.S. Revolutionary War."

As veterans of the liberation of France in 1945, both men were eligible to receive the honor from the French government. In 2006, both men responded to a news article stating that the French government would begin issuing the awards to those who presented a copy of their military records.

Napoleon Bonaparte established the Legion of Honor medal in 1802 to reward both Soldiers and civilians for exceptional merit or bravery, for outstanding military accomplishments and for other distinguished service to the State.

Tuskegee Airmen recognized for WWII sacrifice



Photo by Shanda Tice

Tuskegee Airmen Bill Terry (left) and Alexander Jefferson flank Richard Macon as he tells about their service as America's first African American pilots.

Story by Mike Allegre,
Oregon Dept. of Veterans' Affairs

Determined to prove their detractors wrong, nearly 1,000 Black pilots volunteered in 1942 and were trained as fighter pilots in the U.S. Army Air Corps. They would become known as Tuskegee Airmen—whose exploits in battle have become legendary. Three members of that original group of aviators visited Milwaukie High School on March 17.

For several hours, three former 1st Lieutenants now in their 80's, Alexander Jefferson, Richard Macon and Bill Terry, told their individual stories and answered questions about their service as members of the Air Corps' segregated 332nd Fighter Group. The elder flyers reminded those in attendance that no standards were lowered for Tuskegee pilots who trained in numerous officer fields. That also included nearly 19,000 enlisted members and support staff from mechanics to radio repairmen and nurses to control tower operators.

"We were determined to prove all doubters wrong," Macon said. "I was going to learn to fly and fight for my country. Our government was wrong and guilty of prejudice. They didn't think blacks could learn to fly."

And fly they did. After their flight training at Tuskegee, Ala., the men saw action from 1943-45 in North Africa, Italy, France and Germany. By the end of the war, more than 450 pilots from the four pursuit squadrons within the 332nd FG (the 99th, 100th, 301st and 302nd), completed 1,578 missions, 15,553 combat sorties and destroyed 261 enemy aircraft. Reportedly the pilots never lost an American aircraft to enemy fire in more than 200 combat missions—a record unmatched by any other fighter group.

Jefferson said their commander, Col. Benjamin O. Davis, ordered his men in every briefing to stay with the bombers and don't leave them. "If just one bomber had been shot down, the military would've

killed our unit. We'd have been grounded," he said.

The Red Tails—named because of the red paint on their tail assemblies—lost 66 pilots in aerial combat. Of the 994 black aviators who were trained at Tuskegee beginning in 1942, fewer than 380 are still living.

Macon and Jefferson are the only two surviving black prisoners of war from World War II. Both were shot down while attacking enemy positions over France and both survived harrowing experiences in German concentration camps.

A B-25 bomber pilot, Terry had been a former UCLA basketball player and college roommate of baseball great Jackie Robinson. Despite an exemplary military record, he and 102 African-American pilots later faced a military court martial in 1945 when they attempted to enter an officers' club at a base at Freeman Field, Ind., defying a direct order to stay out. Terry was the only officer convicted. Congress later overturned his conviction in 1996.

"I thought being in jail then wasn't worth it, but the guys stuck with me," Terry said, "and later we went on to help desegregate the military."

After their presentations, a former B-24 bomber crewmember stood up, thanked and saluted the former pilots for escorting his unit on many safe trips to Berlin. Brigadier Gen. Garry Dean, the Oregon National Guard's first black general officer, then openly thanked the trio for "what you have done for African Americans by opening doors that I walked through which allowed me to be where I'm at today."

In Washington D.C., on March 29, President George W. Bush presented the highest civilian award conferred by Congress—the Congressional Gold Medal—to the surviving Tuskegee Airmen to honor their service. The president said, "The Tuskegee Airmen helped win a war, and you helped change our nation for the better. Yours is the story of the human spirit, and it ends like all great stories do—with wisdom and lessons and hope for tomorrow."

Family of fallen Soldier raises funds for climbing wall



Submitted by the Nakis Family

The days were long, hot, dusty, and often dangerous. The work at times was monotonous and tedious and also often dangerous.

To help pass the time and take his mind off the daily responsibilities, the young soldier, a combat engineer with Bravo Company, 52nd Combat Engineers from Albany Oregon, would talk about, plan, and sketch his personal goals and dreams. He had dreams

of reconditioning his first car, of building a cabin, of owning his own military vehicle.

Sadly, most of these dreams ended when the young soldier, Spc. Nathan Nakis of Sedro-Woolley Wash., lost his life in a vehicle accident near Mosul, Iraq in 2003. He was 19 years old.

Today, however, one of Nakis' dreams lives on. An Eagle Scout, avid climber, and Boy Scout instructor, he had dreamed for several years about building an indoor climbing wall at his favorite Boy Scout camp. He even made sketches of climbing wall ideas and shared them with his fellow soldiers.

Nakis wanted to build The Wall at Camp Black Mountain, a beautiful camp reserve on Silver Lake in Whatcom County, in northwest Washington State.

Nakis attended and worked at the camp for seven years. Now, thanks to the efforts of many dedicated volunteers and professionals, his climbing wall is becoming a reality.

The project, dubbed "Nathan's Wall", is a partnership between the Nakis family and the Mt. Baker Council of the Boy Scouts of

America.

The Boy Scouts have selected the building site and raised the necessary resources to construct the enclosure. The Nakis family is using a combination of Nathan's legacy money and donated funds to provide a state-of-the-art climbing facility.

The wall, being designed and built by Entre Prises of Bend, Ore., will utilize modern panels that simulate natural rock. The wall will be thirty feet tall and the facility will include gear storage and training space, as well as a memorial to Nakis and a place to acknowledge donors and volunteers. The family plans to list all donors on a memorial plaque to be displayed at the entrance.

The Nakis family is asking for help to make the dream come true. A fund has been established at the Mt. Baker Council of BSA, and tax-deductible donations can be made payable to the Mount Baker Council of BSA. Mark all contributions with "Nathan's Wall". The Council's Tax ID number is: 91-1622046.

Please mail all inquiries and contributions to: Nathan's Wall, C/O Elinor Nakis, P.O. Box 26, Sedro-Woolley, Wash., 98284.

News Briefs

State Defense Force takes on emergency response roles

The Oregon State Defense Force has gained a new mission that gives the Governor of Oregon and the Oregon National Guard an additional resource to assist in emergency operations.

Under the command of Brig. Gen. J. Michael Caldwell, the ORSDF is under going a major transformation to take on the new role in the area of emergency response and homeland security.

The ORSDF will operate as an integrated part of the Oregon National Guard which has operational control of Oregon Emergency Management.

Their primary task for now is to develop relationships in every county in Oregon with emergency management officials and Oregon National Guard commanders whose areas of operation are identified in the ORNG Emergency Response Plan, and the ORSDF will then serve as a liaison between these agencies.

“This initial stage of development will go far to maximize the knowledge of county emergency procedures and the resources available within the Oregon National Guard,” said Caldwell, who also serves as the Deputy Director of the Oregon National Guard and served as a Union County Commissioner for eight years. “The outcome will be a faster response by these entities in times of emergency.”

The organization will also develop alternate communication links that will be useful during statewide or local emergencies. During emergencies, said Caldwell, ORSDF members will operate as a force multiplier for ORNG units and provide a solid base of knowledge to the commander on the ins and outs of State Active Duty processes.

“Having been on both sides of the fence as a battalion commander and a county commissioner, I am confident these volunteers will add significant value to the commanders,” said Caldwell. “I know how busy these units are, so it’s my goal to provide them with factual, timely information.”

To accomplish this mission, the ORSDF is setting up a regimental group headquarters whose members will be responsible for recruiting former National Guard and other service members who still want to provide service to the State.

State Defense Force personnel are typically military retirees from all branches of service who want to continue serving their state in a volunteer capacity.

“Because of their military background and training these ORSDF members have experiences at of all levels of military operations and, therefore, add value at the county level because of their understanding of the resources held by the Oregon National Guard,” said Caldwell. “I really want to see our Guardsmen who have retired for whatever reason but still want to serve get involved.”

Anyone interested in the ORSDF or who has questions concerning the organization can call (503) 557-5461 or (503) 551-0977 for more information.

DoD issues guidelines for zero-tolerance on sexual assault

WASHINGTON, April 4, 2007 - Sexual assault is a crime that is incompatible with military values and will not be tolerated within the Defense Department, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness said in an announcement April 3.

David S.C. Chu kicked off the month-long DoD observance of sexual assault prevention during a ceremony at the Women in the Military for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

“Sexual assault is devastating to the individuals it victimizes,” Chu said.

“It weakens trust and creates strife within our units. It undermines the state of readiness of the armed forces as a whole.”

Sexual assault is one of the nation’s most under-reported crimes. National statistics

show that an assault occurs every 90 seconds. One in every six women and one in every 33 men will be the victims of rape or attempted rape in their lifetime.

“Sexual assault remains a troubling issue in America,” Chu said. “Since the military reflects the society it serves, the issue faces the Department of Defense as well.”

This year’s DoD campaign is promoting a climate of respect that encourages every servicemember to join in a cooperative effort to end sexual violence, said Kaye Whitley, director for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office.

SAPRO is the Defense Department’s single point of accountability for sexual assault policy matters. The organization develops policy and programs to improve prevention efforts, enhance victim support, and increase offender accountability by collaborating closely with each military branch.

Whitley said the goals of this year’s campaign are three-fold: fostering awareness of the impact of sexual assault on victims, encouraging community-wide prevention, and facilitating awareness of the availability of health services to care and support victims.

In an effort to create a “climate of confidence,” the Defense Department has changed reporting options for sexual assault victims. Beginning in 2005, victims were given an option of restricted or unrestricted reporting.

When filing a restricted report, victims could receive medical care and counseling for assaults without alerting their chain of command or triggering an investigation. DoD officials attribute a 65 percent increase in reporting to this change.

In 2006 there were 756 restricted reports of sexual assault, Chu said. These were victims who might not have come forward under the old policy, he noted.

After receiving initial medical treatment and counseling, Chu added, 86 of those changed their reports to unrestricted status, allowing the pursuit of those who acted against them.

DoD officials continue to focus on providing education and training for its more than 1 million active-duty servicemembers. During a worldwide conference held by the department this year, more than 350 troops were trained to be “first responders” for victims on their installations.

“We believe that the numbers of reports will continue to rise because we are changing a culture,” Whitley said. “While these numbers make an initial rise, we hope to see a leveling off and eventual elimination of assaults within the department.”

Reservations now being taken for 2007 Hillsboro Air Show

The 2007 Oregon International Air Show will be held August 10-12 at the Hillsboro Airport in Hillsboro, Oregon.

This is the 20th anniversary of this event which is considered to be one of the premier air shows in the Western U.S.

This year, we are pleased to announce a significant veterans’ recognition event at the air show. Dignity Memorial is the Title Sponsor for this year’s Veterans’ Commemoration Chalet and we will host local area veterans and their guests on Saturday and Sunday of the Air Show weekend.

This year’s headline aerobatic team, the U.S. Navy’s Blue Angels, will be returning to Hillsboro, along with many other acts and performers.

Three hundred passes per day will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. To reserve passes, or for more information, visit: www.oregonairshow.com/web/info/dignity-memorial-veterans-chalet.asp

Registration ends June 15. Contact Scott Justice at 503-784-5410 or Fred Suter at 360-326-8172 for questions.

Washington CAP unit seeks volunteers

The Centralia / Chehalis Airport in southwest Washington (CLS) and the Washington chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association of America are sponsoring an air fair, July 28-29 on the grounds of the Chehalis Airport.

The Event will be open to the public both days from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

There will be booths, vendor exhibitors and military and civilian static aircraft displays. The Lewis County Civil Air Patrol will assist in the organizing of the event.

The United States Civil Air Patrol has three primary missions; emergency services, cadet programs and aerospace education.

For more information, please contact Daniel Whalen at whalenworks@comcast.net or at 360-520-9413.

Apprentice programs for Guard members

SALEM, Ore. – The Adjutant General of the Oregon National Guard and the chairman of the Oregon State Apprentice Training Council signed a formal agreement at the Governor’s Ceremonial Office at the State Capitol Building in Salem, Ore. on March 7.

OSATC Chairman, Dan Gardner, and Oregon Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, signed a document which allows Oregon National Guard personnel to apply for apprentice positions with various unions throughout Oregon. The agreement will assist Soldiers and Airmen in finding gainful employment, and work toward journeyman positions while earning a living wage.

For more information call 971-673-0761.

Salem center offers free yoga classes to Oregon vets

Indigo Wellness Center in Salem is offering free yoga classes to all returning Oregon veterans.

Yoga can be a helpful tool in re-integrating back into life. The center offers classes for all levels throughout the week. The center is located at 3276 Commercial St. SE in Salem.

For more information, contact Zohra Campbell at 503-370-9090, or visit their website at www.indigowellnesscenter.com.

41 Brigade welcomes inductees into ‘07 Hall of Honor

PORTLAND, Ore – The 41st Infantry Brigade inducted the 2007 recipients into the Hall of Honor April 14.

The 15th annual event was attended by Brig. Gen. (Ret.) James V. Torgerson, a 2006 inductee and Col. (Ret.) Gary Allen, a 2005 inductee.

Inducted into the Hall of Honor for 2007 were Command Sgt. Majors (Ret.) Gregory Drais, Joseph Smith and Michael Schmidt, 1st Sgt. (Ret.) Larry Widener, and Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) O.J. Williams.

The tradition of recognizing individuals through the Hall of Honor began in 1992, for Soldiers who spent a significant portion of their careers serving both the Brigade and the community.

Red Cross says new scam targets family of injured military

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 29, 2007 — The American Red Cross is warning the public about a new scam targeting military families.

Military families targeted by the scam described the caller as a young-sounding female with an American accent. She calls military spouses and identifies herself as a representative from the Red Cross, stating that the spouse’s husband (not identified by name) was hurt while on duty in Iraq and was medically evacuated to a hospital in Germany. The caller then states that they couldn’t start treatment until paperwork was accomplished, and that in order to start the paperwork they needed the spouse to verify her husband’s social security number and date of birth. In this case, the spouse was quick to catch on and she did not provide any information to the caller.

The American Red Cross said their representatives typically do not contact military members or their dependents directly and almost always go through a commander or first sergeant in order to get information on military members. Military family members are urged not to give out any personal information over the phone if contacted by unknown/unverified individuals, to include confirmation that your spouse is deployed.

It is a federal crime, punishable by up to five years in prison, for a person to falsely or fraudulently pretend to be a member of, or an agent for, the American National Red Cross for the purpose of soliciting, collecting or receiving money or material.

In addition, American Red Cross representatives will contact military members and their dependents directly only in response to an emergency message initiated by the member’s family.

Furthermore, the Red Cross does not report any type of casualty information to family members. Rather, the Department of Defense will contact families directly if their military member has been injured.

According to Red Cross officials, if military family members receive calls asking for personal information about any military members, they are urged to report it to their local Family Readiness Group or Military Personnel Flight.

Oregon Guard helps celebrate during ANZAC observances



Photo by Sgt. Cherie Cavallaro

Representatives from the Australian and New Zealand military observe Australia and New Zealand Army Corps Day with members of the 41st Brigade, Oregon National Guard, in Portland, Ore., April 14.

Story by Sgt. Cherie Cavallaro,
Oregon Army National Guard

PORTLAND, Ore – The 41st Infantry Brigade hosted a ceremony honoring the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps for their contributions ranging from WWI through Operation Iraqi Freedom at the H.G. Maison Armory in Portland, Ore., April 14.

The ceremony coincided with ANZAC day, a national holiday where Australia and New Zealand honors their service men and women for their contributions and sacrifice.

Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne, Jr., Assistant Adjutant General for the Oregon National Guard and several commanders from the Australian and New Zealand military were on hand for the ceremony.

Byrne compared ANZAC Day to America’s memorial day observances, but added that ANZAC day is specific to sacrifices made in WWI.

Australian Honorary Consul Ambassador Len Reid said the present day involvement of the two nations in the ongoing Global War on Terrorism was “...the force of human freedom ultimately defeating the ideology of hatred and violence.”

He added that Australia is the only ally that has fought shoulder to shoulder with the American Forces in every conflict since the beginning of the last century.

Representatives from Australia, New Zealand and the United States laid wreaths as a tribute to fallen Soldiers from all three countries.

New Zealand Army Lt. Col. J.G. Howard noted the alliance between the three nations and how the bonds of friendship formed so many years ago are still very solid and not forgotten. He then removed the flair from his beret, which represents fallen Soldiers, and placed it near the wreaths.

Former Oregon Guardsman’s dreams net \$1 million franchise deal

Story by Spc. April L. Dustin,
Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

LAS VEGAS, Nev. – Former marketing director for Recruiting and Rentention Command, Sgt. 1st Class Gower Talley of Canby, Ore., retired from the Oregon Army National Guard and became a millionaire.

“It took me six weeks from the moment of my retirement to become a millionaire,” said Talley.

Talley’s good fortune was the culmination of his adventure in the national Dream Ace Contest put on by Ace Hardware Corporation. He was selected as the grand prize winner of a \$1 million Ace Hardware store during the company’s national convention in Las Vegas on March 15.

Talley decided to enter the competition online in January, along with more than 5,400 aspiring entrepreneurs across the country. The initial application process consisted of a 45-minute business management test and three essay questions which had to be answered within two hours.

“In the beginning, it was kind of a whim,” he said. “I can’t remember if it was me or my wife, Jill, who found it online, but we thought the application process was complicated enough that not very many people would go through with it. I filled all this stuff out and promptly forgot about it.”

Talley figured he had nothing to lose. He was retiring from a 20-year military career, four years with the Oregon Guard and 16 years in the U.S. Army – including service in Operation Desert Storm. Having recently completed his master’s degree in business, Talley had been interviewing for local business management positions when, just seven days after



Photo courtesy Ace Hardware Corporation and Weber Shandwick

Retired Sgt. 1st Class Gower Talley celebrates with celebrity entrepreneur Bill Rancic, season one winner of “The Apprentice” and Dream Ace ambassador, after being named the grand prize winner of the first-ever national Dream Ace contest, winning his very own Ace Hardware store valued at \$1 million.

permanently hanging-up his uniform, he received a life-changing phone call.

“My wife and I were sitting at our kitchen table literally talking about what was going to come next for us, when the phone rang and it was the Dream Ace team saying, ‘Congratulations, you are the finalist from Oregon and you’ve got one week to be in New York,’” Talley said. “I decided to go for it with everything I have.”

Talley spent the month of February traveling to New York, Chicago and Houston where he participated in a series of interviews, business presentations, speeches and a retail “boot-camp”. The competition was narrowed down from 40 state finalists to 12 semi-finalists, and then two finalists were chosen based on their presentations of an integrated marketing plan for the Dream Ace project.

The 45-foot Dream Ace tour bus pulled up in front of Talley’s house on March 6, to transport him and his family to the Ace Hardware store in Canby for the official announcement that he was one of the two final contestants.

“They told me I had a week to be in Las Vegas, where I would have five minutes to convince nearly seven thousand Ace Hardware store owners to vote for me,” said Talley. “I had to be creative, because I was not the most experienced of the final two. The other guy (Frank Ali of Jackson, N.J.) had 17 years owning a hardware store, and clearly I did not.”

So, what was the trick up Talley’s sleeve to convincing thousands of Ace retailers to vote for him? It was a slogan on a wristband he wears, which reads, “Failure is not an option”. He said the slogan, an attitude he adopted during his military career, gave him an advantage throughout the entire competition.

“I had the absolute tenacity of being a 20-year Soldier that I won’t fail, I simply won’t,” said Talley. “I really believe that they chose me for my enthusiasm, drive and mind-set.”

Talley said his experience in the National Guard played an “absolutely critical” role in preparing him for this competition.

“What might have been of greater value than my tenacity, was my marketing experience with the National Gaurd,” he said.

Talley said there were two major components of the competition that he was well rehearsed in because of his National Guard experience. One major component was public speaking, something that had become routine for Talley in the National Guard. Another major component was preparing a large-scale marketing plan, something Talley was required to submit to National Guard Bureau every year.

“It was almost like the Guard systematically trained me to win this,” said Talley. “A lot of people think that the Guard is just about driving trucks and tanks, or being an infantry Soldier, but obviously, from my experience, it is not.”

Talley said his ability to take advantage

of this opportunity was brought on by his training in the Guard and his ability to earn a master’s degree in business by using the Montgomery GI Bill.

“The trading of my uniform, that I wore proudly for 20 years, for a blue, Ace Houston Dealer’s Group owner shirt was a natural transition,” said Talley. “I can’t imagine a career or experience that prepares people more for whatever life might forward them than putting on your country’s uniform.”

Ace will pay for Talley and his family to relocate to Spring, Texas, near Houston, where he will take ownership of a brand new 15,500 square ft. Ace Hardware store. Developers broke ground on the store Feb. 11 and its construction is projected to be completed by June 25. The grand opening of the store will take place June 29-30.

The \$1 million-valued business opportunity includes opening stock inventory and all the necessary technology needed to operate the store. Talley will receive the same training and support that all independently-owned and operated Ace store owners receive.

“It’s incredible, but this isn’t a lotto prize,” said Talley. “I’ve had so many people say to me, ‘Congratulations, you just won a 70-hour a week job, good for you.’ But, I didn’t just get a good job, I got an opportunity to own my future for the rest of my life. I have put the rest of my life in my own hands and I don’t have to work for anyone else ever again.”



Photo courtesy Ace Hardware Corporation

Gower Talley celebrates winning the Dream Ace contest in Las Vegas on March 15 with his wife, Jill, and daughter Grace.



Photo by Spc. April L. Dustin, Oregon National Guard Public Affairs

VOLUNTEER READERS

Sgt. Fernando Fernandez, of AGR programs for DCSPER, reads to children during the Project Page Turner community service event at Chemeketa Community College (CCC), March 8. Fernandez and his wife, Linda, who works in the Student Life Department at CCC, recruited several employees from the Oregon Military Department to volunteer for the event.

Youth Program seeks volunteers

The Oregon National Guard’s Child and Youth Program is in need of volunteers to help organize regional youth programs for children of military members throughout Oregon.

The Child and Youth Program is a branch of the Family Readiness Program. The program supports academic, social and emotional needs of military youth.

Regional coordinators are needed for Eastern, Central, Portland, Willamette Valley, Western and Southern Oregon. Youth Council members ages 15-17 are also needed in each region. The volunteers will work together as a team to develop local, regional and state events for children and youth of all ages.

A focus of the Child and Youth Program will be partnering with organizations, such as the Department of Education, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs and child care facilities across the state to build resources for military families.

For more information please contact Meredith Browning at 503-932-1895 or meredith.browning@us.army.mil.

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