

OREGON SENTINEL

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Guardsmen expand COVID-19 vaccination efforts statewide

Story by John Hughel,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore. - Nearly three months into Gov. Kate Brown’s activation of the National Guard to support the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) in the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, Oregon citizen-soldiers and airmen have now vaccinated over 300,000 Oregon residents.

With the initial call up of more than 40 Oregon Guardsmen on January 8, additional service members have been mobilized around the state to support the expanding demand for the COVID-19 vaccine. After the primary vaccination site opened at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem on Jan. 12, a total of six designated mass vaccination sites are now open throughout the Beaver State, which includes an increased volume of Guard members aiding the largest site at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

As the numbers of military medical workers are increasing, additional Guardsmen have been trained to assist the 211 Call Center, a local community information center connecting people with health and social service organizations. The service members are now answering phone calls to help provide

information about testing, vaccinations, appointments, and other community resources strained by the pandemic.

These Oregon Guard members’ make-up part of the overall national force of nearly 20,000 total National Guard members currently activated to support COVID-19 testing and vaccine response efforts across the country. On Feb. 5, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin announced that 1,100 active duty service members would join them at designated high-density locations.

The number of active duty troops along with National Guardsmen will continue to climb to meet President Joseph R. Biden’s goal of vaccinating 1.5 million Americans each day. This is an increase by 50% from his original goal to immunize at least 1 million per day during his first 100 days in office.

As of April 19, 2021, 2,549,201 Oregonians have been vaccinated with the first of two rounds of approved Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines.

The six mass vaccination sites have been placed at key areas around the state and are flexing their operations based on the supply of the vaccine. Resources and staff can be moved from one site to another as they shift focus based on the first dose and second dose factors.

“Depending on the site, our members are administering 60-70% of the vaccines,” said Maddox, explaining the practice of flexing members from site to site. “Not every site is open every day, we have some that are open for a week and then will be closed for a week while more vaccine supplies are provided to the state.”

As with any new vaccine, there is a hesitancy to trust the safety and effectiveness of the shot. There is also a tentativeness with some members of the community to have Guardsmen administer their vaccine or to see their personal information.

“It’s been great working with our partners in the medical community but for some residents, this is their first encounter with members of the military,” said Maddox, describing some of the inherent challenges.



Photo by Maj. Heather Bashor, OMD Public Affairs

Oregon National Guard Spc. Toby SeWell, administers the COVID-19 vaccination to a Salem resident at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem, Oregon, Jan. 13, 2021.

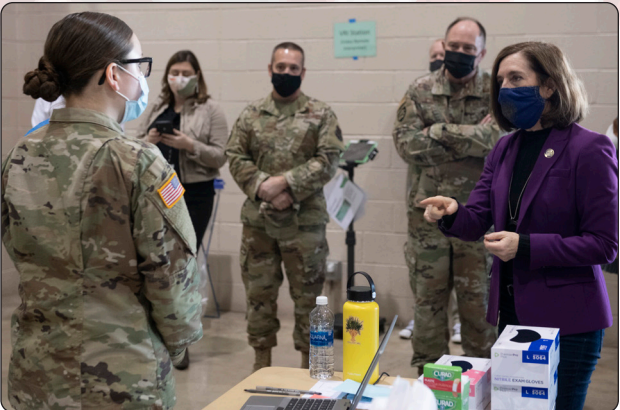


Photo by Maj. Leslie Reed, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Army National Guard Pfc. Mariah Baumgardner, speaks with Gov. Kate Brown during a visit to the Marion County COVID-19 vaccine distribution clinic at the Oregon State Fairgrounds, Salem, Ore., Jan. 13, 2021.

So far, about 50.7% of the U.S. population has received at least one dose of the vaccine, about 34.7% have received both doses, according to CDC reports. The Oregon statistics mirror these national averages.

In addition to 300,000 Oregonians vaccinated by Guardsmen, Joint Task Force Guardian has 226 service members assigned to four different sites around the state supporting COVID-19 operations helping in administrative, call support, and scheduling efforts, as well as traffic control assistance at drive-in max vaccination locations.



Photo by John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Michael E. Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon (left) talks with Col. John Maddox (right) following a tour of the 211info center, Feb. 11, 2021, at their offices in Portland, Oregon.

“It clearly makes sense to have the National Guard help with vaccinations and other support for pandemic needs,” said Col. John Maddox, Oregon Army National Guard State Surgeon and JTF Commander. “This unburdens health care workers, freeing them up in many communities and allowing them to focus on the care of the sick.”

“I think there were specific questions early on from some that we are not training a vehicle mechanic or other non-medical MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) Soldier or Airman to administer the vaccine.”

“We are sending high trained and qualified medical providers to these sites to support the community’s need,” he said, reiterating the preparation of the military medical staff. “Overall, the experience has been exceptional, it really underscores our professionalism and adaptability.”

One of the mass vaccination clinics that have flexed is the Lane County site in Eugene. There has been a series of week-on, week-off distributions of the COVID-19 vaccine depending on the supply and vaccination phase.

“This phase is a four-day vaccination clinic for Phase 1A, and we were able to facilitate a large number of people with the help of the National Guard,” said Karen Gaffney, Lane County Health and Human Services Director during the second weekend of distribution from Jan. 21-24. “We have about 25 members of the National Guard here for this clinic along with [Lane County Sheriff] Search and Rescue as we try and distribute over 7,400 shots.”

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COMMAND

Weathering the challenges, building on lessons learned

Resiliency. The term may have a different meaning for each of us, but the common conception we lean toward is having the ability to weather and recover from difficult events that occur in our lives. Early into 2020, our resiliency was put to the test like never before.

Shortly after the Oregon National Guard's search and rescue operations in response to flooding in Umatilla County, the COVID-19 pandemic changed our lives and nearly everything around us.

As we rolled into 2021, it was apparent that our hard work, dedication, and perseverance were paying off. The first COVID-19 vaccines were beginning to be administered as Governor Brown activated the Oregon National Guard to help distribute the first two approved vaccines to citizens across the state.

We built on the lessons learned from the previous year when our Soldiers and Airmen not only distributed Personal Protective

Equipment but also utilized ingenuity to combat the virus on all fronts. Moreover, we fostered a new sense of teamwork when fires ravaged Oregon's forests, businesses and neighborhoods, as we stepped up to supporting one of the largest wildland firefighting operations in our state's history.

None of this has been easy or convenient. It's not like this was on the training schedule. What became readily apparent was your ability to weather the challenges and devise new methods of working and maintaining operational readiness.

Along the way our awareness of social issues and inequities grew as well, with acceptance, compassion and gratitude resonating new tones within each of us.

These attributes served us well in the past year and will undoubtedly serve us well in the balance of this year. Once again the Oregon Military Department answered the call – for missions in Oregon, across the country and overseas.



Major General
Michael E. Stencel,
Adjutant General,
Oregon National Guard



For all you do as Citizen-Soldiers, Airmen and Civilians – thank you! Thank you for the perseverance and resilience that you, your families, loved ones, and employers demonstrate day after day. Now let's finish the job in 2021 and prepare for new missions, all the while staying true to our core values of character, competence, courage and commitment. I look forward to seeing first hand your continued success and accomplishments for our State and Nation.

Learning from failure can actually be key to success

Success can seem like the most important thing in a world that rewards speed, progress, and gain. As a result, people are scared of failure. To an ambitious individual, failure can seem like a sign that somewhere along the way, they made a serious mistake that kept them from reaching their goals.

Those who reach for the sky often follow the models of others who are already at the top. Looking towards what they did right and how they did it seems like a good idea—and the easiest way—to get ahead. Sometimes, this can lead to success; what worked once may work a second time. But it might just as well fail dramatically.

Failure is just one of the calculated risks we have to take. The fear of failure cannot become so great that it keeps us from even trying?

Studies have shown that people who are afraid of failing are much more likely to procrastinate. In contrast, those who show higher levels of autonomy and vitality more confidently approach new tasks. Another interesting finding:

if we feel competent enough to carry out a task, we do not procrastinate out of fear of failure. With this we can conclude that as leaders we must motivate, provide quality training and guidance then trust.

If we look at stories of prominent people who failed, we see a common theme: motivation and innovation. It's not easy to pick yourself up after a failure but it's definitely possible.

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower is remembered as one of the most masterful military figures in history, the man behind the bold and superbly-executed Normandy invasion in June 1944 that led to Nazi Germany's defeat less than a year later.

But before Eisenhower's great military successes, there was a great failure. When he first faced the Germans in Tunisia in February 1943, his forces took a brutal beating in the battle of the Kasserine Pass. The battle is regarded by some as the most humiliating U.S. combat setback in World War II.

The loss was so devastating that British allies began to question



Command Chief Master Sgt.
Daniel C. Conner,
Command Senior Enlisted Leader,
Oregon National Guard



Americans' ability to fight. But after figuring out what had gone wrong, Eisenhower made sweeping corrections. He reorganized his forces to work together in a more cohesive fashion, shook up his intelligence operation and brought in the brash, aggressive Gen. George S. Patton to shape up the U.S. Army's ground combat force.

Finding the motivation to keep fighting, to keep working, to keep studying is something in your control. Taking some risk is imperative to our success. Don't fear failure. Be prepared to learn from it.

Oregon National Guard leaders step-up to get COVID-19 Vaccine



Photo by Maj. Leslie Reed, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

The Adjutant General, Oregon, Maj. Gen. Michael E. Stencel receives his first COVID-19 vaccine from Oregon Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Kyle A. Pernula, Charlie (Medical) Company, 141st Brigade Support Battalion on March 16, 2021 at the Anderson Readiness Center in Salem, Ore.



Photo by Maj. Leslie Reed, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Chief Master Sgt. Daniel C. Conner receives his first COVID-19 vaccine from Oregon Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Kyle A. Pernula, Charlie (Medical) Company, 141st Brigade Support Battalion on March 16, 2021 at the Anderson Readiness Center in Salem, Ore.

COMMAND

Continued from Front Page

The support of the Oregon National Guard has emphasized the broader theme of 'neighbors-helping-neighbors.' Army Staff Sgt. Nathan Palin noted that he vaccinated one of his middle school teachers at the drive thru clinic. "I haven't seen him in twenty years so it was kind of cool, but one of those unexpected coincidences we encounter in our communities."



Photo by John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Shaun Martin, a medic assigned to MEDCOM, prepares to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to residents in Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, during a mass vaccination clinic, Jan. 23, 2021.

In the early phases, health care workers, including family members of caretakers, medically fragile, and teachers are being vaccinated at these clinics. To ensure all of the vaccines are used each day, a roster of health care workers on staff are also vaccinated to amplify the safety of those who administer the vaccine. Oregon Guardsmen have been eager to sign up to guarantee that no vaccines are wasted and can be fully vaccinated themselves, assuring public safety and confidence in the process.



Photo by John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard medics Spc. Shaun Martin and Sgt. Travis Sinfellow, working with Lane County Health and Human Services, prepare to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to local residents at a mass vaccination site in Eugene, Ore., January 23, 2021.

Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon toured the Oregon Convention Center site on Feb. 1, to get an up-close assessment of how the Guard members are working with OHA staff and walk-in patients.

"After we build a large base [of operations] as we have here in Portland and in Salem, do we need to double down here to meet the population demand, or do we prioritize in other areas?" he asked senior OHA managers during the site visit.

Helping coordinate the staff of military members at the Convention Center, Air National Guard Lt. Col. Torree McGowan told Maj. Gen. Stencel that having a unified plan is challenging while matching staff to the demand by the public is based upon the available supply of the vaccine on any given day.

"If we had enough vaccines on hand, we would have a line down the stairs and out the door," she said, standing on the steps of a vast atrium at the Oregon Convention Center. "We can flex our members to other regional areas depending on the availability, but we are on a week-by-week plan right now with the vaccine we have on hand."

With the pace of the two approved vaccines increasing, the Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 single-dose vaccine will soon be available to the public after being approved by the FDA for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).

"I really believe this is the biggest focus for the new (Biden) administration -- getting the vaccine manufactured and delivered," said Stencel. "I want our people to pace themselves for the long run, it may take until June and July before supply meets demand."

Just as challenging as vaccine shipments and distribution, is communication to the public. Helping support 211 Information, additional Oregon Guardsmen were tasked to help fill a backlog of calls and a gap in staffing.

The most important characteristic of the 211 Information services is the availability to talk to a live person. Guard members will be on the phones to provide that reassurance, creating more lines open to callers.

In an interview on Feb. 5, 2021, with KATU 2 Television, 211 Information CEO Dan Herman said that the Oregon National Guard will help significantly even though it will take more than one day to help with the enormous demand.

"I feel better than a few days ago, but there's still a lot of uncertainty," said Herman. "I think the more we can message around modulating the call demand then that is helpful...the Oregon National Guard is going to make a difference."

By Feb. 8th members were already taking calls having trained the weekend before. For now, the mission is slated for 12-weeks and within the first week, the case backlog was nearly eliminated.

"We showed up on day one and dived in, just like we always do as Guard members," said Lt. Col. Kelly Barton, Officer in Charge of the 211 Information call center. "Everyone here [at 211info] was so welcoming and several of our members put in extra hours to take calls the first day."

A traditional Guardsman, Barton is assigned as the 142nd Wing Force Support Squadron commander. She said this assignment gives



Photo by John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Air National Guard Airman 1st Class Greta Vonderluff talks with a caller using the 211info center, Portland, Ore., Feb. 11, 2021. There are 30 members of the Oregon National Guard assisting 211info, helping residents in Oregon and SW Washington identify and connect with the local resources.



Photo by John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Jason Clark (center), assigned to the 142nd Wing, discusses the COVID-19 vaccine with a walk-in patient at the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon, Jan. 27, 2021.

her a chance to work with a joint team and make an instant impact in the community.

"We're focused just on COVID-19 vaccinations and that data is changing every day," she said, underscoring again how the demand for the vaccine creates a vacuum of information on a daily basis. "We have to learn where we need to look for the most current data and maneuver the system--and get that information to the clients."



Photo by John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Air National Guard Airman 1st Class Yvette Rascon, 173rd FW, administers the COVID-19 vaccine during a mass vaccination clinic at the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Ore., April 19, 2021.

When senior leaders visited the team on Feb. 11, they found an enthusiastic crew still learning the ropes but taking on the new assignment.

As the COVID task force mission continues to expand around the state, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation hosted a two-day mass vaccination clinic on Feb. 23-24 where 975 doses of the Pfizer vaccine were ready to be administered with the help of the Oregon National Guard. The multi-jurisdictional operation was aided by 18 Guard members to help vaccinate the community with their first dose and will return in three weeks to administer the second dose.

"Our Soldiers and Airmen demonstrate our motto again and again of 'Always Ready, Always There,'" said Chief Master Sgt. Dan Conner, Oregon National Guard Chief Senior Enlisted Leader. He emphasized this is just one more unique Coronavirus domestic operation the Oregon National Guard has been asked to respond to.

"We have been active in setting up field hospitals, delivering PPE, working with our tribal communities, and even assisting in employment insurance claims," he said summarizing past mission tasks.

"The citizens of Oregon can rest assured that when the Oregon National Guard is called up, we'll pitch in wherever we're needed to get the job done."

NEWS

173rd FW Airmen assist COVID-19 Vaccine support in Southern Oregon

Story and photos by
1st Lt. Morgan Lindsey,
173rd Fighter Wing

MEDFORD, Ore. - Volunteer Airmen from the 173rd Fighter Wing are currently operating on State Active Duty as part of Task Force Guardian, supporting COVID-19 vaccine clinics in Southern Oregon. Team Kingsley personnel are performing three separate missions: administering COVID-19 vaccine to high-risk populations and essential workers, working traffic control in order to maintain safety at the clinics, and performing administrative management of all the records that go along with a large-scale medical operation.

These volunteers include the chief nurse and three enlisted medics from the 173rd Medical Group, who are part of the team administering vaccines. They began their State Active Duty deployment in Medford, where they inoculated 8,000 Oregonians in a drive-thru setting over a three-day period. The team has since moved to Grants Pass, where they expect to inoculate a similar number in that community.

"It's an emotional time," said Lt. Col. Beth Boschee, an emergency room nurse in her civilian job and the officer in charge of medical operations for the task force. "The people coming in to get the shots are happy, cheering, and they're also sharing stories of deaths in their families from COVID-19." She explained that those coming in to receive the vaccine have ranged from age 16 to 90, and from teachers and first responders to the elderly with underlying conditions. She shared one of the happiest moments was when her team sang "happy birthday" to an 82-year-old man on Sunday as he received his first COVID-19 shot.

Boschee and the 173rd medics help make up the larger, 33-member Task Force Guardian, which has 12 Team Kingsley members in all. The rest of the task force is staffed from the 142nd Wing out of Portland.

In addition to the medical operations team, four Team Kingsley personnel are performing administrative management duties under the leadership of Maj. Robin Bautista, 173rd Medical Group, and another four are working on a traffic control team led by Senior Master Sgt. John Wyman, 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron.

Bautista's team is focused on tracking vaccine data, including lot numbers and who received it. He admits it was a steep learning curve on the first day, but now says the operation is running so smoothly that the civilian counterparts who requested Task Force Guardian's support hope the team will be able to come back in three weeks to help administer second doses.

"I didn't know what this was going to entail but my training really helped," said Bautista. "It's been organization of people and resources, and knowing who to talk to - I'm an optometrist in my civilian job, so knowing how to deal with medical professionals comes to bear in a situation like this. Everyone is here for the right reasons. This is a real step towards making a better world."

Wyman's team has been advising and consulting on traffic plans at clinic locations, directing traffic, and monitoring choke points. The goal, he explained, was to make sure people could receive the vaccine as quickly and safely as possible. "This has been a super positive experience; morale is high," said Wyman. "It's snowed, it's rained, but everyone from a brand new airman to a lieutenant colonel raised their hand to continue volunteering if they need us."



Volunteer Airmen from the 173rd Fighter Wing prepare to assist at a drive through COVID-19 vaccine clinic in Medford, Ore. Twelve Airmen from Kingsley Field are on State Active Duty as part of Task Force Guardian supporting COVID-19 vaccine clinics in Southern Oregon.

While ensuring lines stay socially distanced and moving, Wyman described a situation where one of his team members assisted an elderly gentleman with a walker inside the clinic; the gentleman cried, overwhelmed by the help he was given. "People look to us to be experts. We wear the uniform and that really means something."

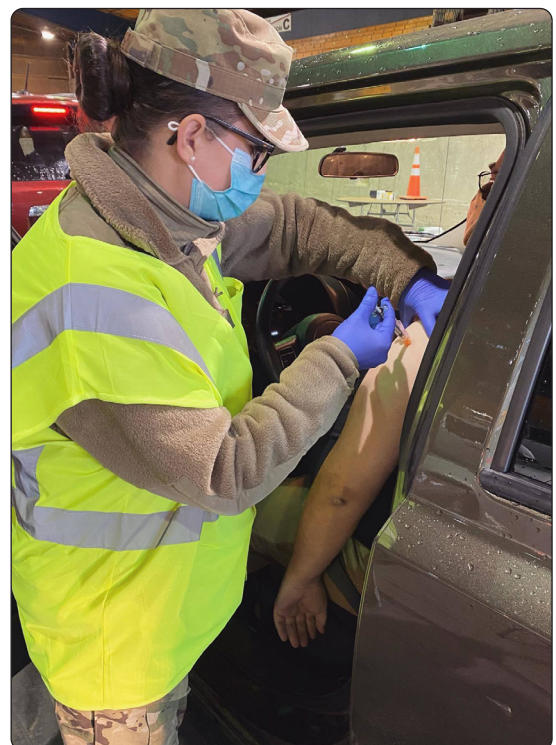
We've received a lot of love from county leaders, and they told us they hope we can come back to help again."

Some of the Team Kingsley members in Grants Pass will be forward deploying to Deschutes and Multnomah Counties later this week, continuing their current missions, and another 173rd member will be joining them. Their activation lengths are varying between seven and 60 days.

As the 173rd's Crisis Action Team Manager, Lt. Col. Mike Balzotti, has been coordinating the requests for support that come from Oregon's Joint Operations Center.

"It's great to see our Airmen put their training to use to help our state," said Balzotti.

"We can really make a difference - this is why we're in the guard. And it's an interesting dynamic to mix with other Oregon Guardsmen and get to see the big picture."



Oregon Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Meghan Olson, 173rd FW administers the COVID-19 vaccination during a drive through clinic for the COVID-19 vaccine in Medford, Ore., Jan. 22, 2021.

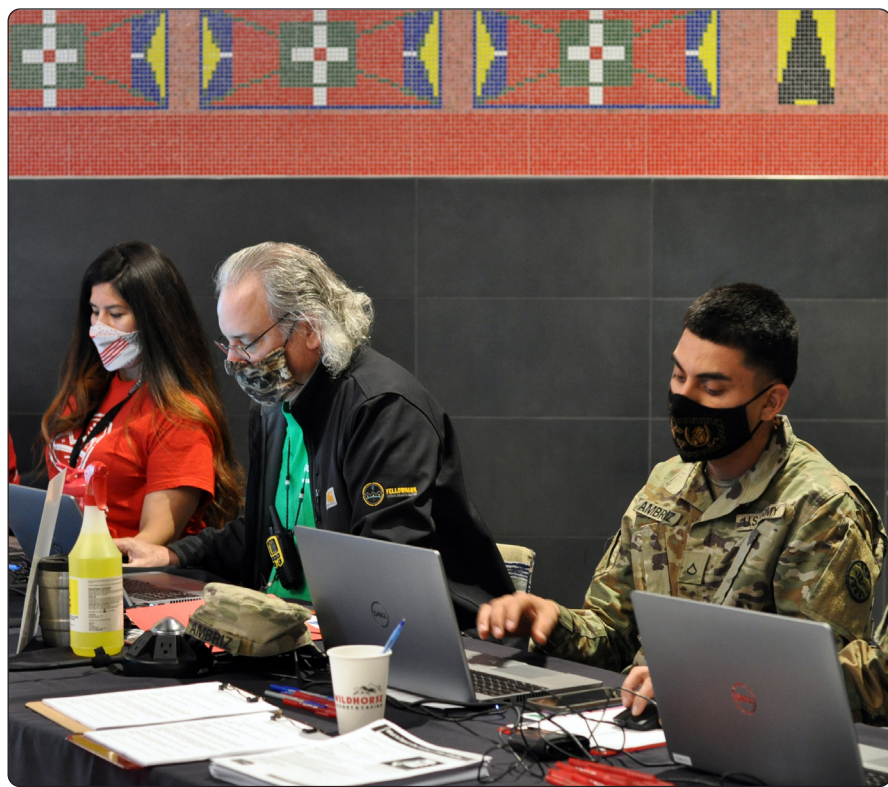
Oregon Guardsmen assist tribe with vaccine distribution

Photos by Maj. Leslie Reed,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs



LEFT: Oregon Army National Guard 1st Lt. Matthew Booher, Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry speaks with Oregon Air National Guard Col. Jonathan Vincent, Task Force Guardian Commander, during a visit to the Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center COVID-19 mass vaccination clinic in Pendleton, Ore., on April 14, 2021. Booher lead a team of 12-personnel who assisted by administering vaccines and providing administrative support.

CENTER: Oregon Army National Guard Cpl. John Shown, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry fills a syringe with a dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in Pendleton, Ore., on April 14, 2021. Together with Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center, Soldiers gave both administrative and medical assistance during a COVID-19 mass vaccination clinic held at the Wildhorse Resort.



RIGHT: Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers and staff from Yellowhawk Tribal Medical Center work together at patient intake during a COVID-19 mass vaccination event at the Wildhorse Resort, in Pendleton, Ore., on April 14, 2021.

NEWS

Oregon Soldiers provide security for 59th Presidential Inauguration

Story by John Hughel,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs
Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Zachary Holden,
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

WASHINGTON D.C. - National Guard troops from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and three U.S. territories mobilized nearly 25,000 Guardsmen to support law enforcement in the nation's capital during the 59th presidential inauguration.

This included nearly 30 members of the Oregon National Guard's 1186th Military Police Company from Salem, Oregon, who first arrived on Jan. 15, 2021, prior to the presidential inauguration for Joseph R. Biden Jr., on Jan. 20th.

"The soldiers and airmen will be under the command and control of Maj. Gen. William Walker, the Commanding General of D.C. National Guard, and are providing security, communications, logistics and coordination with all supported agencies," said Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau as Guardsmen began to arrive. "As



U.S. Soldiers with the National Guard, near the Supreme Court Building are part of 25,000 members activated to provide security during the 59th Presidential Inauguration, Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 2021.

always, our first priority is to protect people and property - and the safety and wellbeing of our National Guard personnel and their families."

Hokanson has been the chief of the National Guard Bureau since Aug. 3, 2020, having previously served as the Director of the Army National Guard and from August 2013 to July 2015 he served as The Adjutant General for the Oregon Military Department. He said that having the National Guard provide security dates back to the first inauguration of George Washington.

"The forefathers of today's National Guard were present for the inauguration of George Washington, and have been part of every inauguration since," Hokanson said, drawing a historical line from past to present. "I visit with these men and women every night and they understand the importance of this mission. They are also proven, prepared, and proud to do their part to ensure a peaceful and safe inauguration of our incoming commander-in-chief."



U.S. Soldiers with the Virginia National Guard recite the Pledge of Allegiance during the 59th Presidential Inauguration ceremony for Joseph R. Biden, Jr., in Washington, D.C., January 20, 2021.



Oregon Army National Guard Pfc. Amelia Shimojima, 1186th Military Police Company, poses for a photo in front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., Jan. 21, 2021. Shimojima is one of 25,000 Guardsmen helping support the 59th Presidential Inauguration.

President Washington's first inauguration took place in New York City, from the balcony of the Federal Hall on April 30, 1789. Beginning with Thomas Jefferson's inauguration on March 4, 1801, the new U.S. Capital in Washington, D.C. has witnessed the confirmation of the U.S. Presidency every four years.

Since the 1981 inauguration of Ronald Reagan, the ceremony has been held at the west front steps of the United States Capitol facing the National Mall toward the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial. Yet with the safeguards in place for the coronavirus pandemic, and following the riot at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, which disrupted the assembled joint session of Congress to count electoral



A U.S. National Guard Soldier watches Joseph R. Biden Jr. and his wife Jill, as they are announced during the processional of his Presidential Inauguration ceremony, at the west steps of the U.S. Capitol building, Washington, D.C., January 20, 2021.

votes, the added number of National Guard members were activated to maintain crucial security.

This is not the first time that members of the 1186th have been entrusted with security for presidential inauguration support, but for many members, the 2021 formality was a once-in-a-lifetime moment.

"I was super excited to come to be part of the security, but I did have some anxiety with what happened on January 6th," said Pfc. Amelia Shimojima, describing her initial excitement and apprehension with being part of the inauguration

support. "Yet the closer the date got I wasn't as worried, I knew I would be with my unit and the people who would have my back -- and I knew I was going to be in Washington D.C., which was an honor all its own."

Shimojima was quick to credit her teammates and leadership that prepared some of the younger Soldiers for the essential security tasks they would be assigned to conduct.

"Being here with the 1186th Military Police Company and the Soldiers that we've brought, it's been a great experience as we're a pretty tight nit group, and the leadership has been fantastic," she said. "I feel really prepared for our mission here in Washington, D.C."



Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, visits with Oregon National Guard Soldiers from the 1186th Military Police Company as they provide security near the White House, in Washington, D.C., January 18, 2021.

During the evening of January 18th, Gen. Hokanson caught up with many members of the 1186th Military Police Company while they were on their security mission for the U.S. Capital near the White House.

"First of all...it's great to see you guys, when did you get here?" he said, eager to see fellow Oregonians in uniform and on a mission. "I've been in the Oregon Guard for 25 years and worked with some amazing people, can't thank you enough for your service."

Hokanson reassured them that this has been an unusual period in the nation's history but a historic time for the National Guard.



Georgia National Guard Soldiers watch the proceedings of the Presidential Inauguration, Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 2021. A total of 25,000 National Guardsmen helped conduct security, communication, and logistical missions in support Presidential Inauguration.

"I wish you guys were coming here under better circumstances, but it's awesome to have you here," he said. "The last 12 months have been unprecedented, we continue to respond to every mission, both here and at home - and overseas."

Meeting the National Guard Chief added to the experience for the members and resonated with Shimojima in particular.

"It was really cool, and that he took time to find us here and come talk to us," she said. "This whole experience, it's been an honor, but it's also somewhat surreal to think back in 10 to 20 years, that I'll be able to tell my kids that I worked on security for the 2020 Inauguration."

NEWS

ShakeAlert® helps Oregonians prepare for the unpredictable

Story by Oregon
Office of Emergency Management

SALEM, Ore. – Wildfires, floods, winter storms and earthquakes: Oregon has its share of natural hazards. Each of these hazards presents unique challenges, but one of the biggest difficulties for earthquake preparedness is unpredictability. Earthquakes strike without warning, causing widespread damage in a matter of seconds.

What if you could receive notice of earthquake shaking before it's felt at your location? The technology exists and is already in place along most of the West Coast. ShakeAlert, an earthquake early warning system operated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), is available in Oregon as of March 11, 2021.

aftermath of an earthquake, allowing for improved response and recovery once the shaking stops. ShakeAlert is an easy-to-use tool. Mobile devices in Oregon are able to receive ShakeAlert-powered Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), just like severe weather or AMBER alerts. These alerts come automatically on most cell phones, making a distinctive sound and displaying a text message that reads, "Earthquake detected! Drop, Cover, Hold on. Protect yourself."

USGS ShakeAlert. This message is available in Spanish for phones set to receive alerts in that language. Some devices with text-to-voice capability may read out the message text. No sign up is required to receive ShakeAlert notifications. Mobile phones that have WEA messages turned on in device settings are able to receive ShakeAlert messages. While these settings may already be enabled, it's important to check your device. Use the search function on the device to find and turn on "Emergency Alerts" or "Public Safety Messages." For more detailed instructions on where to check these settings on different devices, visit www.orshakealert.us.

ShakeAlert-powered alerts can also be delivered through purpose-built apps as they become available. Newer ShakeAlert messages. While these settings may already be enabled, it's important to check your device. Use the search function on the device to find and turn on "Emergency Alerts" or "Public Safety Messages." For more detailed instructions on where to check these settings on different devices, visit www.orshakealert.us.

ShakeAlert-powered alerts can also be delivered through purpose-built apps as they become available. Newer



windows, hanging objects, and tall furniture).

- **HOLD ON** to your shelter until shaking stops. Be prepared to move with your shelter if it shifts.

You may have to adapt to your situation and environment. If you are outside, stay away from buildings, streetlights, and overhead utility lines. Do not go inside! **DROP** to

your knees and bend over to protect vital organs, then **COVER** your head and neck with your arms and hands.

- If you are in a recliner or chair, bend over to protect vital organs and **COVER** your head and neck with a book, pillow, or your hands and arms.

- If you are in a bed, stay there. If possible, lie face down and **COVER** your head and neck with a pillow. **HOLD ON** to your head and neck with both hands

www.ShakeAlert.org @USGS_ShakeAlert

DETECT AND PROCESS (uses)

Sensors in the field DETECT ground motion from an earthquake and pass that information to a PROCESSING center. ShakeAlert quickly estimates the location, magnitude, and shaking intensity of the earthquake and the USGS issues a ShakeAlert Message.

DELIVER (Distribution Partners)

ShakeAlert Messages are picked up by utilities, hospitals, transportation systems, schools, and others. Messages are used to produce and DELIVER alerts that tell people to take a protective action, such as DROP-COVER-HOLD ON, or trigger automated actions.

PROTECT (Automated Systems)

Alerts protect people and vital infrastructure by triggering automated actions, such as slowing trains, closing water valves, opening firehouse doors, and issuing public announcements.

PROTECT (You)

You may get an alert on your phone, just like an AMBER alert. You may also get an alert by TV, radio, or as a public announcement. You may only have seconds to take a protective action, such as DROP-COVER-HOLD ON.

If you feel shaking or get an alert, immediately DROP-COVER-HOLD ON. Do not wait, because seconds matter!

You are the power behind ShakeAlert®

- **COVER** your head and neck with both arms and hands. If a sturdy table or desk is nearby, crawl underneath it for shelter. If no shelter is nearby, crawl next to an interior wall (away from

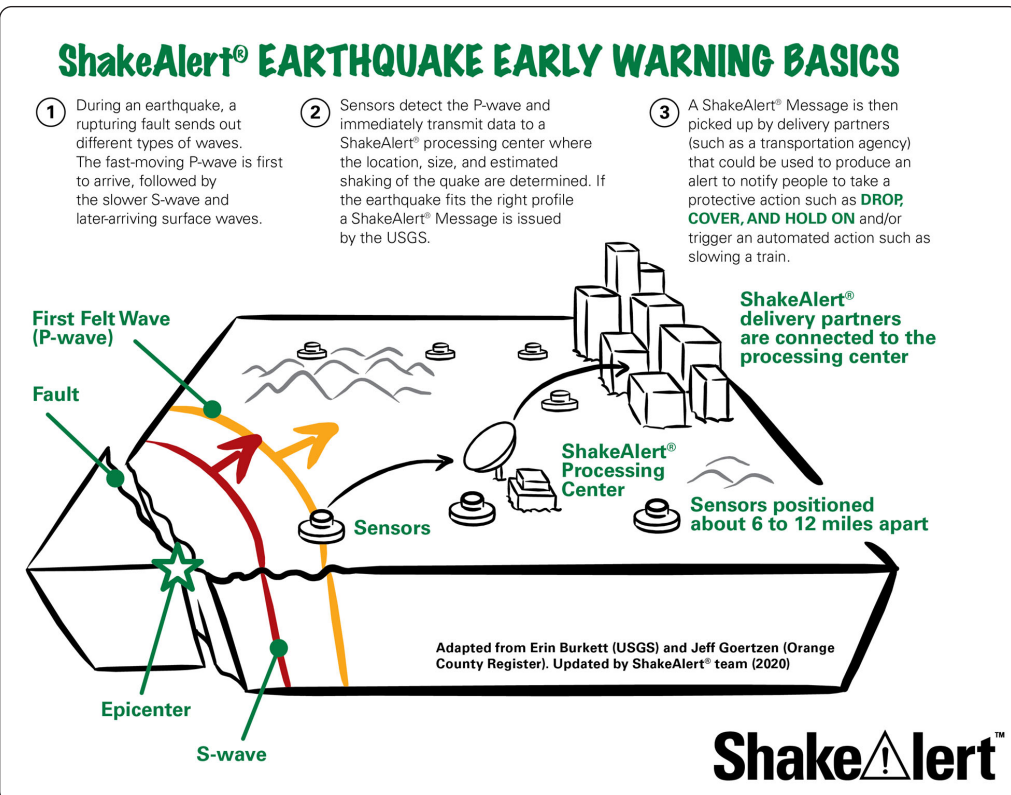
until shaking stops. You are less likely to be injured by objects by staying where you are.

- If you use a wheelchair, move to an interior wall and **LOCK** your wheels. Bend over and **COVER** your head and neck with your arms, a book, or a pillow. Then, **HOLD ON** until shaking stops.

- If you are in a vehicle, activate the emergency alert flashers, pull over, and stay inside the vehicle. Never stop under or near trees, utility wires, overpasses, bridges, or gas stations.

- If you are in a store or where there is no place to take cover, move away from overhead objects to an interior space, then **DROP** to your knees and bend over to protect vital organs, and **HOLD ON** to your head and neck with both arms and hands.

For more information about ShakeAlert and earthquake preparedness visit: www.orshakealert.us.



NEWS

Camp Umatilla wins Environmental Security Award

Story by Paul Rushing,
OMD Public Affairs

CAMP UMATILLA, Ore. - The Oregon National Guard with the remarkable efforts of Jim Arnold and his Environmental Branch team, have received the Environmental Security Award Fiscal Year 2020. This is for the Cultural Resources Management -Small Installation designation of the award.

The Umatilla Chemical Depot opened in 1941 as part of the preparations leading up to World War II. The Umatilla Chemical Depot opened in 1941 as part of the preparations leading up to World War II. The depot's mission was to store and maintain a variety of military items ranging from blankets to ammunition. The depot took on its chemical weapons storage mission in 1962 and stored 12% of the nation's stockpile. From 1990 to 1994, the facility reorganized in preparation for eventual closure, shipping all conventional ammunition and supplies to other installations.

Dismantling of the chemical disposal facility began in August of 2013, and the base was designated to be transferred for state and private use by early 2015. Decommissioning and transfer of land, to the Oregon Military Department in 2018 who planned to use part of the base for a training facility, while the rest becomes industrial land and a wildlife refuge.

The first challenge the Oregon Army National Guard (ORARNG) Environmental Branch and Cultural Resources Management (CRM)



Photo by John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

The main gate at Camp Umatilla National Guard Training Center, formerly Umatilla Army Chemical Depot, near Hermiston, Oregon, August 1, 2019. The decommissioned Depot was transferred to the Oregon Military Department in 2018, with planning now to use parts of the base for a training.

program faced was finding a way to preserve the historic value of the training site in accordance with state law while still allowing training mission and operations and the construction needed to support those operations to proceed.

The training site would be key in housing the Regional Training Institute (RTI) and an Infantry school as well as a place for scheduled monthly weekend drills and annual training events.

The biggest hill the Cultural Resource Management Team conquered was a Programmatic Agreement (PA) with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) along with the completion of an Environmental Assessment of Camp Umatilla as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

The biggest achievement by the CRM was to create a "Grand Bargain" with the SHPO establishing an Historic District where 18 buildings on 23.5 acres would be managed as historic rather than 563 buildings spread over 7,500 acres. It focused on maintaining historically significant structures that held the military heritage and preserve the story of the installation.

"Without the prior relationships we have established over the years with the State Historic Preservation Office and positive government-to-government relationships with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation this agreement would have been much harder to accomplish" said Arnold. Camp Umatilla now has a new Regional Training

Institute building with new barracks, dining facilities, and day rooms. There will also be a new small arms ranges and troop maneuver areas.

Of the many historic landmarks on Camp Umatilla is the 1874 wagon road that was considered part of the connecting spur to the official Oregon Trail. The installation also includes Coyote Coulee that is a traditional religious and cultural property for the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Camp Umatilla also provides an opportunity to connect with the local community. The plan is to host local sports opportunities with summer football camps and cross-country races for area youth athletes. Earth Day events and local school field trips will further utilize the prominence of Camp Umatilla to residents in the area.



Photo by John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

New and ongoing construction at Camp Umatilla National Guard Training Center, formerly Umatilla Army Chemical Depot, near Hermiston, Oregon, Aug. 1, 2019.

U.S. Air Force F-15EX completes first flight

Story by Senior Master Sgt.
Jennifer Shirar,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

ST. LOUIS, Mo. - The first F-15EX destined to the United States Air Force completed its initial flight in Saint Louis on February 2, 2021. The fighter jet took off and landed from St. Louis-Lambert International Airport.

It was announced in August 2020 that the 173rd Fighter Wing will begin transitioning as the F-15EX formal training unit in 2024.

"Being selected as the F-15EX formal training unit is an outstanding mission for the 173rd Fighter Wing," said Col. Jeff Edwards, 173rd FW commander. "Kingsley is simply an outstanding place to train pilots. The community support is just incredible, and we have some of the best training airspace anywhere. We have a culture of fighter training—we have been in the training business for over 3 decades, in the F-4, F-16, F-15C, and now soon to be F-15EX".

The latest iteration of the F-15 Eagle Mission Design Series, the F-15EX features an increased payload capacity, fly-by-wire controls, a digital cockpit, modernized sensors, radars, and electronic warfare capabilities. Edwards notes the long service

life of the F-15EX airframe--20,000 flight hours.

"That's a long time, about double the service life of an F-15C," said Edwards. "Not only is the airframe designed to last for a long time, the F-15EX also has an 'Open Mission System' which allows the computer and avionics software to be more



Boeing photo by Eric Shindelbower

The first F-15EX gets airborne for its maiden flight on Feb. 2, 2021 from Lambert International Airport in St. Louis.

adaptable and more easily updated in the future. This adaptability is key, as we know that technology is continuing to accelerate."

When asked about what it was like watching the first F-15EX flight, Edwards says he was very impressed. "Of course, I'm a big fan of the Eagle, so it's not difficult for me to get excited about seeing the first F-15EX flight! Seeing the F-15EX fly for the first time really left me thinking: 'Wow! We are going to be flying that jet soon here,

and it's going to be awesome!"

Edwards adds that there is a lot to do as the unit prepares to accept the F-15EX aircraft in 2024. "We will be in a transition period over the next several years, as we train F-15C pilots while also preparing for F-15EX; while this will be a challenging time, we know that we've got a fantastic community supporting us and an outstanding team here at the 173rd Fighter Wing."

That team is being led by Lt. Col. Nick Huet, the 173rd FW F-15EX conversion officer. "Ultimately, it's very rewarding to have the opportunity to work on behalf of our Wing to help secure a long-lasting mission for Kingsley and all the folks that call this base home," said Huet.

"Lt. Col. Huet is an outstanding planner, strategic thinker, and instructor pilot," said Edwards. "As we transition to the F-15EX, it was important to select an officer who had a vision for where we needed to go to be ready for F-15EX—Lt. Col. Huet has that vision."

Prior to this position, Huet has held many roles including Director of Operations, USAF Weapons School Graduate, F-22 Instructor

Pilot, and an F-15C Instructor Pilot. "I work with designated representatives from all groups within the wing and together we navigate the conversion process," said Huet. "As the first base to receive the F-15EX, our conversion will set the standard for all bases to follow – my game plan is for Kingsley to establish a bed down model that no other wing will be able to match!"

During the first F-15EX flight, the aircraft was piloted by Matt Giese, chief test pilot of the Boeing F-15, who checked the avionics, advanced systems, and software.

Proving again that the "Eagle Drivers" come from a small community, Edwards and Giese go way back. "Matt and I were in the same cadet squadron at the Air Force Academy," said Edwards. "It's awesome to see him flying the F-15EX and being on the leading edge of the future of the Eagle."

Two F-15EX fighters should be delivered to Eglin Air Force Base by the end of the first quarter of 2021. Eight pre-production aircraft were ordered in July 2020, to allow the military and the manufacturer to test and fully define their applications. The USAF plans to eventually acquire at least 144 F-15EX fighters.

"The F-15EX will secure the future of Kingsley for many more years," adds Edwards.

OREGON NATIONAL GUARD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND REGIONAL EVENTS

Army Best Warrior competition promotes determination and camaraderie upon participants

Story and photos by John Hughel,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs Office

WARRENTON, Ore. – The sun was beginning its descent over the Pacific Ocean as a freezing rainstorm greeted the 12 participants starting the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), the first event to open the 2021 Oregon Best Warrior Competition here at Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center on Feb. 25, 2021.



The three days of grueling events are designed to test each Soldier on a variety of technical and tactical skills, physical stamina and readiness. The weather decided to dare the contenders early too,



testing their resolve right out of the gate with frigid strong winds and a barrage of hail.

On top of all of these challenges were the yearlong safety parameters of facial covers and social distancing provoked by the Novel Coronavirus; the taunts for the contestants taking on Best Warrior 2021 were already being called out. A condensed one-day version of the Oregon Best Warrior Competition was held in June of 2020 due to the pandemic restrictions, but for this year's



event facial coverings and other safety considerations were part of the protocol.

Competing in two categories (enlisted Soldiers and noncommissioned officers) the 12 members competing first had to better their peers at the unit level before advancing to the state-level. Yet competing at this next level would include more events and

unanticipated demands to overcome.

"We don't want them to know what they're going to be doing at any moment, we don't want them to know how long they're going to sleep at night...it's all a surprise as we go along," said 1st Sgt. Carver, OTC Operations NCO and Camp Rilea First Sergeant describing the structure of the three days of competition.



part of day two involved a variety of weapons from the pistol to the shotgun after qualifying with their own weapons.

"One of the shooting competitions had a target array from 500 to 100 meters, each target was worth a different amount of points for that target," said Carver. "The Soldiers were given 60 rounds and three magazines, and based on their confidence and shooting ability, they chose which targets to engage and were scored accordingly."



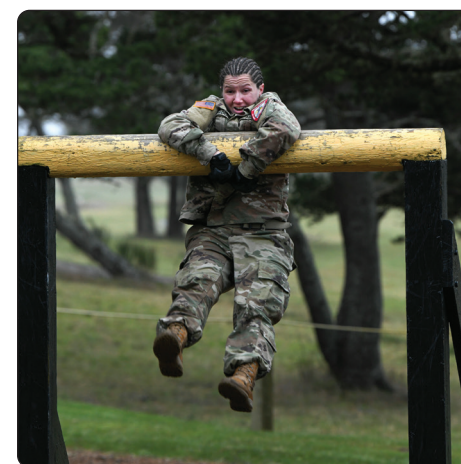
During their initial brief before the first event, the 'unknown nature' of the competition was established to emulate conditions of an ever changing real-world battlefield. The first day ended late after two fitness tests, a 50 question exam and individual Soldier Boards.

"Day two began as we stepped out of the barracks at 0300, marched out to the night land navigation course that took almost four

The entire competition is designed with different areas; where a Soldier will thrive -- then struggle at the next event. It allows each participant to try new ways to solve problems and push beyond their fixed boundaries.



after station confrontations, ending in nearly a two-mile run with their weapons.



Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Trevor Foster, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team won the Enlisted Soldier division during three days of competition and will advance to the regional competition later this year.



Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. John Mayer, assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team won the NCO division during three days of competition and will advance to the regional competition later in the year.

Trevor Foster, assigned to Bravo Co., 1-186th Infantry Regiment, 41st IBCT and the noncommissioned officer (NCO) was Sgt. John Mayer, assigned to Bravo Co., 2nd Battalion, 2-162nd Infantry Regiment, 41st IBCT.

Foster said he enlisted as a Junior in High School with the split training option in 2018 and that "most of the time I've been in the Army, I've been in High School so I've only been with my unit for two drills."

new things...like learning how to load a shotgun -- on the spot!"



In the NCO category, Sgt. Mayer said the layered challenges from event to event presented the greatest overall test. "For sure,

it was physically demanding and the sleep deprivation stressed everything else."

Much like Spc. Foster, there was a short suspense in preparation time from notification to the day of the event.

"I had a great sponsor who helped me prepare," said Mayer. "I really enjoyed the Land Navigation part but I was also prepared for the physical aspects too."

The success of the Oregon Best Warrior competition each year is to push the Soldiers and test their resiliency, said Carver at the event's conclusion on Feb. 27. "The way this has been designed by our predecessors for the two-decades, is to prepare these soldiers for the next level and it's why [Oregon] we've been able to win regional competitions year after year."

"Soldiers who have won this before stay connected to the competition for years to come. They will be sponsors and cadre but mostly they go back to their unit motivated, with new ideas and as proven leaders."



"The ultimate goal is to find who is the most resilient soldier, who's the most physically fit...who is the soldier that has the most heart because those are the things that it takes to win this competition."

As the competition concluded, the winners in the two categories were recognized in front of family and peers at a ceremony held at the Warrior Hall. Winning the Enlisted Category was Specialist

When his recruiter recommended Foster for the Best Warrior competition this year to the Battalion Readiness NCO, he was up for the challenge.

"Two weeks before the event I found out I was competing and just days before the competition I got a sponsor," he said, explaining how quickly he met the test. "Even though I've only been in a short time, I had a lot of fun trying on

"To be able to get out here and do these things that we join [the military] to do...it pushes them beyond the ranges and ruck marches; it allows the Soldiers to use their intellect and ability to think outside the box," said Carver.

After three days of events, that include the obstacle course, medical response, call for fire and others, the final challenge has the Soldiers go through one of the toughest events at the MOUNT

hours before getting a chance to get some hot chow," said Carver. "It was pretty cold out there so they needed to eat and refuel."

Though the pace varied at times, the intensity was constant. Each participant had areas that they excelled in and others that found uncovered vulnerabilities. A large

OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Heritage displayed: Lt. David R. Kingsley’s memories go digital

Story and photos by
Senior Airman Emily Copeland,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. - A new heritage display opened recently at Kingsley Field after months of preparation from the 173rd Fighter Wing Historian's office. This is the first time a digital display can be seen in the halls of the 173rd FW command building, and the subject of the display is none other than our namesake, 2nd Lt. David R. Kingsley.

"This display really brings life to who Lt. Kingsley was not only as a World War II hero, but as a regular guy who was making his way through life," said Major Ryan Bartholomew, 173rd FW historian. "It's important as a current Airman at Kingsley Field to know why the base name was dedicated to him and how we can continue to remember his sacrifice to our country."

The digital display is interactive in a way that allows you to touch



A new digital display showcases pieces of 2nd Lt. David R. Kingsley's life and our base's heritage at Kingsley Field, Oregon.

the screen to move to different viewable documents and animations. Several key pieces are Lt. Kingsley's personal journal, a letter from Staff Sgt. Mike Sullivan, the wounded tail gunner whom Lt. Kingsley sacrificed his life for, and a story of Kingsley's life and valor.

"We were given these items by Lt. Kingsley's family members who wanted them to be showcased to all of our Airmen on base," said Bartholomew. "This was a great project to work on and it took a lot

of help from members of 173rd Operations Group and the 173rd Civil Engineer Squadron to bring every piece to life."

Any member has access to view this new display, which presents itself on the wall to the left once you walk into the main entrance of the command building, 211. This new display opening comes at a perfect time as March 25 is National Medal of Honor Recipient Day, to which Lt. Kingsley was posthumously awarded on April 9, 1945, for his actions during the Ploesti Raid.

The 173rd FW Commander, Col. Jeff Edwards praised Bartholomew on the creation of the heritage display stating, "You far exceeded anything that I had ever imagined.

Thank you for your vision, passion and hard work! Your work of art is a lasting tribute to Lt. David R. Kingsley and his family, and you have marked a new chapter in celebrating our heritage at Kingsley Field...way to go!"

A quilt made by Lt. Kingsley's niece, Fran Kingsley, will be hung up on the wall above the digital display at a later date. Stay tuned for that addition to our display!



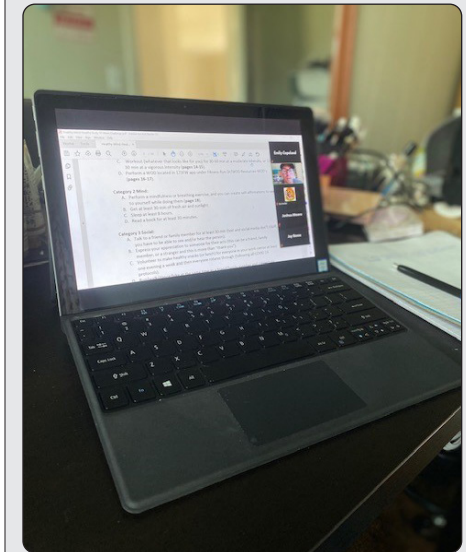
The 173rd Fighter Wing historian office recently created a new digital display to showcase pieces of 2nd Lt. David R. Kingsley's life and our base's heritage, at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

173rd Fighter Wing Resiliency Team hosts virtual classes

Story and photo by
Senior Airman Emily Copeland,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. - The 173rd Fighter Wing's Resiliency Team worked together for January drill weekend to host virtual life and health classes for Airmen and their families. Many types of classes were offered such as finance, health, fitness and personal development.

"During the pandemic we knew we needed to adapt and overcome with our classes," said Jen Green, 173rd FW Director of Psychological Health. "We began offering virtual classes during December drill weekend and it's been a huge success."



Over December and January regular scheduled drills, an estimate of 2,000 personnel joined in on the multitude of classes that were offered. The classes are possible through the efforts of fulltime and part-time Kingsley Field team members, and funding that Kingsley Field received through the Warrior Resilience & Fitness Innovation Incubator

grant. This grant awarded \$70,000 in funding to support the embedded resiliency teams at Kingsley Field.

"It is more important than ever to be here for the Airmen and families who are going through tough and stressful times," said Green. "We know with the pandemic, people are having to overcome difficulties they have never experienced before and that is why we are always here to support and help them avoid crisis."

With the pandemic changing norms and daily processes, the Air Force has altered how it conducts physical fitness testing. The waist measurement is now permanently eliminated from the test and the testing dates are slated to resume in April. With testing starting back up, the Health Education Awareness Team, one part of the Resiliency Team, is dedicated to help Airmen get back on track with their health and fitness.

"The 10 Week Healthy Mind – Healthy Body Challenge was created for anyone to do," said Master Sgt. Collin Carr, HEAT leader. "This challenge is a great way to push yourself and get everyone involved, especially while many are working from home."

The challenge begins on January 11 and ends two weeks before fitness testing resumes. The purpose is not only to get Airmen ready for physical fitness testing, but to help establish good daily habits for your mind and body.

The Resiliency Team will be offering additional virtual classes in the future and can be reached for additional support through the Airman and Family Readiness Center, the Office of Psychological Health, Chaplain or HEAT.

Model Citizen: One Airman's Journey to U.S. Citizenship

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Sean Campbell,
142nd Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. - Senior Airman Raul Reyes is part of the Fatality Search and Recovery Team for the 142nd Force Support Squadron at Portland Air National Guard Base (PANGB), Oregon.

Reyes enlisted in the Oregon Air National Guard in 2017, two years after becoming a permanent resident of Oregon.

long after he enlisted, a new policy came into effect, changing the naturalization process for military members.

Under the old law, military members were cleared to leave for basic training, provided their security clearance request had been submitted, and in order to gain U.S. citizenship, members only had to serve one day.

Now, under the new policy, Reyes and other prospective military members seeking citizenship are required to have a completed background check before leaving for basic training, and in order to become citizens, they needed to have served no less than one year in the U.S. Military.

The change in policy pushed Reyes' basic training date from October 2017 to August 2018.

Reyes' plan was to join the Air Force right out of high school, but his plans were put on hold as he waited for his security clearance to process.

"I worked, went to college, and became a permanent resident, but I still wanted to serve and give back," said Reyes.

In November 2020, Reyes finally obtained his citizenship, marking the end of a near two-decade journey.

"I've considered myself an American from the first day I stepped foot on American soil almost 20 years ago," said Reyes. "I've pledged allegiance to our flag since elementary school and will continue to do so. It's a great feeling to finally and officially be an American."



142nd Force Support Squadron Senior Airman Raul Reyes is coined by Oregon Air National Guard Commander, Brig. Gen. Donna M. Prigmore at Portland Air National Guard Base, Ore., October 17, 2020.

OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD

The 142nd Wing is gearing up for the new Air Force F-15EX models

Story and photo by
Tech. Sgt. Emily Moon,
142nd Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. - The 142nd Wing has experienced numerous changes over the years. From starting out as an observation squadron with a fighter group, then a fighter wing, and is now a wing. It has also harnessed several different aircraft from the P-51 to the F-15C Eagle and different kinds of aircraft in between. The 142nd Wing is slated to receive the new F15-EX model aircraft sometime around fiscal year 2025.

In order to prepare the base and its Airmen to bring in the new fighter, the base has a dedicated Conversion Team of 4 experts, with many working groups under them. This team will determine what changes need to be made to prepare for new structures and equipment, but most importantly, what kind of training the Airmen will need, to accommodate for this exciting change.

According to Lt. Col. Nathan Rice, the Unit Conversion Officer, who is a seasoned fighter pilot, "The whole purpose of the Conversion Team is to help the base transition in a seamless manner."

Currently the team is working with Test and Evaluation at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, as they will be the first unit to receive the EX. They are also in close contact with representatives at the National Guard Bureau, Air Combat Command, and Boeing, to discuss monetary needs for new structures and equipment. In addition to the

hardware changes, this new Eagle will potentially change how much manpower the base will need.

All members involved are hoping the transition will be a smooth one.

"The F-15EX is almost 90 percent compatible with the F-15C Model," said Rice. "We want to convert as soon as possible so we're a usable wing to the Air Force."



The Conversion Team from the 142nd Wing is making preparations for the to base to receive the F-15EX Fighter Jet, Feb. 10, 2021 at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Ore. Part of the preparations will have to do with preparing the Airmen and the base structures for the EX.

The team hopes that the conversion will be a quick turn-around so that pilots and maintainers can keep the current mission going without shutting anything down. Boeing has said that the training for pilots on the F-15EX should be minimal before they're qualified to fully operate them. The maintainers will receive onsite training once jets start to arrive but some will likely go to another base.

"Maintaining the F-15C has

become difficult, and our people are wearing out," said Rice.

Chief Master Sergeant Norio Colipano is in charge of the maintenance side of the Conversion Team, and he said that maintainers are excited for the new change, to hopefully make their job a little easier, but they know it's going to come with some adapting.

maintenance could be working on two different types of engines. Right now, they use Pratt & Whitney engines at PANG, but the new jet could come with General Electric engines and will need separate maintenance levels. We will have to decide who is working on what so there is no confusion between new parts and old parts on the ramp, and then the trained EX Airmen will become the trainers.

Also, right now, no plans are solidified as of yet as to how many EX jets PANG will receive. The Air Force has to decide how many new jets will go to Kingsley Field Air National Guard Base in Southern Oregon, where pilots train on F-15s first.

The Conversion Team has worked out a very detailed timeline to prepare for the unknowns until they receive a definite number.

"We want to get into this conversion running, instead of crawling or walking, so we're trying to prepare our people in the operations and maintenance groups now," said Colipano.

The Conversion Team is excited that this jet could be at the forefront of the future as it can eventually go from an Air-to-Air mission to becoming an Air-to-Ground mission. This will require another Conversion Team to take charge in training their people for various kinds of weapons loading and training in the future.

"There is a light at the end of the tunnel in all of this," said Rice, "It's a big project, but we're excited to see it happen."

Night flying a necessary component of readiness for Oregon Air National Guard

Story by
Staff Sgt. Alexander Frank,
142nd Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. - While many Portlanders have grown accustomed to the sights and sounds of military aircraft from the 142nd Wing out of Portland Air National Guard Base (PANG), hearing them at night can be a jarring experience. But rest assured night flying is perfectly normal, and part of a vital training requirement for pilots across the Air Force.

Night flying missions are accomplished on a regular basis to allow Citizen-Airmen pilots from PANG to fulfill annual training requirements, conduct essential nighttime maneuvers, and familiarize themselves with equipment vital to flying safely in the nights sky.

According to pilot Lt. Col. Mark Porcella, the Director of Operations for the 123rd Fighter Squadron, this training is done so pilots feel comfortable maneuvering their aircraft regardless of when they're called into service.

Night flying comes with some unique challenges for pilots. Those challenges require a specific skill set that pilots must



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Emily Moon, 142nd Wing Public Affairs
Members of the 142nd Wing perform night flying Jan. 9, 2021 at Portland ANG Base, Ore. Night flying helps pilots enhance their skill set to handle multiple types of conditions.

exercise regularly to maintain readiness in order to perform in nighttime conditions.

"The main difference of flying at night is the loss of visual references," said Porcella. "When flying during the day, your subconscious does a lot of the work keeping your oriented with the horizon. At night those visual cues are significantly reduced or lost."

Because pilots can't rely as much on visual cues when flying at night, they need to be able to reference their instruments. Flying at night requires that pilots maintain focused attention and a continuous consciousness of position and orientation.

While it's easy to conclude that pilots are the only beneficiaries of night flying, Airmen from the 142nd Maintenance Group are also a vital component to ensuring the reliability of the aircraft, and the tools pilots use to navigate.

According to Tech. Sgt. Bryson Colipano, an avionics technician with the 142nd Maintenance Group, aircraft prep for night flying missions present their own unique challenges and training opportunities.

"It makes us more well rounded maintainers," said Colipano.

Night flying gives maintainers the opportunity to work in a varied environment, and in doing so, they become acclimated to these varied conditions, enhancing and increasing their level of readiness.

Aircraft maintainers need to be as ready as the pilots under diverse

circumstances because there's a considerable amount of time, effort, and skill that goes into getting these jets into the air safely.

Maintaining this readiness plays directly into one of the major missions of the 142nd Wing which is guarding the skies of the Pacific Northwest.

"We need to be able to safely operate and fight at night to fulfill our primary mission of combat operations," said Porcella. "Further, our alert mission must be able to protect America 24/7. Nothing prohibits our enemies from attacking the homeland after dark."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Emily Moon, 142nd Wing Public Affairs
Flight and ground crew members of the 142nd Wing perform night flying as part of on-going training, Jan. 9, 2021, at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Oregon.

FEATURES

Podcast promotes interaction among leadership and service members

Story and photos by John Hughel,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

CLACKAMAS, Ore. - Communication is fundamental in every part of military life, from orders in the field; to telecommunications messaging and training in garrison -- interaction with each other is essential. As the COVID-19 pandemic lingers on, Oregon National Guard leadership continues to use work from home, video messaging and other innovative approaches to interface with service members.

Recently, Chief Master Sgt. Dan Conner, Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) for the Oregon National Guard sat down to discuss the development of his new podcast series with members of the Public Affairs staff after hosting members of the Army National Guard's 41st IBCT a few days before, here at the Camp Withycombe studio.

"I am a big fan of podcasts, and decided that this would be a great way to get out a 20 to 40 minute message to our entire Oregon (National Guard) team," Conner said, reviewing how the first two episodes of, 'Get a Sign', have taken shape and the intent of the series.

As a template, Conner's approach is both scripted and informal, allowing the conversation to follow some prescribed



ORNG Soldiers assigned to 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry who returned from deployment in Jordan, enjoy some of the stories with Chief Master Sgt. Dan Conner, CSEL for the Oregon National Guard during a podcast recording, Oct. 14, 2020.



"What I hope is that when someone receives the messages, you can 'share and then move up the chain,' more topics that you think are important to Soldiers and Airmen."

Now, in the current COVID environment, the podcast yet another way for senior leaders to reach out Oregon National Guardsmen with up-to-date information and the constant changes that are happening both in the community and with revised information.

"2020 is a perfect storm, Oregon's largest deployment of Soldiers since WWII then domestic operations that mobilized more Airmen and Soldiers than any time in our Oregon history; this awful pandemic complicated everything else," said Conner.

Breaking down these missions, Conner asked hypothetically, "Can we employ assistance to go out and help wildland fires? Yes we can. Can we do TCP's (Tactical Control Planning)? Yes we can. Can we go out and do the war tasking's? Yes we can -- and now let's throw COVID in there and meet all the different guidelines and restrictions from the state of Oregon to the Department of Defense."

Working with a list of topics from The Adjutant General, Conner said these themes can be discussed over time and as new ideas are generated, they can be added to future broadcasts.

"These are things that are the most important subjects and can be broke down and ingredients to build on," he said. "We can focus on these areas and discuss in an ongoing basis."

topics but room to take a deeper dive into impromptu issues.

"I use the word communication as a two-way conversation, so in a sense with the podcast it's me pushing the topics," he said in discussing the format.

In laying out these "ingredients to build on," Conner described some of the real hurdles that are needed in maintaining resiliency.

"Suicide is one critical issue that is important to every leader in our organization, especially as this pandemic has put added pressures on all of us who are home, teaching our kids and working remotely."

For his inaugural podcast, Chief Conner interviewed Command Chief Master Sgt. Tony Whitehead, the senior enlisted listed leader for the National Guard.

"I wanted to start off this series with a view from leadership at the very top," Conner said, having gotten to meet Whitehead over the past several years before each took on new leadership roles.



ORNG Soldiers assigned to 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry who recently returned from a deployment in Jordan, discuss post deployment issues with Chief Master Sgt. Dan Conner, CSEL for the Oregon National Guard during the Post cast, 'Get a Sign,' at Camp Withycombe, Ore.

"My goal is to be inclusive of all Army and Air National Guard values," he said. With more than 30 years serving in the Air Force, Conner represents both branches now serving as the CSEL.

"Currently, like our Soldiers recently coming home from deployment, this is a great opportunity for me to help integrate our collective goals as one force," he said.

The first two podcasts are currently completed and can be downloaded at Spotify and Apple podcast sites.

With other topics in the pipeline, the series will introduce a new broadcast about every three to four weeks. So stay tuned!

The 142nd Wing Airman and Family Readiness Center officially opens

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Emily Moon,
142nd Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. - The 142nd Wing Airman and Family Readiness Center officially opened its doors on Nov. 8, 2020, at building 355 at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Oregon, during a small ceremony was held over the November drill weekend.

This move comes as the final step in the wing's effort to build a robust, ready, and able Resiliency Team to serve the Airmen of the 142nd Wing.

After spending several years building up a Resiliency Team to help our 142nd Wing organization, finding a place to house all of its members became a bit of a challenge. The various team agencies had moved around so many times that it felt like a game of musical chairs. The different office spaces were simply not adequate enough to reach the staff and the Airmen's needs. The 142nd Wing Command Chief, Chief Master Sergeant Brent Cavanias, worked closely with the team to find solutions but ultimately, the new 142nd Wing Commander, Col. David Unruh, made the decision to put the team in their own building.

"Active Duty already has designated centers for their Airmen," said Cavanias. "We are trying to do the same."

In the past, the wing had faced difficulties in maintaining a full-time family programs office. Unlike Active Duty Air Force and Air Reserve bases who maintain a full office of civilian and military staff at a dedicated center on their bases



Resiliency Team members pause for a photo during a ribbon cutting event at the Airman and Family Readiness Center.

to support their Airmen, the guard, has faced challenges to manage helping its Airmen through a family program consisting of one civilian and sometimes if able, another military professional, to support a wing of around 1,400 people. This made it difficult to support Airmen and their families for any issues that cropped up. Now that the team has their own space to work out of together, they can pull their resources together to better focus on the wing members and the needs of their families.

"It's the right thing to do, to take care of our families, and it's a direct correlation on readiness. If things are not going well at home, they're probably not going to go well at work," he said.

This Resiliency Team that was created a few years ago is comprised of: Family Programs, Yellow Ribbon, the Chaplain Corps, Department of Psychological Health (DPH), Sexual Assault and Resource Center (SARC), Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), and even Personal Finance.

Although, the team was mostly located together in the wing headquarters building, no one knew where each office was within the building and where the rest of the team was located around base. Finding a designated space to hold all the agencies seemed to be impossible until the potential of building 355 was realized. Finding a building that could accommodate the Resiliency Team as a whole was a game changer according to Senior Master Sergeant Amy Almond-Schmid, who works as the 142nd Wing Family Program Manager and Human Resources Advisor (HRA).

"Being in the same building makes perfect sense for a resiliency center, having access to all of the resources in one place," said Almond-Schmid, "And now we can easily point people in the right direction or just walk them over to the person they need."

Relocating everyone to building 355, proved to be helpful in bringing the team together for a more cohesive environment and will help reduce Airmen's time in finding individual agencies and hitting up different resources all in one building.

The team has been hard at work in creating a family friendly environment, holding various training events to offer new courses, hosting key volunteer meetings, and being a place for members to find volunteer opportunities to help their fellow Airmen.

"The team cohesion will really help support our airmen, show the base that leadership values these programs by creating a center for it, and aide in increasing our readiness capability in the future," said Almond-Schmid.

FEATURES

Pacific Northwest Airmen serve PACAF Religious Affairs mission

Story by Master Sgt. John Hughel,
PACAF/ANG Public Affairs News Feature

SALEM, Ore. - When it comes to supporting service members and their families, Religious Affairs Airmen work behind the scenes to help chaplains and commanders consider the health of the force. At the wing level, they support the unit directly through a variety of task. For two Air National Guard Pacific Northwest Airmen, the opportunity to serve as top-tier non-commissioned officers with the Pacific Air Force (PACAF) has capped long careers in the service of others.

In 2012, the 215th Engineer Installation Squadron, at Paine Field in Everett, Washington, was slated to close by the end of 2013. The Washington Air National Guard set up a career day for members to transition into new jobs who still wanted to serve.

At the time, then Tech. Sgt. Rob Boleak was a Cable and Antenna Systems repairman with the unit and expressed an interest in becoming a First Sergeant, but with no open positions in the state, he decided he could work with Airmen in a similar capacity as a Chaplain's Assistant.

"What was funny is that in my first two active duty bases, I never saw a Chaplain's assistant and didn't even know that career field existed," Senior Master Sgt. Boleak said in describing his opportunity to take on a new Air Force career move.

Similar to a First Sergeant's role of "Taking care of Airmen", Boleak saw that he could provide other resources available to troops and their families.



Washington Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Robert Boleak, assigned to Joint Task Force Steelhead (left) talks with Army National Guard Soldiers at a local community food bank in Pasco, Wash., May 13, 2020.

"Many people don't know all the forms of support, resources and connections that Religious Affairs airmen can offer," he said. "Oftentimes we are the eyes and ear of our members and can feel the temperature of a unit and some of the missing and underlying needs are."

After serving with the 194th Wing for several years, in 2015 he applied for a newly created role in the Religious Support Team, or RST, at the higher Air Force commands. By adding the Senior Master Sergeant position to support PACAF and other major commands, this would also facilitate a larger pool of potential candidates for the Functional Manager position at the National Guard Bureau.

"It created an RST that had one chaplain and one religious support NCO that could work together out in the field," said Boleak, discussing the new Senior Master Sergeant role. "Now you have six or seven E-8's to choose from that have broadened their experience in the career field to help all the RST members in the Air National Guard."

Being one of the first people picked for this role, Boleak said the job requires 60 active duty days a year with the assigned MAJCOM



Oregon Air National Guard Master Sgt. (then Tech. Sgt.) Osten Coaty (center) helps transport injured personnel during a previous deployment in 2011 when assigned in Germany.

on top of the monthly annual drills.

"For the battling planning and rhythm in the Pacific, we were creating training plans that would change the Chaplain Corps," said Boleak, noting how other MAJCOMS noticed and started implanting the changes. "In 2018 the Air Force began beta testing [Task Force] True North by ebbing religious affairs and other professionals within high-risk groups of a Wing."

"About a year and a half ago, Gen. (Charles) Brown, then the PACAF Commander, said

that he like the concept and wanted to replicate the program," said Boleak.

Eventually, True North-Lite was developed for local Mental Health Teams and Religious Support Teams working in partnership to provide intensive support to at-risk units across PACAF, without the assistance of additional manning.

"The intent was to embed Chaplains into these high-risk units instead of just trying to serve the wing staff and headquarters," he said. "The program had chaplains attached to Security Forces Squadrons, Nuclear

Weapons Centers and other high-stress areas -- places were suicide rates, alcoholism and family problems are more prevalent."

The success of the program propelled PACAF to utilize active duty, reserve and guard chaplains and other mental health resources, family readiness staff and other service professionals to augment critical areas where commanders felt a need for support. This has created the expanded role for Air National Guard Chaplains and Religious Support assistants in the field directly supporting Airmen.

As Boleak transitioned toward retirement in October his successor was another Pacific Northwest Airman, Master Sgt. Osten Coaty from the 173rd Fighter Wing, Klamath Falls, Oregon. Serving as a First Sergeant with the Logistic Readiness Squadron and 24 years of military service, Coaty was a natural pick to take up the reins for a self-described, "guy who likes to work in churches."

"I could really tell how much of an impression Senior Master Sergeant Boleak left for this position in his final email to the group," said Coaty. "He's already helped me make this a much easier handoff and all the work he has done to define the role."

The father of three boys is a private school teacher in his civilian career said he thrives in areas where he can help connect people to resources and open lines of communication.

"Being a First Sergeant prepared me in some ways for this job," said Coaty. "The way you care for people, that each case is different and being ready for the number of issues that arise...these are all important for unit readiness too."

His excitement for the new job was evident as he spoke about the challenges that lie ahead and the travel in the Pacific theatre once the COVID-19 pandemic allows for international travel again.

"I spoke with our wing chaplain before I applied over the summer," he said. "I felt like having served on active duty and the guard and having deployed four times over the years prepared me for this next step up."

In his deployment assignments, Coaty has worked around the world, from the United Arab Emirates to Qatar, followed by a special assignment for six months at Ramstein Air Base in Germany to care for wounded service members, and responding to the massive earthquakes in Haiti in 2010.

"I started off my military career as an Army Combat Engineer, so having my 'ducks in a row,' is essential to me," he said. "This new position at PACAF is a big responsibility, so readiness and resiliency are key factors I hope to bring to the mission and for the Airmen."



Oregon Air National Guard Master Sgt. Osten Coaty prepares for an F-15 Eagle Flight at Kingsley Field, in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

With the assignment being a three to five-year commitment, Coaty knows that he is has been given a chance to work in two assignments at once.

"I will still be performing my drills at the Joint Force Headquarters in Salem, (Oregon) but will be traveling and interconnecting with leadership all across the Pacific region," he said, describing the expanded expectations. He officially transferred in November.

"The learning curve will be a challenge at first, but Sergeant Boleak said he would still make himself available to questions I have, even though he will be retired," he said. That's reassuring and it speaks of his integrity for the mission and taking care of Airmen; even in retirement."

FEATURES

Oregon Soldier's eagerness keeps vehicle readiness 'In the Green'

Story by John Hughe,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore. - Over the course of the past twelve months, members of the Oregon National Guard have been tasked with multiple short suspense missions responding to the impacts of the novel coronavirus pandemic in the community. Regularly, many of these assignments revolve around logistics and vehicle readiness to transport personnel and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when needed thought-out the state.

For the 1186th Military Police Company, having been dispatched for civil disturbance response and security check points on firefighting missions, being able to move out quickly is the name of the game.

Sgt. Jessica Edwards has been assigned as an Automated Logistical Specialist in the ORARNG for over nine years. The job encompasses a variety of management and record keeping skills to ensure that the fleet of High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) or 'Humvee's' is ready to roll.

Edwards helped prepare vehicles and commanders for State Active Duty (SAD) missions this year, but specifically during the most recent civil disturbance, the response was required in less than 23 hours. She coordinated the completion of 50% of the non-mission capable vehicles to return to a 'fully mission capable' status.

Her diligence and work ethic has not gone unnoticed by her supervisors.

"She is the most junior Soldier we've had in this position, (Equipment Specialist in the SMM office) she jumps right in and is nose to the grindstone, and has been able to streamline much of this entire process," explained Chief Warrant Officer 5 Ronald Higginbotham, referring to the response, who serves as the Deputy Surface Maintenance Manager. "On paper, it looks like we have a ton of stuff to fix but in reality, it's items like batteries or minor repairs."

With the unit being short-handed during the last deployment, Edwards 'No-Fail Attitude,' helped fill in the gaps with three other members gone during the parts of the summer.

"Getting the right equipment to the right people as quickly as possible is important to getting the mission done," said Higginbotham. "She was taking on not only the administrative side of the job but, doing some of the maintenance management with the vehicles; she's just a wonderful person to have around!"

For the last two COVID-19 Task Forces: TF Assurance and TF Alliance, Sgt. Edwards has been assisting supply sergeants with the resources they need.

"I am a full-time technician so a lot of them come to me when they need help," said Edwards. "I love my unit so, with all these important assignments, I wanted to make sure everything was done properly."

Accounting for mission-capable vehicles is essential even during ideal circumstances. Keeping them organized during vital domestic missions and short-handed has been a bigger challenge.

"The Brigade says, 'We need to get so many vehicles up and running,' so I look at the numbers and see what work orders can be closed out and where the strength in numbers can be met," she said.



Photo by John Hughe, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Jessica Edwards, an Automated Logistical Specialist pauses for a photograph with vehicles assigned to her unit in Salem, Oregon, on March 12, 2021. Over the past year, Edwards has been tracking and insuring 821st Troop Command vehicles are properly logged and documented in the Global Combat Support System-Army (GCSS-Army).

Many times if they are short in vehicles, Edwards will contact other units for support and back up and how quickly they can be dispatched is critical to doing the mission.

"In some situations, if we get a request for 32 vehicles and we've got 24 that are ready, the Brigade will take those numbers that I've allotted for, then get those missing 8 [vehicles] from another Battalion...that's a big part of my job; I get them the information they need to succeed."

In the telework environment due to the COVID-19 restrictions, it's been an added challenge to keep a physical inventory at times. Edwards said that getting into the Armory can be an 'every-other-day thing right now,' as well as balancing having kids at home because the schools are in remote learning too.



Photo courtesy of Jessica Edwards

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers Staff Sgt. Brian Edwards and Sgt. Jessica Edwards pause for a photo together at the Salem Armory where they both work. As a married military couple, they have been able to balance the demands of family and Army work life during the pandemic.

"Any parent in these Covid times can attest to how some days are just rough," she said with a resigned laugh. "You're trying to do 8-hour days with people calling and your kids are screaming. So I get up early and work, then when it's their nap time I can get more done and finally late in the evening when my husband is home to help."

As a dual military family, they have been able to balance both their mission requirements

and the Homefront. Her husband, Staff Sgt. Brian Edwards is the unit Supply Sergeant.

"It can be trying but I think like most families when kids can get back to school or day-care then there will be a feeling of normality with work-life balance."

The challenge is something she's accustomed to since she began her career in the military on a good-natured dare. "I had a friend that said I wasn't strong to join the Army -- I told him, 'I bet you I can...that was 9 years ago!'"

That decision to join the National Guard is not lost on her supervisors and staff who depend on Edwards 'all-in energy' and proactive can-do attitude.

"I am so impressed with this young leader and everything she has brought to the team," said Lt. Col. Tannis Mittelbach, Assistant Deputy Chief Staff Logistics for the 821st Troop Command. "She will work on a moment's notice, come in early, stay late, and log extra time to get the mission complete."

"What she (Sgt. Edwards) done to get all our vehicles and other data into the GCSS-Army system is impressive in itself," said Mittelbach.

The Global Combat Support System-Army (GCSS-Army) is a two program system. The first component is an automated information system that serves as a logistics support system for joint transformation for Army sustainment. The second component provides a single source for data and business intelligence. This supports a rapid force that can be calculated for battlefield functionals to include arming, fixing, fueling, sustaining, and tactical logistics financial processes.

"It is critical for logistical readiness that equipment and their maintenance schedules are loaded in the system of record ensuring it's safe to operate and fully mission capable," Mittelbach said, explaining that Edwards has helped everyone in the 821st Troop Command better understand GCSS-Army and with fully trained Commanders. "She has trained all 821st Commanders with their maintenance program; this has helped everyone as we have been tasked eight times in the last year for a domestic operation assignment."

"She's really an impressive Soldier in every sense of the word."

FEATURES

First time: Two brothers learn to fly the F-15C Eagle in the same class

Story by Master Sgt. Jefferson Thompson,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. - Instructor pilots at the 173rd Fighter Wing in Klamath Falls, Oregon, meet any number of students who have interesting stories of how they found their way to F-15C Eagle training at the sole schoolhouse for the aircraft in the U.S. Air Force. For the first time in any of their memories, stretching back more than 15 years, there is a new "first".

Two brothers arrived to learn how to fly the F-15C at the same time, and in the same class.

For Capt. Jasper and 1st Lt. David Arneberg it's something they didn't see coming either. Jasper is 26, and although he went to the U.S. Air Force Academy he wasn't intent on becoming a pilot, thinking instead he would pursue electrical engineering as a cadet and use that skill to the benefit of the force as a commissioned officer.

His younger brother David, who is 24 years-old, felt that flying was more of a 50-50 proposition as he entered the Academy in 2014. While at the Academy they both joined the Air Force Parachute Team, Wings of Blue—learning to freefall in formation and land under a parachute.

"That really is what sparked my interest in aviation," Jasper said. "The atmosphere of always being in airplanes—taking off in them but not landing (smiling)—that sparked my interest in pursuing aviation as a career."

David echoes much of that saying that interacting with pilots during jumps helped



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

U.S. Air Force Capt. Jasper (left) and 1st Lt. David (right) Arneberg are brothers who for the first time in 173rd Fighter Wing history are navigating the F-15C B-Course together, Nov. 12, 2020 at Klamath Falls, Ore.

him realize the rewards of aviation as a career and in particular that it suited his preference for a "hands-on" career, one that didn't require long hours at a desk.

Jasper pursued graduate school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for two years before heading to undergraduate pilot training at Sheppard AFB, Texas. Meanwhile, David arrived at Undergraduate Pilot Training at Laughlin AFB, Texas. There, they individually received the news that would see their paths converge at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Ore.

"We were at different bases," said David. "When the time came to drop, find out what plane we'd get—I dropped first and got F-15Cs, which I was super happy about—Jasper dropped about a month after that."

In the current environment very few pilots track to F-15Cs. "It's rare to have an F-15C drop in a pilot class at all, so the fact that we both had one drop in our classes and both got it is surprising," said Jasper.

They say it's helpful having their brother at their side during training

"Since we know each other well, we can help each other very effectively," said David.



Jasper and David Arneberg pause for a photo while enrolled at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., in the Spring of 2015 where they both attended, albeit two years apart. (courtesy photo)

Both David and Jasper are very relaxed talking about their relationship, but when the subject of competitiveness comes up they became more animated—wearing wide smiles they immediately mention that they really want to fly a BFM (Basic Fighter Maneuvers) against each other.

That competitiveness goes all the way back to backyard football games in grade school.

"Brutally competitive," said Jasper. "We have a strong competitive streak going all the way back to childhood where we'd have football games and we'd always be on opposite teams, playing quarterback."

He adds that some of that has tempered over time but David mentions a time when as a

sophomore, he challenged Jasper as a senior for the top spot on the boy's tennis team in high school.

"I barely lost..." he said, wearing a rueful expression.

It remains to be seen if they will have the opportunity to vie for supremacy in a one-on-one dogfight in the F-15, but it stands to reason that will not end what is a life-long competition. Despite the competitiveness neither one says they could imagine a better wingman.



U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets David (left) and Jasper (right) Arneberg, two brothers who joined the Wings of Blue parachute team at the academy have now joined the ranks of aspiring F-15C Eagle drivers at the 173rd Fighter Wing in Klamath Falls, Oregon. (courtesy photo)

Soldier's lifesaving actions recognized more than 20 years later

Story and photo by Sgt. Cory Grogen,
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore. - While serving with his Oregon Army National Guard unit based in Coos Bay during a two-week annual training at Camp Rilea in the late 1980s, Sgt. Dan McCarron knew something was wrong when a fellow Soldier complained of having a terrible headache and neck pain. McCarron knew he had to do something to help.

Terry Crump served with McCarron in the same unit with the 1249th Engineer Battalion and, witnessed what happened next. McCarron, who Crump describes as an exemplary Soldier, took action that saved the Soldier's life. When McCarron's initial pleas to his leadership to seek help for the Soldier were ignored, McCarron stepped up and spoke out, ensuring the Soldier received the medical attention he needed.

Upon learning that McCarron was never acknowledged for his actions, Crump made it his mission to contact the Oregon Army National Guard and request that McCarron receive the recognition he deserved. Crump said that this recognition for McCarron was as important to Crump as his General Military Orders were when he served.

"Sgt. McCarron kept a close eye on the Soldier showing great concern, and as that concern grew, he voiced this matter to his Platoon

Sargent demanding someone take the Soldier to get help," Crump explained.

Crump added that McCarron's persistent pleas caused his leadership to finally take action. As the Soldier was being transported to receive medical attention, he went unconscious and



Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Bertilson, 1249th Engineer Battalion (BEB), presents Daniel E. McCarron, who served as a Heavy Construction Equipment Operator with the Oregon National Guard's 1249th Brigade Engineer Battalion unit, formerly based out of Coos Bay, Ore., with a plaque to recognize McCarron's actions from the 1980's, Salem, Ore., Apr. 10, 2021.

was promptly taken to Portland for emergency surgery to relieve pressure on his brain. Any further delay would have made the difference between life and death. "I have no doubt Dan's actions are the reason this soldier is still alive today," Crump said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Angel Smith, command sergeant major for the Oregon National Guard's G1, and the 821 Troop Command, said Crump reached out to the Oregon National Guard after learning McCarron was never recognized for his actions that ultimately saved the Soldier's life.

"Our state archives NCO was able to locate enough documentation to corroborate the players, and the lifesaving part," Smith said. "If not for McCarron's efforts, the doctors stated he would have surely died."

Smith added that after serving with the Oregon National Guard for a brief stint, McCarron returned to Active Duty Army where he served for the remainder of his career.

"He spent many tours in the service, places including Korea, Alaska, Hawaii and many other training bases, Smith said. "His record shows a life-long dedication as a Soldier."

Thanks to Crump's efforts, McCarron was recognized April 10 during a ceremony at the Hall of Honors, 1249th Engineer Battalion, Salem, Ore. Before the ceremony, McCarron said he had mixed feelings.

"You really don't do these things to get recognized, but yeah, it feels good," McCarron said. "I'm glad I was able to help, and it's nice to know that after I thought I was out of sight and out of mind, that somebody was still looking out for me."

AZUWUR

Battling Blazes and Breaking Barriers

AZUWUR

OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Amy Elker,
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Millions of Americans spent a moment of silent remembrance on Dec. 7, a date which marked the 79th anniversary of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1942--the event most responsible for the U.S. entry into WWII. On that day, we pay homage to service members who gave their lives through their dedication and service on the home front. Yet, there is a group of unsung American heroes who fought bravely during the war, serving and sacrificing to protect U.S. citizens from a dangerous and deadly Japanese threat, right here in the state of Oregon.

Many years before the slogan "Black Lives Matter" was echoed through city streets by citizens demanding racial equality, a small group of Black American Soldiers embodied the spirit behind the slogan. During that era,



Then-1st. Sgt. Walter Morris, right, prepares for his first jump with the 555th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

service members of color were segregated and were typically given more menial positions, rather than serving in combat. However, despite the odds, Soldiers of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, or "Triple Nickles," succeeded in becoming the nation's first all-Black paratroopers. The Triple Nickles served in more airborne units, in peace and war, than any other parachute group in history. Their role during WWII, and in Oregon, would come to have great significance after one fateful day in 1945, when the first—and only—civilians on the U.S. mainland were killed during the war.

On May 5, 1945, a sunny day in Bly, Oregon, 26-year-old Elsie Mitchell, pregnant with her first child, packed the chocolate cake she had baked the night before in anticipation of a picnic outing with her husband, Rev. Archie Mitchell, and a group of Sunday school children from their quaint local community. A short time later, they set out for the scenic drive to nearby Gearhart Mountain in southern Oregon.

After parking at the site, Archie stopped to



Officers of the 555th Parachute Infantry Regiment pose for a photo while at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

talk to a construction crew to ask about fishing conditions, while Elsie and the five children ventured about 100 yards away from the car into the forest, where they encountered an odd-looking object. Elsie yelled back to her husband, "Look what I found dear..." Archie later described that moment to local newspapers: "I...hurriedly called a warning to them, but it was too late. Just then there was a big explosion. I ran up – and they were all lying there dead." The cause of the explosion was a Japanese "Fu-Go" balloon bomb.

Held aloft by 19,000 cubic feet of hydrogen, and carried eastward by the jet stream, the balloons were designed to travel across the Pacific to North America, where they would drop incendiary devices or anti-personnel explosives, often starting raging forest fires.

Though the Triple Nickles were slated to deploy to Europe, early in 1945, the German armies were collapsing, and it was unlikely additional paratroopers would be needed. Instead, they received orders to depart for permanent duty in Pendleton, Oregon, where they were assigned to the 9th Services Command, for a classified mission dubbed "Operation Firefly". They were trained by the U.S. Forest Service, and became the Army's first and only airborne firefighters, known as "Smokejumpers."

There were two primary reasons for their assignment: the first was that U.S. military forces in command in Europe, were hesitant to have highly trained, Black paratroopers, come into contact with Nazi's who espoused white supremacy; the second was the need to battle the blazes these balloon bombs were igniting in the Northwest.

After making landfall, the Triple Nickles would contain the fire until ground units arrived with water. One of the paratroopers, 1st Sgt. Walter Morris said this was often an arduous task. "Sometimes it took two to three days because the area on fire could be 25 miles away from the road," Morris said.

Operating out of Camp Pendleton and the Chico Air Base, California, the Triple Nickles answered approximately 36 fire calls, some of which were caused by lightning and careless

campers, with more than 1,200 individual jumps. During fire operations, the battalion suffered numerous injuries but only one fatality.

As fire raged below, Morris and fellow paratrooper Pvt. 1st Class Malvin L. Brown, a medic assigned to the battalion's headquarters company, plunged into a high canopy of trees in the Siskiyou National Forest near Roseburg, Oregon. While attempting to slip out of his parachute harness and slide down a rope to the safety of the ground underneath him, Brown somehow lost his hold on the rope and plummeted 150 feet to his death.

Despite this tragedy, many of the techniques and equipment tested and developed during "Operation Firefly" are still in use in both civilian

and military firefighting missions today. Even more noteworthy, the Triple Nickles, a company of 165 Blackmen were instrumental in breaking the color barrier in the military. Not since the Buffalo Soldiers, the all-Black unit that was formed after the U.S. Civil War, had Blacks been placed in such prominent wartime positions. By the end of World War II, there were more than 400 Black paratroopers.

The Triple Nickles continued their smokejumping mission six months after Germany surrendered, and then was deactivated in 1947. Their success could not be denied, and Lt. Gen. James Gavin, commander of his all-white 82nd Airborne Division, recommended the Triple Nickles be integrated and become the 3rd Battalion of the 505th Infantry Regiment. This decision paved the way for Black Soldiers to become part of the 82nd Airborne Division, one of the most prestigious departments in the Army. A year later, President Henry Truman's Executive Order officially ended racial segregation in the U.S. military.

During WWII, with the racism that was rooted in white supremacy abroad and the racism that still lingered from the Civil War and was rooted in segregation at home, one could ask why a Black man would risk his life to help his country? Morris said the answer was simple: "This is my country; this is my duty regardless of the social climate; regardless of the faults. This is my country, my children's country and their children's. It is up to me and many, many people of all races and cultures to fight the haters and the racists to make this a better place to live. We've come a long way, and we still have a long way to go. With the help of all people, I have a good feeling about the future of this wonderful country."



Sgt. Jordan J. Corbett in his uniform.



The shoulder insignia of the 555th Parachute Infantry Regiment, known as the "Triple Nickles."