



OREGON SENTINEL

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Oregon Guardsmen participate in joint-service disaster training



Oregon Air National Guard Senior Airman Susanne Traudt, a search extraction medical technician assigned to the 142nd Medical Group-Detachment 1, peers out from the mask of a hazmat suit during a disaster response evaluation and exercise held at Camp Umatilla, Oregon on June 14, 2022.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Yuki Klein, 142nd Wing Public Affairs
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Oregon National Guard Airmen save lives in Idaho



Oregon Air National Guard Airmen with the 125th Special Tactics Squadron work alongside paramedics to prepare two patients for transport near Boise, Idaho, May 15, 2022. After completing a day of small arms training, the Oregon Airmen were in a convoy heading to Gowen Field, Idaho, when they witnessed an accident that injured two people on a motorcycle.

Story by Steven Conklin,
142nd Wing Public Affairs Office

BOISE, Idaho – Two Idahoans are alive today thanks to the quick and skillful reaction of some of America’s most elite service members.

After completing a day of small arms training, Airmen with the 125th Special Tactics Squadron (STS), Oregon Air National Guard, were in a convoy heading to Gowen Field, Idaho, May 15, 2022, when an accident unfolded in front of them.

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continued
on Page 5**

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COMMAND

Oregon National Guard continues to strengthen global alliances

Our Citizen-Soldiers, Airmen and civilians continue to support dynamic missions at home and around the world. Each time our organization has been tasked with another challenge, you have stepped up and knocked it out of the park!

Oregon Guard members are supporting European Command through participation in Atlantic Resolve, providing Public Affairs support to Special Operations Command, and filling a key role in Kuwait for Central Command's Operation Spartan Shield.

Our State Partnership Program continues to strengthen relationships through multiple engagements with Bangladesh and Vietnam, and more than 240 service members recently completed a mission in Indiana resettling over 7,000 Afghan guests in support of Operation

Allies Welcome.

Finally, here in Oregon, our service members conducted exercise Vigilant Guard activities in Eastern Oregon and Klamath Falls to assess our preparedness for a Cascadia Subduction Zone fault rupture.

Russia's brutal attack on Ukraine has driven increased focus on the National Guard's State Partnership Program and our ability to stand with our allies. More than ever, our training, readiness, and ability to respond is a vital deterrent to Russia's expanding aggression in Eastern Europe.

Having just celebrated Independence Day and reflected on our own freedoms, remember that as members of the United States military every mission we undertake helps to ensure our nation's security –



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



whether supporting our local communities or reinforcing global alliances. The people of Oregon and the citizens of the United States have relied on us time and again.

Thank you for your extraordinary support, both domestically and abroad, and for your continued efforts to remain: *Always Ready, Always There!*

Personal preparedness starts with being 'Ready To Be Ready'

When a starter calls out "Ready, Set, Go!" To begin a race, he is telling the competitors to first approach the starting line, then to assume their starting positions, and finally to start the race. But being 'Ready To Be Ready', even in this case, requires a great deal of preparation before the competitors are ever within earshot of the starter. Being ready to be ready for military operations and domestic operations is even more complex. Whether we're talking about F-15 pilots, infantry soldiers, firefighters or civil support team members, they cannot simply throw on their uniforms and be ready to go for all kinds of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that none of these patriots can operate alone.

Readiness begins with personal preparedness, because it establishes an individual's fitness for duty, in part simply by limiting the distractions. Preparedness elements include physical, medical and dental, mental, financial, legal, family, and spiritual, and we must expect them as we recruit the force, and facilitate them as we sustain the force. Personal preparedness provides us individuals who are ready to be led, warriors who can be ready to fight and win.

Next in the readiness equation is training. It is imperative that we develop, attend and comprehend all the training required. Take it seriously because you may have little time to exercise that training. In the past months I've read stories



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



where our Oregon service members have taken their training and put it to real world use saving lives at traffic accidents, mountain rescues and suicide interventions.

Being 'Ready To Be Ready' is an expectation and our responsibility. The citizens of our communities, state and nation depend on us.

NGB Chief host the Bangladesh Chief of Staff



Photo by Master Sgt. Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, The Chief of the National Guard Bureau, held an office call with Bangladesh Army Chief of Staff Gen. S M Shafiuddin Ahmed and Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, adjutant general, Oregon National Guard, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., April 20, 2022. Bangladesh and the Oregon National Guard established a security cooperation relationship under the Department of Defense National Guard State Partnership Program in 2008. Hokason commended General Shafiuddin for his Army's extraordinary contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Guardsmen support Memorial Day events



Photo by Master Sgt. Steph Sawyer, 142nd Wing Public Affairs

BEAVERTON, Ore. - Oregon National Guard Brig. Gen. Eric Riley, Assistant Adjutant General for the Oregon Army National Guard, speaks to local community members during a Memorial Day ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park in Beaverton, Oregon on May 30, 2022. The event was attended by local dignitaries, to include the Mayor of Beaverton, Lacey Beaty as well as several local military members and veterans organizations. A Howitzer Salute was performed by the 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery, from McMinnville. *The full story and additional photographs from Memorial Day can be found on page 15.*

COMMAND

Continued investments make Guard effective, Chief says to committee members

Story by Master Sgt. Erich Smith,
National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. – The chief of the National Guard Bureau told senators June 7 that continued investments in the National Guard mean it will be able to effectively support the Joint Force while quickly responding to the needs on the home front.

"Today's National Guard would not be possible without your continued investments," Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson told members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. "It provides the manning, training and equipment for our primary mission: to fight and win our nation's wars, which also makes possible our ability to serve our communities in their times of need."

The Guard can operate effectively in this dual-status role partly because of its size.

"We're more than 440,000 strong – 20% of the Joint Force, second in size behind the U.S. Army," the general said. "Today, more than 43,000 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are on duty around the globe and here at home."

Hokanson also highlighted the Defense Department's State Partnership Program, which pairs Guard elements with 93 countries – representing 45% of all nations.

Notably, he said, one of those partnerships is between the California National Guard and Ukraine, now in its fourth month of combat following Russia's unprovoked invasion.

"While much of the world underestimated the Ukrainian Armed Forces' abilities, the National Guard was not surprised because we have been training with them for more



U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Zach Sheely

Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief, National Guard Bureau, testifies before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Defense, during the National Guard and Reserve posture hearing in the Dirksen Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill in Washington June 7, 2022.

than 29 years," said Hokanson. He noted that the Florida National Guard now trains with Ukraine forces in various locations in Europe.

While these partnerships have proven highly valuable, Hokanson said supporting the Guard is crucial in helping deter near-peer adversaries.

"Having a modernized, relevant and capable reserve component to augment our active forces is perhaps one of the best deterrents that we have," he said.

This is done by ensuring the Guard's equipment is deployable, sustainable and interoperable on the battlefield to stay ahead of near-peer competitors, such as China and Russia, he said.

Hokanson said Air National Guard fighter jets need to be modernized to help meet future threats.

"We have 25 fighter squadrons, and I think our nation needs every single one of those," he said. "So, it's important that

we identify a way forward to recapitalize those fleets, with newer aircraft so they can continue to provide 30% of the Air Force's air capability in the next generation."

To continue being an effective reserve component to the Army, Hokanson informed the committee the Army National Guard must boost intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities for some of its divisions.

"We're working very closely with the Army on equipment that is in the active divisions and that are currently not in the National Guard, specifically to the [MQ-1C] Gray Eagle," said Hokanson, referring to the armed, unmanned aerial system used in overseas operations. "Our goal is that [Guard divisions] look exactly like the active component divisions – so they're interoperable on the battlefield or whenever our nation needs them."

But investments in equipment and assets only go so far.

It's people, Hokanson said, that are the most important resource the Guard must continuously invest in. This means more resources for mental health assistance to help enhance readiness in the ranks. While it is difficult to pinpoint the causes of each situation, Hokanson said improved access to mental health care is "definitely going to make a difference."

In closing, Hokanson expressed the honor he feels in advocating on behalf of Guard Soldiers and Airmen.

"I'm extremely fortunate to represent today's National Guard force that is ready to fight and win our nation's wars, ... serve our communities in their time of need, and ready to work with our partners at every level from local to international."

173rd FW welcomes new commander, holds Change of Command ceremony

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

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. - A change of command ceremony marked a major transition for the 173rd Fighter Wing when Col. Jeffrey B. Edwards relinquished command to Col. Lee R. Bouma who stepped into the top post on May 15, 2022.

Bouma was selected for the position after serving as the 173rd Maintenance Group commander since June of 2021 after moving there from his prior station at the deputy commander of the mission support group.

"Colonel Bouma's leadership, capabilities and diverse experiences in the 173rd Mission Support Group, 173rd Operations Group and 173rd Maintenance Group make him the absolute right choice to lead the "Land of No Slack" at this critical time," said Brig. Gen. Donna M. Prigmore, the commander of the Oregon Air National Guard.

His command tenure promises extensive change as the wing is slated to adopt a new airframe in 2024, the F-15EX Eagle II, as the F-15C/D models are retired.

"Colonel Bouma gained invaluable conversion experiences—one related to a transition from F-16s to F-15s, and the other from F-15s to C-130Hs—during his time with the Montana Air National Guard," said Prigmore. "Clearly his conversion experience and leadership

acumen is what we need at this time as we prepare the Wing for the F-15EX."

The heart of the change of command ceremony is the passing of the guidon, a flag representing the wing, which is passed from the outgoing commander to the new. This formal protocol shifts the authority and responsibility of the

he said gesturing to the nearly 50 foot tall flag draped behind the stage. "We defend America and the State of Oregon. That's what I value and that's what this organization provides."

With the passing of the guidon the wing completed another tradition common to Air Force fighter wings—revealing the name of the new commander on the flagship aircraft of the fleet. Bouma, the newly minted commander, looked on as a crew chief peeled back a covering revealing a fresh stencil reading Col. Lee Bouma beneath the cockpit on the iconic Heritage Jet.

Bouma is a senior pilot who has logged more than 2,000 flight hours in the F-16 B,C, and D variants, C-130 H 1,2, and 3 variants and the F-15 C and D models.

He steps into the position at a unique time in the history of the base with the first F-15 EXs scheduled to arrive in under two years, as well as one of the largest construction projects in the bases history in progress.

Bouma is also the first prior enlisted commander of the wing, originally joining the Air National Guard with the 120th Fighter

Wing in Montana, and completed basic training in 1997. He was commissioned in 2002 and attended undergraduate pilot training in 2004, where he was recognized as a distinguished graduate. He joined the 173rd Fighter Wing in 2015.



Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Jennifer Shirar, 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs
Oregon Air National Guard Col. Lee R. Bouma accepts the guidon from Brig. Gen. Donna M. Prigmore, the Oregon Air National Guard commander, thus accepting the mantle of 173rd Fighter Wing commander during a change of command ceremony, May 15, 2022, Klamath Falls, Oregon.

command in a single moment and finds its roots in military history.

After accepting the guidon Bouma addressed his assembled Airmen saying, "Why is it that we are here? It's represented really, really big behind us,"

NEWS

CERFP task force trains to maintain operational standards for disaster preparation*Continued from Front Page**Story by Sgt. Hunter Bomar,
Oregon Military Department
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs**Photos by Airman 1st Class
Yuki Klein, 142nd Wing Public Affairs*

UMATILLA, Ore. – The Oregon National Guard CERFP task force trained at Camp Umatilla June 12-14, 2022 to maintain standards for emergency management.

The task force, comprised of Oregon Army and Air National Guard members, is designed to be the subject matter expert in a domestic chemical, biological, nuclear or radiological incident.

Oregon Army National Guard Master Sgt. Matthew McCreery, the noncommissioned officer in charge of task force operations, said task force members must have the skills and credentials to respond when first responders need assistance.

“Not often do our Army service members get a chance to cohesively work with the Air component, and vice versa, on a mission that could directly reflect the communities we all live in,” he said. “It’s a great joint experience to work



The Oregon National Guard CERFP task force begins to set up its footprint during training at Camp Umatilla, near Hermiston, Oregon, on June 14, 2022. The Task Force is the subject matter expert in the event of a domestic chemical, biological, nuclear, or radiological incident.

traditionally an engineer battalion, makes up the command and control element, the search and extraction section, and the decontamination section.

Only the medical teams are evaluated during the training to ensure they are up to standard.

“When we go out to a disaster, I’m responsible for the initial treatment of a patient,” said Senior Airman Christopher Schiller, aerospace medical technician assigned as a search and extraction medic, 142nd Medical Group, Detachment 1, Oregon Air National Guard. “We get on scene, and they send us with the recon teams. I’m treating

patients with anything from a severely traumatic injury to someone who just rolled their ankle and needs help getting back to the hospital.”

Teamwork is important because of the number of components that make up the task force and its joint operational nature.

“There has to be a lot of situational awareness to make sure patients are taken care of properly,” said Senior Airman Gabriella Boros, 142nd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard.

“We all are working together and we all have to have good communication so we can be a tight-knit group. Without that communication, we wouldn’t be able to give proper patient care.”



Members of the 142nd Medical Group-Detachment 1 carry equipment across a field at Camp Umatilla, Oregon, during a disaster response evaluation and exercise, June 14, 2022.

with our Air Force counterpart to be a stronger response for the state of Oregon and Region 10.”

The Air Guard component, the 142nd Fighter Wing, contributes to the fatality search and extraction team, the communication suite, and the medical element. On the Army Guard side, the 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion,



Oregon Army and Air National Guardsmen assigned to the CERFP (CBRN-Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear) Enhanced Force Package) assess mass disaster victims during a disaster response evaluation and exercise at Camp Umatilla, Oregon on June 14, 2022.



Airmen assigned to the 142nd Medical Group-Detachment 1, set up a tent during a CERFP (CBRN-Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear) Enhanced Force Package) disaster response exercise and evaluation at Camp Umatilla, Oregon, on June 15, 2022.



Oregon Air National Guard Commander, Brig. Gen. Donna Prigmore, speaks to CERFP (CBRN-Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear) Enhanced Force Package Liaison Officer, 1st Lt. Daniel Gates, while on a site visit during a Joint-force disaster response exercise and evaluation at Camp Umatilla, Oregon on June 15, 2022.



Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion prepare a Soldier for the decontamination station during a CERFP training exercise at Camp Umatilla, Oregon, June 14, 2022.

NEWS

Special Tactics Airmen rely on training while responding to highway accident*Continued from Front Page*

“We were just driving back to base. I look over and I see it happen, and I tell the driver to pull over,” said Senior Master Sgt. Stephen Studenny, 125th STS senior enlisted leader. “I was running across the highway on the phone calling the others to grab their gear, and I looked back and they were already out of their vehicles running across the median.”

The Airmen’s convoy was on a stretch of I-84 with a speed limit of 80 mph when a motorcycle with two riders was struck from behind, causing extreme injuries to both riders, including severe head trauma to one.

“If I was ever in a situation with that bad of trauma, those are the guys I want working on me,” said Studenny. “Our guys went straight to work; it’s like second nature. You have over a combined century’s worth of combat experience with the medics that we had on the ground.”

Lives were on the line, and these Airmen were ready.

“These guys were in flip-flops sprinting across the median, ready to flag down traffic and create a roadblock to protect their teammates and the patients,” said Maj. Alex Nell, 125th STS commander. “We had guys that blocked and directed traffic while their teammates simultaneously moved to triage and treat what ended up

being two patients. We had four to five pararescuemen and combat controllers working on each patient.”

The Airmen acted quickly, assessing and treating injuries.

“One patient had really bad road rash, likely broken bones, and experiencing shock, but was responsive,” Nell said. “They stabilized the head and neck with organic equipment and established an IV to administer fluids.”

“Simultaneously, they got to the other, who was in really bad shape. I won’t get into specifics, but it was bad,” he said. “They assessed the second patient, ended up clearing and establishing an airway, put in intraosseous access for fluid administration, and stabilized the head/neck and pelvis/back for transport while monitoring vitals. They got them both to a point of stability to be able to be transported by ambulance.”



File photo by Senior Airman Valerie Seelye, 142nd Wing Public Affairs. Paraescuemen and combat controllers from the 125th Special Tactics Squadron conduct extrication training at Portland Air National Guard Base, Portland, Ore., Oct. 8, 2020, in order to simulate removing trapped personnel from a vehicle or aircraft.

The stars seemingly aligned for these Airmen stationed out of Portland Air National Guard Base in Oregon to witness and quickly respond to this accident in Idaho.

“The fact that those six vehicles just happened to have the equipment, the personnel and, oh by the way, the recent relevant

training, it’s a series of events that is hard to explain,” he said.

The STS Airmen had conducted tactical combat casualty care (TCCC) training just days before. And thanks to their firing range training the day of the accident, they had even more specialized medical equipment.

“Without a shadow of a doubt, and the ICU confirmed it, one of the patients would have died on scene had it not been for [the 125th STS Airmen], and the other patient could have easily died from shock,” said Nell. “The week prior, we happened to have just completed our TCCC refresher and hands-on cadaver training, including everything from controlling arterial bleeding to establishing airways via cricothyrotomy.”

In the time it took for paramedics to arrive, the 125th STS members managed to do what they are expected to do while deployed.

“I think in Special Tactics, we just expect this of our operators and of ourselves,” Nell said. “When you take a step back and put their actions into context, this isn’t a deployed theater with combat operations, this is in the middle of Idaho ... and if it hadn’t been for the actions of our guys, one person would be dead, potentially two. I couldn’t be more proud of everything they did.”

As the Air Force Special Tactics motto goes; “First There...That Others May Live.”



File Photo by Master Sgt. John Hughe, 142nd Wing Public Affairs. Oregon Air Guardsmen from the 125th Special Tactics Squadron, conduct various hoist, rope and rappel training from a MH-60 Blackhawk, as part of ongoing operational readiness exercise, Portland Air National Guard Base, Ore., March 19, 2017.

Demobilization ceremony held for Oregon Guardsmen in support of OAW*News Brief by Oregon Military Department
Public Affairs Office*

SALEM, Ore. - Nearly 200 Oregon National Guard members from the 1186th Military Police Company and 224th Engineering Company, were formally recognized during a demobilization ceremony in support of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) on May 15, 2022, in Salem, Oregon.

“As citizens, not just of Oregon and our nation, but also of the world, we have the responsibility to care about, and care

for, other citizens of the world, especially those less fortunate than ourselves,” said Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon, detailing the months-long mission at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. “Many of you worked in security and law enforcement positions, others worked in clothing distribution or helped set up the temporary housing in the military billets. In essence, you set up a city for over 7,000 people.”

The Oregon National Guard Soldiers provided aid to Afghan evacuees with resettlement support as they began to rebuild their lives in the United States. Both units arrived back to home station on March 1, 2022.

“The best thing for me personally, was I got to see [the people] of Afghanistan in that role and capacity, and then I got to see them here in the US in the opposite, the ending...[of] what happens after war,” said Staff Sgt. Patrick Gonzalez, a platoon sergeant with the 1186th Military Police Company. “It was cool to keep them safe and find the evacuees housing, to see the flip side,



Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon, shakes hands with Staff Sgt. Scott Lee, a squad leader with 1186th Military Police Company.

to really speak to them.”

Beginning in late August of 2021, Afghan refugees began arriving in the United States, which included Indiana National Guard’s Camp Atterbury and other U.S. Military installations around the country. Aaron Batt, federal coordinator of Operation Allies Welcome at Camp Atterbury said that 7,201 Afghan guests were resettled as the mission concluded on January 24, helping thousands of them into communities around the United States. Officials at Camp Atterbury said evacuees were resettled in 45 different states, with over 700 now calling Indiana their new home.



Event photos by Staff Sgt. Tim Jackson, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers from the 1186th Military Police Company, and the 821st Troop Command Battalion, render a salute during their formal demobilization ceremony in support of Operation Allies Welcome, in Salem, Oregon, on May 15, 2022.

NEWS

Vigilant Guard 2022 exercise brings national resources to Southern Oregon

Story and photos by
Master Sgt. Jeff Thompson,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. - The 173rd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard, sits on the east side of the Cascade mountains, which makes it less rainy, higher in elevation and less likely to suffer the after effects of a catastrophic earthquake.

At 235 miles inland, the base sits just beyond anticipated damage from a Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake and likely tsunamis.

A subduction zone is where an oceanic plate rides underneath a continental plate, which causes volcanic and seismic action. And although these results are predictable, it's anyone's guess as to when.



Members of the 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office, as well as visiting German Air Force Reserve Captain Daniel Waite of the Military Reserve Exchange Program, monitor a simulated social media site during Vigilant Guard 2022 at Klamath Falls, Ore., June 9, 2022.

"The biggest thing with a Cascadia Subduction Zone event is that it's going to happen with no notice," said

Lt. Col. Michael Balzotti, the wing exercise coordinator.

This dynamic requires advance preparation and in that spirit the 173rd Fighter Wing hosted its first Vigilant Guard exercise, which is an annual large-scale exercise sponsored by U.S. Northern Command in conjunction with the National Guard Bureau and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"One of the things we wanted to test was devolution of command," said Balzotti. "We'd take off our 173rd Fighter Wing hat and put on our Oregon National Guard Joint-Staff leadership hat."

That hat means the 173rd FW commander becomes the acting adjutant general for the entire Oregon National Guard, and other base personnel fill

the roles of the joint staff senior leadership.

This exercise simulated this expected chaos and the participants fought to bring order by accounting for every Oregon National Guard, bringing helping agencies resources to bear and providing needed relief to those trapped in damaged areas.

In other words, locating command and control elements for disaster response at Kingsley Field, which has a



U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Victor Knill, the acting chief of operations commander, updates participants in Vigilant Guard 2022 at Klamath Falls, Ore., June 9, 2022.

high likelihood of remaining operational following what could be a massive devastation to areas west of the Cascade Mountains.

"Would we feel any shaking out here in Klamath Falls? We really don't know, but based on the studies we should be okay out here," he added.

More than 150 people from around the country converged on the Kingsley Field gym, standing up mobile communications including network capability, and even a simulated media platform to improve the realistic feel.

Balzotti says that these facilities are very important for the coordination of a possible influx of 30-thousand people arriving into the state to provide relief to affected areas. Those people and the critical supplies they bring will transit through Kingsley Field.

Among the lessons learned was the fact that the base can handle that influx for the initial response, while aerial port

or cargo handling capability ramps up to handle that as well as the associated air traffic coordination.

Another lesson he stresses is that for people who live west of the Cascade Mountains, they have to be ready to support themselves as the relief efforts have tremendous challenges to overcome in order to reach them and it will take time.

"We know bridges on the coast are going to be affected, we know roads are going to be affected; there is going to be landslides and tsunami damage, so really the only way to get to the coast will be via aircraft and in the immediate follow-through, that will be helicopters," he said.

He stressed that for everyone in the state and particularly those in the Cascadia footprint to be "Two Weeks Ready," a campaign by the state of Oregon, where residents have enough supplies on-hand to weather two weeks of total isolation.

Oregon Guardsmen prepare to safeguard World Athletics Championships

Story by Sgt. Hunter Bomar,
Oregon Military Department
JFHQ Public Affairs

KEIZER, Ore. - The 102nd Civil Support Team (CST), Oregon Army National Guard, is preparing once again to assist civil authorities in safeguarding Oregon citizens. The city of Eugene requested the CST to work in conjunction with the Eugene Police Department by providing 24-hour Joint Hazard Assessment Team Operations for the World Athletics Championships.

The championships will take place at Hayward Field, University of Oregon, in Eugene from July 15-24. The event, dubbed Oregon 22, will take place in the U.S. for the first time in history. Approximately 2,000 of the best track and field athletes from more than 200 countries will compete.

To train for the mission, the 102nd CST hosted a Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high yield Explosives (CBRNE) Characterization, Exploitation, and Mitigation Course in Keizer, Oregon, at the Volcanoes Stadium, June 6-9. Participants of the training also included federal, state, and city emergency first responders throughout the State of Oregon.

"The training is designed around worse case scenarios concerning a large-scale threat," said Maj. Richard Hosmer, commander, 102nd CST, Oregon Army National Guard. "The work that's going into it right now is to ensure that everyone understands their roles, and we complement each other's mission to collectively achieve the overall objective, which is to keep the community safe."



Army National Guard Sgt. Jeremy Jamieson, CBRNE specialist and survey team member, 102nd CST, Oregon Army National Guard, sends information to his teammates on the floor below during a training exercise at the Volcanoes Baseball Stadium, Keizer, Ore., June 10, 2022.

Sgt. Jeremy Jamieson, CBRNE specialist and survey team member, 102nd CST, Oregon Army National Guard, said the training is invaluable. "We learn how to create a

one-set mind, where if we see a problem, we are able to assess that problem, so if we do have a situation, we can handle it and make sure everyone is safe."

Joint Hazard Assessment Teams will work throughout Oregon 22 to locate and respond to any potentially suspicious packages, persons, or threats of interest. Each team consists of a fire-hazmat, police bomb technician, explosive K9 handler, and a CST member. They're designed to assess a multitude of threats from a legal, environmental, safety, and law enforcement perspective.

"It's cool I get to work with a bunch of different agencies to make sure that people are safe and can enjoy the world games, knowing that they will be going home at the end of the day," Jamieson said, "and for me, that's super important."

NEWS

Soldiers and Airman compete in Combat Marksmanship "TAG Match"

Story and photos by
Cadet Bailey Breving,
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

WARRENTON, Ore. - Oregon National Guard Soldiers and Airmen competed in the annual Adjutant General's Combat Marksmanship Training Exercise, or "TAG Match" at Camp Rilea Forces Training Center, Ore., April 29 - May 1, 2022.

The TAG Match is a shooting competition open to any Army or Air Force National Guard member that aims to promote marksmanship training. It also offers National Guard members the opportunity to compete for distinguished pistol and rifle badges to wear on their military dress uniforms.



Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Avery Chitwood, 2 Battalion 218 Field Artillery, won 6 titles during the 2022 Adjutant General's (TAG) Match at Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center, Oregon, May 1, 2022. Sgt. Chitwood received the Combat Pistol Excellence in Competition (EIC), High Novice Rifle Shooter, High Novice Pistol Shooter, High Overall Novice Shooter and the highly competitive Governor's 20 Tab for both pistol and rifle.

This year's competition drew a record-breaking 125 individual competitors composed of 27 teams of 2-4 members each. Each participant competed in five combat-focused courses of fire that demonstrated their marksmanship skills: Combat Pistol Excellence in Competition (EIC), Reflexive Fire, Speed Steel Pistol, Practical Rifle, and 3 Gun. Only the top 10 pistol and top 10 rifle performers in the state of Oregon qualified for the coveted Governor's 20 Tab. The Governor's 20 Tab is worn on the left sleeve of the combat service uniform and positioned below other tabs such as Special Forces, Sapper, Ranger, or Honor Guard.

In preparation for this record-breaking competition, more than 22 thousand rounds of 5.56mm ammunition and 12,900 rounds of 9mm ammunition were requested. Each competitor demonstrated their skill and knowledge of their service-issued weapons like the M4 carbine rifle and the M9 pistol. The 3 Gun event added an additional M500 shotgun to round out the three necessary weapon systems.

Each course of fire is designed to assess a competitor's skill in engaging targets quickly and accurately under intense stressors like quick time constraints and physical exhaustion. While the scoring and standards for most of the events remain consistent each year, unique challenges can be added to courses that mimic real-life firing scenarios while also keeping the competition fresh from year-to-year. A new element in this year's program appeared in the Speed Steel Pistol event, which required competitors to pull a 90-pound sled for 20 meters before loading and engaging their steel targets with their M9 service pistol. The best performance would have the fastest time and the most confirmed target hits.

The annual TAG Match offers both novice and experienced shooters a series of challenging courses of fire to test their marksmanship capabilities.

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Oregon Army National Guard Staff Sgt. David Nelson, assigned to the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, evaluates the number of target hits during the 2022 Adjutant General's Match (TAG Match), held at Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center, Warrenton, Oregon, April 30, 2022.

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Marugg, the TAG Match Director, encourages all participants to carry the knowledge gleaned from the competition back to their home units.

"I think it's really great to



An Oregon Army National Guard Soldier uses his service M9 pistol to engage a target during the 2022 Adjutant General's (TAG) Match, held at Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center, Warrenton, Oregon, April 30.

come and shoot a competition like this, but it's even better to take what you learned, or even one of the courses of fire, and go back and train soldiers," said SFC Marugg.

Of the 125 participants, 68 were classified as 'novice' competitors meaning they've never competed in any discipline

at a previous TAG Match or high-level competition. Command Sgt. Major James Lindseth, Joint Force Headquarters, douses feelings of intimidation and encourages all levels of shooters to attend next year's challenge. "It was a tough competition believe it or not. Even for those who have never done anything like this before, I think you've surprised yourselves," CSM Lindseth said. "I hope they go back to their units and tell them about this [opportunity] and bring more people next time."

For competitors like Sgt. Avery Chitwood, 2-218th Field Artillery Battalion, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, this was a fun competition that catered to all types of shooters but also allowed him to comfortably demonstrate his skills.

"Everybody should volunteer for this. A lot of people have a stigma about military shooting but here it's not aggressive - it's like a gentleman's course. I did not feel pressured by anybody, instead, I was allowed to

perform," Sgt. Chitwood said. The comfortable atmosphere and his practice paid off as he received 6 of the top performance awards including Pistol Excellence in Combat (EIC), High Novice Rifle Shooter, and High Novice Pistol Shooter, High Overall Novice Shooter, and the highly competitive Governor's 20 Tab for both pistol and rifle.

The Dude Bros, composed of Sgt. Dustin Davis, 1st Lt. Marcus Briggs, Sgt. Lance Pierce, and Spc. Michael Cline, from Bravo Troop, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, walked away with the Overall Team award.

"Prepare them for the next TAG Match," SFC Marugg said. "Even if they don't come to the next TAG Match, I guarantee each and every person in here learned something."



An Oregon Army National Guard Soldier prepares to shoot his M9 pistol during the Combat Pistol event while participating in the 2022 Adjutant General's (TAG) Match for the Oregon National Guard.



Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Avery Chitwood, 2 Battalion 218 Field Artillery, won 6 titles during the 2022 Adjutant General's (TAG) Match at Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center, Oregon, on May 1, 2022. Chitwood received the Combat Pistol Excellence in Competition (EIC), High Novice Rifle Shooter, High Novice Pistol Shooter, High Overall Novice Shooter and the highly competitive Governor's 20 Tab for both pistol and rifle.

OREGON NATIONAL GUARD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND REGIONAL EVENTS

Chaplain Annual Sustainment Training fosters resilience and 'HOPE'

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

UMATILLA, Ore. – The striking mixture of desert flora, rolling bluffs, and wide-open landscape helped create a welcoming setting for the Oregon National Guard's Chaplain Annual Sustainment Training, from April 29 to May 1, 2022.

More than 35 Chaplains and Religious Affairs Specialists from across the state and region gathered at Camp Umatilla, Oregon for three days of training, designed to promote team-building, career proficiency, and enhance professional development.

Outlining the Religious Support mission, Chaplain [Col.] Jacob Scott, Oregon State Support Chaplain, opened the training weekend by detailing many of the attributes needed for the faithful care for Oregon's Soldiers, Airmen, and their families.

"When we define our work and our broader mission of outreach, it's found in the acronym 'HOPE,' said Scott, describing the abbreviation. "Holistic Health, Ongoing Ministry, Professionalism and Education as the foundation. It's import to remember that as members of the Army, that to accomplish our religious support team mission – our members are 'Fit to Fight: Body and Soul.'"



Oregon Army National Guard Chaplain [Capt.] Patrice Robichaux (left), assigned to the 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, presents the "Word of the Day." Following a 5K Ruck with other Oregon National Guard Chaplains and Religious Affairs Specialists as part of the Chaplain Annual Sustainment Training (CAST) at Camp Umatilla, Oregon, April 29, 2022.

airman must possess to accomplish the assignments given to them.

"It's building that culture – that resilient culture of equity, dignity, respect for all people, which in turn, fosters growth and learning," he reiterated to the group, touching on the key foundations for RST members attending the training. "This foundation in faith that's so many of us look to; it's incredibly important for us as an organization to have the highest moral compass."



Oregon Army National Guard State Support Chaplain [Col.] Jacob Scott welcomes Oregon National Guard Chaplains and Religious Affairs Specialists to the first of three days of the Chaplain Annual Sustainment Training (CAST) at Camp Umatilla, Oregon, on April 29, 2022.

As each attendee went around the room, giving a brief personal introduction, they were later joined by Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon, during a live teleconference address, scheduled as part of the CAST opening session, where members participated in a question and answer session.

"In terms of our strategic priorities of being 'Ready, Relevant, and Resilient,' it's really that resiliency part that the Chaplains Corps has the biggest opportunity to make a difference," said Stencel, outlining the overall posture for the National Guard and its members. "In reality, a really strong argument can be made that resiliency is the hardest of our three priorities."

Discussing several topics revolving around the ever-changing mission challenges and Guard members' commitment to balancing military and civilian employment, Stencel emphasized that trust is the defining characteristic that every soldier and

presented in those environments."

With the first day's classroom work complete, the training setting shifted outdoors, where RST members took advantage of a warm spring afternoon during a team-building 5K Ruck around the Camp Umatilla. The group received a briefing from Oregon National Guard Environmental Branch Chief Jim Arnold, who described the history of the former

Umatilla Army Ordnance Depot.



Oregon Army National Guard Chaplains and Religious Affairs Specialists take part in a 5K Ruck around sections of the historical areas of Camp Umatilla (Formerly Umatilla Army Chemical Depot) during the Chaplain Annual Sustainment Training (CAST) at Camp Umatilla, Oregon, April 29, 2022.

"Prior to WWII, this site was selected because it was far enough away from the Pacific coastline from sea attacks, yet close enough to the major ports and railroad lines," said Arnold. "When we head out, you'll see where 1,001 of these 'Igloos' (ammunition storage bunkers) were all built prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor."

The Ruck served to elevate several important themes for the weekend. "We need to remember that as Soldiers, readiness begins with being 'Fit to Fight,'" said Chaplain Scott, as members donned backpacks and headed out towards the foothills.

In drawing a similar parallel, Scott's emphasis also drew on enhancing the group's spiritual resolution during their ruck.

"There is purpose and meaning in participating in physical activities together," he said. "My vision for the Oregon National Guard Chaplains Corps is that all of our religious support team members are living reminders of



Oregon Army National Guard Chaplain [Capt.] Jeffery Parker, assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, addresses others attending the Chaplain Annual Sustainment Training, April 29, 2022.

education, secondary education, or going down range on deployments and facing some of the unanticipated challenges

HOPE." After an hour, when the group reached a bluff overlooking the blooming

spring basin, Chaplain [Capt.] Patrice Robichaux, led the "Word of the Day" to those gathered on the hillside, selecting a fitting scriptural passage about walking with faith.

"Though oftentimes we walk in the darkness, unsure of the path we're on and where it will take us – we carry a lantern or light, allowing us to live in that moment," she said, describing a recent spiritual interaction with a fellow veteran. "We often cannot see the next step, yet faith carries us beyond the darkness with every step we take into the light."



Oregon Army National Guard Religious Affairs Specialist conduct Unit Ministry Team (UMT) training scenarios; moving Chaplains through the Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) at Camp Umatilla, Oregon on April 30, 2022.

Bringing reassurance to service members and a committed source of support allows Chaplains a channel of connection with service members and often their families. During the second day of training, the Oregon National Guard Chaplains conducted specialized training in spiritual resiliency and traumatic event management, focusing on aiding recovery following a traumatic



Oregon Army National Guard Religious Affairs Specialist conduct Unit Ministry Team training scenarios; moving Chaplains through the Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) at Camp Umatilla, Ore., on April 30, 2022.

event. Religious Affairs Specialists conducted Unit Ministry Team (UMT) training scenarios; moving Chaplains through the Military Operations in an Urban Terrain (MOUT) site at Camp Umatilla.

U.S. Army Chaplain [Maj.] Jesse Adkinson, an instructor assigned to the U.S. Army Institute of Religious Leadership (USA-IRL) at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, presented a lecture on stress-related matters with the Army

National Guard Chaplains. The major topics in trauma, traumatic stress, moral injury, spiritual injury, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) were broken down into two working teams on each topic, thus expanding the topic with the entire group in an interactive and comparative discussion.

In discussing the topic of spiritual injury, Adkinson referred

to the Army's Field Manual on Holistic Health and Fitness. "FM 7-22... Spiritual readiness develops the personal qualities a person needs in times of stress, hardship, and tragedy," he said, giving the topic a reference point. "What questions might you encounter when one of your service members has suffered a spiritual injury during the course of combat?" Speaking for her group, Robichaux said that spiritual injuries vary nearly every time on an individual experience.

"Spiritual injury in an existential crisis preceded by a violation of our deeply held spiritual beliefs. It may change our relationship or view of God and result in an imbalance of concrete beliefs." The feedback allowed the overall group to consider a variety of circumstances, to which Adkinson said the relationship between a spiritual injury and a moral injury is often difficult to distinguish.

"Is there a diagram where one overlaps another...it's hard to say because it's one of those 'Yes-Maybe-So,' situations," he detailed, touching on the places where religious and philosophical examinations can be the most problematic and often paradoxical.

While the Chaplains were evaluating these complex questions, the Religious Affairs Specialists were conducting field training on operational security. They were joined late in the day by the Chaplains to do hands-on drills, integrating with force protection as UMT's in hostile threat situations.

Each Chaplain was moved from a hospitable interaction with a native tribal leader, to quickly coming under hostile fire, requiring to be moved quickly from station to station and evacuated to ground transportation. A cold and heavy dose of rain only added to the tasks, yet once again, reinforced to each group, the crucial need to trust and support one another.



U.S. Army Chaplain [Maj.] Jesse Adkinson, an instructor assigned to the U.S. Army Institute of Religious Leadership (USA-IRL) at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, leads a lecture on stress-related matters with Oregon Army National Guard Chaplains as part of the Chaplain Annual Sustainment Training (CAST) at Camp Umatilla, Oregon, April 30, 2022.

Concluding the day, Army National Guard Sgt. Maj. Jody Courts, the Religious Affairs Sergeant Major for the National Guard Bureau, addressed some of the challenges within the career field while making observations about the long weekend of training.



U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Jody Courts, the Religious Affairs Sergeant Major assigned to the National Guard Bureau, Washington, D.C., addresses Oregon Army National Guard Chaplains and Religious Affairs Specialists during the Oregon National Guard's Chaplain Annual Sustainment Training (CAST) at Camp Umatilla, Oregon, on April 30, 2022.

"The work in the field you just completed reinforces the model of Unit Ministry Teams. Remember you are a team, UMT's are critical – not only with supporting the overall Army mission but each other," he restated to the group. "You back each other up, you make each other stronger."



U.S. Air Force Chaplain [Maj.] Lauralee Ozelio (right), assigned to the National Guard Bureau, Washington, D.C., receives a T-shirt from Chaplain [Col.] Jacob Scott (left) during the Oregon Chaplain Annual Sustainment Training (CAST) at Camp Umatilla, Oregon, April 29, 2022.

OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD

The Last Response: Airmen play a pivotal role in helping military mortuary affairs

Story by Tech. Sgt. Brandon Boyd,
142nd Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore.- When one contemplates the military, thoughts of guns, marches, pilots, or other emblematic images come to mind.

Other supporting roles like logistics, bringing beans and bullets to the troops, possibly aircrew or administration also make sense. The individuals who fulfill these roles provide a logical extension to the day-to-day operations at the home front or while deployed into harm's way.

There is, however, one unique role that seems grim but aligns with the ethos of the military: never leave anyone behind. Bringing solace to those who have faced loss and providing closure amidst a sea of grief are the defining functions of this detail.

Services Airmen play a pivotal role in helping military mortuary affairs, and these Air National Guard Airmen fulfill a specific role in supporting civilian members of our community in times of disaster as part of the Fatality Search and Recovery Team or FSRT. This team exists to provide services to those who have lost their lives.

A specialized group with expert-level training, members often join with the state medical examiner's office to observe morgue operations, how remains should be collected and forensically processed, and viewing how autopsies are handled. This litmus test is coordinated to train Airmen before disaster strikes.

In the Oregon Air National Guard, the team can activate to provide support in a state capacity, assisting the governor in an emergency as part of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) or as a standalone group directly supporting the requesting agency(ies).

142nd Force Support Squadron commander, Lt. Col. Kelly Barton remarked on how the partnership between FSRT and civilian search and recovery teams enables a more efficient force.

"When we are activated, it is high stress. To know you will walk in and have rapport, it means it is much faster to get the mission started," said Lt. Col. Barton.



Members of the 142nd Wing's Fatality Search and Recovery Team (FSRT) gather for a group photograph in front of their work tent while on mission in Albany, Ore., during the wildfire season of 2020. (Courtesy asset)

Members of the 142nd Wing FSRT are often asked to provide support in difficult circumstances. In the late summer of 2020, Oregon's wildfires raged, causing unprecedented damage and loss of life across the state. During this time, the 142nd Wing FSRT was activated.

"We drove into Albany and it was all ash and smoke. Our airmen got out of the truck, built our tents and hustled...no task was too big or too small. Whatever they needed to do to get the job done, they did," said Barton.

At a central location to multiple wildfires throughout the state, the team worked alongside the Oregon State Police, Oregon Health Authority, FEMA, and the state medical examiner's office. As the fires worsened, some civilians in Southern Oregon were unable to leave in time.

"After the Phoenix, Oregon fire, we were planning for the possibility of hundreds of casualties across the state and thankfully, that was not the case," said Barton.

The team was tasked with helping to receive and identify those that perished, serving at the request of the governor to help bring closure to the families of the deceased.

During the forensic process,



Members of the 142nd Wing's Fatality Search and Recovery Team (FSRT) gather alongside Oregon State Police (OSP) while on mission in Albany, Ore., during the wildfire season of 2020. The FSRT worked to support the OSP in the search and recovery efforts for those who lost their lives in the fires. (Courtesy asset)

close-knit nature of the team provides a sense of belonging," said FSRT Officer in Charge (OIC), Capt. Miles Dodge.

Described as approachable and relatable, this isn't a group seeking the limelight, but Dodge said they enjoy serving and supporting others and bringing a positive energy when circumstances seem overwhelming.

As they worked, the state and the wing brought chaplain and mental health support professionals to serve alongside the responders. The team found respite when meeting together in a tent, a safe space set up just beside the mobile morgue.

Capt. Angelica Hayes, former FSRT OIC, was activated during the wildfire season of 2020 and recalls the value the resiliency team brought to their fight.

"We debriefed and let people share at their comfort level. One person would share what they experienced, and others would share their own perspective or how they processed things," said Hayes.

Sharing dinners together, playing games and discussing those difficult moments helped the team come together.

"It was a really supportive, trusting environment, where our folks could be vulnerable and personal," said Hayes.

As the group finished up their two-week tasking and the wildfires began to scale back, the meaning of their work came into focus. The group had made an impact, not just to community, but also to the professionals they worked with. State officials recognized with admiration the 'never-stop' work ethic of the FSRT team.

"Looking back, the impact of the mission keeps a lot of us fulfilled," said Hayes. "We returned them to their families, giving them the closure that they deserved."

When the worst days do come, this band of last responders brings dignity and respect to the members of our community. Although they often evade the spotlight of formal recognition, their legacy and work ethic showcases the essence of an ardent Oregonian identity.



File Photo by John Hughe, OMD Public Affairs
Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Isabella Williams (center) and Air National Guard Capt. Angelica Hayes (right) work together during the decontamination process as part of the CBRN Responder Operations Course at Camp Rilea, Warrenton, Oregon, May 20, 2019. The training helped Hayes maintain mission readiness for the FSRT wildfire response in 2020.

Despite the difficult work, the relationships the team had formed helped strengthen the resolve of these Citizen Airmen.

"This group is not always nine-to-five in uniform, but the camaraderie and the

OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Oregon ANG partners with Washington ANG, honing wartime skills

Story and photos by
Master Sgt. Jeff Thompson,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. - For several days in late April, two KC-135 tanker aircraft from the 141st Air Refueling Wing called Kingsley Field, in Klamath Falls, Oregon, home, while they practiced warfighting skills—supplying fighter aircraft with gas being a prime example.

In order to effectively train for the modern mission set, officially named agile combat employment, the refueling wing moved their operations away from Fairchild Air Force Base, in Spokane, Washington, and trained their Airmen on what it takes to pack up and stage out of an unfamiliar airfield.

In order to facilitate their trip, the 173rd Logistics Readiness Squadron planned extensively,

providing everything from lodging arrangements to the large quantities of fuel needed to feed the wing jets during training missions.

Master Sgt. Mike Elder coordinated much of the trip for the visitors. "There was a lot of preparation prior to the telephone and email communications with the shops that were involved—to get them an area on the airfield to bed two aircraft down."



A U.S. Air Force F-15 Eagle assigned to the 173rd Fighter Wing in Klamath Falls, Ore., approaches a 141st Air Refueling Wing tanker from Fairchild AFB, top off its tanks during a training mission, April 28, 2022.

Once the Washington unit arrived, Elder acted as their

liaison, ensuring they had what they needed to run their operations.

"The hardest part as it turned out was getting a porta-potty on the airfield for them to use," he said with a chuckle.

Having an air refueling unit stage out of Kingsley Field allowed a number of Airmen and their family members to fly along for a first-hand look at some of the training.

"That was my first time going up and seeing that," said Senior Master Sgt. Christine Longfield, the 173rd Fighter Wing command support staff functional manager. "You could see them really clearly, they are very close, and it was impressive."

"This is an opportunity to practice modern force generation where resources move easily into the areas where they are needed rather than massing heavily

at one location," said Maj. Eric McDaniel, the director of operations for 173rd LRS. "For us, this helps develop our cooperation across the wing, in addition to strengthening a long-standing relationship with the 141st."

Senior Master Sgt. Rob Mitchell, a KC-135 boom operator from 141st ARW echoed that sentiment, saying, "Not only did we get to exercise our agile combat employment, we got introduce a new generation of Airmen to the uniquely important relationship our two wings have."



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Timothy Diehl, a boom operator with the 141st Air Refueling Wing in Spokane, Wash., explains refueling operations to members of the 173rd Fighter Wing during a mission to refuel King'sley jets over the local training range, April 28, 2022.

142nd Wing Guardsmen sharpen skills in WSEP/Checkered Flag 22-2

Story by Steph Sawyer,
142nd Wing Public Affairs

TYNDALL AFB, Fla.- Roughly 200 142nd Wing Guardsmen and a fleet of 123rd Fighter Squadron F-15 Eagles flew from Oregon to Florida in May to participate in a two-week exercise known as WSEP (Weapons System Evaluation Program)/Checkered Flag 22-2.

WSEP and Checkered Flag represent two distinctly separate schools: one focused on the weapons systems, and the other focused on dissimilar aircraft training.

The goal of WSEP was to test weapons systems, from loading to firing, and evaluate pilots' abilities to employ weapons. WSEP involved testing the skill sets of pilots and maintenance troops on the ground.

Checkered Flag is a recurring exercise where pilots from bases across the country play out training scenarios in one of the largest air-to-air exercises featuring fourth- and fifth-generation aircraft.

The Checkered Flag aspect of the training exposes pilots to other airframes and

capabilities in blue versus red scenarios. Pilots apply strategic thinking to defend their forces from the enemy or penetrate their opponent's defenses. Pilots learn to understand better how to integrate U.S. aerial forces in real-world operations.

"We have a handful of brand new CGOs who never participated in an exercise this size, and so for them in particular, I think that they got experiences that we just cannot generate at home station," said Lt. Col. Joshua Hovanas, detachment commander in charge of all 142nd Wing members at the exercise. "In terms of our readiness, this was a



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jacob Dastas
A U.S. Air Force F-15C Eagle flies over the installation during the Checkered Flag 22-2 exercise at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, May 18, 2022.

phenomenal opportunity to kind of get the squadron ready to deploy this fall."

Capt. Alan Greene, 123rd Fighter Squadron F-15 pilot, said he experienced a lot of firsts during the exercise May 9-20.

"I really enjoyed being able to fight against other fighter jets like the F-22, which I've never done before; shot a missile, which I've never done before; a lot of fighter integration with fourth- and fifth-generation aircraft," Greene said. "I feel like it's only [trainings] like this that you're

able to do this."

What happened on the ground during the exercise was equally important. Along with the pilots, dedicated aircraft maintainers were part of the team to fly out to Tyndall.

"We brought down eight jets, and once we got those eight jets down there, they flew very well and we were able to execute almost all of our sorties, and that's mainly because the maintenance personnel worked so hard," said Hovanas. "I think they got to see what winning feels like. We won every day we got jets in the air."

These types of exercises help ensure the unit is ready for the arrival of the F-15 EX Eagle II. Though the new aircraft will inevitably bring challenges, Hovanas says the unit's ready.

"I really believe that we're set up well to accelerate right into the F-15 EX," said Hovanas. "I think we're going to be the best unit to fly that airplane when it finally arrives." Leadership here at the base and the work ethic of the individual Guardsmen that we have here and I think it speaks volumes to our teamwork, our dedication, and our capability," said Hovanas.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Betty Chevalier
Oregon Air National Guard Airman 1st Class Leo Johanson, 142nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, signals to other ground crew to pull chocks to launch an F-15C Eagle at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, May 17, 2022.

FEATURES

President Joe Biden visits the Portland Air National Guard Base

Photos by Master Sgt. Steph Sawyer,
142nd Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. - U.S. President Joe Biden visited Portland for the first time during his presidency on April 21, 2022 during a brief stop at several locations around the Pacific Northwest. In his public remarks at Portland Air National Guard Base, Biden highlighted the bipartisan \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package he signed into law in November. Following his remarks, President Biden took time to meet with service members and others in attendance before later departing for Seattle, Washington.



President Joe Biden speaks about infrastructure improvements coming to Portland, Oregon in the near future during a press conference held at Portland Air National Guard Base, on April 21, 2022.



President Joe Biden shakes hands with 142nd Wing members following his remarks to those in attendance.



U.S. Air Force One prepares to depart the Portland Air National Guard Base, Ore., for Seattle, with President Joe Biden, following his remarks at the Air Base on April 21, 2022.



Members of the 142nd Wing Guardsmen attend a press conference for U.S. President, Joe Biden at Portland Air National Guard Base, Ore., on April 21, 2022.

Army National Guard recruiter inspires recruit to get in shape and enlist

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

TILLAMOOK, Ore. - Purpose, passion, and perseverance: are all necessary qualities for a Soldier to be successful in the Oregon Army National Guard (ORARNG). Not all new recruits, however, start out with these qualities, and often it takes a great recruiter to bring them out.

ORARNG Recruiting and Retention NCO Staff Sgt. Kyle Stimpson found a diamond in the rough when 18-year-old Deacon Shepherd walked up to his recruiting booth at the Tillamook county fair last August. Shepherd graduated in June 2021 from Tillamook High School but found himself like many other high school students after graduation—without purpose and a clear direction of his path in life. After talking with Stimpson and learning about the many opportunities the Oregon Army National Guard provides, Shepherd said he had an epiphany.

“It kind of hit me...Oh wow, this is what I want to do for the next 20 years of my life,” he said.

Despite his newfound sense of direction, Shepherd had one major obstacle standing in his way from enlisting as a truck driver in the ORARNG—his weight. Shepherd had to drop 57 pounds to meet the height-weight standards. Shepherd, however, was not about to let that stop him from pursuing his dream.

“It’s really like I found my purpose in life

when I met Staff Sgt. Stimpson,” Shepherd said. “So, whatever I needed to do to get there, I was going to do it.”

Stimpson tells all of his applicants: “There’s only two things I ask from you. The first is motivation, motivation, motivation. If you’re motivated, I’m motivated,” he said. “The second is don’t lie to me. If you’re working out, let’s celebrate it, but if you didn’t, just be honest.

Life happens. Don’t beat yourself up for it; just get back on it the next day.”

To get Shepherd started, Stimpson devised a five-step plan, which included the following: don’t drink anything but water; do intermittent fasting and only eat from noon until 8 p.m.; keep caloric intake under 1700; find a healthy meal plan and prep it out; and work out for an hour, four times a week. The workout included doing 25 pushups, sit-ups, and air squats throughout the course of the day.

Shepherd started out not being able to do a single push-up and had to start training by doing them on his knees. He also lives on a steep hill in Tillamook, so for an addition to his workout, Stimpson told Shepherd to walk down and back up the hill—about a two-mile trek—every day.

Stimpson checked in on Shepherd’s

progress every few days. “Any time I felt like he had a hard time or needed a push,” Stimpson said, “I would text or give a phone call.”

He didn’t just keep Shepherd motivated through text and phone calls though. Stimpson literally went the extra mile...or two.

“I was doing the walk up the hill with him once or twice a week,” Stimpson said. “When we were walking up the hill, I told him, ‘If you don’t beat me going up and back two times, then you have to do it a third time.’ I was always rooting for him to beat me because I didn’t want to do it the third time, but at the same time I’m a little prideful and I didn’t want him to beat me.”

Six months later, Shepherd finally beat Stimpson. More importantly, Shepherd met his 57-pound weight loss goal, allowing him to finally enlist.

Shepherd said the constant motivation Stimpson provided helped him succeed.

“It was just him being there by my side every step of the way,” Shepherd said. “He took me under his wing and was a mentor to me. He told me exactly what to do and how to do it, and that’s how I lost all the weight.”

That motivation, however, went both ways. “I’ve watched this 18-year-old kid, who’s never done sports or worked out in his life, and it’s motivating,” Stimpson said. “It paid off for him, and he’s already lost two more pounds in the two weeks since he’s enlisted.”

Shepherd offered some advice for others who are struggling to overcome an obstacle: “Find your purpose,” he said. “Find the fire that motivates you to do it.”

Stimpson shared some advice of his own. “Great people inspire other people to be great,” he said. “Tearing down another building doesn’t make your building taller. If you’re motivated, you’re probably going to motivate other people.”



Oregon Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention NCO Staff Sgt. Kyle Stimpson, (left) pauses for a photo with Deacon Shepherd (right) after enlisting in the Oregon National Guard earlier this year. (Courtesy photo)

FEATURES

173rd FW Crew Chief pays homage to Choctaw lineage, military service

Story by Master Sgt. Jeff Thompson &
Photos by Senior Master Sgt. Jennifer Shirar,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. - U.S. Air Force fighter aircraft have standard paint schemes designed to fit their combat role. However, there is one exception to the rule of uniformity required of military aircraft—nose art.

Many Kingsley Field aircraft have a small patch on the nose cone, each with its own story and meaning.

For F-15C dedicated crew chief Staff Sgt. Robert Holster, the nose art on his aircraft is a personal story of his heritage and his service to his country. Holster is Choctaw and traces his lineage to the Native American Choctaw Tribe, which today is a sovereign nation located in Eastern Oklahoma.

When Holster considered what he’d like his aircraft to display he was drawn to the story of the original Choctaw code talkers dating to WWI.

“When I became the crew chief on 2046 it didn’t have any nose art,” Holster said. “I took the opportunity to not only honor military tradition but also honor my heritage as a Choctaw Native American—to honor the Choctaw Code Talkers.”

Many are familiar with the Navajo Code Talkers during WWII, but the first use of code talking dates to WWI where the Choctaw language provided a means to keep the Germans from knowing the location and movements of American and allied troops.

The Germans were able to intercept and translate any radio communications to the front lines and used that advantage to shell friendly Soldier’s locations repeatedly.

After placing six Choctaw code talkers into service the shelling stopped, showing that although they could intercept telephone and radio communications, they could not translate them.

The moniker Telephone Warriors was adopted and a military patch was designed to commemorate them. The symbol was an arrow with a “T” in it and that was for the telephone warriors,” Holster said. That patch persists today, and is worn on 36th Infantry Division uniforms.

It occurred to Holster to reach out to the head of the Choctaw Nation, Chief Gary Batton, to participate in dedication ceremony here at Kingsley Field, and to his surprise he agreed.

“I was speechless; they came because I asked them to,” Holster said in reference to the visit by Chief Batton and several others.

During his remarks at the nose art dedication, Chief Batton said that he’s proud of the service so many of the Choctaw people render to the U.S. Military, “We want to do our part as American’s to protect our homeland.”

He went on to commemorate the service of the Code Talkers and “the great impact they had in ending World War I



Members of the 173rd Fighter Wing and visiting dignitaries from the Choctaw Nation stand for a photo in front of the newly commissioned nose art, April 14, 2022 at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Staff Sgt. Robert Holster, the dedicated crew chief, commissioned the art work to pay homage to his lineage as a member of the Choctaw Tribe and his service to the U.S. military.



and the great service that they did for our country.”

The nose art itself is the original arrowhead shape, with a painting of the original Choctaw Code Talkers during WWI with tribal feathers and is emblazoned on the fuselage of F-15 Eagle aircraft 82-0046.

There it will stay, representing the contributions of the Choctaw people and the lineage of its Eagle Keeper, Staff Sgt. Robert Holster.



The Chief of the Choctaw Nation, Gary Batton, addresses both tribal and military members at a dedication ceremony for nose art featuring the Choctaw Code Talkers.

234th Army Band’s 1SG promoted to 821st Troop Command Battalion CSM

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Tyler Meister,
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SALEM, Ore. - Oregon Army National Guard 234th Army Band’s 1st Sgt. Tasha Cruz, made history on May 14, 2022, as she became the first female Soldier of the band to be promoted to the rank of Sergeant Major. Cruz was also selected as the next command sergeant major of 821st Troop Command Battalion in Salem, Oregon.

This marks the second time the band has produced a Soldier to achieve the rank of sergeant major. Sgt. Maj. Joseph Worley,

former National Guard Music Deputy, was the first from the 234th Army Band to reach the highest enlisted rank.

Lt. Col. Seth Rogers, 821st TCB Commander, said Cruz will have big shoes to fill as she takes the position from Command Sgt. Maj. Angel Smith, who is retiring.

“I look forward to Command Sgt. Major Cruz’s leadership and guidance,” said Rogers. “Command Sgt. Maj. Smith was a true professional and I know Command Sgt. Maj. Cruz will step up also set a fine example of professionalism.”

Cruz will be leaving the leadership of the band in good hands. Her husband recently promoted 1st Sgt. Jesus Cruz, who also serves in the band will become the band’s senior leader as the first sergeant.

“I’m extremely proud of her and know she will be a great leader for the battalion,” 1st Sgt. Cruz said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Cruz said she looks forward to this new opportunity



Lt. Col. Seth Rogers, 821st Troop Command Battalion Commander, passes the colors to Command Sgt. Maj. Tasha Cruz, at Salem, Ore., May 14, 2022.



Command Sgt. Maj. Angel Smith, outgoing command sergeant major of 821st TCB, presents a plaque to Command Sgt. Maj. Tasha Cruz, the incoming command sergeant major of 821st TCB, during the change of responsibility ceremony, Salem, Ore., on May 14, 2022.

and challenge before her. She has been in one unit, the band, her entire military career and she said she’s excited to meet all the battalion’s Soldiers and get to know them and help develop their military careers.

“I want to also thank Command Sgt. Maj. Smith for her confidence, guidance, and support,” said Cruz.

FEATURES

Veterans ranch in Bend provides an oasis for Vets to build connections

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Cory Grogan,
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

BEND, Ore. - Camaraderie and positive energy were on full display at the Central Oregon Veterans Ranch (COVR) during the 5th Annual Armed Forces Day Plant Sale & Breakfast Fundraiser, on May 21, in Bend, Oregon. For the past five years, COVR has operated a 19-acre working farm that has engaged hundreds of veterans of different ages and eras in peer support and agriculture-related activities, or "agri-therapy."

COVR Founder and Executive Director Alison Perry said COVR is a sacred place that provides an environment of camaraderie for the veterans (whom Perry calls family) to participate and connect with nature and each other to support mental wellness with therapy and peer support.

Perry said the vision of a therapeutic veteran's ranch started in 2007 while working on the PTSD Clinical Team at the Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center. At that time, Perry was helping a 22-year-old Oregon National Guard veteran who had experienced severe trauma after being sexually assaulted by a Soldier he deployed with upon returning from Iraq. In addition to severe trauma, Perry explained that the veteran was exhibiting his first symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia. Perry, who had developed a desire to help those experiencing trauma, was sensitive to the veteran's unique challenges and wanted to find a better way to support him.

Perry recalled the day she was notified that the veteran had been checked into a psychiatric ward and was throwing furniture and threatening staff. Perry wondered to herself that if she'd been through everything this veteran had experienced, would she be reacting the same way. Her professional experience led her to believe that the veteran was being retraumatized in this setting.

"I looked at a social work colleague who was also working with the distressed veteran and said, 'I wish we had a sheep ranch out east where we could send these vets when they got home, a place where they could work on the land, sleep under the stars, and be in a community of other veterans,'" Perry said.

Perry added that now she sometimes

finds it hard to believe that her vision is a reality, but sees the fruits of this labor of love regularly with a growing number of veteran participants every year, often reporting that "the Ranch" has changed their life.

"It's hard to describe...it makes me emotional after 16-years of working with veterans, and seeing family and friends who struggled with feeling suicidal during and after deployments, sometimes feeling powerless," Perry added. "It's incredibly gratifying to know that a team of concerned, committed, dedicated veterans and veteran family members



Patrons shop for plants at the 5th Annual Armed Forces Day Plant Sale & Breakfast Fundraiser, on May 21, 2022 at the Central Oregon Veterans Ranch in Bend, Oregon. (Courtesy photo by retired Army veteran Tim Parsons)

made a vision into the reality of this place. The Ranch gives veterans a sense of pride, a sense of connection, and the feeling of belonging to a community, changing the paradigm of how we integrate veterans post-military. I feel like this place provides a different approach that works."

Members of the Oregon National Guard Service Member and Family Support Program (SMFS) visited the Ranch and were impressed by what they were witnessing at the plant sale.

Grace Fox, a military and family readiness specialist with ORNG SMFS, said her job is to connect service members and families with resources, and the Ranch is an example of an amazing resource that authentically helps veterans. Angela Jones, the family programs battalion leader for the ORNG 82nd Cavalry Regiment based in Central Oregon agreed with Fox.

"This is the type of connection we need. To know there is a place you can go (whether you're still serving or not) and know that you have that family."

Vietnam Veteran Joe Florio is the President of the COVR Board of Directors.



Staff members with the Central Oregon Veterans Ranch in Bend, Ore., pause for a photo at the 5th Annual Armed Forces Day Plant Sale & Breakfast Fundraiser, on May 21, 2022 at the Central Oregon Veterans Ranch in Bend, Ore.

"When Alison told me about the idea of the Ranch I was intrigued. It's a peaceful place where vets can get together and talk freely without holding back. It helps heal long term and short term. We have a lot of Vietnam vets here as well as recently separated veterans, and everyone is treated like family," Florio explained.

Eric Hardin, a volunteer at the Ranch was a forward observer who deployed to Afghanistan and struggled to reintegrate after coming back from deployment. Hardin said he is an example of how the "agri-therapy" and peer support approach is working, and that coming to the Ranch

helped him learn to open up and interact with people after his combat experience.

"Taking care of the plants kind of helped me reconnect with life. I love this place; I love coming here. As veterans often do, I tend to avoid things that are good for me when I'm having issues, but every time I come here, I enjoy it and am grateful for the fact that it exists," said Hardin.

For John Parsons, who is a peer support specialist at the Ranch and retired ORNG veteran, the peer support program provides an authentic experience where veterans often feel more comfortable opening to other veterans.

"We connect with veterans who are going through their recovery, no matter what that looks like, and just walk alongside them, meeting them wherever they're at in their journey."



From L to R: Grace and Eric Hardin, and John & Chloe Parsons stand for the National Anthem during a ceremony to kick off the 5th Annual Armed Forces Day Plant Sale & Breakfast Fundraiser, May 21, at the Central Oregon Veterans Ranch in Bend, Ore.

Parson runs a weekly group at the Ranch that trains veterans to mentor their peers and directs those interested to state-certified peer support training. He meets weekly with about 15 other veterans to provide individual peer support. Parsons added that while helping veterans is extremely important to him, being at the Ranch also plays an important role in his own personal wellness.

"When I retired from the military and the Oregon National Guard, the biggest thing I missed was being around my Soldiers and being around other veterans, and the ranch gives me an avenue to connect with veterans regardless of era."

Parsons said he loves the diversity of veterans that spans from Korean and Vietnam war veterans to young veterans who recently separated from the military.

"In 20-years of service and 7-years retired, I've only been a part of two organizations that have fundamentally changed the lives of veterans—and this is one of them," Parsons said.

COVR's Operations and Program Manager, Adrian de la Rosa, a Marine Corps veteran with a background in non-profit work, says that working with veterans is his calling, and that COVR is a special place like nothing he's seen before.

"The outside-of-the-box thinking and concept that Alison has created here, to me that's amazing. Every day we see and hear the success stories," said de la Rosa.

FEATURES

Oregon Guardsmen participate in Memorial Day events around the state

Story by John Hughel,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore. – Oregon National Guard service members participated in several Memorial Day community events around the state on May 30, 2022, underscoring the significance of those members of the United States military that paid the ultimate sacrifice to this nation.

Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated shortly after the American Civil War, becoming an official federal holiday in 1971. This year, for the first time since 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans throughout our country gathered again for Memorial Day services and ceremonies in person.



Photo by John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs
Kelly Fitzpatrick, Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (left) and Gold Star of American Chapter President Stephanie Torres (left) lay a ceremony Wreath during the Memorial Day ceremony held in Salem, Ore., May 30, 2022.

Addressing a gathering at the War II Memorial at the Oregon State Capitol building in Salem, Oregon, Brig. Gen. Mark Crosby, Assistant Adjutant General for the Oregon Air National Guard said that Memorial Day is set aside to honor the men and women who gave their lives in the defense of the United States.

"This is a reminder of the true cost of war and a reminder to honor those that died while answering their Nation's call," he said, recalling past conflicts in American history from the American Revolution to Afghanistan and Iraq. "Our service members put the welfare of the nation and the welfare of their fellow brothers and sisters before their own."

More than one million, 275 thousand Americans have died in war and conflict since 1775 when our Revolutionary War began. Service members have been fighting for our nation's independence, freedom, and national security for nearly 250 years.

"I challenge you to serve your country as well," said Crosby, when describing his own experience as both a part-time service member and in his civilian career. "Giving back to this great country doesn't mean you have to wear the uniform, there's lots of ways to give back to your community and country – with your time and your compassion."

Highlighting the spirit of the Memorial Day holiday, Crosby said that giving back to veterans and current service members is a good place to start.

"Volunteerism is one of the things that makes America great, and sets us apart from the rest of the world."

Many of those that attended Memorial Day events around Oregon were fellow veterans and family members. At a service held in Beaverton, Oregon, Brig. Gen. Eric Riley, Assistant Adjutant General for the Oregon Army National Guard Riley said, "For me, Memorial Day's a sacred and special day."

"It will forever be the day I remember the nine fallen Soldiers that I served with in the streets of Baghdad. I will always remember the soldiers and officers that I worked with over the last 28 years that never came home."

Framing the significance of the Memorial Day holiday, Riley said the day is an opportunity to remember those that made the ultimate sacrifice but also to cherish what they fought for to provide for future generations.

"It's a day that I reflect on the generations of service members that have gone before us," said Riley. "Finally it's a day that I look optimistically and enthusiastically to see what our future holds for us."

As hundreds of veterans, family supporters and members of the community dodged a brief rain storm, the event connected those in attendance to the picturesque Memorial Park that featured a live firing Howitzer Salute by the Oregon Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion 218th Field Artillery from nearby McMinnville.

As communities around the state held their own ceremonies, further south in Medford, Army



Photo by John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs
Oregon Army National Guard Chaplain [Col] Jacob Scott (left) and members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, recite the Pledge of Allegiance during the Memorial Day ceremony held in Salem, Ore., May 30, 2022.

National Guard Maj. W. Chris Clyne spoke to those gathered at Hillcrest Memorial Park.

"So, on this Memorial Day, never forget. Think about those who have died, those who have returned from war, and all the loved ones who sacrifice daily without them. And then, freely enjoy your day with gratitude," he said.



Photo by Maj. W. Chris Clyne, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs
U.S. Air Force F-15 Eagles assigned to the 173rd Fighter Wing, Klamath Falls, conduct a flyover at Hillcrest Memorial Park in Medford, Ore., on Memorial Day, May 30, 2022.

One of the highlights of the day was a picture perfect flyover by the Oregon Air National Guard's F-15 Eagles from the 173rd Fighter Wing, stationed at Klamath Falls, soaring over the Medford ceremony and other southern Oregon locations.

The 142nd Wing assigned to Portland Air National Guard Base, flew multiple patriotic F-15 flyovers in the Portland and Salem metro areas as 'Eagles covered the skies' around Oregon on this national day of remembrance.

Major W. Chris Clyne and Master Sgt. Steph Sawyer contributed to this report.



Photo by Master Sgt. Steph Sawyer, 142nd Wing Public Affairs
Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion 218th Field Artillery out of McMinnville, Ore. render a Howitzer Salute during a Memorial Day ceremony held at Veterans Memorial Park in Beaverton, Ore., on May 30, 2022.

AZUWUR

United States Navy Commissions USS Oregon (SSN 793)

AZUWUR
OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Story courtesy of the

SUBMARINE READINESS SQUADRON (SRS) 32

U.S. Navy photos by Chief Petty Officer Joshua Karsten

GROTON, Conn. – The Navy commissioned the fast-attack submarine USS Oregon (SSN 793) in a traditional ceremony held Saturday, May 28, at Naval Submarine Base New London.

“Oregonians are deeply honored that the 20th Virginia-class submarine will bear the name of our state,” said Gov. Kate Brown of Oregon, the ceremony’s keynote speaker.

The Memorial Day Weekend event for USS Oregon – the second of the Block IV Virginia-class subs – represented the first in-person submarine commissioning ceremony since the commissioning of the USS South Dakota (SSN 790) on Feb. 2, 2019.



Gov. Kate Brown of Oregon delivers remarks during a commissioning ceremony for the Virginia-class fast attack submarine USS Oregon (SSN 793) in Groton, Conn., May 28, 2022.

“This is the first in-person commissioning ceremony of a submarine in more than three years, and that’s a long time to delay celebrations like this one,” Tommy Ross, performing the duties of Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition, told the assembled audience Saturday, adding: “As we honor the fallen this Memorial Day Weekend, I’d also like to remember the many service members who made the ultimate sacrifice to keep this great nation free.”

Because of restrictions on large gatherings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 commissionings of USS Vermont (SSN 792) and USS Delaware (SSN 791) were completed administratively, with ceremonies held at later dates in 2021 and 2022 to celebrate the milestones retroactively.

SSN 793 is the third U.S. Navy ship launched to bear the name Oregon, but first in more than a century. The first, named after the Oregon Territory before Oregon became a state, was a brigantine in service from 1841-1845. The second was an Indiana-class battleship commissioned in 1896 and ultimately decommissioned for the final time in 1919.

“As we commission Oregon today, the torch is passed from our storied naval history to the present,” said Ross. “First a brig bearing the name Oregon served as an exploration vessel in the mid-19th century, and later as an Indiana-class battleship, Oregon served in the Spanish-American War and helped destroy (famed Spanish Adm. Pascual Cervera y Topete’s) fleet.

Today, Oregon breaks her flag again and returns to sea, reborn as an extraordinarily capable fast-attack submarine.”

USS Oregon is 377 feet long, has a 34-foot beam and is able to dive to depths greater than 800 feet and operate at speeds in excess of 25 knots. She has a crew of nearly 140 Navy personnel.

“The passion, grit and enthusiasm of Oregon’s crew has carried the ship to sea and were vital to the completion of construction and testing,” said Cmdr. Lacy Lodmell, commanding officer of USS Oregon. “I have been deeply honored to see you grow into a team that is ready to undertake any mission we are assigned. This is without a doubt the finest crew I have ever had the pleasure to serve with.”

The submarine Oregon was previously christened in a traditional ceremony at General Dynamics Corp.’s Electric Boat shipyard in Groton, Connecticut, on Oct. 5, 2019.

Dana L. Richardson, the wife of former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson, is the ship sponsor. During Saturday’s commissioning event, Dana Richardson gave the crew the traditional order to “man our ship and bring her to life,” after which Oregon’s Sailors ceremonially ran aboard the submarine.

Fast-attack submarines are multi-mission platforms enabling five of the six Navy maritime strategy core capabilities – sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security and deterrence. They are designed to excel in anti-submarine warfare, anti-ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare and mine warfare. Fast-attack submarines project power ashore with special operations forces and Tomahawk cruise missiles in the prevention or preparation of regional crises.



Dana Richardson, center, ship sponsor for the Virginia-class submarine USS Oregon (SSN 793), honors the colors alongside Oregon’s commanding officer Cmdr. Lacy Lodmell, left, and Adm. Frank Caldwell, director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, during a commissioning ceremony in Groton, Conn., May 28, 2022.

“Oregon and the other Virginia-class submarines will not only sustain, but exploit our edge in undersea warfare,” said Adm. Frank Caldwell, director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, at the Saturday ceremony. “Soon Oregon will employ her stealth, her flexibility, her superior firepower and her endurance to travel silently throughout the world’s oceans undetected, collecting intelligence, preparing for battle and – if necessary – striking from the deep swiftly without warning to answer the nation’s call.”

Block IV Virginia-class submarines incorporate design changes focused on reduced total ownership cost. By making these smaller-scale design changes to increase the component-level lifecycle of the submarine, the Navy will increase the periodicity between depot maintenance availabilities and increase the number of deployments.

Blocks I-III Virginia-class submarines are planned to undergo four depot maintenance availabilities and conduct 14 deployments. Block IV design changes are intended to reduce planned availabilities by one to three, increasing deployments to 15.

Other speakers at the commissioning ceremony included Kevin Graney, president of General Dynamics Corp.’s Electric Boat shipyard, as well as U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal and U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney of Connecticut. The master of ceremonies was Lt. Cmdr. Collin Hedges, executive officer of the USS Oregon.



Crewmembers attached to the submarine USS Oregon (SSN 793) man the ship during a commissioning ceremony in Groton, Conn., May 28, 2022. SSN 793, the third U.S. Navy ship launched with the name Oregon and first in more than a century, is a flexible, multi-mission platform designed to carry out the seven core competencies of the submarine force.