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Oregon Sentinel

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

142nd Fighter Wing Airmen return from overseas deployment

Photo courtesy of 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron

Members of the 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron pose for a group photo with an F-15 from the 142nd Fighter Wing and a Romanian MiG-21 fighter at Campia Turzii in Romania. Approximately 200 Airmen deployed to Europe as part of a Theater Security Package in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve. The 123rd Fighter Squadron augmented the U.S. Air Forces in Europe's (USAFE) existing efforts in light of Russian intervention in Ukraine. See **Oregon Airmen** on Page 8-9.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Oregon National Guard welcomes new Adjutant General

Story by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Governor Kate Brown (left) administers the oath of office to Oregon's new Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Michael E. Stencel (right), with his wife, Sue Stencel (center), during an investiture ceremony, Nov. 18, in the Governor's Ceremonial Room at the State Capitol.

SALEM, Oregon - Governor Kate Brown officially swore in Oregon Air National Guard Maj. Gen. Michael E. Stencel as the Adjutant General, Oregon, during an investiture ceremony, Nov. 18, in the Governor's Ceremonial Room at the State Capitol. The governor appointed Stencel on Sept. 25 to succeed Lt. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson.

The adjutant general directs, manages, and supervises the Oregon Military Department to include the administration, discipline, organization, training and mobilization of the Oregon National Guard, the Oregon State Defense Force, and the Oregon Office of Emergency Management.

Stencel is also responsible for developing and coordinating all policies, plans and programs of the Oregon National Guard in concert with the governor and legislature of the state. The adjutant general also serves as the governor's homeland security adviser.

"I'm proud to report that the Oregon National Guard has never been a more prepared or more professional force than it is today, due to remarkable leadership and, of course, the dedication of the men and women who serve as Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen," said Governor Brown, during the investiture ceremony. "Today we are continuing that record of excellence."

She thanked Hokanson for his contributions to our state and nation; "Throughout your career you have served the people of Oregon and the people of this country with unparalleled leadership. On behalf of grateful citizens, I want to thank you for your continued service with NORTHCOM and NORAD in ensuring the safety and security of our nation," said Brown.

The governor welcomed Stencel to his new position, "I am very glad and grateful that you chose to accept this new assignment. I am confident that under your leadership and direction we will continue

See **Stencel** on Page 3

Oregon Sentinel

The Oregon Military Department

State Commander in Chief
Governor Kate Brown

The Adjutant General
Maj. Gen. Michael E. Stencel

Interagency Director
Mr. David Stuckey

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Brig. Gen. Steven R. Beach

Asst. Adjutant General - Joint Ops.
Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Silver

Land Component Commander
Brig. Gen. Todd A. Plimpton

Air Component Commander (Interim)
Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Silver

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COMMAND

Take pride in your achievements and continue to improve

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

In my first 180 days as Oregon's new Adjutant General, it gives me great pleasure to say simply, WOW!

As the former Commander of the Oregon Air National Guard, I knew this was a great organization filled with professionals who are ready to accomplish the mission when asked, and always with a positive attitude.

When I was assigned as the Acting Adjutant General, we were immediately asked to support wildfire suppression efforts with our Army Guard aviation assets. This was quickly followed with a request for both Army and Air firefighting ground crews. We then mobilized our CH-47 unit from Pendleton for deployment overseas, completed Version 2 of the Cascadia Playbook rollout, and welcomed home members from the 142nd Fighter Wing from a mobilization to Europe.

This was all while working to upgrade our facilities across the state, working new Net Zero initiatives, assisting our Museum to get off the ground, standing up new units, and many, many other accomplishments.

Now as the Adjutant General, I continue to see remarkable teamwork through our State Partnership Program, the Oregon Youth Challenge Program, search and rescue operations, local community and civic engagements, and the list goes on and on…

As Director of the Oregon Military Department and Commander of the Oregon National Guard, let me say job well done!

Take pride in your accomplishments - each of your individual contributions is what makes our organization a success. This is an impressive organization whose reputation and influence reaches not only across our nation, but also across the globe. I am so proud of the Oregon Guard and all we achieve together.

However, let me take a moment to reintroduce an old adage, "we cannot afford to rest on our laurels." We need to continue to retain, recruit, train, teach, and mentor our best. Nobody comes to work to just be mediocre, we need to be focused on continuous improvement and leaving the organization better than we found it.

We have a bright future ahead of us, but challenges lie ahead. However, if we continue to hold true to our core values – character, competence, courage, and commitment - we will never go wrong.

I look forward to meeting all of you and hearing your thoughts on how I can assist you in doing your job. My door is open 24/7 to provide you support in making the Oregon National Guard the envy of the country.

Central Oregon to Korea, BG Bush serves global mission

Story by Christopher L. Ingersoll, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Peter Burghart

Brig. Gen. Eric Bush (center), Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for U.S. Forces Korea, passes through side-boys onboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS McCampbell (DDG 85) for a ship tour, Sept. 15, in Yokosuka Japan.

SALEM, Oregon – In Central Oregon, Eric Bush is known for his career in law enforcement, where he served for 11 years as Chief of Police in Prineville, a town he has called home since 1986. Now retired from law enforcement, Bush is also known in the area for the Arabian horses he and his wife, Kim, breed and raise at Owl Creek Ranch near the Prineville Reservoir.

However, in the Oregon National Guard, Brig. Gen. Eric C. Bush's career represents a lifetime of service to the state of Oregon and the United States. Since he enlisted in the Army in 1984 as a cavalry scout, his accomplished career is riddled with awards such as a Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal and a Combat Infantry Badge, just to name a few. He was recently awarded the 30-Year Faithful Service Medal in a ceremony, August 31, at the Oregon Military Department in Salem, Oregon.

Four years after he enlisted, he received his commission with the Oregon Army National Guard and served as an armor officer with 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment, and also with 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment.

Bush's role as a commander first began in 1994 as a company commander for D Troop and G Troop, 1-82nd Cavalry Squadron. He became the battalion commander for 821st Troop Command Battalion, an then squadron commander of 1-82 Cavalry Squadron before eventually becoming the commander for the 82nd Rear Operations Center. Finally, in 2008 he became the deputy commander of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) and he deployed with that unit from 2009 to 2010, a position that primed him to become the brigade commander of the 41st IBCT.

Bush was promoted to brigadier general in 2011 as he took on the role of Assistant Adjutant General-Army and Land Component Commander, before taking command of the 82nd Brigade Troop Command.

"I think the opportunities that Citizen-Soldiers have to work, live and train with the Army and Air Guard, are tremendous assets to the military and to the state," Bush said. "I am a product of decades of support from my community, great opportunities, and I would enlist all over again at the age of 18."

Currently, Bush is the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for United States Forces Korea, a job that carries very high stakes.

"Korea is a serious challenge for the United States, and we work hard every day to keep the peace over there, but we are ready for whatever could happen, ready for the worst-case scenario," said Bush.

As the director of operations, known as J3, Bush is tasked with syncing reception, staging and onward movement and integration of U.S. forces entering the Korean Theatre. This includes all of the resources that come with those forces.

During peacetime, he monitors the operational readiness of all United States Forces Korea and supports training exercises as principal coordinator of all joint actions and planning with U.S. Pacific Command and Joint Chiefs of Staff. During wartime, he provides operational direction for ground, naval, air and special operations assigned to United States Forces Korea. He is also tasked with syncing any evacuations in Korea of American citizens and anyone else directed by the State Department, if necessary.

"The mission of the United States and Republic of Korea alliance is to deter aggression, and if deterrence fails, defend South Korea," said Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, Commander, United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command/United States Forces Korea, during a press conference on Oct. 24, 2014. "We deter North Korean aggression by ensuring our forces are ready to fight tonight. Therefore, our focus is on readiness and sustaining and strengthening the alliance."

Bush says one of the biggest challenges of his position in Korea is the sense of the world changing rapidly in the Information Age.

"The world is a changing place," Bush said. "What we do in Korea and how we do it is affected daily by events, not only in Korea but events around the world."

Bush went on to further clarify how those changes can specifically affect U.S. missions in Korea.

"For instance, the President's philosophy on how to balance the Pacific has had an impact on how we look at what we do in Korea in the context of the Pacific region," Bush said. "As the U.S. faces other challenges around the world, our objectives can be challenged as resources are redirected and the national focus changes. So, in a resource-constrained environment, we are in competition with other global challenges."

Bush highlighted that his assignment in Korea allows him to work amongst a staff and team that includes all branches of the military.

"Having those joint assignments is a very important part of a military leader's professional development," he said. "You should learn to work with the other services."

After decades serving in the Oregon National Guard, Bush is confident that the lessons he has learned as a Citizen-Soldier and officer have created a command philosophy that help him to be successful in his mission in Korea.

"My personal philosophy is first, to lead by example," Bush said. "That means I need to have and follow core values that I apply in everything I do in my capacity as a leader."

"Second, I try to create an environment where individuals are empowered to do their jobs and do it well," Bush added. "It has worked very well for me in my career. Very often you will face challenges when you apply a moral compass and core values and how you manage those values and conflicts in the long term will make all the difference for the people you serve and lead."

Bush doesn't take much credit for his success, but rather attributes his career to years of training as a Citizen-Soldier. He encourages others to take advantage of a career in the Oregon National Guard as well.

"It is certainly an honor to be asked to serve at this level and this capacity," Bush said. "I have been blessed for decades now of being able to serve my country as an Oregon National Guardsman. The opportunities that I have been able to realize have been wonderful."

COMMAND

Oregon Air National Guard general retires after 41 years of service

Story by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Oregon – Returning home to Oregon with family and friends, Maj. Gen. Garry C. Dean formally retired after nearly 41 years of military service during a ceremony held in his honor at the Portland Air National Guard (PANG) Base, December 6.

"Maj. Gen. Dean has a long history of leadership with PANG and the Oregon Air National Guard," said Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald, 142nd Fighter Wing Commander. "We're privileged to host an event of this caliber for such a leader of his distinction."

Lieutenant General Joseph L. Lengyel, Vice Chief, National Guard Bureau, accompanied Dean from Washington D.C. and hosted as presiding officer for the ceremony. Major General Dean most recently served as The Special Assistant to the Chief, National Guard Bureau, where he acted in the capacity of Director, National Guard Joint Staff.

Ceremony attendees included Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Silver, interim Commander of the Oregon Air National Guard; Chief Master Sgt. Andy Gauntz, State Command Chief, Oregon Air National Guard; and State Command Sgt. Maj. Shane Lake, Joint Senior Enlisted Leader, Oregon National Guard, and other men and women of the Oregon National Guard.

During the ceremony, Lt. Gen. Lengyel presented The Distinguished Service Medal to Maj. Gen. Dean along with his official Certificate of Retirement from the United States Air Force and Oregon National Guard.

Lengyel said that the first time he met Dean was not at an Air Force endeavor, but rather at the Delta Airlines pilot lounge in Atlanta, Georgia, as they both flew commercially for the airline at the time.

Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Lt. Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel (left), Vice Chief, National Guard Bureau, presents Maj. Gen. Garry Dean (right), Special Assistant to the Chief, National Guard Bureau, with a Certificate of Retirement during his formal retirement ceremony, December 6, at the Portland Air National Guard Base.

"Over the last 10 to 15 years I've worked with him and as a colleague in other capacities. One thing I can say about Garry Dean is that it's never been about him, but rather about him helping grow future leaders, Airmen and organizations," said Lengyel.

Lengyel said he witnessed this first hand when they served together at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, serving as Dean's vice commander at 1st Air Force, Continental United States North American Aerospace Defense Command. The mission of 1st Air Force is to ensure the aerospace control and air defense of the continental United States, U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

"The responsibility is immense, this is our biggest job in the Air National Guard," Lengyel said. "The commander is charged with the air sovereignty and air defense of the United States."

In concluding his remarks, Lengyel described Dean's subsequent assignment and Dean's unique ability at building relationships as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Allied Joint Forces Command in Naples, Italy.

"Who better to bring together a collation of 28 nations, who all have to agree on something before it is done? General Garry Dean of course," Lengyel said.

In his statements, Dean described the experience of working in Italy with other NATO [North American Treaty Organization] partners, "There is no doubt that given the resources, their pilots and officers are as good as ours," he said.

The distinction that Dean found during his two-year assignment, and "took to heart," was the role of the senior enlisted and the total force development within the United States military.

"Airmen and Soldiers who get the job done; the professional expertise, discipline and education of our enlisted corps is what make us special and it's our future," he said.

Dean touched on other duties during his career, from attending the United States Air Force Academy, to his active duty assignments and later becoming a member of the Oregon Air National Guard. He served in various leadership capacities in Oregon from 1990 through 2003 - including his role as the 142nd Fighter Wing Commander from January 2001 through January 2003.

"In the early 1990s we saw a cultural shift, beyond a UTA (Unit Training Assembly) or a normal drill weekend in the National Guard," Dean said.

"This was a seminal moment. It was about building what our nation needed: a sustainable combat reserve," he said. "This development is what our nation has now come to expect of our 54 National Guard states and territories."

Stencel promoted as he takes charge of the Oregon National Guard

Continued from **Front Page**

the remarkable reputation that the Oregon National Guard has as the premiere corps of Citizen-Soldiers and Airman in this nation."

She cited Stencel's extensive background and leadership experience that led to his selection for the position.

"Stencel has tremendous qualifications, both as a citizen and Airman," said Brown. "He has gained a deep understanding of the critical dual roles of the National Guard to respond to emergencies here at home and to serve our nation when called to active duty."

Brown closed her remarks with a vote of confidence for Stencel, "I know that you will carry on the tradition of strong support for the men and women who serve in this great organization and of course their families. May you continue to have grace and compassion for those you lead, those you serve, and for the many people whose lives you will touch in ways both large and small."

Stencel thanked the governor for the opportunity to serve the Soldiers and Airmen of the Oregon National Guard and the citizens of Oregon.

"The privilege to serve as Oregon's 31st Adjutant General is more than I could ever ask for," he said.

Stencel was promoted to the rank of major general in a ceremony, Nov. 17, at the 41st Infantry Division Armed Forces Reserve Center at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas, Oregon.

"I've been fortunate to inherit an incredible culture," said Stencel. "The Oregon National Guard has a long, proud heritage of serving our communities and answering our nation's call, and it has earned a reputation as one of our nation's finest military organizations."

He said the extraordinary reputation of the Oregon National Guard is due to the unwavering commitment of more than 8,000 Soldiers and Airmen of the Oregon National Guard and the state employees of the Oregon Military Department.

Photo by Christopher L. Ingersoll, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Michael E. Stencel receives new rank on his shoulders from his wife, Sue, and son, Nathan, as he is promoted in a ceremony, Nov. 17, at the 41st Infantry Division Armed Forces Reserve Center at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas, Oregon.

"The dedication and ongoing sacrifices made by them and their families make the Oregon National Guard what it is today," said Stencel.

Prior to his selection as Adjutant General, Stencel served as Acting Adjutant General, in a dual position as the Oregon National Guard's Air Component Commander as well as the Air National Guard Assistant to the Commander of 11th Air Force.

Stencel joined the Oregon Air National Guard in April 1984 and received his commission through the Air National Guard Academy of Military Science in December 1984. He holds a rating as a command pilot with nearly 2,000 military flight hours in a wide variety of aircraft including the T-37, T-38, F-4, and F-15.

Throughout his military career, Stencel has served as commander of the Oregon Air National Guard and chief of staff to the Oregon Air National Guard in Salem. He has commanded the 142nd Fighter Wing, where he was responsible for the Aerospace Control Alert mission protecting the skies over the Pacific Northwest. He also served as the battle director in Air Force Central's 609th Air and Space Operations Center, Al Udeid Air Force Base, in Qatar. He has commanded the 142nd Civil Engineering Squadron and the 142nd Mission Support Group prior to serving as the State Director of Operations/A-3 Joint Force Headquarters for the Oregon Air National Guard, where he was the principal adviser on operational readiness and strategic planning for state and federal tasking.

In the civilian sector, Stencel has worked in diverse facets of real estate finance, development, investment, and syndication. He holds three degrees; a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Washington, as well as a Master of Business Administration from Portland State University.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, OMD Public Affairs

Governor Kate Brown stands with Maj. Gen. Michael E. Stencel during his investiture ceremony, Nov. 18, in the Governor's Ceremonial Room at the State Capitol, where she administered his oath of office.

Stencel said the Oregon Military Department is a complex organization with complex missions, which requires an immense amount of coordination and advocacy. He says he's prepared to take on those challenges.

"We can't predict what challenges the future may bring, whether a catastrophic natural disaster or the terrible events that unfolded in Paris … but we can be ready to address them," Stencel said. "We are prepared to respond to crisis and disasters, and proactively engage in building global partnerships that reinforce the security of our nation. We will continue our focus on readiness and emergency preparedness, in our effort to remain faithful to our motto; 'Always Ready, Always There.'"

NEWS

Oregon, Vietnam leaders meet to discuss State Partnership Program plans

Story and photos by
Christopher L. Ingersoll,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

HANOI, Vietnam – The Adjutant General, Oregon, Brig. Gen. (promotable) Michael E. Stencel and the Chairman of Vietnam's National Committee for Disaster, Incident Response, and Search and Rescue (VINASARCOM), Vice Admiral Pham Ngoc Minh, met at the Vietnamese Army Hotel in Hanoi, Vietnam, October 20, to discuss the relationship between VINASARCOM and the Oregon National Guard as emergency managers and to reaffirm their commitment to an enduring and constructive State Partnership.

The relationship between the Oregon National Guard and VINASARCOM as State Partners and the lead military agencies for emergency management in their respective country and state was established in September 2011 with a memorandum of understanding to advance bilateral defense cooperation through U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) and Vietnam Bilateral Defense Dialogue (BDD). The relationship recognizes that building and maintaining capabilities as emergency managers in times of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) is for the benefit of all countries and promotes stability, prosperity and domestic resiliency in the entire region.

The Chairman of Vietnam's National Committee for Disaster, Incident Response, and Search and Rescue (VINASARCOM), Vice Admiral Pham Ngoc Minh and the Adjutant General, Oregon, Brig. Gen. (promotable) Michael E. Stencel (left), exchange gifts as they meet to discuss plans for the State Partnership Program.

Brig. Gen. (promotable) Michael E. Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon, poses for a photo with students following a ribbon cutting ceremony for the grand opening of their new intermediate school in Phu Tinh Village in the Quang Nam Province of Vietnam, October 21. The new school was built in cooperation between the U.S. and Vietnam and has a dual-use function as a shelter during natural disasters. The school's use as an emergency shelter has special significance to the Oregon National Guard as a State Partner with Vietnam's VINASARCOM to mutually bolster disaster response capabilities.

Members of the Oregon National Guard's State Partnership Program meet with key staff of Vietnam's National Committee for Disaster, Incident Response, and Search and Rescue (VINASARCOM) to discuss their partnership as emergency managers, and to reaffirm their commitment to an enduring and constructive State Partnership at the Vietnamese Army Hotel in Hanoi, Vietnam, October 20. The State Partnership Program dialogs seek to solidify future goals and plans for mutual cooperation through knowledge sharing and joint participation in emergency response exercises.

These activities include continuing to co-chair the USPACOM-BDD Disaster Management Working Group; enhancing command and control capacity at national and provincial Disaster Management Coordination Centers; as well as conducting Search and Rescue (SAR) and HADR exchanges, training and exercises in order to operate together and promote mutual understanding and confidence for urban SAR and SAR joint command and control.

They also aim to exchange systems and best practices to enhance disaster response capabilities; explore areas for cooperation to improve response to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) threats with focus in detection, identification and response capabilities; conduct a bi-lateral tabletop exercise in 2016 that will set the conditions for a HADR field exercise in 2017; and strive to conduct future 'SPP Dialogues' annually to identify further cooperation opportunities to strengthen their partnership.

While in Vietnam, Stencel participated as the senior U.S. representative during a ribbon cutting ceremony, October 21, for the grand opening of an intermediate school in Phu Tinh Village in the Quang Nam Province of Vietnam. The school was built in cooperation between the U.S. and Vietnam and has a secondary-use as a shelter during natural disasters.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Pacific Command, and the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam collaborated efforts to help make the new school project possible. The school's dual-use function as an emergency shelter has special significance to the Oregon National Guard as a State Partner with Vietnam's VINASARCOM to mutually bolster disaster response capabilities.

Since 2009, the U.S. Government, through the Overseas Humanitarian Disaster Assistance and Civic Action Program, has spent more than $16 million in constructing schools, clinics, and bridges in many towns and villages throughout Vietnam. In the same period, the U.S. Agency for International Development has provided more than $8 million for disaster risk reduction activities. This year, the United States has committed to spend $5 million to continue humanitarian assistance projects like this school in Vietnam.

Employment assistance program helps Veterans, Families find jobs

Story by Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing,
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

SALEM, Oregon – Service Members often return from deployments to find themselves in difficult times. While overseas, they were doing the most important work they have ever done. Upon returning, they are finding it increasingly more difficult to obtain meaningful work at home.

Recognizing these struggles, the Oregon National Guard has awarded a new contract for the Oregon Service Member and Family Employment and Education Program (OSMF-EEP) to help our heroes secure employment. The program has been fully staffed and is prepared to meet and exceed the expectation and requirements outlined in the Performance Work Statement accepted by the Oregon National Guard.

"The program is designed to provide education and employment resources to Service Members, Veterans and Families in their perspective areas," said Michelle Kochosky, director of Oregon National Guard Service Member and Family Support (SMFS) and program manager for the new employment program. "We are fortunate to have strong partnerships with The Oregon Employment Department, The Oregon Department of Labor, and The Oregon Employment Council."

Employment and Education Counselors (EEC's) are located regionally throughout the state in cities where the majority of Oregon Army and Air National Guard units are geographically located. They operate conveniently in areas where the majority of the population of Service Members resides, and where the employment opportunities are the greatest.

"I feel confident that will make a substantial difference in the retention of our Service Members and the welfare of their Families," said Craig Snitker, who leads the OSMF-EEP program.

Snitker put together a team of four Team Members to cover Springfield, Portland, Bend and Medford, while he operates out of Salem, Oregon.

Snitker works closely with Dawn Taylor, the program lead for Hero to Hired (H2H) and hopes to combine their resources to reach more Veterans and Families in need of help. Working together, they can share employer resources and accrue new employer resources to bolster both programs.

"This combined effort will maximize our efforts and will ultimately help more Soldiers and their Families" Snitker said.

For employment assistance or more information about the program, contact Craig Snitker at (503) 428-8032.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Paul Rushing, JFHQ Public Affairs

An Oregon Army National Guard Soldier participates in a career fair at the Moda Center in Portland, Oregon, March 11, 2015. The event was co-sponsored by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

NEWS

1-168th Aviation deploys to Kuwait for Operation Inherent Resolve

Story by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Capt. William Liebhaber (left), commander, and Spc. Kane Kelley, guidon bearer, lead a formation of Soldiers with 1-168th Aviation, during a mobilization ceremony, October 3, in Pendleton, Oregon. The unit will transport personnel and equipment using CH-47 Chinook helicopters in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

PENDLETON, Oregon - Family, friends and community members gathered to honor Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, during a mobilization ceremony, October 3, at the Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF #2), in Pendleton, Oregon. The ceremony was a send-off for approximately 60 Oregon Soldiers who are deploying to Kuwait in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Oregon Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins addressed the Soldiers on behalf of Governor Kate Brown and all Oregonians during the ceremony, "I am deeply honored to be here today and to have this chance to say how proud we are of all of you as you prepare to embark on a mission that is vital to our long-term security and that of our allies overseas," she said.

The unit will be supporting an operation made up of U.S. and coalition forces that have conducted more than 7,000 airstrikes in Iraq and Syria to defeat ISIS and deny them safe haven. The company will transport personnel and equipment throughout the region using CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

"We're going to support the units that are over in Kuwait, doing some air movement and heavy lift and re-supply of equipment for them," said the unit commander, Capt. William Liebhaber.

In preparation for the deployment, the unit trained and certified with new F-model Chinooks, which have updated electronics and cargo loading systems. The Oregon Army National Guard is in the process of transitioning the new F-models.

"They're great new helicopters with a lot of new features that really help out the pilots and the crew members in dealing with more difficult flight situations," Liebhaber said.

The 1-168th Aviation Regiment has a long tradition of answering the call to duty. They recently provided helicopter support to wild land firefighters during the 2015 fire season in August. The unit has also previously deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom to Afghanistan in 2005 and again in 2010.

"What makes this deployment so extraordinary is how it has become so ordinary – this is a very busy unit!" said Brig. Gen. (promotable) Michael Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon, during the ceremony, referring to multiple deployments and wildfire suppression missions the unit has supported over the years. "Among this group we have five Soldiers who will be on their fourth or fifth deployment. If that doesn't speak to service, I don't know what does."

Photo by Spc. Jhoana Mendez, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade

Oregon Army National Guard crew chiefs with 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, prepare for aerial gunnery in a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, October 26, during mobilization training at Fort Hood, Texas, in preparation for their deployment to Kuwait.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, OMD Public Affairs

Sgt. Anthony Bell, with 1-168th Aviation, holds his daughter, Lindsay, at his mobilization ceremony, October 3, in Pendleton. Bell is among the 60 Oregon Soldiers deployed to Kuwait.

Sgt. August Radke deployed with the 1-168th Aviation to Afghanistan in 2010-11.

"That was just a whole culture shock going to a different world," Radke said of his first deployment.

This time around, he is deploying with his older brother, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jacob Radke.

Jacob Radke previously deployed to Iraq in 2004-05 as a medic unit with the Washington National Guard before joining the Oregon Guard and becoming a pilot.

"I haven't been to Iraq for ten years, and this time it will be in the air as opposed to on the ground," he said. "It will be interesting to see what's changed in ten years and a different perspective from the air."

While many of the Soldiers have deployed before, this will be a new experience for more than a third of them.

Spc. Brandon Bonney has been in the Guard since 2011, but he has never been deployed until now.

"I'm just ready to get it started," he said. "It's the first deployment, so it's going to be a new experience."

The company is comprised of Soldiers from several detachments of the 1-168th Aviation, including Det. 2 Headquarters and Headquarters Company; Det. 1 Bravo Company; Det. 2 Delta Company; and Det. 2 Echo Company. They are deploying with units from other states as part of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade.

"This is an enviable opportunity to apply your skills in a wartime environment, and you have my total admiration for answering this call," Stencel said to the deploying Soldiers. "But with every rewarding endeavor we find that there is an equally large sacrifice, and service within the Army National Guard is no exception."

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, Task Force Long Knife, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), based out of Pendleton, Oregon, conducted aerial gunnery training in their CH-47 Chinook helicopters during their mobilization training at Fort Hood, Texas, October 26. The unit was training for their upcoming deployment to Kuwait, where they will transport personnel and equipment in support of Operatin Inherent Resolve. (Photos by Spc. Kevin Palomera, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade)

FEATURES

Oregon Airman helps upgrade maintenance tracking logistics system

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Brandon Boyd,
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Oregon Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Andrew Saunders, a vehicle management and analysis specialist with the 142nd Fighter Wing, shows off a set of floppy disks used to run the On-Line Vehicle Interactive Management System (OLVIMS), a legacy system that is being phased out of use due in part to Saunders' efforts. Saunders has been testing and teaching others how to use a new Defense Property Accountability System that will eventually replace OLVIMS for vehicle maintainers across the DoD.

PORTLAND, Oregon – If you imagine earnestness, excitement and a quick-to-speak personality, Tech. Sgt. Andrew Saunders would be a model prototype. An avid gamer, PC-based games to be exact, Saunders flies on the edge of social norms and strives to arrange life to fit his definitions.

What happens when an old computer system is slowing you down? If you're someone with the personal momentum of Saunders, a vehicle management and analysis specialist with the 142nd Fighter Wing, you try and figure out how to replace the system. Not just in his squadron, not just in his wing, not even just across the Air Force, but throughout the entire Department of Defense.

On an old machine in the corner of a dusty office at the Portland Air National Guard Base sits the On-Line Vehicle Interactive Management System (OLVIMS). Airmen feed it floppy disks and get printed reports out the other end.

It is a bit of an understatement to call the OLVIMS a legacy system. For the average tech-savvy millennial, life is stuffed with smart phone alerts, web-based applications and instant gratification. For mechanics across the U.S. military, however, work life is a little more involved. Let's put it this way; sending floppy disks via post to fellow mechanics to make the system run is not an uncommon occurrence.

"OLVIMS is very limited, it's a legacy system," said Tech. Sgt. Nick Petchell, a vehicle maintenance mechanic with the 142nd Fighter Wing. "When I went to tech school 11 years ago, we were told 'we're phasing it out.'"

Petchell said his colleague went to tech school 20 years ago and was told the same thing.

Almost 30 years after the creation of OLVIMS, while on active duty, Saunders said he struck up a conversation with Deric Sims, the fleet manager for the Department of Defense. According to Saunders, Sims revealed that another very capable system called the Defense Property Accountability System (DPAS) had been created a few years prior to handle vehicle maintenance operations but it was not well-known, nor well-used in the vehicle maintenance community.

And Saunders said the timing for the new system was right as OLVIMS was set to be decommissioned in April 2016 due to new military reporting requirements.

"The number one obstacle for adoption of the new system is culture change, the old one has been in use longer than most Airmen have been alive," said Saunders.

Despite this obstacle, Saunders said he began to teach himself to use the new system. After serving as a beta-tester for video games in his spare time, he was well-versed in writing in-depth reports, along with screenshots, to help alert software developers to annoying bugs and useful feature requests.

And he began to send the same kinds of reports to the software developers who work on DPAS. Within a short amount of time, Saunders built extensive knowledge and more than 50 pages of documentation about the system.

"I tested the software at Joint Base Andrews, extended testing at multiple bases and started getting sent on TDYs to go teach the new system across the Air Force," said Saunders.

A web-based application, DPAS leapfrogs many of the obstacles inherent in the old system. Aside from obvious usability improvements for maintainers, higher headquarters can use the new system to instantly see the maintenance status of the entire fleet to analyze trends and adjust resources.

According to a presentation written by Sims, many additional features are scheduled to be added to DPAS to help vehicle maintainers and managers prioritize cost and optimize procurement for a more efficient system.

Now as a member of the Oregon Air National Guard, Saunders is putting his skills to use by continuing to train others and also facilitating a pilot-project for the 142nd Fighter Wing on the new DPAS system, the first of its kind.

"We've received the training for the new system, but we're going to be much more involved and hands on over the next few weeks," said Petchell.

Saunders said he plans on pursuing a Bachelor's degree in logistics management from Portland State University in Portland, Oregon.

"I'm just that weird guy who really loves logistics," he said.

Soldiers help injured motorists after witnessing car accident

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Patrick Caldwell,
3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment

Sgt. Robert Hunt (right), a resident of John Day, Oregon, laughs with Sgt. James Hawley (left), a resident of Boise, Idaho, at the Oregon Army National Guard Readiness Center in Ontario, Oregon. Hunt and Hawley, both combat veterans assigned to Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment, were returning home from training in Montana when a traffic accident occurred and they felt compelled to rescue two people severely injured in the car accident.

ONTARIO, Oregon – Even though it was six months ago, Sgt. Robert Hunt still vividly recalls the car crash on a stretch of Interstate 84 near American Falls, Idaho.

A member of Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, Hunt and another member of his unit encountered the deadly accident on the way back from a training stint in Montana, in May 2015.

Hunt, a resident of John Day, Oregon, and fellow Soldier, Sgt. James Hawley, a resident of Boise Idaho, saw the accident unfold. Both Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers said they didn't think twice and immediately stopped and rushed to the scene to help. Hawley was asleep in the vehicle and said he awoke just in time to see the crash.

"When I saw it, it (the vehicle) was still tumbling," Hawley said.

The vehicle was upside down by the time the Snake River Regiment Soldiers reached the scene and two people – a man and a woman – were trapped inside.

"The woman was out of her seat lying on the floor. We checked her pulse," Hawley said.

Hunt said the two Guardsmen were joined by several other people at the accident scene, all of them intent on helping the two injured occupants. While several other people checked on the male driver, Hawley and Hunt worked to get the woman out of the vehicle. The only problem was the passenger side door was stuck.

"So we tried to figure out how to get the door open," Hunt said.

The solution was both simple and effective. Hunt placed his back and shoulder against the car and then lifted. His effort only budged the vehicle but it was enough for the other rescuers to get the door open.

"The woman looked like she had a broken arm," Hunt said.

Once the woman was out of the vehicle, Hunt and Hawley put their combat lifesaver skills to use. As Hunt and several other people helped the woman, Hawley jumped to the other side of the car to assist with the injured driver. An off-duty nurse was helping and Hawley stepped up to hold the man's head. Hawley said it was obvious the driver was in serious distress.

"I held his head straight. Tried to keep his airway open. He was bleeding from his mouth and nose. The nurse was trying to check his vital (signs)," Hawley said.

Within a few minutes Hawley said an Idaho State Police officer arrived and then an ambulance. When the medical personnel took over Hawley and Hunt stepped back from the scene and then returned to their vehicle.

Six months later, Hawley was more focused on the tragic aspects of the incident. While the woman lived, the man behind the wheel died of his injuries.

"It was sad, a sad ordeal," Hawley said. "We did look it up afterwards and found out the guy didn't make it."

The event was a tragic end to a one-week training stint helping a Montana Army National Guard unit conduct gunnery exercises, but both Hunt and Hawley said there was never any doubt about helping out the car crash victims.

"No hesitation. If you are able to, why not?" Hawley asked.

Hunt said neither he nor Hawley thought much about their actions that day after they returned to the interstate and drove toward home.

"It was the right thing to do and I have some training," Hunt said.

Both Soldiers downplayed their role. They point out that there were other people there helping out as well. And they both viewed their actions that day as simply part of the ethos of serving in the 3rd Battalion.

"Being in the 3rd Battalion, you have that mentality to just go," Hunt said.

"It was just business as usual," Hawley agreed.

He also said training is a huge factor.

"It (training) gets rid of the hesitation. You don't hesitate to help. I don't think it matters what the situation is," said Hawley, who is the supply sergeant for Charlie Company.

Hunt, who is the grocery manager at Chester's Market in John Day, said their response had nothing to do with recognition.

"We didn't brag about it. We are not here for glory and fame. We do what we are supposed to do," Hunt said.

The commander of Charlie Company, Capt. Christopher Miller, said their response to help at the crash was no surprise and is right in line with the ethos of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, and the Oregon Army National Guard.

"There is that sense of esprit," Miller said. "I am very proud of them. I would expect our Soldiers to do something like that. I have high-caliber leaders and I'm not surprised they did something like that."

FEATURES

173rd Fighter Wing students hope to earn Eagle patches as aspiring F-15C pilots

Follow the journey from the classroom to the cockpit as six student pilots spend the next seven months enduring the B-Course in the 'Land of No Slack' at the 114th Fighter Squadron, 173rd Fighter Wing. Find out what it takes to become an 'Eagle Driver.'

F-15 photo by Jim "Hazy" Haseltine; Student photos by Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Class 16-ABK began their seven-month journey, November 2, 2015, to earn the F-15 Eagle patch worn by rated pilots. This new class (above) from left is: Capt. Alexander Lisot, Capt. Alex Frank, 1st Lt. Brock McGehee, 1st Lt. Scott McGowen, 1st Lt. Garret Womack, 1st Lt. Colton Buechel. The 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon, is home to the sole F-15C training school house for the United States Air Force.

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

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon – The 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field is home to the sole F-15C training school house for the United States Air Force. The wing's daily mission is ushering prospective F-15C pilots into fighter squadrons at Kadena Air Base in Japan and Royal Air Force Lakenheath in the United Kingdom, as well as a number of Air National Guard units who fly the Eagle.

Over the next seven months, we will follow a new class of aspiring F-15C pilots from their arrival at the 173rd Fighter Wing to graduation in what is commonly referred to as the 'B-Course' or basic course.

Beginning with academics, we will watch these students wrestle with what many say is the most difficult training program in the U.S. Air Force. Although the main thrust of the course is evident, training them to be fighter pilots, what makes the course so challenging is less evident.

Instructors say the cost of the program is nothing less than constant and endless hours of preparation in order to earn the right to be called an 'eagle driver.'

Over the course of this series, we will learn what skills students must perfect to be successful in the cockpit, and what personal characteristics make it possible in the first place.

Welcome to the first day:

The first day for Class 16-ABK starts like any other as the new students make their way to the classroom for the very first academic session, a welcome really ... and a warning.

Lt. Col. Alaric Michaelis, incoming commander of the 173rd Operations Support Squadron, extends the first welcome to this group and references being in the student's shoes.

"You guys are coming in, just like I was some 16 years ago and I was thinking 'this is the biggest day of my life, this is what I worked for all these years to get to this point.' What this really is ... this is the most difficult thing you'll ever do in your life, and you've done a lot just to get here," he said.

This pronouncement doesn't elicit any signs of apprehension from the six new students, ranging from 24 to 31 years old, listening. Later, each of them characterizes that although they realize it's going to be difficult they are anxious to get started, "to start the uphill climb" in the words of the newly minted class leader, Capt. Alex Frank.

The rest of the students consist of one Air National Guard pilot, 1st Lt. Scott McGowen, a former enlisted crew chief from Barnes Air National Guard Base in Massachusetts, and the active duty pilots bound for overseas assignments - Capt. Alexander Lisot, 1st Lt. Colton Buechel, 1st Lt. Garret Womack, and 1st Lt. Brock McGehee.

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

Maj. Adam Gaudinski, an F-15 instructor pilot with the 173rd Fighter Wing, welcomes the newest class of Basic Course F-15 student pilots at Kingsley Field, in Klamath Falls, Oregon, November 2, 2015. Guadinski is the class flight commander, responsible for guiding these six students through the process of earning their Eagle patch over the next seven months.

The day gets on in earnest when Maj. Adam Gaudinski, the class flight commander, takes control of the room and lays out the ground rules on everything from taking leave (he doesn't recommend it) to attending gatherings known as Roll Calls (he does recommend it). A roll call is an informal gathering of pilots where the history of the F-15 community is shared along with tactical lessons learned in a tradition dating back to World War I.

He quickly makes the case that with the chaos growing in the Middle East, an increasingly aggressive Russian presence on the world's stage, defiance in Iran, and more saber rattling in North Korea and China, the graduates of Class 16-ABK can expect to fly into harm's way scant months after graduation.

Gaudinski plays both 'good cop' and 'bad cop.' He briefs everything from ground safety to surviving in a high-risk, tactical environment. He stares at them pointedly and uses pointed language while describing the measure he will take of them by course completion.

He says bluntly, "the stark reality of this business is kill or be killed."

He tells them at one point they will be scared. And finally, he repeatedly offers whatever assistance he can provide to them, at any time, to include the middle of the night.

The rest of the themes seem normal for any military instruction, including teamwork, which Gaudinski repeatedly returns to, saying that class cohesion is a factor in the highest performing classes. Finally, he stresses humility and credibility, the need for a thick skin, and promises that, "We are going to rough you up while you are here, but this is meant to make you the best in the world."

Gaudinski sums it up saying, "Other people are training right now to kill you. I won't let them have that opportunity and neither will you."

With that, the first three academic hours are in the books and crossed off the list, leaving 277.85 academic hours remaining before graduation.

Over the next seven months, Class 16-ABK will move from the classroom to the cockpit. We will follow their progress, examining some of the inherent challenges, and gaining a greater understanding of what the 'Land of No Slack' teaches these fledgling 'eagle drivers.'

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

Maj. Adam Gaudinski (right) briefs an F-15 student pilot with unclassified information; he says he wears this quizzical expression quite often while teaching students about the airframe. Guadinski is the flight commander for the newest 'B-Course' class at the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

> ***"Other people are training right now to kill you. I won't let them have that opportunity and neither will you."***
>
> - Maj. Adam Gaudinski,
> B-Course Flight Commander

FEATURES

Oregon Airmen return from overseas deployment in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve

Story by
Tech. Sgt. John Hughel,
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Oregon – Nearly 200 Airmen from the 142nd Fighter Wing returned home and were formally recognized during a demobilization ceremony, November 6, following their deployment to Eastern Europe in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR).

"Our Oregon National Guardsmen created history with this deployment," said Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald, 142nd Fighter Wing commander. "I couldn't be more proud of the men and women of the 142nd Fighter Wing."

The Airmen deployed in June to Camp Turzii, Romania, and Kecskement Air Base, Hungary, as part of a Theater Security Package (TSP) known as the 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron (EFS). The squadron included a total of 12 F-15C/D Eagles, augmenting the U.S. Air Forces in Europe's (USAFE) existing efforts in light of Russian intervention in Ukraine. The 123rd EFS trained alongside North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners to strengthen interoperability and to demonstrate U.S. commitment to the security and stability of Europe.

As the keynote speaker for the ceremony, Oregon Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins remarked on the significance and scope of the mobilization.

"This was the unit's largest deployment to Eastern Europe. Your presence alongside NATO forces strengthened our nation's capabilities to carry out joint operations and bolstered our continuous commitment to peace and stability," she said.

Also in attendance at the ceremony were U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader, and Brig. Gen. (promotable) Michael E. Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon, among additional state and other elected officials.

"In addition to flying a record number of sorties while deployed, you were true ambassadors for America," said Stencel. "Your interaction with the Romanian people contributed to the larger international effort."

As the commander of the 123rd EFS, Lt. Col. Sean Sullivan led the unit during the OAR mobilization. He said that the 90-day deployment gave his Airmen the opportunity to integrate with the U.S. Air Force active duty and European coalition partners.

Above: Family members and co-workers greet the first F-15 Eagle assigned to the 123rd Fighter Squadron, 142nd Fighter Wing, as it returns from Romania to the Portland Air National Guard Base, Sept. 27. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Right: Oregon Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins (left), stands with Lt. Col. Sean Sullivan (right), commander of the 123rd Fighter Squadron, as the 142nd Fighter Wing flag is presented during a demobilization ceremony to welcome the unit home, Nov. 6, at the Portland Air National Guard Base. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

"Operation Atlantic Resolve allowed us to show our dedication and presence while promoting peace and stability in the region," Sullivan said.

The distance from Oregon created several unique challenges from time adjustments, language barriers, air space considerations and working outside the normal supply chain. The maintenance staff worked closely with the Logistics Readiness Squadron (LRS) team to obtain supplies both from established supply and other Eagle communities in Europe.

"The airplanes did great; our maintainers did an outstanding job as the biggest challenge came in acquiring parts," Sullivan said. "Our LRS team did a stellar job, just like they do when we are at home."

Sullivan said the unit flew just over 500 sorties total, more than 500 hours, working on different types of missions.

"In Romania, we flew with their MiG-21s and Puma helicopters; sometimes integrated with them in planned assignments and other times we flew against them to support their mission," he said.

After leaving active duty three years ago and joining the 142nd Fighter Wing, Maj. Mac Young was one of many Redhawk pilots who signed up for the OAR deployment.

Young said that even though Camp Turzii is a smaller airfield with fewer established structures than Portland Air National Guard Base, it was able to handle all 12 F-15 Eagles the unit maintained during the deployment.

"It was definitely a bare bones base, as we were working mostly out of tents set up there, yet maintenance, fire, life support and other operations staff were able to get the job done," he said.

The TSP was a six-month active duty request that the 142nd Fighter Wing and the 125th Fighter Wing, Florida Air National Guard, broke down into two 90-day rotations; Florida taking the first half and Oregon the latter half.

"Florida took six of our jets along with six of their own, and eventually they dropped the jets off in Romania from Bulgaria where they had been assigned, and we took over the rest of the deployment from there," Young said.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Col. Paul Fitzgerald (left), 142nd Fighter Wing commander, U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici and U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader (center) welcome home Master Sgt. Rebecca Shouldis (right) and other members of the 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, Nov. 6, at PANG Base.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Oregon Air National Guard members from the 142nd Fighter Wing reunite with their families, Oct. 2, at the Portland Air National Guard Base after returning from a deployment to Romania with the 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron. More than 200 Oregon Airmen deployed in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

Left: Capt. Joshua Hovanas, assigned to the 123rd Fighter Squadron, 142nd Fighter Wing, greets his wife with flowers after landing at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Sept. 27. Hovanas flew one of the first of four F-15 Eagles returning from Romania to Portland following the unit's deployment in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Below: Staff Sgt. Joshua Boelter, poses with his dog, Luna, that he adopted from Romania. Three Oregon Airmen befriended dogs during their deployment and were able to adopt them through SPCA International and Operation Baghdad Pups Worldwide. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Left: Capt. Ryan Shuck, assigned to the 123rd Fighter Squadron, 142nd Fighter Wing, greets his wife and children after returning from Romania to the Portland Air National Guard Base, Sept. 27. Shuck flew one of the first of four F-15 Eagles returning from Romania to Portland following the unit's deployment in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

Young noted the operations began slowly to familiarize the unit to the area, but the squadron quickly became fully engaged in the mission.

"We wanted to make sure everything was good to go, that our maintenance staff had what they needed and to acquaint ourselves with the local airfield operations, local procedures, and local weather conditions," Young said.

While deployed, members of the squadron raised more than $3,500 dollars to provide backpacks filled with clothing and toiletries for orphans who lived near their deployed airbase. The Airmen visited with the orphans on two separate occasions.

"Beyond the strategic show of resolve, as Citizen-Airmen you demonstrated your commitment to community," said Stencel. "There is no doubt that the Airmen of the 142nd Fighter Wing left an indelible mark upon the communities where you served."

A few of the Airmen were also able to adopt stray dogs and have them shipped home to Oregon through non-profit animal rescue organizations.

As the mission concluded, Airmen, jets and equipment returned to Oregon in late September with the last members returning home in mid-October. The demobilization ceremony capped a milestone for the 142nd Fighter Wing's lineage and was noted by Atkins in her closing remarks.

"You are part of a long line of Guardsmen. You add the stories of your deployment to a history of service, dedication and courage in the face of hostile forces and security threats," she said. "What an impressive job you did."

Airmen bring smiles to Romanian orphans

Story by
Capt. Angela Walz,
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Oregon – Airmen from the 142nd Fighter Wing (142nd FW) deployed with the 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron (123rd EFS) at Campia Turzii, Romania, raised more than $3,500 dollars to provide backpacks filled with clothing and toiletries for orphans who live near their deployed airbase.

The smiles on the faces of the children who received the backpacks offered a sense of mission accomplishment and justification to the Airmen as they neared the end of their six-month deployment to the region.

"This was the best day I've had here," said Lt. Col. Sean Sullivan, commander of the 123rd EFS. "Our troops from Oregon really made a difference with a local Romanian orphanage."

Overall, the Airmen raised 14,000 lei (approximately $3,500 U.S. dollars) to buy necessities for the children, and had the opportunity to spend the day on two different occasions with them.

Personnel at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, organized the initial visit to the orphanage. Portland-based Guardsmen with the 142nd Maintenance Group who were deployed to Campia Turzii planned a second event on September 19 to deliver the backpacks.

Airman 1st Class Devin Wulle, a 142nd FW F-15 Eagle crew chief; Staff Sgt. Tristan Janini, a 142nd FW electrical/environmental specialist; and Master Sgt. Joanne Lorden, a 142nd Maintenance Group training manager, planned the donation.

"The original goal was 10,000 lei," said Wulle. "We met that, and with the additional money ... we were able to go above and beyond and purchase cold weather clothing. Our unit raised over 14,000 lei!" he said.

In addition to clothing, each backpack also contained a toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, body spray and wash, a loofa sponge, shampoo and conditioner, a hairbrush and even a candy bar for each child.

The Oregon Airmen, along with active-duty U.S. Air Force Airmen from the 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, served in various roles as part of a Theater Security Package (TSP) while forward deployed to Campia Turzii, Romania, as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve. The combined TSP unit, known as the 159th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, included a total of 12 aircraft and approximately 200 Airmen. These were the first Air National Guard units supporting the TSP mission in Europe, and the 142nd Fighter Wing's first unit deployment to Europe.

"Whether at home or abroad, we're always ready, always there," said Sullivan. "The National Guard is always on mission."

Photo courtesy of 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron

Senior Master Sgt. Pam Pitman, assigned to the 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, pauses for a photograph with children at a local orphanage near Campia Turzii, Romania, Sept. 19, 2015. Airmen from the 123rd raised $3,500 to provide the children with backpacks filled with clothing, toiletries, cold weather gear, and treats for each child.

OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Combat Operations Group realigns under the Oregon fighter wings

Story by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel,
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Photo courtesy Oregon Air National Guard Combat Operations Group

Members of the 116th Air Control Squadron (ACS), the 125th Special Tactics Squadron (STS), the 123rd Weather Flight (WF) and the 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron (ATCS) pose for a group photo. These four separate units comprised the Combat Operations Group, but were recently realigned under the command and control of the Oregon Air National Guard's two fighter wings.

PORTLAND, Oregon – Over the past 13 years, four separate Oregon Air National Guard units have comprised the Combat Operations Group (COG), distinct in their individual responsibilities, yet linked by their common combat communications mission.

As the new fiscal year began on October 1, 2015, Oregon COG units – the 116th Air Control Squadron (ACS), the 125th Special Tactics Squadron (STS), the 123rd Weather Flight (WF) and the 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron (ATCS) – were realigned under the Oregon Air National Guard's two fighter wings. The 116th ACS, 125th STS and 123rd WF now fall under the command and control of the 142nd Fighter Wing Operations Group, in Portland, Oregon. The 270th ATCS is now assigned to the 173rd Fighter Wing Operations Group, at Kingsley Field, in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

The 270th ATCS is located at Kingsley Field and the 116th ACS is located at Camp Rilea, in Warrenton, Oregon. The 123rd WF and 125th STS are located at the Portland Air National Guard Base. The realignment is administrative, for command and control purposes, and does not require the units to move physical duty locations.

The 123rd Weather Flight Change of Command ceremony, held at the Portland Air National Guard Base on Sept. 13, symbolized one of the last official formalities of the Combat Operations Group, as COG Commander Col. Mark Crosby presided over the event and remarked on the accomplishments and alterations ahead for the four units.

"It has been my distinct honor to command this group and as these changes can be problematic, I know the Airmen of the Combat Operations Group will meet and exceed every challenge," said Crosby.

After introducing new 123rd WF Commander Maj. Joseph Lantai, Crosby highlighted the career of retiring Lt. Col. Matt Doggett during his tenure as the WF commander.

"During nearly 10 years as the unit commander, Matt [Lt. Col. Doggett] has deployed or been part of many significant moments in the COG's history," Crosby said.

He then listed several missions, including hurricane relief following Katrina and Rita in 2005; missions supporting overseas contingency operations; as well as direct support by the 123rd during Operation Unified Response, which assisted with relief efforts following the January 12, 2011 earthquake in Haiti.

Inheriting the legacy and triumphs of the COG will now rest with Col. Adam Sitler, 142nd Fighter Wing Operations Group Commander, as the three units move under the Wing's command.

"The challenges are administrative, but really this is an opportunity to broaden our mission as we understand the battle rhythm of these well-established organizations," said Sitler.

Prior to the realignment under their respective fighter wings, the four COG units had a series of support agreements in place that allowed them to receive services and mission support. These agreements are no longer, which streamlines efficiencies to help save time and resources.

As three of the COG units become part of the 142nd Operations Group, Sitler said there was a sense of anticipation about adding nearly 280 new members.

"I am, by nature, a consensus builder and educator, so embracing change and building on our well-established mission set is exciting," he said.

With a broadened capability portfolio, the Operations Group may have some degree of learning curve issues, but Sitler said that if he does his job right, no members below the command level would be able to tell the difference.

"These are three high-performing units and we should be able to parachute into this high-speed train and keep going," he said.

Having key personnel in place also helps reinforce the union. Sitler pointed out that several important noncommissioned officers (NCOs) from the COG would be instrumental in helping leadership grow.

"Both Master Sergeants Ashley Kennedy and Rebecca Burt, along with newly-promoted Chief Master Sgt. [Brent] Cavanias, are key NCOs that are well-established leaders and have a good understanding of issues that affect Airmen and operation readiness," said Sitler. "We're always on mission."

As Chief Cavanias transitions as the new Superintendent of the Operations Group, the previous Senior NCO of the COG, Chief Master Sgt. Chris Roper, has become the new 142nd Fighter Wing Command Chief.

Roper described his role as the Senior Enlisted Advisor for two of the geographically separated COG units during his tenure.

"It was a real eye-opener for me to see how similar, yet at the same time, how different the 270th [Air Traffic Control Squadron] and the 116th [Air Control Squadron] mission sets are," said Roper.

Roper said he feels that he can help facilitate the transfer of the 'COG North units' into the Fighter Wing and echoed Sitler's sentiments about the other COG leaders.

"What a huge bonus for us to have Chief Cavanias, as he was a member of the 125th STS for many years; through deployments and other state missions, he knows what their squadron can bring to the table," said Roper.

Roper said he also hopes to help current 142nd Fighter Wing Commander Paul Fitzgerald recognize some of the ranges of mission sets that Airmen from the COG will add to the Wing's expanded capabilities.

"This has been a really smooth transition and all of the units are highly functioning organizations. Just look at the recently announced Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards," Roper pointed out.

The Air National Guard recently announced that the former COG units – the 125th STS, 123rd WF, 116th ACS, and 270th ATCS – were all recipients of the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for 2014. Along with the 142nd Fighter Wing and 173rd Fighter Wing, these Oregon units made up six of only 53 units out of the entire U.S. Air Force to be selected for this distinction. In addition, the Oregon Air National Guard Headquarters earned the U.S. Air Force Organizational Excellence Award for 2014.

"These are all positive changes; in the number of new people, heightened mission sets, and a really good group of professionals in place going forward," Roper said.

19th Air Force commander visits 173rd

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

Capt. Ryan Reeves (left), 173rd Fighter Wing F-15 pilot, and Maj. Gen. James Hecker (right), 19th Air Force commander, walk off the flight line following their flight in an F-15 Eagle at Kingsley Field, in Klamath Falls, Oregon, November 19. Hecker is a former F-15 Eagle pilot and had the chance to get back into the seat of an Eagle during his visit to the 173rd Fighter Wing. Hecker spent two days at Kingsley Field meeting with the Airmen and learning about the wing's mission.

142nd FW Airmen visit kids in the hospital

Photo by Master Sgt. Shelly Davison, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Members of the 142nd Fighter Wing spent the day with some of the guests at Shriners Children's Hospital, in Portland, Oregon, December 8. The Airmen visited with the children and they played some games together. They handed out F-15 fighter jet pictures and 142nd Fighter Wing uniform patches so the kids could remember their visit with fighter jet pilots. A highlight for the kids was the chance to try on a real fighter pilot helmet.

OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD

142nd Fighter Wing assessed by Air Combat Command inspection

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

PORTLAND, Oregon – The 142nd Fighter Wing hosted the Air Combat Command (ACC) Inspector General team at the Portland Air National Guard Base, August 13-18, for a Unit Effectiveness Inspection (UEI) designed to improve mission readiness and educate Airmen amidst a new inspection process.

Badged inspectors roamed the base, interviewed Airmen of the 142nd and provided guidance during the planned UEI.

The inspection was the first outside inspection of the 142nd Fighter Wing under the new Air Force Inspection System (AFIS), which mandates consistent, year-round assessment and self-reporting at the lowest organizational levels. The new approach lays in contrast to the previous inspection model, which was much more focused on top-down evaluation.

Col. Peter J. Milohnic, team chief for the ACC Inspector General (IG) Team, expressed the paradigm shift of this new inspection approach during an inspection kick-off meeting on base.

"We're here to improve your process through education, help you find that greatest risk to mission of noncompliance, evaluate your CCIP, and provide that independent evaluation," said Milohnic.

The inspection focused on four key areas: resource management, leadership, process improvement and the ability to execute the mission. These four focus areas were mirrored by the 142nd Fighter Wing Commander Col. Paul Fitzgerald as being key priorities for the organization and have been integrated into the newly developed fighter wing strategic plan.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Russell L. Mack, Headquarters Air Combat Command Inspector General, speaks to members of the 142nd Fighter Wing at the start of a Unit Effectiveness Inspection (UEI) Aug. 14, at the Portland Air National Guard Base.

According to Milohnic, the key to the new inspection process is education and clear communication between the IG team and the wing.

"We get our data through observations and Airman-to-inspector-general sessions (ATIS) to build our report, and more importantly to get you the data that you need about your wing," said Milohnic.

ACC Inspector General, Brig. Gen. Russell L. Mack, provided a broader perspective and context for the new inspection system.

"We as an Air Force provide our nation with global vigilance, global reach and global power. And we do that at the drop of a hat," said Mack. "I have been charged to make sure we look at (fighter) wings to make sure that you are doing the best you can, given the resources you have."

The new inspection process will provide a series of findings to the 142nd Fighter Wing upon completion and will cover key benchmarks, strengths, recommended improvement items, deficiencies and observations. The findings regarding the management of resources will be broken out into two parts, covering the adequacy of resources and the stewardship of resources at the wing level, said Milohnic.

Upon completion of the inspection, the IG team was charged with rating both the fighter wing and higher headquarters based on a five-tier grading scale designed to measure the wing's effectiveness and the ability of higher headquarters to provide adequate resources.

Throughout the inspection, the IG team reiterated that the focus of this inspection is to provide visibility and learning opportunities for all involved and to assist the fighter wing in identifying areas at the greatest risk of noncompliance.

As the inspection concluded on August 18, Fitzgerald addressed members of the wing to offer feedback with the marks. He also took time to acknowledge some of the superior performers from the process.

"This was an inspection with a four-year look back with the metric the [inspection team] have now," he said. "Overall I have to say this new system is a breath of fresh air as we learn to inspect ourselves and run this program."

As the program matures and broadens, the wing will have a regularly-scheduled capstone inspection in four more years.

Fitzgerald said the unit was given an 'effective rating' with the new assessment guidelines and that the entire organization was heading in the right direction in every group that was inspected.

"I know we're outstanding - The Redhawks are outstanding in everything we do," said Fitzgerald.

Airmen enhance public speaking skills

Story and photo by
1st Lt. Chelsi Spence,
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Oregon – Members of the 142nd Fighter Wing spent two days learning speech writing and delivery techniques from an industry expert during a presentation at the Portland Air National Guard Base, December16-17.

Dr. Rosemary King, a former speechwriter for Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and two Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke to Airmen about the importance of body language and speech delivery.

"How well you speak matters," said King during the opening remarks for her presentation.

King highlighted six specific areas while preparing for a speech. The first day of training provided information on structure and delivery of speeches.

"The three take-a-ways I want you to remember about structure are to keep it simple, keep it short and keep it easy to follow," King said.

King emphasized the importance of looking natural while giving a speech and suggested the best way to know how you look when giving a speech is to record yourself. If you are a pacer, put newspaper on the ground while you practice and listen to the crinkling of the paper. That will help you to stop going back and forth, she said.

The second day of training focused on audiences, headlines, storytelling and slides. King mentioned the importance of knowing your audience and finding the common ground between you and them.

"The bottom-line when it comes to audiences, your message may not change, but your approach should," said King.

She also emphasized the need for an attention-grabbing headline because that is what people remember as they leave. After a few more tips and tricks, King split the Airman into four groups and had them practice the skills they learned by having them address the group on several different topics including why they serve.

Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald, 142nd Fighter Wing commander, presents Dr. Rosemary King with a litho in appreciation for her two-day training on speech writing and delivery techniques held at the Portland Air National Guard Base, December 17. King's presentation skill training is the most recent contribution to the Wing's ongoing mentorship program.

"Dr. King spent two days with us giving us fantastic tools to help us in the public speaking arena," said Col. Paul T. Fitzgerald, 142nd Fighter Wing commander. "Here is an individual who wrote speeches and coached leaders at the highest levels within the Department of Defense and she came to our Wing to share her advice."

King's presentation skill training is the most recent contribution to the Wing's ongoing mentorship program.

"Public speaking is a skill set that we use on a daily basis around here," said Fitzgerald. "Whether we make comments at a staff meeting or a major presentation, public speaking is an area where even the very best of us have room for improvement. This is what our mentorship program is all about - helping Airman at all ranks to become the very best leaders in their field."

King is a retired Air Force officer who is also a published author with more than 20 years of communications, leadership and program management experience. She has 10 years of experience writing speeches for the Secretary of Defense, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Senators, and CEOs. During times of war, she has written more than 250 speeches a year for the nation's top ranking defense officials.

173rd FW thanks spouses with ride

The spouse of a 173rd Fighter Wing maintainer gives a thumbs up as she straps into an F-15C in preparation for a high-speed taxi ride arranged for spouses of maintenance group members, Oct. 4, at Kingsley Field. Twenty spouses experienced the result of their significant others' work as a way to thank them for their support.

Story and photo by
Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon – Twenty spouses of 173rd Fighter Wing Airmen climbed into the back seat of an F-15 aircraft for a taxi ride down the runway on the morning of family day at Kingsley Field, October 4.

The event served as a morale builder, helping family members to see firsthand the result of their loved one's efforts.

"It's a little tough logistically, but the morale value makes it worth it," said Col. Jeffrey Smith, 173rd Maintenance Group commander.

The event organizer, Senior Master Sgt. Brian Stroup, said the idea was to showcase the excellent work the maintenance group does day-in and day-out.

"I'm very proud of what we do and wanted to share the experience across the entire maintenance group," added Stroup.

The morning began with each rider getting suited up and then attending a pre-flight brief to familiarize them with getting into the aircraft.

Following the training, the wives, husbands and pilots stepped to the jets. Pilots went through their pre-flight routines, just like any sortie, and crew chiefs readied jets for rollout. With engines spooled up, the crew chief marshaled the jet out of parking and saluted the pilot and spouse in the back seat.

The jets rolled down the taxiway to the main runway where they kicked on the afterburner for a short blast, which often lifted the nose to the sky before settling back to a rollout.

With the relatively large wing surface and powerful engines, pilots have to keep their F-15 Eagles on a short leash; anything beyond a short burst of afterburner would put the aircraft in the air and that was not permitted for this activity. Even so, the riders said they got a taste of the power of the aircraft and for the work that their significant others' do on a daily basis.

"What an amazing day!" said Tracy Ricketts. "Thank you to all of the people who made it possible for me to see firsthand how many exceptionally talented personnel contribute to the success of Kingsley. After 14 years, I am so proud to be a part of such a wonderful base where family and community are clearly valued so much."

FEATURES

Regional Training Institute Soldiers first to receive instructor badges

Story and photo courtesy
Maj. Timothy Merritt,
249th Regional Training Institute

SALEM, Oregon – The first four Soldiers in Oregon to receive an Army Instructor Badge (AIB) were recognized in a ceremony, October 5, during the weekly Army Status Brief (ARSB) at the Oregon Military Department, in Salem, Oregon.

The first four Oregon Soldiers to receive the prestigious award were Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Austin, Staff Sgt. Larry Watkins, Staff Sgt. Glenn Breivogel, and Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Greenwood, all members of the 249th Regional Training Institute (RTI).

The presentation was made before Col. Christian Rees, Chief of Staff – Army, who was conducting the ARSB meeting; State Command Sgt. Maj. Shane Lake, who spoke about the importance of the RTI mission; and Brig. Gen. Todd Plimpton, Land Component Commander, who was conferenced in via telephone, congratulated the recipients.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Members of the 249th Regional Training Institute (RTI) pose for a photo following a ceremony awarding the first Army Instructor Badges (AIB) to Oregon Soldiers, October 5, at the Oregon Military Department in Salem, Oregon. From left: Maj. Timothy Merritt, Command Sgt. Maj. Kerry Boggs, Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Austin, Staff Sgt. Larry Watkins, and Staff Sgt. Glenn Breivogel, all with the 249th RTI, and State Command Sgt. Maj. Shane Lake. Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Greenwood (not pictured) was also awarded the AIB.

The Army Instructor Badge is a new award designed to promote instructor achievement.

The AIB is a new award designed to promote instructor achievement through personal and professional growth. The very first AIBs were awarded July 17, 2014, to seven active duty Soldiers in Alexandria, Virginia, for their participation in the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's (TRADOC) Instructor Development Program.

Watkins first learned about the AIB and quickly became a subject matter expert for the award. He personally contacted the TRADOC AIB Proponent, clarified some regulatory questions and ensured that Command Sgt. Maj. Kerry Boggs, Commandant of the RTI, was delegated the authority to approve the award for Oregon Soldiers.

There are numerous qualifications required to earn the AIB. Soldiers submitted for consideration must have completed Army Basic Instructor (ABI) and Small Group Instructor (SGI) training; their TRADOC Instructor Certification; conducted 80 hours of instruction as the primary instructor, as well as passed two successful observations for Basic Instructor Recognition Board.

Watkins was insistent that Greenwood should be the first Soldier recognized for the award in Oregon. However, Greenwood was not able to attend the ceremony in Salem due to a work conflict.

"He's an M-Day [traditional part-time] Soldier," said Watkins, "He's been here longer than any of us and certainly met the requirements before we did."

Watkins went on to express his confidence that additional AIBs would be presented during the upcoming year.

"This is a brand new award and we are working hard to scrub our records, and award badges to all who have earned it," he said

The RTI continues to play a key role in meeting the increasing demands for training in the western region. Recognizing the hard work that the Instructors do all year long is just one more example of how the RTI is rapidly transforming into a premier training center.

Soldiers compete in the statewide Best Warrior competition

Photo by Sgt. Erin J. Quirke, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

1. Fifteen Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers from units throughout the state participated in the grueling, annual Best Warrior competition, Sept. 24-26, at Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Oregon. The winner of Non-commissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year is Sgt. Joseph Habecker (bottom row, third from left), of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment. The winner of Soldier of the Year (SOY) is Spc. Conner Breedlove (bottom row, third from right), of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment.

Photo by Sgt. Erin J. Quirke, 41st IBCT Public Affairs

2. Soldiers swim in the ocean near Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Oregon, as part of a timed event during the Best Warrior competition, Sept. 26.

Photo by Sgt. Aaron Ricca, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

3. Spc. Brandee Dudzic, from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, tries to reassemble various weapons while blindfolded for the 'Pandora's Box' event during the Best Warrior competition, Sept. 25.

Photo by Master Sgt. Thomas Hovie, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

4. Staff Sgt. Jacob Sams, with Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, takes aim at a target during the marksmanship portion of the Best Warrior competition, Sept. 25.

Photo by Sgt. Aaron Ricca, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

5. Sgt. Joseph Habecker, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, performs an 'Australian Drop' rappel from a 70-foot tower during the Best Warrior competition, Sept. 25.

6. An Oregon Army National Guard Soldier races towards the finish line during a timed event as part of the Best Warrior competition, Sept. 26.

Photo by Sgt. Erin J. Quirke, 41st IBCT Public Affairs

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Oregon Silver Jackets awarded for flood mitigation

Story by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Portland District

Photo by Brian Murphy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

From left to right: Dennis Sigrist, state hazard mitigation officer for Oregon; Cindy Thrush, section chief, river and hydrologic engineer, UACE-Portland District; Karen Durham-Aguilera, director of contingency operations and homeland security for USACE; Andy Bryant, service hydrologist NOAA's National Weather Service, Portland office; and Ryan Cahill, hydraulic engineer, USACE-Portland District; pause for a photo with the 2015 Silver Jackets State Team of the Year award, Dec. 3, at the South Bridge Conference Center in South Bridge, Mass., during the 2015 Flood Risk Management national workshop.

The Oregon Silver Jackets, an interagency team that addresses flooding emergencies and flood preparedness within the state, was recently named the national 2015 Silver Jackets Team of the Year.

The Silver Jackets is a national initiative under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Flood Risk Management Program, which leverages the resources of state and federal agencies to prepare and respond to flood emergencies. Silver Jackets partnerships allow agencies to coordinate actions before, during and after a flood event.

The Oregon Silver Jackets Team is a sub-committee of the State Interagency Hazard Mitigation Team, chaired by the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The collaborative team included contributions by OEM, Department of Land Conservation and Development, Department of Water Resources, Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Federal Emergency Management Agency Region X, the U.S. Geological Survey, National Weather Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and USACE Districts.

Karen Durham-Aguilera, the director of contingency operations and Office of Homeland Security, USACE Headquarters, notified Northwestern Division Commander Brig. Gen. Scott Spellmon of the award. She said the Oregon team is an exemplary model of the Silver Jackets program.

"I commend this team," said Durham-Aguilera. "I am extremely pleased that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters has had the opportunity to work together with the Oregon SJ partners to accomplish the team's goals."

Durham-Aguilera said the team has made excellent progress in flood risk management in Oregon. Tools developed for prioritizing emergency management activities in the state are so useful they're being expanded for use in Washington, Idaho and Alaska.

"The partnerships formed within the Silver Jackets program are invaluable," said Portland District Commander Col. Jose Aguilar. "When we work together we can find new ways to use existing data, information and resources that ultimately help us all better serve our communities and the nation."

The team's public outreach efforts were also cited as reasons for the commendation.

"Flood awareness and readiness is key to minimizing risks and damages," said Ryan Cahill, Portland District Silver Jackets interim coordinator. "Last year we worked with the cities of Albany, Turner and Oregon City to install signs showing high water marks of some of the historical flood events in their communities. The signs serve as monuments that remind the communities of the potential for major flooding."

With flooding in many parts of Oregon recently, mitigation projects help protect valuable property, said OEM State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Dennis Sigrist.

"Current projects like the Mill Creek Flood Warning System in Marion County and residential floodplain home elevations and acquisitions around the state have helped to reduce the extent of flood damage in many parts of the state," Sigrist explained. "Water flows downhill, and too much water eventually rises, which causes flooding. We know that in Oregon we need to be acutely aware of that."

The team also developed a flood preparedness and recovery webpage with information and resources for use before, during and after a flood. Current Oregon Silver Jackets projects include evaluation of a flash flood warning system in Mitchell, Oregon; a non-structural flood risk assessment of Johnson Creek in Portland; and outreach efforts to communities in Eastern Oregon about the regulatory process.

"The team has collaboratively developed a Rapid Assessment of Flooding Tool to combine data available from multiple sources to estimate flood frequencies of both recent and forecasted events across the state," said Durham-Aguilera.

The Oregon team was selected for the 2015 honor by a vote of their peers: Silver Jackets team members throughout the United States. They were formally recognized for their accomplishments at the 2015 Flood Risk Management Workshop, December 3, in Southbridge, Massachusetts.

For more informaiton about the Oregon Silver Jackets, visit http://silverjackets.nfrmp.us/State-Teams/Oregon.

Oregonians "Drop, Cover and Hold On"

Rebekah Conklin, Portland Emergency Communications Dispatch lead, practices the drop, cover, and hold on earthquake drill at the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management, Oct. 15, during the Great Oregon ShakeOut. The drill also tested how 911 operators in Portland will respond to calls during and after an earthquake.

Story and photos by Cory Grogan, Oregon Office of Emergency Management

At 10:15 a.m. on October 15, more than 520,000 Oregonians practiced "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" for the world's largest earthquake drill, "The Great ShakeOut!"

The Oregon Office of Emergency Management and partners throughout the state encouraged individuals and families, schools, businesses, tribal, local, state and federal agencies, health care organizations, and more to participate in the nationwide earthquake drill.

The total number of participants in Oregon has nearly doubled in the last two years, with increased interest in earthquake preparedness and awareness. Oregonians joined more than 40 million people worldwide for the largest earthquake drill in history.

"Oregon is at risk for both crustal and subduction zone earthquakes that have the potential to destroy property and take lives," said OEM Geologic Hazards Coordinator Althea Rizzo. "It's critical that people know what to do during an earthquake so they can be survivors."

Recently, much attention has been given to the fact that Oregon is located near the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a fault line stretching from California to British Columbia, that is due for a major quake and tsunami similar to the 2004 Boxing Day event in Indonesia and the 2011 Tohuku event in Japan.

To learn more about the Great Oregon ShakeOut, visit http://shakeout.org/oregon/.

OEM rolls out Tsunami Safe program

Story courtesy Oregon Office of Emergency Management

The Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) officially rolled out "Tsunami Safe: Hospitality Begins with Safety," a free program that focuses on tsunami awareness in the hospitality industry along the Oregon Coast. The program officially began, Monday, Oct. 19.

According to OEM Geologic Hazards Awareness Coordinator Karen Parmelee, Tsunami Safe is designed to increase tsunami awareness by educating all levels of employees in the hospitality industry, informing overnight visitors to the Oregon Coast of the risk, and increasing disaster preparedness throughout the hospitality industry along the coast.

"Facilities that participate in the program will be at the forefront of providing safety for guests," Parmelee said.

Ann Chapatte, who is the manager of the Overlook Motel in Lincoln City, said personal experiences have helped her see the value of the Tsunami Safe project. Chapatte was managing her hotel when the distant tsunami from Japan hit the Oregon Coast in 2011 after the Tohuku earthquake and tsunami. She was also personally affected by a major earthquake in the past.

"We are right on the beach, I watched visitors sit on the beach to wait for and watch the tsunami," explained Chapatte. "I personally lost everything in an earthquake, so I take natural disasters seriously!"

The first round of trainings for hospitality industry management began in November.

For more information on the program, visit www.tsunamisafe.info.

Tsunami SAFE
Hospitality begins with Safety

Are you prepared for emergencies?

Being prepared means being equipped with the proper supplies you may need in the event of an emergency or disaster. Keep your supplies in an easy-to-carry emergency preparedness kit that you can use at home or take with you in case you must evacuate.

For more information, or to build a kit, visit the Red Cross website at:
www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/get-kit

Be a survivor, not a statistic!

NEWS

Roseburg Armory upgrade results in 70 percent energy savings

Story and photos courtesy
Lt. Col. Kenneth Safe,
Construction & Facilities
Management Officer

The newly renovated Roseburg Armory is more modern, earthquake safe and energy efficient. This project is one of many energy conservation and renewable energy projects that are being implemented at Oregon Military Department facilities across the state as part of the U.S. Army Net Zero Energy effort to be more energy efficient and energy secure.

ROSEBURG, Oregon – The National Guard Armory in Roseburg, Oregon, originally constructed in 1977, needed restoration and repair. The 20,000 square-foot facility is home to Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, part of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

The Oregon Military Department (OMD) leveraged the restoration project to push the envelope by implementing high performance energy and sustainable design principles. The OMD enlisted the help of SOLARC, architecture and engineering firm, which specializes in sustainable design and high performance buildings and systems.

This restoration project transformed a tired old armory into a polished newly renovated, earthquake safe, comfortable, efficient, and modern facility. The project achieved more than 70 percent energy savings and greatly improved conditioned space throughout the building.

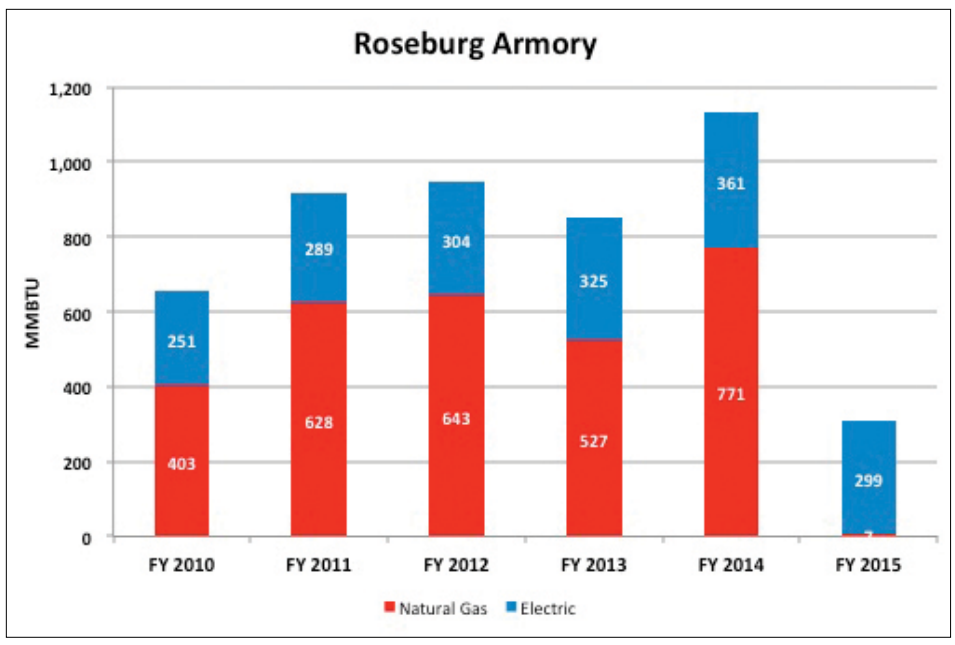
The energy efficiency improvement at the armory was dramatic. The energy achievements are phenomenal with the modeled energy use index (EUI) at 14.4 kBtu/s.f.-yr. The fiscal year 2015 energy usage numbers (see graph) are estimated per the final State Energy Efficient Design (SEED) report. SEED requires all state facilities to exceed the energy performance of the Oregon State building code by at least 20 percent.

The OMD eliminated nearly all natural gas use while simultaneously reducing electricity use. The remaining natural gas is for tank-less condensing domestic hot water heaters.

Elements of the design included LED lighting, variable refrigerant flow (VRF) heating and cooling with heat exchangers for preheating outside air, added insulation for the exterior walls and roof, improvements to air tightness, and use of controls. The facility is also solar ready for a future solar panel array to achieve net zero electric.

The Oregon Army National Guard is committed to reducing energy consumption and producing cost effective renewable energy as part of the U.S. Army Net Zero Energy effort to be more energy efficient and energy secure. Oregon is the only state in the National Guard that is part of the Net Zero pilot program. The goal of this program is to be energy net zero by 2020.

To get to this goal, the Oregon Army National Guard needs to reduce energy consumption as much as possible in all facilities. Energy reduction projects, like what was accomplished at the Roseburg Armory, is the most essential element to reduce energy consumption up to 50 percent overall. However, the cultural and behavioral aspect of everyone utilizing the facilities is also critical. We need everyone to be conscious about the energy they are using in a facility and make every effort to conserve. Everyone has a role and together it is estimated that up to 10 percent of energy savings can come from our behavior. The remaining energy consumption to get to zero net energy will need to come from renewable energy sources like solar and biomass.



This graph shows the natural gas and electric usage at the Roseburg Armory from 2010 to 2015. The recent remodel included energy efficiency improvements that achieved more than 70 percent energy savings.

Solar system provides power for Pendleton aviation facility

Story and photos courtesy
Lt. Col. Kenneth Safe,
Construction & Facilities Management Officer

A solar photovoltaic (PV) array was recently installed at the Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF) in Pendleton, Oregon. The 150-kilowatt solar system provides renewable electricity for the helicopter hangar utilizing 475 Oregon-made solar panels divided between a ground mounted system and a carport structure that also provides weather protection for parked vehicles.

PENDLETON, Oregon – In an effort to increase the energy efficiency of Oregon Army National Guard facilities, and to promote the implementation of alternative energy solutions, the Oregon Military Department installed a solar photovoltaic (PV) array at the Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF) in Pendleton, Oregon.

The 150-kilowatt solar system provides renewable electricity for the helicopter hangar utilizing 475 Oregon-made solar panels divided between a ground mounted system and a carport structure that also provides weather protection for parked vehicles. A net metering agreement with Pacific Power will produce approximately $16,800 (38 percent) annually in reduced electricity costs for the site.

This new renewable energy project was made possible with a $250,000 Pacific Power Blue Sky grant; $84,319 Energy Trust of Oregon solar incentive; and federal funding through the National Guard Bureau.

The solar project was implemented as part of an Oregon Army National Guard Energy Savings Performance Contract with McKinstry Essention. This contracting method provides a guaranteed maximum price, guaranteed equipment performance, and guaranteed electrical production. The Pacific Power Blue Sky program, coupled with the Energy Trust of Oregon incentives, and the guarantees in the McKinstry contract enabled this project to be funded by the National Guard Bureau.

This project has a significant positive impact on the environment. The PV array is projected to produce 220,323 kilowatt-hours per year of clean energy. Every year this solar array is in production, it has the equivalent effect of 361,724 miles not driven, offsetting 150 metric tons of carbon dioxide, or planting 3,895 trees.

The Oregon Army National Guard is committed to reducing energy consumption and producing cost effective renewable energy as part of the U.S. Army Net Zero Energy effort to be more energy efficient and energy secure. This project is one of many energy conservation and renewable energy projects that are being implemented at Oregon Military Department facilities across the state.

In addition to helping meet Net Zero standards, the project also provides educational and outreach opportunities that demonstrate multiple solar panel applications to the Pendleton community and it's Citizen-Soldiers.

The Oregon Army National Guard specifically targeted this project with public visibility in mind. The ground mount panels are very visible and easily maintained; the solar parking canopy is practical for covered parking benefits; and solar electrical production is tracked on a public facing website.

The Pendleton AASF solar array production, as well as historical data, can be viewed at the following link:

http://live.deckmonitoring.com/?id=pendleton_airport_armory&peek=true

NEWS BRIEFS

Adjutant General visits OYCP graduation

Photo by Jim Calice, Oregon Youth Challenge Program

Oregon Youth Challenge Program Cadets O'ree, Wheeler, Garcia and Huerta pose for a photo with the OYCP Director Dan Radabaugh (far left), Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel (center), Adjutant General, Oregon, and Oregon State Command Sgt. Maj. Shane Lake (right), the day prior to their graduation ceremony, December 15, 2015. The Oregon National Guard's alternative high school, located outside of Bend, Oregon, gives students a second chance to catch-up on credits, allowing them to re-enter high school and graduate on-time with their peers or graduate from OYCP with a state-accredited high school diploma or GED.

Relief Fund helps Service Members in times of need

The Oregon Service Members Relief Fund (OSMRF) is a non-profit corporation under Section 501(c)(3) IRS Code to receive contributions and provide financial assistance to active members of the Oregon Army and Air National Guard, their dependents, and honorably discharged Veterans. The board of directors consists of retired members of the Oregon Army and Air National Guard. OSMRF was established to replace the Oregon National Guard Emergency Relief Fund.

Funds may be distributed to a qualified applicant based on short-term emergency or urgent need for financial assistance by loan or grant. Loans may be available when the applicant has the means and it is appropriate to repay the loan. Grants may be appropriate when requested and repayment would be difficult or inappropriate. Funds are not sent directly to the applicant but only to creditors.

Local commanders, non-commissioned officers, and Family Assistance Specialists (FAS) are best able to evaluate a genuine need for financial assistance. Applicants should be assisted by their unit leadership and/or FAS when requesting financial help. Recommendations will be forwarded through the State Family Program Coordinator to the OSMRF.

The application process can be started by acquiring forms and information from the Service Member and Family Support website home page at http://oregonbtyr.org/osmrf.html.

Applications and donations can be sent to:

Retirement Services Office
ATTN: OSMRF, Room 243
Anderson Readiness Center
3225 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97309

U.S. Air Force awards Oregon Air Guard units

2014 Outstanding Unit Award:

- 142nd Fighter Wing
- 173rd Fighter Wing
- 116th Air Control Squadron
- 123rd Weather Flight
- 125th Special Tactics Squadron
- 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron

2014 Organizational Excellence Award:

- Headquarters, Oregon Air National Guard

Oregon ESGR recruiting for state chair position

The Oregon Committee of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is recruiting for a new state chair. The state chair will be responsible for all aspects of state ESGR operations.

They organize, lead, direct, supervise and motivate ESGR members with various backgrounds, abilities and interests. Chairs must have excellent leadership and communication skills, as they must frequently address influential people or groups, including governors, legislators, Adjutants General, Guard/Reserve general/flag officers, federal/state/local officials, mayors, CEOs, business and industry leaders, chambers of commerce, and civic groups.

Chairs develop and execute the state's ESGR annual spending plan and budget. The state chair reports to the national chair (NC).

For the full duty description/responsibilities, please contact Laine Encabo at alaine.c.encabo.ctr@mail.mil or 503-584-3442. Send resumes via the same email address or by postal mail to:

Oregon ESGR
ATTN: State Chair
1776 Militia Way SE
P.O. Box 14350
Salem, Oregon 97309

2016 NDAA changes some of your benefits

Story courtesy ENGAUS

The 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was signed into law by President Obama on November 25, 2015. There are many education and GI Bill changes in the new law.

The Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) GI Bill is ending. According to the law, the REAP program ended on the date the law was signed, November 25. However, those people who currently or previously were in the REAP program have until November 25, 2019 to use their benefits.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately 13,700 people used REAP in fiscal year 2014, the most recent date for which they provide data. The number of people using REAP has been declining around 25 percent annually since the inception of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2009. Most recipients are eligible for both programs and the Post-9/11 GI Bill is far more generous.

Service Members will no longer be able to claim unemployment while receiving the GI Bill. Congress was surprised and upset to learn that many veterans were receiving free tuition at school, a housing allowance to pay all their housing costs, $1,000 a year book stipend from their GI Bill and then turning around and drawing unemployment. This was a loophole in the law nobody saw coming and apparently quite a few people took advantage of, enough to cause Congress to insert language into the law prohibiting the receipt of unemployment benefits while receiving the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Reservists and Guard Members will get more reintegration and quality of life training before during and after activations, mobilizations, and deployments. They will now receive four paid training sessions.

One pre-mobilization session focusing on preparing eligible individuals and affected communities for the rigors of activation, mobilization, and deployment.

One mid-deployment session focusing on helping them cope with the challenges and stress associated with mobilization, decreasing feeling of isolation during mobilization, and preparing them for the challenges associated with reintegration.

Two post-deployment session focusing on reconnecting them with their families, friends, and communities; providing information on employment opportunities; helping them deal with the challenges of reintegration; ensuring they understand what benefits they are entitled to and what resources are available to help them overcome the challenges of reintegration; and providing a forum for addressing negative behaviors related to operational stress and reintegration.

Scholarships available from ORNG Association

The Oregon National Guard Association (ORNGA) will be presenting ten $1,500 scholarships for School Year 2016-2017 at the ORNGA Conference, April 30, 2016, in Bend, Oregon.

Scholarships are available to active members of the Oregon National Guard, ORNGA, including spouses or children for undergraduate level college, business or trade school. The scholarships are awarded for demonstrated qualities of leadership, civic action and academic achievement.

Previous year recipients are not eligible. The winners for school year 2015-2016 may not apply until next year.

Applications are available on the web at www.ornga.org. The application deadline is March 14, 2016.

For more information, contact Chief Warrant Officer-4 Diane Beach at (503) 584-3456, diane.r.beach.mil@mail.mil or the ORNGA at (503) 551-0977.

Send completed applications and support documents to:

Oregon National Guard Association
ATTN: Scholarship Committee
(CW4 Beach)
P.O. Box 14350
Salem, Oregon 97309

Banquet will celebrate 75 years of Oregon Air Guard

Members of the Oregon National Guard are invited to attend the 22nd Annual Oregon Air National Guard Awards Banquet, March 12, 2016, at 6:00 pm, at the Salem Convention Center, located at 200 Commercial Street Southeast in Salem, Oregon.

The annual event recognizes and honors the accomplishments of outstanding Airmen, units and retirees over the past year. This year, the event will also celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Oregon Air National Guard.

Register online at the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Oregon website at http://eangor.org/. For more information, contact Chief Master Sgt. Norman Olson at (503) 584-2226.

2016 federal budget funds Guard programs

Story courtesy NGAUS

Congress completed its work on the fiscal 2016 federal budget December 18, 2015, and President Barack Obama signed the measure into law the same day. It provides funding for all government agencies, including the Defense Department, through Sept. 30, 2016.

The budget, which is for $1.1 trillion, includes $514.1 billion in base defense spending and an additional $58.6 billion in overseas contingency operations funds.

Congress and the president had earlier reached a budget framework agreement through the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 which sets spending levels for both defense and nondefense discretionary spending for fiscal 2016 and 2017.

Some highlights from the new budget include a 1.3 percent pay raise for service members, additional funds to research traumatic brain injury and psychological health, and a continued prohibition on the transfer of Guantanamo detainees to the U.S.

Although the budget funds Army and Air National Guard personnel and operation-and-maintenance accounts below the president's budget request, the funding levels represent a significant increase over last year's spending. A National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) examination of the new budget can be found at: www.ngaus.org/sites/default/files/NGAUS%20FY16FinalApprops.pdf.

Additionally, this budget includes robust funding for the Guard counterdrug program, an increase for the Army National Guard cyber-protection teams, $330 million each for the Army and Air Guard in National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account funds, and money to procure an additional eight UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters for the Army Guard for a total of 23.

It prohibits the transfer of additional AH-64 Apaches to the active component before July 2016. It also includes funding to restore the A-10 Thunderbolt program for fiscal 2016 and significant funds for purchase of active electronically scanned array radar for F-15s.

Calling all Black and Green Belts in Lean Six Sigma

The Oregon National Guard needs you!

Contact
Lt. Col. Keith Townsend
503-584-2218
Keith.S.Townsend.mil@mail.mil

LEAN SIX SIGMA

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OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

First Oregon National Guard unit deployed since WWII reunites 25 years after Desert Shield/Storm

Story by Mike Allegre,
Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

Photos courtesy Mike Allegre, Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs

Left: Fifteen Veterans who were assigned to the Oregon Army National Guard's 206th Transportation Detachment reunited 25 years after they served in Operations Desert Shield/Storm. Back row: Eric Schwarzkopf, Steve Houghman, Terry Criswell, Chris Jacob, Don Shiarla, Bob Parrack, Cecilia (Clark) McMullen, Jeff Courtright, Darrell Wilson, Robert Ramos. Front row: George D. Lanning, Stacey Nelson-Hale, Denise (Atkinson) Rene´, Mark Brown, Marlene (McCullom) McClellan.

As military units throughout the nation waited for President George H.W. Bush's official call to active duty, members of a small Oregon Army National Guard detachment could not have known that before September 1990 they would be preparing to deploy to the Middle East in support of Operation Desert Shield.

With only 35 Citizen-Soldiers, the 206th Transportation Detachment (Air Terminal Movement Control Team) first reported to the Portland Air National Guard Base for training. Their call to federal active duty became a part of Oregon military history.

The unit's commander, Major George Lanning and his troops had become the first Oregon National Guard unit to be activated for war since World War II.

Nearly 25 years after their memorable call to duty, 15 former members of that unit gathered together for a reunion in Wilsonville, Oregon, in July, to come together and remember their service together during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Now a retired colonel, Lanning said several of the unit's Soldiers get together at least once per year to keep in touch and reminisce, but this year these Veterans were honoring the 25th anniversary of their unit's historic call-up.

"We had a few people from out of state join us, including one of our ladies who travelled from Virginia. It's always fun to reunite and spend time together. We're still like family today," said Lanning.

In 1990, during their 18 days of pre-deployment preparations, the 206th nearly became a household name. A blitz of local and regional media coverage and the public's desire to support their troops placed Lanning's Soldiers in the spotlight as they prepared to deploy.

The 206th was flown from McChord Air Force Base in Washington on September 16th to the Middle East and was one of the first units to arrive at the King Abdul Aziz Air Base Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. As part of the Army's 93rd Transportation Battalion, these Oregon Soldiers would soon coordinate the movement of personnel and cargo through an air terminal facility, despite the lack of any substantial infrastructure.

The arrival of 13 female Soldiers from the 206th also drew some attention because the Oregon Guard had never deployed women into or near a combat zone before then.

As the U.S. military build-up continued in November 1990, more than 200 Oregon Soldiers assigned to the 2186th Maintenance Company were also called up and deployed during the Christmas holiday. Smaller groups of Oregon Soldiers and Airmen were later activated and served in various locations.

While proud of his unit's place in Oregon military history, Lanning remembers that throughout the nine months his Soldiers served together, they were a strong and unified unit that was prepared and ready to serve. Support on the home front, from their initial sendoff to their return to Oregon, made a big difference for his Soldiers.

"These Soldiers made me proud and their service that placed them in harm's way let the public know that Oregon's National Guard has trained Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen ready to respond and serve when called upon."

Oregon National Guard participates in Veterans' Day celebrations

Story by Capt. Leslie Reed, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

SALEM, Oregon – The Oregon National Guard celebrated Veterans' Day at community events throughout the state, November 11. The Guard's participation included everything from speeches, color guards and musical performances, to parades, Howitzer salutes and F-15 flyovers.

Veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice were both remembered and honored during the annual Veterans' Day Memorial Service at Timber Linn Park in Albany, Oregon. The 234th Army Band provided musical support and Soldiers from Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, executed a three-gun Howitzer salute.

"Veterans' Day serves as an opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to never forgetting the sacrifices they made for us," stated Brig. Gen. (promotable) Michael E. Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon, during the memorial ceremony.

Stencel read the names of the 20 Oregon National Guard Soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice during recent conflicts, "Their duty and their sacrifice came at great cost … not only impacting their families, but our communities as well."

He also highlighted the recent return of Oregon Airmen from the 142nd Fighter Wing from Romania, who served under Operation Atlantic Resolve and the mobilization of 60 Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, who will provide helicopter transportation in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in Kuwait.

Photo by Capt. Leslie Reed, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

Soldiers of Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, fire rounds as part of a three-gun Howitzer salute during the annual Veterans' Day Memorial Service, Nov. 11, at the Linn County Veterans' Memorial at Timber Linn Park in Albany, Oregon.

Photo by Capt. Leslie Reed, 41st IBCT Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers of the 234th Army Band play for the crowd as they march in the annual Albany Veterans' Day parade Nov. 11, in Albany, Oregon.

Following the memorial service, in it's 64th year, the City of Albany hosted its annual Veterans' Day parade. It is the largest Veterans' Day parade west of the Mississippi River. The more than 225 entries were lead by the Patriot Guard Riders, who helped set the pace along with the Albany Police Department.

Airmen and Soldiers from across the Oregon National Guard were out in full force with nearly 100 participants marching and riding equipment along the parade route.

The 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team had representation from almost all of its six battalions, which included a demonstration of both mounted and dismounted patrols and medical vehicles. Engineers from the 82nd Brigade Troop Command also had a large contingent of their heavy equipment roll past the crowd-lined streets.

The 102nd Civil Support Team (CST), made up of both Airmen and Soldiers, made cameos in their protective suits, giving high fives to cheering kids along the parade route while highlighting their capabilities alongside their mobile suites.

The Oregon Air National Guard had a large representation in the parade, including Prowlers and motorcycles from the 125th Special Tactics Squadron. The 173rd Fighter Wing also executed an F-15 flyover of the parade route, ripping across the Albany sky.

The Oregon National Guard participated in a dedication ceremony for the Freedom Memorial Plaza at Town Square Park in Silverton, Oregon. The posting of the colors began the unveiling ceremony for a new memorial that honors Silverton's fallen heroes from all American wars.

The Oregon National Guard participated in myriad other Veterans' Day events, including a ceremony at the Salvation Army Kroc Center in Salem, Oregon, and the University of Portland Veterans' Day commemoration, to name a few.

"Time has changed, equipment has changed, the location of conflict has changed, practices have changed, but what hasn't changed is the integrity and the honor of the men and women who choose to focus their lives on their service to our country," expressed State Senator (D), Sara A. Gelser, District 8.

Photo by Master Sgt. Shelly Davison, 142nd FW Public Affairs

An F-15 Eagle assigned to the 173rd Fighter Wing flies over the city during the 64th annual Albany Veterans Day parade, Nov. 11, in Albany, Oregon.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, OMD Public Affairs

An Oregon National Guard joint-service color guard prepares to post the flags of each military service branch and raise the U.S. Flag on a 30-foot flagpole at the new Freedom Memorial Plaza at Town Square Park in Silverton, Oregon, Nov. 11. The posting of the colors began the dedication ceremony unveiling the new memorial, which honors Silverton's fallen heroes from all American wars.