

Inside this issue...

Looking back: 2008, a year in photos, p. 4



Cooks win competition, head to national championship p. 8



Oregon Sentinel

VOL 6, ISSUE NO. 9

DECEMBER 2008



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

ONE WISH: OREGON GUARD HELPS CANCER SURVIVOR REALIZE LIFELONG DREAM

Story by
Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson
Oregon Military Department
Public Affairs Office

Gage Dole is seven years old. Someday he hopes to be a Soldier.

But it's a dream that has hung in the balance ever since he was stricken with cancer at age three.

After fighting and surviving two bouts with the disease, he met and befriended Staff Sgt. Bill Postels of the Oregon National Guard at a cancer survivors' camp. After learning of the youth's dream, the Oregon Soldier helped make Gage's dream a reality—at least for a day.

On Sept. 6, the Oregon National Guard's 41st Special Troops Battalion at Camp Withycombe made Gage Dole one of their Soldiers.

Sgt. 1st Class Jason Phelan arranged for Gage to participate in a hands-on weapons demonstration, and to meet with a combat medic. Gage also toured the base in a M-1117 Armored Security Vehicle.

"Gage has an infectious personality and the Soldiers really thought his outlook on life was better than a lot of ours, and we are adults," said Phelan.

Sgt. Michael Richards, a heavy equipment operator for 41st STB, taught Gage how each of the weapons worked. During the lesson Gage sat behind a 240 Bravo Machine Gun with a huge smile on his face.

When Gage saw the security vehicle, he exclaimed, "It looks like one of the transformers from the movie!"



Photo by Spc. Josh Hudson

Spc. Anthony Marcus, a heavy equipment operator with 41st Special Troops Battalion at Camp Withycombe explains how to fire a heavy machine gun to Gage Dole while Spc. Adam McGinnis steadies the weapon during a Soldier for a day event Sept. 6 at Camp Withycombe. Gage was stricken with cancer at the age of three and has beaten it back twice in the last three years.

More than 20 Soldiers from 41st STB helped show Gage what it's like to be an Oregon Guardsman. In return the Soldiers got the satisfaction of providing a small, brave boy with a lot of joy, Postels said.

"I'll tell you I think those Soldiers got as much out of it as he did," Postels said. "There sure was something about him. He doesn't quit, and that's the warrior ethos they try and instill in all of us."

Gage's father, Trux, whose birthday fell on the same day, said the look on his son's face was the best birthday present he

could have ever received.

Perhaps the most poignant moment came when Sgt. Lonnie Paradis removed his own Combat Infantry Badge, and pinned it on Gage's sweatshirt. Paradis told him that he'd earned it during his fight with cancer.

"Since he came here the Soldiers haven't quit talking about him," said Postels. "He's an awesome kid."

Spc. Josh Hudson contributed to this story.

Guardmembers to see new tax benefits

Story by Kim Lippert
Oregon Military Dept. Public Affairs

In our March, 2008 issue of the Oregon Sentinel we told you about a \$6,000 tax deduction military service members are eligible for under a new law put into effect this year.

Under this law, members of the Oregon National Guard and Reserves can deduct up to \$6,000 of their pay earned for performing active service, which did not include pay for weekend drills among other things.

The Oregon Department of Revenue adopted a temporary rule in October 2008 to clarify that this law applies to pay earned while serving at weekend drills, annual training, encampments, special school attendance, and battle assemblies of the reserves.

The rule took effect on November 1, 2008 and will apply to tax years going back to 2007 and forward to 2008.

The new information will be included in your 2008 tax returns and instructions will be sent to taxpayers.

In December, the Oregon Department of Revenue will provide more information at www.oregon.gov/DOR/, they can also be reached by phone at (503) 378-4988.

Oregon Guard builds partnership in South Asia

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

SALEM, Ore. —The Oregon National Guard has established a partnership with one of the most populous, and according to the U.S. State Department, one of the more strategically-located countries in South Asia.

A delegation from Oregon visited the country of Bangladesh Oct. 25-30. They met with senior Bangladeshi military and civilian leaders to discuss a formal partnership between Oregon and the South Asian country.

"This is a chance for Oregon to reach out and share expertise in nation-building and to promote democracy and support foreign policy," said Brig. Gen. Bruce Prunk, Assistant Adjutant General, Air, for the Oregon Air National Guard.

One of the people who spearheaded the effort was Maj. Daniel Schilling, Commander of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron, Oregon Air National Guard.

"The State Partnership Program itself is designed to cross a broader spectrum of military-to-civilian cooperation and civilian-to-civilian cooperation. One of the things the Oregon National Guard brings is the ability to transcend the traditional military-only partnership," Schilling said.

He went on to cite a prime example of just that kind of cooperation.

"One of our partnership initiatives is an establishment of community policing proj-



Photo courtesy of Capt. Gregory Fernandez

A delegation from the Oregon National Guard met with key civic and military leaders in Bangladesh Oct. 25-30 to discuss a collaborative partnership between Oregon and the South Asian country. This is the first official partner for Oregon in the State Partnership Program.

ects [in Bangladesh]," he said. "We have quite a few members of the Oregon Guard who are sheriffs, police officers and fire-fighters and we can take these people on military orders over there and work with civil and military authorities to establish these initiatives."

This new relationship is an historic one said Brig. Gen. Prunk.

"This is the first formal relationship between any country and Oregon," he

said. "I think it's very exciting for Oregon to establish a long-term relationship with a very strategic partner."

According to Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, the Oregon National Guard can benefit from Bangladesh's skills and experience in peacekeeping operations with the United Nations.

"Bangladesh is the second most prolific

See **BANGLADESH** on PAGE 6

PRSR STD
US Postage
PAID
Permit #605
Salem, OR

OFFICE OF THE STATE ADJUTANT GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE
NATIONAL GUARD OF OREGON
P.O. BOX 14350
SALEM, OREGON 97309-5047
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

The Oregon Military Department

State Commander in Chief
Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski

The Adjutant General
Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees

Asst. Adjutant General, Air
Brig. Gen. Bruce W. Prunk

Deputy Director Oregon Military Dept.
Brig. Gen. Mike Caldwell, OSD

Asst. Adjutant General, Army
Brig. Gen. David B. Enyeart

State Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Brunk Conley

State Command Chief
Chief Master Sgt. Rodney R. Smith

Oregon Sentinel Editorial Staff

Managing Editor
Maj. Michael S. Braibish
michael.s.braibish@mil.state.or.us

Editor in Chief
Tech Sgt. Jefferson Thompson
jeff.j.thompson@mil.state.or.us

Assitant Editor
Sgt. Eric Rutherford
eric.a.rutherford@mil.state.or.us

Contributing Editor
Tech Sgt. Nick Choy
nick.r.choy@mil.state.or.us

Contributing Writer
Kay F. Fristad
kay.f.fristad@mil.state.or.us

Contributing Writer
Kimberly L. Lippert
kimberly.l.lippert@mil.state.or.us

Contributors
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs
Unit Public Affairs Representatives

Editorial Offices
c/o Oregon Military Department
Attn: Editor, Oregon Sentinel
P.O. Box 14350
Salem, Oregon 97309
503-584-3917

The Oregon Sentinel is the official publication of the Oregon National Guard, authorized under the provisions of Army Regulation 360-1. It is designed and published by the Oregon Military Department's Public Affairs Office. The views and opinions expressed in the Oregon Sentinel are not necessarily those of the Departments of the Army and Air Force, or the Department of Defense.

The Oregon Sentinel is distributed to members of the Oregon Army and Air National Guard, and other interested persons by request, free of charge. Circulation: 12,500. The Oregon Sentinel is published by Eagle Web Press, a private firm in no way connected with the DoD, Departments of the Army or Air Force, or the State of Oregon, and is under exclusive written contract with the Oregon Military Department. The Oregon Sentinel is also distributed electronically, and can be found online at www.oregon.gov/OMD/AGPA/publications.shtml.

Paid advertising is strictly prohibited in the Oregon Sentinel. However, announcements which benefit Oregon Guardsmen and their families is allowed, at the discretion of the editorial staff.

Oregon National Guard members and their families are encouraged to submit articles and story ideas. Stories from any source, military or civilian, are accepted. Letters to the editor are also welcome. All submissions must include the author's name, mailing address and daytime phone number. Names may be withheld in print upon request. All submissions are subject to editing prior to publication. The Public Affairs staff reserves the right to print or reprint submissions at any time. For publication schedules, or for any other questions, please see your unit's Public Affairs Representative, or contact the State Public Affairs Office or any of the Oregon Sentinel staff members listed above.

The Oregon Sentinel adheres to guidance found in DoD Instruction 5120.4, "Department of Defense Newspapers and Civilian Enterprise Publications." The Oregon Sentinel utilizes Times New Roman, Garamond Pro and Arial fonts, and is designed using Adobe InDesign CS. Graphics are produced using Adobe Illustrator and PhotoShop, and are accomplished on a Macintosh G5 computer. Text files are edited using Microsoft Word.

Story files must be submitted in Microsoft Word format, with all formatting turned off. Photos must be high-resolution color JPEG files, and must be accompanied by caption information containing the following: full name, rank, and unit of person(s) depicted in the photo, along with a short description of what is happening in the photo. This caption can be a part of the overall story file. All hard-copy files submitted to the Oregon Sentinel become the property of the Oregon Military Department unless prior arrangements are made with the Public Affairs staff. Stories and photos appearing in the Oregon Sentinel may be reprinted with permission.

2008 Oregon Military Department
All Rights Reserved

COMMAND

Oregon National Guard continues to improve readiness



Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees,
Adjutant General,
Oregon Military Department

Let me start by wishing everyone a happy holiday season. Spending quality time with Family and friends has never been more important to the National Guard. As we spend time with our Families this season, it is important to remember that Family readiness is an integral part of the overall success of the Guard's mission.

This year the Oregon Guard has participated in local and national emergency response while also providing support to Department of Defense efforts throughout the world. We currently have more than 250 Soldiers and Airmen deployed supporting 13 countries to include Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition we have been able to train Soldiers and Airmen to fight fires both on the ground as well as

from the air. Through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) we have also been able to assist other states with their own disaster response.

Family readiness of our Soldiers and Airmen has made this possible. Without the support and the knowledge of Family security, our Guardsmen would not be able to respond as effectively as we have.

Mrs. Michelle Kochosky is now the lead for the Oregon Guard for the Family program. She will work to maintain, and more importantly, improve upon our already successful program.

EMAC is a two-way street. To over simplify, this is a compact between the 54 state and territorial governors for the potential use of National Guard resources and equipment during a governor declared state of emergency. We have been able to successfully utilize EMAC multiple times this year including the fires in California and most recently with hurricane relief in Texas.

As we prepare to send off a large portion of our aviation assets to Iraq in January, I am confident this compact will work for us as well. In the event of a state of emergency in Oregon our neighbors are pledged to our aid.

The National Guard has a dual mission to serve both state and nation. This role is and has been described for us in the Constitution

of the United States. One particular portion, Article I, Section 8 states that the militia, "... may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the appointment of the Officers, and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress." Furthermore in Article I, Section 8 it states that the militia may be called, to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasion.

The Oregon National Guard will stand ready and continue to successfully conduct missions as set forth by the state and federal Constitution.

As we bring 2008 to a close, I think of all that has been accomplished this year. We excelled in support for deployments for the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), disaster response, search and rescue, environmental stewardship, youth programs, and air sovereignty missions, while setting a course for a more successful future.

I want to express my thanks to all our Soldiers, Airmen, veterans and civilians and their Families for their contributions and service. Your sacrifices are what made us proud of the Oregon National Guard team. I look forward to what we will be able to accomplish in the coming year.

Happy Holidays.

New year sees continued focus on missions

I truly hope you have had a safe and productive year, and that this next year is prosperous for you and your family. And now the holiday season is once again upon us.

This is one of those special times in the year for families and friends to gather together and reflect on the past, enjoy the here and now, and plan for the future. At the same time we need to be thankful for all things good and show kindness and compassion to those less fortunate.

This year was as busy as ever for the Oregon National Guard. We deployed our Airmen and Soldiers all over the world, and by all accounts they have performed magnificently, serving alongside our active duty counterparts.

We deployed CONUS and OCONUS, supplying personnel who helped support our national security and ongoing training missions. We were also tasked with operations in support of state emergencies along with focused efforts to increase our assigned strengths throughout all the units within our state. I am extremely proud of the professionalism and can do attitude of our Oregon Citizen-Soldiers and Citizen-Airmen.

In 2009, we must continue to focus on our future missions as well as maintain our cur-

rent operations tempo. We will once again be ready for the call to deploy Oregonians overseas to support whatever missions need our expertise and assistance. How do I know we will be ready? Because of who we are and what we believe in; we are a proud force and take every challenge head on. I know all of our units will maintain the highest levels of readiness and be ready for what ever lies ahead.

Again this year recruiting and retention will be a top priority. It is all of our jobs to go out and sell the Oregon Guard to our communities. With your help we can grow and strengthen our force throughout the state. We are in for another challenging year, and it is going to take all of us to pull together and once again make all our missions a successful venture.

One of our challenges ahead is transformation. It is a process which will involve changes in concepts and practices, technologies and capabilities, roles and missions, organizational structures, education, and personnel policies. Transformation applies to every member of the Oregon National Guard, and at its heart is willingness from individuals and the organizations to embrace innovation and accept analyzed risks.



Chief Master Sgt. Rodney R. Smith,
State Command Chief Master Sergeant,
Oregon Military Department

In closing, I ask that each of you take time to remember those that have made the ultimate sacrifice. Please take the time during this holiday season to remember our fallen comrades and those serving away from home that will once again be separated from family and loved ones this holiday season. To all our Airmen and Soldiers, I say thank you very much for serving your State and Country. God bless all of you.

To all the members of the Oregon National Guard, have a safe and joyous holiday season and a peaceful New Year. From my family to yours, happy holidays.

TAG letter to Oregon Guard: 'prevent suicide, loss of life'

As professional Soldiers and Airmen, we must continue to exercise sound judgment and take prudent action to avoid the senseless loss of life.

In preparation for this holiday season, I want all commanders, supervisors, co-workers and military members to re-emphasize the commitment necessary to enjoy a safe and memorable holiday season.

Let's ensure that our guardmembers have all the tools they need to guarantee the well-being of their families and their fellow guardmembers.

Take this time to conduct safety briefings and stress the use of A.C.E. cards.

Ask your buddy:

Have the courage to ask the question, but stay calm.

Ask the question directly, e.g. "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

Care for your buddy:

Remove any means that could be used for self-injury.

Calmly control the situation and refrain from using force.

Escort your buddy:

Never leave your buddy alone.

Escort to a member of the chain of command, a chaplain, a behavioral health professional, or a primary care provider.

Oregon has a top notch reintegration team. They are available around the clock at (888) 688-2264. The Suicide Prevention Hotline is (800) 237-TALK (8255).

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees,
Adjutant General,
Oregon Military Department

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Texas TAG thanks OR Guard for hurricane assistance

On behalf of the Governor of Texas and the men and women of the Texas Military Forces I want to extend to you and your state our deepest gratitude. The support and commitment that the State of Oregon provided us during our trying times in response to Hurricane Gustav and Ike was most appreciated.

Your contribution as part of a local, state, and federal team did not go unnoticed

and was instrumental in the overall hurricane response operations for the State of Texas. Your efforts, and the lessons learned from this response have better prepared us for the next storm.

Thank you once again for your continued support. We are pleased to have you as a partner and look forward to improving our interagency relationship and collectively providing the best possible support to the citizens of this great state and nation.

Cordially,

Charles G. Rodriguez
Lieutenant General (TX),
TXARNG,
Adjutant General

COMMENTARY

New Command Chief Warrant Officer stresses hard work, service

How do you fill the shoes of former Command Chief Warrant Officers Bill Manahan, Floyd Bard and most recently Jim Powell?

How can you compare yourself with such quality professionals and highly capable Warrant Officers?

All you can do is learn from their accomplishments and build upon their successes.

Doing so will take time, a steep learning curve, and a sincere desire to enhance and build the Warrant Officer Corps within the Oregon Army National Guard.

I am excited and thrilled to begin this journey.

This will require hard work, service to the Soldiers and a clear understanding of the tasks that are ahead of us.

We are all keenly aware of the unique challenges that face all that wear the uniform. The most recent challenge



CW4 Michael Zagyva,
Command Chief
Warrant Officer,
Oregon National
Guard

is the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team deploying, right behind them 3rd Battalion, 116th Armor Regiment, and both will be leaving Oregon with a full complement of warrant officers.

The second challenge is to assure the units supporting the warfighter in Oregon are fully manned with, "The Quiet Professionals."

In order to accomplish those tasks it will take teamwork, education and commitment from all warrant officers. As commissioned officers, from those who fly aircraft to those who make sure all equipment is at the ready, we are the technical experts that will make the Soldiers we supervise and support combat ready for the commander. If the commander is successful then so are we.

We know there is a demand for more warrants. Recruiters and the Warrant Officer Strength Manager (WOSM) cannot fill our special ranks alone. They need your help.

Listed below are the current warrant officer openings and number of openings. Start recruiting!

Engineer – (3), Signal/IT – (2), Intel – (3), Supply – (2), Food Service – (2), Air Missile Defense – (1), Maintenance – (5), Admin – (2), Ammunition – (1), Aviation – (2).

We have revised the monthly senior warrant officer council.

Listed below are the senior warrants and the WO branches that they represent. Please contact them with issues that you feel the council needs to address. I will notify you as to where the agenda and minutes of the council will be posted once that has been established.

CW5 Scott O'Donnell – Admin

CW5 Debra Murphy – Logistics

CW5 Vern Johnson – Maintenance/Ordnance

CW5 Marko Frye – Aviation

CW4 Ed Webb – Signal/Intelligence/All others

I look forward to meeting and working with all of you.

Your community needs you in the wake of a disaster

By Jennifer Bailey
Public Affairs Coordinator
Oregon Emergency Management



I hope everyone reading this column has started putting together their emergency kit and a family plan of what to do during a crisis. Last issue we discussed how children will respond after an emergency or crisis.

Now let's talk about what we can do for our communities. Besides knowing who your neighbors are and which of them might need extra help, there is a whole town of people out there that will be in need immediately following a disaster.

After September 11, 2001, America witnessed a wellspring of selflessness and heroism. People in every corner of the country asked, "What can I do?" and "How can I help?" A group named Citizen Corps was created to help all Americans answer these questions through public education and outreach, training, and volunteer service.

Citizen Corps has five programs where citizens may volunteer to be of service in their local areas. The five programs are Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Fire Corps, Medical Reserve Corps, Neighborhood Watch (USAonwatch.org), and Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS). For information on all of these programs go online to www.citizencorps.gov.

The group that I want to discuss with you today is the CERT program. CERT educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. People will have to rely on each other for help in order to meet their immediate life saving and life sustaining needs.

One also expects that under these kinds



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

of conditions, family members, fellow employees, and neighbors will spontaneously try to help each other. This was the case following the Mexico City earthquake where untrained, spontaneous volunteers saved 800 people. However, 100 people lost their lives while attempting to save others. This is a high price to pay and is preventable through training.

CERT is about readiness, people helping people, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where citizens will be initially on their own and their actions can make a difference.

Through training, citizens can manage utilities and put out small fires; treat the three killers by opening airways, controlling bleeding, and treating for shock; provide basic medical aid; search for and rescue victims safely; and organize themselves and spontaneous volunteers to be effective.

To find and join a CERT group in your area, go online at www.citizencorps.gov, click on programs and then CERT. You will be asked to enter the zip code for your area. Thank you for helping your community.

properly serviced fire extinguishers on hand and check your smoke alarms to make sure they are working properly.

Every home and vehicle should be equipped with an emergency kit in case of an accident.

The following websites have lots of information on how to properly prepare for a home or vehicle disaster, www.acsim.army.mil/readyarmy and www.redcross.org/services/disaster. For driving safety please consult www.ncdot.org/dmv/driver_services/commercialtrucking/drivingSafety.html#125. Or to check road conditions in Oregon at www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/.

For more information on home fire safety visit www.homesafetycouncil.org/safety_guide/sg_electrical_w001.aspx.

Finally, I would like to say farewell as I am retiring at the end of the month. My replacement is Maj. Tim Deckert from the 141st Support Battalion. He already has some knowledge in safety and is currently training up to be a great safety manager! You can always reach the safety office at (503)-584-3931. I wish all of you a safe and successful 2009!

winter hours presents an additional hazard. Drivers are reminded to use extra caution during the rainy holiday season. Pedestrians should ensure they are visible while walking on or near active roads, by wearing appropriate reflective gear. Motorcyclists should also wear the required safety gear, including reflective clothing, while riding in uniform.

Road conditions including wet pavement, ice, and road construction can affect safe stopping distance--please leave extra space between you and the other vehicle if possible, and keep situational awareness for unexpected actions by the "other guy."

The home may present more fire danger now than at any point during the year. With the use of stoves, fireplaces, electrical heaters, other appliances, and Christmas trees, the fire danger increases. Even trees that look green can be ignited in seconds causing large-scale damage to home and property.

Ensure you complete proper maintenance on furnaces and other appliances, and make sure you keep the Christmas tree well watered and clear of any heat sources that could cause the tree to catch on fire. Keep

Family Program supports readiness



Michelle Kochosky,
Oregon State
Director
of Family
Programs

Family programs in the State of Oregon seek to provide an enhanced quality of life for National Guard members, their families, and the communities in which they live.

As part of that program the state has hired a new director of family programs, Michelle Kochosky. She focuses on Family readiness including preparing families for deployment whatever the issue may be, from child care issues, to issues with Tricare, to pay problems.

She says one important and growing aspect of Family care involves providing care to significant others who do not have a dependent ID card.

For example, parents, fiancés or girlfriends of a deployed servicemember. Additionally the program is chartered to help the family of any servicemember whether Guard, Reserve, or Active Duty.

"If you live in the state of Oregon and you are in any way a family member of a servicemember we are here to help you," Kochosky said.

If you need assistance or know of someone who does, you can contact Kochosky at (503)-584-2245.

For more information you may also visit www.guardfamily.org.

Safety is important during holiday season

By Lt. Col. Marilyn K. Woodward
Safety Manager
Oregon National Guard

As your safety officer I would like to take this opportunity to remind you, your employees and your family to have a safe and happy holiday season.

There are many festivities and activities in December that keep us busy and with that hustle and bustle comes an increase in risk.

Here are a few reminders about some hazards to keep in mind.

Being aware of fatigue, intoxication and distractions is an important part of holiday safety. Many people do not realize that driving while fatigued can be just as dangerous as driving while intoxicated, the effect behind the wheel is the same.

Distractions from cell phones, children in the car or other drivers can keep you from being actively engaged in your driving. Combine any or all of these and the risk factor goes up quickly.

Poor visibility while driving both to and from work or school or though dark or dim

PASS IN REVIEW: 2008 IN PICTURES

The Oregon National Guard participated in many events throughout 2008. From recognition on the national level to local law enforcement training and community support, Oregon's men and women in uniform proved once again they are an indispensable and ready force.



Photo by Patrick Sherman, Clackamas Co. Sheriff's Office

Under the watchful eye of Clackamas County Sheriff's Department Deputy and SWAT team member, Tony Kollias, Soldiers from the Oregon National Guard practice making a tactical entry through an open door at Camp Withycombe, April 5.



The Oregon Army National Guard Military Honors Team took





Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees (center), flanked by military and civic leaders, participates in an official groundbreaking ceremony for the Ontario Readiness Center, May 23. The center will also support the community with a relationship with Treasure Valley Community College. (Photo courtesy Johna Strickland, Argus Observer)



Photo by Staff Sgt. Trisha Harris, 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

A Klamath Falls Airman surveys the early-morning flightline at Kingsley Field, home of the Oregon Air National Guard's 173rd Fighter Wing.



Photo by Spc. Josh T. Hudson, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

first place during a national competition held at Camp Rilea March 30 to April 4.



Members of Ontario's Oregon Army National Guard unit, Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry, scramble from an M1-A1 main battle tank during a training session October 25. The Soldiers were practicing dismounting a tank while it is on fire during the training session. (Photo courtesy of the Argus Observer.)



Photo by Sgt. Mathew Niblack, 1249th Engineer Battalion

Col. Robert Mouw, deputy brigade commander, 82nd Brigade, leads the color guard for the Oregon Army National Guard element during the 89th annual Veteran's Day Parade held in Albany, Ore., Nov. 11.



Sgt. Devin Fields (right), an engineer with the Oregon Army National Guard's 224th Engineer Company, clears an irrigation channel near Balad, Iraq, Jan. 9 for local Iraqis who use the channel for crop irrigation, while Sgt. Jeff Tomchak (left) acts as his spotter. The engineers also cleared the ditch to deny enemy forces from using the vegetation to their advantage.

Photo by Spc. Thomas Keeler, 316th ESC



Photo by Spc. Josh Hudson, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Members of the public and Oregon Guard members were treated to a ceremonial firing of three 105mm Howitzer cannons during Armed Forces Day held in Salem, Ore. May 15, on the Capitol Mall. The celebration gives citizens an opportunity to see the capabilities of the Oregon National Guard and the Office of Emergency Management.

NEWS

Band leader passes baton after 25 years

Story by
Kim Lippert

Oregon Military Dept. Public Affairs

CANBY, Ore. – With the lights dimmed, Chief Warrant Officer 5 James Powell took the stage for a final performance with the 234th Army Band at the Canby High School Auditorium Oct. 18, 2008.

As the music began, the crowd filled with many of his former band members, general officers, and residents from the community watched as he directed a two-hour musical performance.

“I don’t care how much you invest in iPod’s, Bose speakers, or technological advancements, this (music) is as good as it gets,” said Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General for the Oregon National Guard.

As the longest running bandmaster of Oregon National Guard’s 234th Army Band, Chief Warrant Officer 5 James Powell, has lead his band through more than 25 years of service. He’s played in peacetime and while the nation was at war. He’s played with protesters nearby and crowds cheering his presence.

“There was a time when I first joined the band when we were not very popular with some of the people at the parades and now people say ‘thank you,’” said Powell.

Those who know him best said he’s been a source of inspiration for those under his leadership.



Photo courtesy Master Sgt. Tom Hovie, Oregon Military Department

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon presides over the change of command ceremony following Chief Warrant Officer 5 James Powell's last concert Oct. 18, 2008. Powell hands over the baton as Commander of the 234th Army Band to Warrant Officer 1 Ashley Alexander. During the Change of Command Ceremony, the 234th Army Band played an array of music from the classic, “Over the Rainbow” to the solemn, “Hymn to the Fallen.”

“You’ve devoted so much energy to this band and your professionalism can’t be matched,” Rees said. “What a legacy you’ve left.”

Powell leaves after spending 40 years with the 234th Army Band. He enlisted in the 234th Army Band on Nov. 17, 1968, as a french horn player. He was appointed first sergeant in 1980, and served in that capacity until his direct appointment to warrant officer in 1983.

In 1990, Powell deployed

overseas with the 234th Army Band for the first time. He retraced the steps which the band followed as it deployed to Australia and the South Pacific during World War II.

Since that deployment, the band has served other states, foreign countries, and all branches of the military with ceremonial and musical support.

“I have been privileged to travel out of country and play to thousands of citizens in our nation,” said Powell.

During the change of command ceremony, the 234th Army Band played an array of music from the classic, “Over the Rainbow” to “Hymn to the Fallen.”

The ceremony concluded with Powell handing over the reigns as commander of the 234th to Warrant Officer 1 Ashley Alexander.

“I wish you well,” said Rees. “Thank you for stepping up to take the baton. We expect great things from you.”

Oregon unit earns campaign streamer for accomplishments in Iraq

Story by Sentinel Staff

WARRENTON, Ore. – An Oregon Army National Guard unit received national recognition for their support of operations in Iraq during a ceremony at Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Ore., Oct. 11, 2008.

The 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment received a campaign streamer for their participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and their support of the Global War on Terrorism.

Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. William Edwards, and unit Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Warnock, were on hand for the ceremony. The two hung the streamer on the unit’s guidon.

The Secretary of the Army authorizes the award of campaign participation credit to eligible U.S. Army units who served in the theater of operations for support of GWOT. The campaign streamer, which appears in the colors of the Iraq Campaign Medal, and inscribed with “Iraq”, is authorized to be flown on the unit’s colors.

The 2nd Bn., 162nd Inf. Rgt. has a long history of mobilizations since the origination of the 2nd Oregon Volunteer Infantry. With the motto “First to Assemble,” Soldiers have served in conflicts including the Spanish American War, World War II, and the current war in Iraq.

In July of 2003, the 2nd Bn., 162nd Inf. Rgt. was alerted

to deploy to Iraq while training at Camp Rilea. Later that same year, the 2nd Bn., 162 Inf. Rgt. was activated for federal service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II, and sent to Fort Hood, Texas, in preparation for the upcoming deployment.

After completing extensive training at Fort Hood, the 2nd Bn., 162nd Inf. Rgt. culminated with a battalion size collective training event at Fort Polk, La.

In March, 2004, the 2nd Bn., 162 Inf. Rgt. deployed to Iraq, mainly staging near Baghdad, in Camp Calsu. During the deployment, the battalion conducted full spectrum operations, which included combat missions in Baghdad, Fallujah, Najaf, and Mahmudiyah.



Photo courtesy of John Bruning, Jr.

Lt. Col. William Edwards and Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Warnock of 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment hang a campaign streamer awarded for participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Oct. 11.

A highlight of the deployment was the aiding the first free election in Iraq in over 50 years.

During the deployment, over 70 Soldiers were injured and nine Soldiers lost their lives.

BANGLADESH from front page

contributor to U.N. peace-keeping operations,” he said.

Bangladesh is an active member of the Global Peace Operations Initiative, organized by the U.S. Institute of Peace, which is chartered with promoting post-conflict stability and development throughout the world, as well as assisting with amicable resolution to international conflicts.

Another important component to the partnership, according to Maj. Gen. Rees, is Bangladesh’s experience with natural disasters. In particular, the Bangladesh government is interested in Oregon’s emergency preparedness and

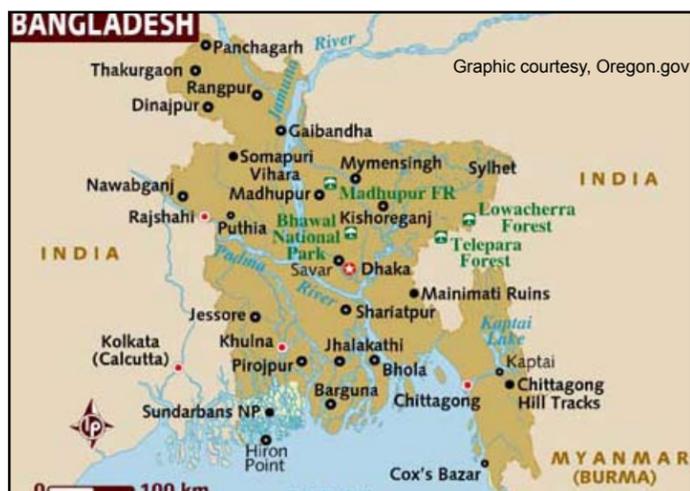
response plan, he said.

“We can share information on these capabilities,” Maj. Gen. Rees added.

The Bangladeshi partnership comes out of a meeting in early 2008 in Hawaii, between U.S. Navy Admiral Timothy J. Keating, Commander of U.S. Pacific Command, Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Maj. Gen. Rees, where they discussed a formal partnership between Oregon and Bangladesh.

“Adm. Keating’s vision of Bangladesh’s strategic role and location was instrumental as a catalyst for the partnership,” Maj. Gen. Rees said.

According to both Brig. Gen. Prunk and Maj. Gen. Rees, officials in both Oregon and in



Bangladesh is bordered by India, Myanmar, and the Bay of Bengal. The country’s population is more than 131 million.

Bangladesh are currently outlining key areas they will focus on over the next few years. Another Oregon delegation plans to visit

Bangladesh in early 2009 to discuss further details to the partnership.

License plates now available to veterans



Graphic courtesy ODVA

Story by Mike Allegre,
ODVA Public Affairs

Recognizing veterans for their service is done in many ways. A distinct and patriotic option is to get the new Oregon Veterans License Plates for their vehicle. The Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs, in conjunction with the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles, is offering veterans specialized license plates. A portion of the proceeds will go to the Oregon Veterans’ Home.

The 2007 Oregon Legislature approved the new veterans plates which feature a distinct red, white and blue design that includes an American flag and the word veteran.

The plate can be personalized by choosing any one of the five military service branch seals or, to display one of several service-related or campaign medals that a veteran has earned while serving. Combining a service branch seal with a medal is not allowed.

The military service medals that are available for the plates include: Silver Star, Bronze Star, Distinguished Service Cross, Air Force Cross, and the Navy Cross. Campaign medals that may be attached are: World War II Victory, Korea, Vietnam, Southwest Asia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Global War on Terrorism (Expeditionary).

A plate for Gold Star family members--those who have lost a family member who was serving in the military--is also available. Family members must certify that they are a surviving parent, spouse or dependent of a person who was killed in action during an armed conflict while serving the Armed Forces of the United States.

To apply for the new plate, go to any DMV office with proof of your military service (DD Form 214 or 215) and/or documentation indicating the award of a related military medal. The cost of the plate varies and there is a one-time \$10 or \$20 group surcharge fee.

For more details on obtaining your plate, visit: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/DMV/vehicle/platevet.shtml>.

NEWS BRIEFS

Guard to celebrate Oregon's 150th

The Oregon National Guard will organize and help host Oregon's 150th Birthday Ball, in conjunction with their annual military ball, on Feb 14, at 6:00 p.m., at the Salem Convention Center in Salem, Ore.

Oregon's Governor, Theodore R. Kulongoski, as well as many of the Oregon National Guard's leadership will attend the event.

The event will celebrate Oregon's 150th Birthday, and will feature the 234th Army Band, auction baskets from each of the counties in Oregon, the Oregon Zoo, and Army Corps of Engineers, and period music played by a re-enactor group wearing 3rd Division "Oregon Volunteers" military uniforms.

Also featured will be displays from historical societies throughout Oregon depicting themes and artifacts from the time of Oregon's statehood, as well as re-enactors in period-correct costumes, and dancing from the era.

Tickets are available to the public at www.ornga.org. Admission includes dinner, music, dancing, and access to the display area. Attendees are encouraged to dress in formal attire appropriate to 1859.

The Oregon National Guard Association is soliciting local companies who may want to sponsor tables at the event. More information on table sponsorships can be found at the website listed above.

For more information, or questions about the event, please contact Roberta Janssen at roberta.m.janssen@mil.state.or.us or Lt. Col. Alicia Hamel at alisha.hamel@us.army.mil, or by phone at (503)-584-3030.

National Guard scholarships available

The Oregon National Guard Association will present six \$1,500 scholarships for school year 2009 at the ORNGA Conference on Feb. 14, 2009. Scholarships are awarded for demonstrated qualities of leadership, civic action and academic achievement. Scholarships would cover attendance at an accredited college, university, trade, or business school.

These scholarships are administered by the Oregon National Guard Charitable Education Fund and paid directly to the recipient's school of choice.

Available to: Active Members of the Oregon National Guard, the ORNGA, or their spouses or dependent children.

Note: Current year recipients are not eligible, (winners for school year 2008-2009 may not apply until next year). Scholarships are awarded for undergraduate level college, business or trade school.

The application Deadline is January 5, 2009.

Scholarship applications are available on the web at <http://www.ornga.org> or call the ORNGA Office at (503) 584-3030.

Send completed applications and support documents to:

Oregon National Guard Association
ATTN: Scholarship Committee
P.O. Box 14350
Salem, Oregon 97309-5047

Blue Star Mothers start Oregon Chapter

Thanks to a local organizer and military mom, Oregon will now have a local chapter of the Blue Star Mothers of America.

President and Founder of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the Blue Star Moms, Becky Ginsbach, recently formed the organization after learning Oregon lacked official representation in the national organization.

"Being a mom of an Army Soldier, I know the importance of moms staying connected," Ginsbach said. "Not only to support one

another but to support our sons and their comrades."

The Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. is a non-political, non-religious organization dedicated to mothers who have had, or currently have children serving in the military. According to Ginsbach, the general public is welcome to join as associate members.

The non-profit group is famous for the blue star window banners distributed to military families who have children serving in the military. The gold star version of the banner represents families who suffered the loss of those children killed in action.

The organization began on Jan. 22, 1942 after Capt. George H. Maines asked the Flint News Advertiser to print a coupon inviting servicemembers' mothers to write back. About a year later, 300 mothers met in the Durant Hotel, in Flint Michigan, with Maines as the chairman for the first meeting. After about 1,000 people responded to the newspaper ad, the group decided to form a permanent organization.

Mothers volunteered throughout most of World War II, working in hospitals and train stations. They also packed care packages for Soldiers, and helped with homeland security during the war.

The organization currently has 180 chapters nationwide, with about 4,900 active members.

If you are interested in joining the Blue Star Mothers of the Pacific Northwest, please call Becky Ginsbach at (503) 631-2824 or contact her via e-mail at sunshine-and-roses@hotmail.com.

Free classes to help families deal with deployment

Imagine a spouse leaving for parts unknown. You're not sure exactly when they'll return and whether they'll be safe. And you certainly don't know how to talk about it with your kids.

That's where the Oregon Trail Chapter of the Red Cross can help. In order to address the stress and strain that goes with deployments, the Oregon Trail Chapter is launching a new course -- "Coping With Deployments: Psychological First Aid for Military Families."

Offered free of charge, the course is open to military family members of active duty, Reserve and National Guard forces, as well as veterans and their families.

The four-hour course is taught by licensed Red Cross mental health professionals and provides information on resiliency strategies for both adults and children; the easy steps involved in psychological first aid; and resources and referrals. All curriculum was developed with the help of subject matter experts from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. Families and individuals interested in the new course should contact Laura Fields at (503) 280-1496.

Overnight travel deduction available for Guardmembers

According to the Internal Revenue Service, United States Department of the Treasury website, for tax years after 2002, reservists and Guardmembers who stay overnight more than 100 miles away from home while in service, such as drills or unit training assemblies, may deduct unreimbursed travel expenses (transportation, meals and lodging) as an above-the-line deduction.

The deduction is limited to the rates for such expenses authorized for federal employees, including per diem in lieu of subsistence. In other words the servicemember may deduct the current mileage rate as published by the IRS which for the period of July 1, 2008 to Dec. 31, 2008 is 58.5 cents-per-mile, as well as the published per diem rate for the area in which they drill.

The Oregon Department of Revenue also allows this deduction for state income tax purposes following passage of Senate Bill 31 which is retroactive to 2003.

Red Cross prepares Coast for storms

Nearly one year ago, Oregon's northern coast was pummeled with record-setting storms and flooding.

This year, the Oregon Trail Chapter of the American Red Cross is positioning new stockpiles of supplies and materials throughout the area, more than doubling the number of people who can be helped in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.

The Chapter is delivering seven trailers filled with cots, blankets, personal comfort kits, cooking supplies, cleaning supplies, HAM radios, nurse's kits and shelter kits to communities along the northern Oregon Coast.

Additional supplies arrived in Cannon Beach, and were delivered to Pacific City, Manzanita/Nehalem, Warrenton, Astoria and Seaside in November.

The Red Cross has recently pre-positioned additional emergency supplies in Clatskanie and Vernonia as well.

The supplies are housed in trailers so that they are mobile and can be made available to neighboring communities when needed.

"The Red Cross plays an important role in disaster preparedness and response, and these supplies are critical to that mission," said Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski.

Retiree corner: E-Mail a good way to stay current and informed

Each Tuesday the Retiree Service Office (RSO) sends out information to retirees via e-mail. E-mails on change of command ceremonies, deployments, Tricare services, survivor's benefits, quarterly luncheons and COLA increases are just a few examples. If you are retired and would like to start, or stop receiving information via e-mail from the RSO, just send your name and e-mail information to orrsso@or.ngb.army.mil or phone at (503) 584-2891.

Retirees... Keep your information current. Mailing addresses and phone numbers are kept on every Soldier and Airman retiring from the Oregon National Guard.

Official retirement orders are used to add information about retirees to a data base maintained by the Retirement Service Office (RSO).

A list of retirees along with their last known address is what the public affairs office uses to mail out copies of the Sentinel. Retirees should contact the RSO whenever there is an address or phone number change.

Want to find another retiree from the Oregon Army National Guard?

If you would like to get in touch with another retiree from the Oregon National Guard, just give the Retiree Service Office (RSO) a call at (503) 584-2891, or e-mail them at orrsso@or.ngb.army.mil.

New bill to improve health care for autistic children

The National Defense Authorization Bill, which became law Oct. 14, 2008, encompasses new legislation aimed at improving health care for military children affected with autism.

The Oregon Department of Education says the number of children with Autism in Oregon is approximately one in 98. Nationally, the Center for Disease Control, one in 150 kids in America has Autism.

The amendment to the National Authorization Bill will enhance funding for autism treatment for military families. The legislation changes the monthly cap of \$2,500 for treatment under the extended care option Extended Care Health Option (ECHO), to a yearly maximum of \$36,000, an annual increase of \$6,000.

Currently, military children are covered

under Tricare through the ECHO. In 2007, the Department of Defense acknowledged in a report to Congress that ECHO was deficient in several areas including access to board-certified behavior analysts who can provide ABA therapy to children with autism. According to experts, applied behavior analysis is one of the preferred treatments for autism. The report went on to say the problem is even worse in rural areas.

Angela Warner, spouse of an Oregon Air National Guardsman and mother of four, two of whom have autism, said this change is needed.

"It lends flexibility to a child's medical treatment for autism, and lends flexibility to the professional treating the child with autism, which is how it should be," she said.

For the full text of the bill go to www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-5658.

Retirees Service Office has moved

As of Oct. 14, the RSO moved to their new location in Room 243 of the Anderson Readiness Center, located at 3225 State St, Salem, Ore. The RSO will share the office space with representatives of TriCare and Employer Support to Guard and Reserve (ESGR). Office hours remain from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM every Tuesday. The RSO can be reached at (503) 584-2891 or e-mail at orrsso@or.ngb.army.mil.

Bush Order Allows Direct Hiring of Military Spouses

President Bush issued an order Sept. 26, which grants federal agencies the authority to bypass competitive hiring regulations to appoint spouses of military service members to civilian government jobs. The order allows for noncompetitive appointments to: 1) spouses of active duty military service members who are under orders authorizing permanent change of station move; 2) spouses of totally disabled retired or separated members of the armed forces; 3) Unremarried widows or widowers service members killed on active duty.

Oregon Military Museum closes temporarily

The Oregon Military Museum is closing temporarily to begin its transition to a new facility at the Oregon National Guard's Camp Withycombe.

The museum must relocate from its Clackamas County site to make room for the 41st Infantry Division Armed Forces Reserve Center, which will serve 1,300 soldiers.

Museum artifacts will be housed at the Clackamas Armory. The re-opening will be announced at a later date.

The Oregon Military Museum has been at its current location since it was established by the Oregon Military Department in 1975 as the state's official military history repository.

The museum has more than 13,000 artifacts, 25,000 library volumes, and 750 cubic feet of archives. It is part of the U.S. Army Museum System and the National Guard Museum System.

Facilities, activities available at Rilea

All military retirees are offered a wide choice of facilities and services to help them enjoy the beautiful Oregon coast at the Rilea Armed Forces Training Center. Camping sites, RV Park, fishing and shopping at the Post Exchange are a few of activities available to retirees. Rilea is located on Highway 101 a few miles north of Seaside, Ore. Facilities are well maintained and very affordable. Retirees should contact the Camp Rilea Billeting Office at (503) 861-4052 to make reservations.

Original Air Guard members give gift to museum

Story by Mike Allegre, ODVA Public Affairs

Three original members of the Oregon Air National Guard presented memorabilia to the Tillamook Air Museum, Sept. 26. The men, who helped to organize the 123rd Observation Squadron (OS), placed a "shadow box" in a display area that already showcases the squadron's history.

The handcrafted box contains a Governor's proclamation, commemorative coins, a recent photograph of original unit members and a U.S. flag that was flown over the museum in an Oregon F-15 Eagle jet on the unit's 65th anniversary in April 2006.

"We're so pleased the museum honors the heritage of the Oregon's first military flying squadron and its 117 members," said Lt. Col. Pat Carpenter, a retired Oregon Air Guard officer. "These men laid the foundation for the military organization that thousands of us have proudly

served in during the past 67 years."

Originally an emergency aid instructor with the 123rd OS, Fred Parish, 88, of Lincoln City, later served as a section chief for a reconnaissance group in India. Parish said, "We may have helped start this organization, but it's the men and women of today who have made it better."

Five months after the 123rd was activated in April 1941, the Portland-based unit was federally activated. Its mission: aerial reconnaissance. Following their training in 1942, many unit members would serve in every theatre of operations including China-Burma-India area, South Pacific, Africa, and Europe.

"We never imagined then what our old squadron would become," Parish added. "It's mighty impressive today."

At war's end, the 123rd OS regrouped at Portland Air Base and was designated as the 123rd Fighter Squadron—which today is assigned to the 142nd Fighter Wing. Since 1946, the squadron's pilots have flown many



Photo by Tech Sgt. Greg Neuleib

From left to right: Glenn Currey, Fred Parish and Forest Lembkie, original members of the Oregon Air National Guard surround a "shadow box" filled with anniversary memorabilia on Sept. 26, at the Tillamook Air Museum

aircraft. For 19 years, the squadron has flown the F-15 while providing air defense 24-hours a day in the Pacific Northwest.

1249th cooks win at regional level, look toward national win



Pfc. Roger Tudela, a 1249th Alpha Forward Support Company (FSC) cook, checks the temperature of meatloaf he prepared during the 41st Phillip A. Connelly Award Competition, field kitchen component.

Story and photo by
Pfc. Anita VanderMolen,
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP RILEA, Ore.—The Oregon Army National Guard's 1249th Alpha Forward Support Company (FSC) participated in the final stage of the 41st Phillip A. Connelly Awards Competition, Army National Guard Field Kitchen component, Oct. 18, at Camp Rilea, Ore.

Winning the state and regional competition levels placed the FSC team in the running for the national title. They are competing against six other National Guard regions in the field kitchen component for excellence in Army Food Service.

It has been seven years since a section has competed in the competition and three years since the 1249th has cooked in a field kitchen environment, said Sgt. 1st Class Harry Morrison, the section sergeant.

"We are competing against people that have done it before," he said.

Cooks and kitchen staff worked together to make meatloaf, mashed potatoes, gravy, herbed green beans, pepper pot soup, jalapeno cornbread with cheese, salad and apple crisp, which were the required menu items for the competition.

The team was evaluated on 10 categories in the food preparation process including quality, administration, operations, field sanitation, kitchen site selection and security.

"The main focus is force protection: food safety, sanitation, keeping everything safe for the Soldiers," said Master Sgt. Derek S. Rivers, evaluator and the Senior Food Operations Management noncommissioned officer for the Army Center of Excellence Subsistence (ACES).

Food quality, safety and competition anxiety were not the only issues the team experienced. An unexpected power outage added to the stress.

"Anytime you are cooking for a bunch of people, in the wilderness, with equipment that goes on and off, it is tough," said Rivers. "At the end of the day

you did a superb job. The best I've ever eaten."

As the meal was served, comments from the Soldiers were positive.

"The meatloaf is to die for," said Pfc. Christopher Deckert, a 1249th track-vehicle repairman.

The section members were awarded a Certificate of Recognition from U.S. Army Quartermaster General, Brig. Gen. Jesse R. Cross for their outstanding performance and a Certificate of Merit from the International Food Service Executive Association (IFSEA).

"The main thing is making sure the Soldiers are fed: food when they need it and as much as they want," said baker Spc. Kevvin Kilbreath. "The competition is something for us."

Evaluations are done by one IFSEA civilian and two military representatives from the U.S. Army Quartermaster Center and School (QMC&S).

Competition winners will be announced in December.

PSU Student Body President chooses to join Oregon Guard

Story By Owen R. Smith,
Vanguard
Portland State University
used with permission

He started the Roots Festival at Portland State, served on the Student Fee Committee and won the highly contentious 2007 election for student body president.

Three weeks ago, as the students he once represented were preparing to return to classes, Rudy Soto packed his bags and left for Fort Sill, Okla.

After completing his one-year term as student body president this past June, Soto surprised his friends and family by announcing the next step in his life wouldn't be pursuing an internship in Washington, D.C., or even just taking a year to finish up the 43 credits he has until graduation.

Instead, Soto declared his intention to join the Oregon Army National Guard. He signed up for combat duty as a field artillery specialist and left for basic training Sept. 23. He will be there for nine weeks of basic training, and then another eight weeks for job-specialty training.

"The plan is for me to return from basic training, finish my degree and pursue becoming an officer," Soto said in an interview before he left, adding that he has made a six-year commitment to the military. "The choice that I've made is part of fulfilling who I am and what I need to grow."

While Soto said he has been opposed to the Iraq War from the start, it was this historic presidential election that caused him to start thinking about what he wanted to do with his potential.

"I felt like I wanted it to mean something," he said. "I began to realize how much I appreciated the opportunities I had, and the freedoms. I started to think about how much

we take for granted."

Soto said he would never have joined the military in order to go to college. Rather, it was a realization that "the military is what keeps us safe, what allows us to live the way we do" that pressed him to join.

"I've begun to see the world as it is, not as I want it to be," Soto said. "Before, I used to think that war was absolutely unnecessary, that fighting is all a result of misunderstanding. That's not true."

Soto said his family and friends were supportive of his decision, even though many of them were shocked when he announced his plans.

"I tried to convince him to get his degree first," said Amanda Newberg, a friend and former Student Fee Committee chair who ran on Soto's ticket. "It's something he really wanted to do. At a certain level you're worried about anyone who joins the armed forces, but I'm not concerned for him."

Soto said he had a lot of hard conversations with his family about his decision to pursue the military and combat duty, made more serious by the fact that both his younger brother and sister were born with spina bifida.

"Before, I used to think that war was absolutely unnecessary, that fighting is all a result of misunderstanding. That's not true."

— Rudy Soto

"I'm the only one who could carry on the family name," Soto said. "They understand I'm not a stupid person. They think I'm doing this because it's the right thing and best decision for me."

Still, Soto said he didn't want to join just to "sit in the background," and he realizes there is the chance he could get called into



Photo by Ed Johnson, Portland State University

A proud moment: Rudy Soto is congratulated after winning the student body presidential election in April 2007.

duty before he has a chance to finish his degree.

"I want to gain the insight of someone who joins to fight," he said.

Jake Meeks, president of the Student Veterans Association and a veteran of the Army, said he got to know Soto in 2006, when Soto was planning the Roots Festival.

"I was a little surprised at first," Meeks said of Soto's plan to join the military. "It made sense to me. Some people think you're throwing your life away, but no matter what you become a stronger person."

Meeks, 28, said he found the military to be a good testing ground.

"You age in dog years," he said. "It just gives you knowledge of your own character."

In the beginning:

In many ways, Soto's path from student

government to the Army has been an improbable one.

He is the son of a Mexican immigrant and a member of the Shoshone Bannock tribe, and grew up in Nampa, Idaho, where he and his father worked in the fields.

By the time Soto reached junior high school, he said he ended up "getting swept up in a wave of gangs."

Between the ages of 12 and 15, Soto spent his time joyriding, stealing cars and paying for his mistakes with nearly two years of incarceration as a juvenile delinquent.

Soto left his troubles in Nampa for Southeast Portland's Cleveland High School in 2001, where he played varsity football. When he wasn't playing football or studying, Soto worked multiple thankless jobs.

"I had to work to pay back restitution," he said. "I worked at Safeway, Burger King, Burgerville."

Nevertheless, Soto did well enough in high school to earn a scholarship to Portland State University where he plans to graduate next year, following basic training.