

Oregon Sentinel

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

41 Infantry Brigade Combat Team • 142 Fighter Wing • 82 Brigade • 173 Fighter Wing • Joint-Force Headquarters • Combat Operations Group

Oregon engineers mobilize for duty in Afghanistan



Photo by Sgt. Eric A. Rutherford, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Patriot Guard Riders post American flags alongside fire trucks from Dallas and Polk County Fire Departments, near the entrance of Dallas High School in Dallas, Ore., prior to the mobilization ceremony for 162nd Engineer Company, Oct. 31. About 100 Oregon National Guard members in the Dallas-based company – Oregon's oldest Guard unit – will perform route clearance as part of a year-long deployment to Afghanistan.

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



Photo by Sgt. Eric A. Rutherford, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Soldiers with the Oregon National Guard's 162nd Engineer Company, based in Dallas, Ore., bow their heads during the invocation at the unit's mobilization ceremony at the Dallas High School Gymnasium, Oct. 31.

Oregon's oldest National Guard unit, the 162nd Engineer Company based in Dallas, Ore., mobilized approximately 100 citizen-soldiers during a ceremony at the Dallas High School, Oct. 31.

The ceremony, originally planned for 500-800 guests, saw standing-room only with about 1,500 family members, well-wishers, and local, state, and military leadership.

World War II veterans, Abe Bergen, a former member of Company "L", 162nd Infantry Regiment, Dallas, Ore., and retired Army Sgt. Don Malarky, former member of Easy Company, also attended the event.

Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski, told the group he was honored to be in the presence of skilled and courageous soldiers.

"Today is about duty, honor, and

country," he said. "Words each of you live by."

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard, said the unit's soldiers were "smart and enthusiastic". "We know you're going to perform your mission superbly," Rees told the soldiers as they stood in formation.

Prior to the ceremony, the com-

pany recognized attending family members with special dog tags and backpacks in the school's Gymnasium Annex building. Spc. Thomas Melendy, who was born and raised in Dallas, Ore., presented his two daughters Kaleah and Helen with gifts in front of a group of cheering soldiers.

"I think the kids get missed a lot of times," Melendy said. "It's

not always what the soldiers are going through. You have to think about the families—especially the kids because they don't always understand what's going on with the deployment."

Melendy, who graduated from Dallas High School, said he appreciated how the city of Dallas has

See **ENGINEERS** on PAGE 4

Oregon general takes command of 1st Air Force

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

TYNDALL AFB, Fla. -- An Oregon Air National Guard general officer assumed command of Headquarters, 1st Air Force, Air Forces Northern, during a morning ceremony at Tyndall AFB, Fla., Nov. 12.

Maj. Gen. Garry C. Dean of the Oregon Air National Guard, assumed command from Maj. Gen. Henry C. Morrow.

The ceremony was attended by Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard, who led a group of about 20 Oregonians to Tyndall AFB, near Panama City, Fla.

While Dean remains attached to the Oregon Air National Guard, his new assignment as commander of 1st Air Force, AFNORTH leverages command positions he has held within the Oregon National Guard and his ties in the state, Rees said.

"This is a wonderful day for Oregon, and a great day for the U.S. Air Force and our nation," Rees said.

About 500 well-wishers, friends, coworkers and family members filled Hangar #2 at the base. Some of those in the audience included; Gen. Craig McKinley, Director of the National Guard; Maj. Gen. Ernesto Rivera, Chief of Staff for the Mexican Air Force, and Brig. Gen. Andre Viens, Deputy Commander, Continental U.S. NORAD.

Gen. Victor E. Renuart, Commander

of North American Aerospace Defense Command/U.S. Northern Command, praised the outgoing commander for his steadfast leadership and innovative approach to several challenges such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and numerous domestic contingency missions.

"You should be proud of the way you've integrated your mission every day," he said to Morrow. "You are 'Mr. Total-Force'."

Renuart then welcomed Dean back to Tyndall AFB, saying, "we are extremely pleased to have him here with us."

He added that Dean is a strong and successful leader, and a great follow-on to Morrow.

"[Dean] truly understands the business of sovereign safety," Renuart said.

During Morrow's speech, the outgoing commander highlighted the many accomplishments under his command. He thanked the airmen before him for meeting the many challenges over the course of his tenure.

"We have kept our nation's skies and shores safe from attack," he said.

Dean then thanked Morrow for his hard work and dedicated leadership, expressed his gratitude to the many airmen in attendance, and thanked Rees for his mentorship and guidance.

"Command is a team sport," Dean said, as he smiled at Rees.

Dean said his new assignment is a homecoming of sorts. In 2006, he served as the Air National Guard Advisor to the



Photo courtesy 1st Air Force Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Garry Dean accepts the organizational flag from Gen. Victor E. Renuart, left, commander of NORAD and U.S. Northern Command, during the Continental U.S. NORAD Region-1st Air Force (Air Forces Northern) change of command ceremony Nov. 12 at Tyndall AFB, Fla.

commander of AFNORTH/NORTHCOM.

"I started off as a member of the 1st Air Force team, and now I have the privilege to lead that team," Dean said.

"I will do my utmost to lead this command to new levels of success," he added.

Dean recently completed an assignment as the Deputy Inspector General of the Air Force, in Washington, D.C. He served as the former wing commander of the 142nd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard. He has also served at the Oregon National Guard's Joint-Force Headquarters, as the State Director of Operations and Assistant Adjutant General for Air.

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COMMAND

Oregon Guard members 'stay vigilant' over Winter months



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

The holiday season is approaching and as we enter the winter months I want to remind everyone to stay vigilant in your own domestic preparedness. Our Oregon National Guard will continue to be there in the event of a major disaster as we have in the past. In the event of a major incident this season, nearly every one of our local armories has back up generator power. This will further enhance our capabilities to assist our communities.

However, what I encourage you to focus on are smaller incidents at home such as short-term loss of electricity, water or heat. Be

prepared. Have extra water, lighting and alternate heat sources should services be temporarily interrupted. Our domestic preparedness response in Oregon will be that much more effective when our soldiers, airmen and retirees are already prepared at home. Knowing your family is safe and secure at home

should you get called on to help your community, will allow you to concentrate on the mission at hand and know your family is safe.

This month we send off the 162nd Engineers toward their mission in Afghanistan. I have no doubts they will not only accomplish their mission, but go above and beyond in all they do. To the men and women of one of Oregon's oldest Guard units, established in 1848, I am proud to see you continue in your history and tradition of service and excellence. At the ceremony we had the pleasure of having

many dignitaries and community leaders and I want to thank all of them for coming to show support for our Guard members as they depart for Afghanistan. I want to especially highlight Abe Bergen, a soldier who deployed with the 162nd Infantry Regiment during World War II, as well as Jesse James Jones Jr., Co-Chief of the Cayuse Indians, who were both there to wish our men and women well. These individuals signify both the present and the history of the Oregon National Guard. I need to also address and thank the Polk county and more specifically the Dallas community, where this unit is based. As we all know, our Guard members live, work, and raise their families within our communities. I usually end my articles with our Oregon Guard motto, when we are needed, we are there. Seeing all the local community support for this event reminded me, the same is true for us. When we need you, you are there. Together, we are all what makes our state so amazing. We are Oregon.

Finally, I want to welcome the

173rd Fighter Wing, back home to Klamath Falls. The 173rd has been conducting operations in Boise, Idaho for the last seven months while the Klamath Falls runway was completely renovated. The 173rd is postured to be the only F-15 pilot training facility in the United States. Our 173rd Oregon Guard members are the individuals responsible for training the best fighter pilots in the nation. With the new runway repairs and upgrades, we will be able to continue quality training for years to come. Welcome home 173rd.

Although we have more than 3,400 Oregon Guard members supporting global operations, our team members here will be the ones to answer the domestic call if a disaster should strike. As we head into the winter months remember to be prepared at home. Whether it's through stocking up on extra supplies or sending hand sanitizer with your kids to school to prevent illness, stand-ready. When we are needed! We are there!

Raymond F. Rees

Warrant officer mentorship provides path for junior enlisted

In September I had the opportunity and privilege to attend the Army National Guard Warrant Officer's Senior Leaders Conference.

Attending were 54 Command Chief Warrant Officers from the states and territories, plus selected senior warrant officers from throughout the Guard. Numerous issues were discussed including warrant officer recruiting and warrant officer professional development.

You should begin seeing banners in your armories encouraging high quality non-commissioned officers to start on the path to honor by advertising "Experts Needed."

An Army-wide campaign has begun to recruit those of you who have those technical skills to become one of "The Quite Professionals."

This February Recruiting and Retention Command, in conjunction with this office is set to sponsor an Officer/Warrant Officer Training Workshop in Newport, Ore. All of ORARNG's chief warrant officer fives will either be attending or sending a representative.

Soldiers will have the opportunity to discuss branch-specific questions regarding the process, career advantage and special commitment in becoming a technical expert. Recent graduates from the Warrant Officer Candidate Course will be there to share a day in the life of a WOC.

Contact one of the following for more information:

CW5 Scott O'Donnell - Admin
CW5 Vern Johnson - Maintenance
CW5 Debra Murphy - Logistics/Ordnance
CW5 Marco Frye - Aviation
CW4 Jan Martin - All others
WOC Lenora Landwehr - General Information

The other topic mentioned was warrant officer professional development. This is a broad area that needs to be addressed both at the state and National Guard level. For example during this year's company grade officers and junior warrant officer's workshop in March, warrants will have a separate session specifically designed for their needs and issues. As with the training workshop in February the above senior warrants will be there as presenters and to address issues or questions.

An idea taking shape, which I aggressively support, is requiring technical prerequisites prior to enrolling in the warrant officer staff or senior staff course. In simple terms, a warrant must be the technical expert. In order to maintain that expertise, he or she would be required to attend a specific number of subject matter events prior to attending a career course at Fort Rucker. As warrants we are continually improving our skills by attending training sessions, conferences or workshops at ARNG



Chief Warrant
Officer 5
Michael Zagya,
Command Chief
Warrant Officer,
Oregon National
Guard

Professional Education Center (PEC), or at the branch school house such as Fort Gordon-signal, Fort Rucker- aviation and others. This concept is in its infancy but I will keep you informed as this issue develops.

Finally, Oregon currently has three warrant officer candidates at Fort Rucker going through Warrant Officer Candidate School; WOC Mike Benniger- maintenance, WOC Lenora Landwehr, and WOC Jamie Rogers both in administration. They will pin bars on in November. We have two more soldiers who's predetermine packets are off to the branch proponents and three more individuals that will be ready by December. Once the packets are approved I will announce the names. We wish the best of luck to all these high quality NCO's who are taking that "Path to Honor."

"For The Corps"

I am a 'citizen-soldier' But what does that term mean to you?

CITIZEN-SOLDIER: What does this phrase mean to you?

When I was a youngster growing up in Stayton, Ore., I had no idea what that phrase meant.

Really, I don't think I truly understood that phrase until maybe 20 years after first joining the active Army.

I grew up in an Army family. My grandfather jumped in both Normandy and Holland with Golf Company, 502nd PIR, 101st Airborne, and my father had served with the 187th in the 82nd Airborne. (Yes the 187th was part of the 82nd in the early 1960s).

I had four uncles, two on each side of the family who had served in Vietnam. None of them were Guardsmen, except for my father. But even then, I really didn't have any idea about what the National Guard was as an organization, or what the term citizen-soldier meant.

I joined the active Army for the education and the health coverage for my young family. While in the 2nd Ranger Battalion, I was indoctrinated by what the active Army thought of the National Guard.

While I was extremely proud of the time

I spent active, the things they told me about the guard were not accurate. I joined the guard when my active commitment to the Army ended-- not for the right reasons, but for the \$50 affiliation bonus.

I showed up to the Silverton Armory, my Dad's TOW unit, with preconceived notions.

I had to leave the guard, because I was a poor NCO with a bad attitude and embarrassment to my father and the uniform. The unit leadership smiled, told me thanks for trying it out, and asked me to reconsider when my mind was right.

Two years later, I missed the Army. I still didn't know what the Oregon Army National Guard was about, but I knew something was missing.

I went back to the Silverton Armory, with a new attitude and a new perspective. They welcomed me back and put me to work.

I served with a great group of soldiers and leaders. I began to see what a citizen-soldier was, but still never really got a deep appreciation for the meaning of the term.

I was mentored, coached, and taught, but never had the citizen-soldier lesson taught to me by any of my leadership. I was left to my



State Command Sgt. Maj. Brunk W. Conley, (right), with his father, retired Sgt. 1st Class Brunk J. Conley (left), and Conley's son, 1st Lt. Nick Conley (center) at Nick's Airborne School graduation ceremony in Dec. 2008.

own devices and learned by experience and hard knocks. Some of those lessons came during fires and floods, but still I had no real understanding.

I progressed in my career and served in some of the best units in this state, but still the definition was escaping me.

Everyone remembers where they were on

See **CITIZEN-SOLDIER** on PAGE 5

NEWS

Air Force chief calls for collaboration



U.S. Air Force Joint Chief Gen. Norton A. Schwartz addresses National Guard delegates from 54 states and territories during the National Guard Association of the United States conference in Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 12.

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

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Citing evolving missions and shrinking budgets, the chief of staff of the Air Force called for the Air National Guard and active duty forces to work closer together.

"The skill-set of National Guard members is critical to sustaining worldwide partnerships," said Air Force Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, during his speech at the 131st annual National Guard Association of the United States General Conference meeting here today.

"We stand to succeed across all areas of our total force mission," Schwartz said. "But we face numerous challenges."

Schwartz said the total Air Force structure is evolving along with the demands being placed on the force by the Defense Department.

"We need to adapt to this change," he said.

Schwartz said the Air Force's

most pressing priority is the acquisition of new refueling tanker aircraft.

The general echoed Air Force Secretary Mike Donley's speech at the NGAUS conference the day before, citing a robust request for a proposal, which is due out to contractors later this year, with a final contract awarded in late 2010.

"You all have a considerable investment in the new tanker," Schwartz told the audience, which responded with applause.

"The second priority is our fighter aircraft," he said.

"Why would I want to dissipate a limited pool of resources on a 4.5 generation fighter, when I can purchase a fifth generation platform?" Schwartz asked the audience.

He said it would be a "major mistake as a nation" to spend money on upgrading the existing Air Force inventory, and "prematurely walk away from the F-35."

"I think this is the wrong approach," he said.

Schwartz said he believes the F-22 Raptor is "over-spec'd" for the

Air Force's Air Sovereignty Alert mission, but he hopes to bring a combination of F-22, F-35, legacy aircraft, including upgraded F-15 and F-16 fighters, and unmanned aircraft to the ASA mission.

Schwartz warned that while distribution of any new platform concurrently between the active duty Air Force and Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units is important, the changing role of the Air Force means not all units will retain their present missions.

"We must recognize that the total Air Force is evolving," he said. "As I said before, we need to adapt, but adaptation also applies to a concurrent and proportional rollout in terms of F-35 procurement."

Schwartz said that in the future not every fighter unit will retain their flying mission. Units may migrate to an unmanned flying mission or even a non-flying mission.

"We need to be equally prepared to do those missions too," he said.

The third priority for the Air Force is its long-range strike capability, Schwartz said. "I think our country needs a penetrating air capability," he said. "We cannot depend exclusively on 'fire and forget' ballistic missiles."

"And as you know," he continued, citing the B-2 bomber mission at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, "[The Air Force] has a significant partnership in long-range strike capability with the Guard and Reserve."

Schwartz reminded the group of ceremonies commemorating the eighth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, calling them "a sobering reminder of the unfamiliar political and military landscape Americans now face."

"Now, more than ever, we must be vigilant in our efforts to provide for the common defense of our nation."

Oregon National Guard Funeral Honors Team: Second in Nation



Photo courtesy of Kansas National Guard Public Affairs

The Oregon National Guard Funeral Honors Team at the national competition at Fort Myer, in Washington D.C. The team, which captured first place in 2007 and 2008, came in second during the competition held during the second week of September.

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

WASHINGTON -- Although hopes for the Oregon National Guard Funeral Honors Team winning the title three years in a row during the national competition in Washington D.C. didn't materialize, the Oregon soldiers did walk away with a solid second place Sept. 17.

"I am very proud of this Oregon team, and as usual they have presented themselves with professionalism and pride," said team coordinator, Mark Brady.

Oregon took the number one spot in the national competition in 2007 and 2008. Brady said while the Oregon citizen-soldiers didn't clinch the number one spot this year, they were able to show the team's professionalism and pride.

"This is an excellent opportunity to showcase how well the military honors program has trained its soldiers nation-wide and to the level of service that our country's veterans and retirees deserve," he said.

The Funeral Honors competition is held each year at Fort Myer, in Washington D.C. According to Brady, the Oregon team spent a lot of time planning and practicing before they even think about the trip to the Nation's capital.

Seven regions submit videos to the National Guard Bureau for evaluation and consideration. From that group, the best team from each region is invited to attend the national-level competition in D.C.

The teams compete in several categories, including physical fitness tests, in-ranks inspections—which last over two hours, and an honorable transfer test, which involves moving a casket from an aircraft to a vehicle.

While the program boosts the skills of Oregon's honors team, the group's training non-commissioned officer thinks all soldiers benefit from participating in their respective states' programs.

"I believe that this competition increases the proficiency of the program overall," said Sgt. Timothy Tompkins, Oregon Honors Team Training NCO.

Oregon's state program began in 2004. By the following year, the team had conducted 415 honors for veterans or retirees. By 2006, that number had grown to 2,350 events, and in 2008, 3,400 veterans received honors from the Oregon team.

As veterans continue to age into their 70s, 80s and 90s, Brady expects that number to increase in 2009.

"I anticipate that we will provide honors for over 3,500 in 2009," he said.

Competitions aside, the soldiers on the team keep their perspective—to honor their fallen comrades and veterans who served their nation.

"The dignity and professionalism of these soldiers truly honor the fallen soldier or veteran," Brady said. "The true beneficiaries of this excellent program are the family members, retirees, and veterans themselves."

This year's competition was held September 13-17, at Fort Myer in Washington, D.C. Winners were announced Sept. 17, with the Minnesota National Guard taking the top position.



Oregon National Guard soldiers compete during a flag ceremony at the National Guard Funeral Honors Competition on Sept. 17.

Recovery Act benefits Oregon Guard, creates jobs

Story by Kim Lippert, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs Office

SALEM, Ore. -- The State of Oregon is expected to receive \$3.9 billion over the next three years in federal stimulus funds aimed at boosting the local and in turn the national economy.

The Oregon Military Department received a total of more than \$7 million in state and federal stimulus funding in the first seven months of 2009 which not only provided much needed upgrades to state armories but also put Oregonians back to work.

"We have contracted all of our initial 25 projects," said Roy Swafford, Chief of Operations and Maintenance within the Installations Division of the Oregon Military Department. "Because of the market and economic times we had competitive bids and significant cost savings, which allowed us to do ten additional projects."

Some of the major projects included a sanitary and storm sewer infrastructure project valued at \$1.3 million at Camp Withycombe, and a \$4 million project at Kinglsey Field in Klamath Falls where an aircraft arresting system is undergoing renovation in conjunction with a full runway restoration. Major improvements have been made at the Clackamas, Coos Bay, Roseburg, Hood River, Grants Pass, Prineville and Salem armories, as well as Camp Rilea and at the Biak Training Area.

According to Swafford the stimulus funded projects for the Oregon Military Department have created or maintained 382 jobs in the state.

He adds that the projects not only benefit the economy by putting people to work, but also benefit the soldier.

"When we do upgrades we modernize the facility and it's improved for their use," Swafford said. "We improve the sustainability of the facility and it's better for the soldiers and the using public."

The Oregon Military Department is just one



Photo courtesy of the Governor's Office

of many agencies in the State to receive funding through the Recovery Act.

According to Courtney Warner Crowell, Communications Manager, of the Economic Recovery Executive Team the Recovery Act was a necessary parachute for an economy in free fall.

"In the first seven months, we have either begun hiring or planning to hire more than 5,000 jobs across the state because of federal recovery projects and investments," said Crowell.

For more information on the Recovery Act, visit: www.recovery.gov

NEWS

Dallas citizen-soldier fights for two nations



Oregon Governor, Theodore R. Kulongoski (left), stands with Oregon Army National Guard Pfc. Stephen R. Printup, and Printup's grandfather, Jesse James Jones Jr., Co-Chief of the Cayuse Tribe of Pendleton, Ore., following the mobilization ceremony for the Oregon National Guard's 162nd Engineer Company, Oct. 31 in Dallas, Ore.

**Story and photo by
Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy,
Oregon Military Department
Public Affairs Office**

DALLAS, Ore. -- On Oct. 31, Pfc. Stephen R. Printup and about a hundred of his fellow soldiers of the 162nd Engineer Company, based in Dallas, Ore., took part in a mobilization ceremony at the Dallas High School Gymnasium.

Like most small-town events involving local citizen-soldiers, the turnout was huge--organizers originally planned for between 500 and 800 people--over 1,500 showed up. It was standing-room only.

The Dallas and Polk County Fire Departments strung a huge American flag between two of their ladder trucks. As the firefighters finished the task, the gray skies broke, and a rainbow emerged, framing the flag.

Inside the building, the soldiers stood in formation as family members, community leaders, well-wishers and the general public settled into their seats.

In the front row, regaled in full ceremonial Native American headdress, was Printup's grandfather and Cayuse co-Chief of the Federated Tribes of Umatilla, Chief Jesse James Jones, Jr.

He said Printup is stepping forward as a warrior to represent not only the United States, but also the Cayuse and Umatilla Nations.

"It's a great honor (for him) to represent the country as a whole and our nation," Chief Jones said.

Last month, tribal elders, which include a number of Native American veterans'

groups, held a ceremony of their own at the Umatilla Reservation to honor Printup. They presented him with an eagle feather, representing his status as a warrior. They also bestowed upon him and his family gifts and blessings.

"Today he is stepping forward as a young man," Chief Jones said. "He will be going forward as a warrior."

His mother, Nabja Printup-Jones, said the entire tribe recognizes the significance of her son's service and sacrifice as a citizen-soldier.

"So few men volunteer to serve, so we recognize how special he is," Printup-Jones said.

Printup-Jones and her family fully support her son's deployment.

"All my tribal beliefs tell me he is being a warrior, and I want to give him my full support," she said.

Following the ceremony, Oregon's Governor, Theodore Kulongoski, and Oregon National Guard's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, shook hands with each soldier, as family and friends armed with cell phones and cameras captured the moment.

Printup is soon surrounded by the media, as his grandfather and mother converge for the photo opportunity.

"We're proud of our heritage and culture," Printup said. "My family is of supreme importance to me and having them here today is a great blessing."

The unit will spend a little over a year in Afghanistan helping with route-clearance. Most of the soldiers come from the town of Dallas, Ore., located west of Salem.

Engineers to assist with road clearing, escorts during deployment



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Thomas Melendy, of Dallas, Ore., presents his daughters, Kaleah, 11, and Helen, 13, with special dog tags bearing Melendy's name, during a family presentation prior to the mobilization ceremony of his unit, 162nd Engineer Company at the Dallas High School, Oct. 31.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

supported the Oregon National Guard and the soldiers who are deploying--many of whom still live in Dallas.

"This unit is like a family," Melendy said. "We're really attached to the community here."

The unit's commander, Capt. Bob Baca, said while the family appreciation event shows the unit's appreciation for their local community, the real bonus was being able to include the soldiers' families. He said having family support is critical to the mission the unit will perform in Afghanistan.

"This unit is like a family."

-Spc. Thomas Melendy

"We're giving back to let them know how important they are to us," Baca said. "This also improves morale," he added.

The 162nd Engineers are slated to provide route clearance on roads alongside the 204th Engineer Company from Washington State.

The unit, which dates back to 1843, will conduct pre-deployment training at Fort McCoy Wis., before departing to Afghanistan as part of a 400-day mobilization.

This is the unit's first overseas deployment. The 162nd Engineers deployed to the Umatilla Chemical Depot in 2003 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

New grant to help Oregon soldiers and families

**Story by Kim L. Lippert,
Oregon Military Dept.
Public Affairs Office**

EUGENE, Ore. -- Thanks to a new grant, Oregon National Guard soldiers and their families can take advantage of free counseling focused on reintegration following a deployment.

Sponsored by the Walmart Foundation, the grant from the National Center on Family Homelessness, addresses reintegration issues facing returning soldiers and their families.

Darcy Woodke, a family assistance specialist for the State Family Programs Office, said she has seen the need for military family services intensify.

"This grant allows us as a test site, to provide free services to OEF/OIF military families," she said.

In early October, 20 mental health providers gathered in Eugene, Ore., for a two-day conference focused on Cognitive Behavior Therapy--a proven treatment for chronic stress, anxiety, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

"We wouldn't wish someone to get PTSD but it's one of the most treatable mental health disorders," said Dr. Candice Monson, the developer for intervention component of this project and the Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of Clinical Training at Ryerson University. "If you do treatment there is a good chance you will recover."

The treatment sessions, offered free to Oregon National Guard soldiers and their families, will be offered in the Eugene area in the coming months.

"Most often our loved ones cause us to take action, I think our loved ones are a reason for change especially if they understand they can be a person to help them continue to face what they fear," said Monson.

Monson said one of the main treatment components of Cognitive Behavior Therapy is to learn how to stem avoidant behavior.

"Often soldiers suffering from chronic stress or PTSD avoid crowds or places where a crowd might be present," said Monson.

Monson said she encourages anyone who is a significant person in the life of a returning Oregon National Guard soldier to attend these counseling sessions because those important people can be agents for change.

For more information on how to take advantage of these free family counseling sessions please contact Darcy Woodke at 541-736-4601 or 503-991-6097.

Operation Proper Exit returns injured Oregon soldier to Iraq



Photo by Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

Retired Oregon Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Luke Wilson jokes that audience members can play with his prosthetic leg if they want to during a "town hall meeting" with paratroopers of 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division during a visit by Operation Proper Exit participants at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Oct. 15.

**Story by
Oregon Sentinel Staff**

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq--

To help bring closure to their participation in war, The Troops First Foundation, working with the USO, took eight wounded soldiers back to Iraq in the early part of October 2009.

Luke Wilson, who hails from Hermiston, Ore., was one of them.

According to officials who organized the program, Operation Proper Exit, their aim is to help wounded warriors complete their mission.

"Some of you were taken in on a gurney and left on a gurney and won't remember having ever been there," Wilson told them at the Joint Visitors Bureau Oct. 12.

Wilson lost his left leg below the knee in an RPG attack on his convoy on Aug. 4, 2004, while

he was deployed to Baghdad with the Oregon Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion 162nd Infantry.

He and seven others visited Camp Ramadi, Iraq. The group was comprised of Marine Sgt. John Eubanks of Atlanta, Ga., Army Cpl. Craig Chavez of Temecula, Calif., Army Sgt. John Hyland of Charlotte, N.C., Army Sgt. 1st Class Josh Olson of Spokane, Wash., Army Sgt. Eric Payton of Milford, N.J., and Army 1st Lt. Ed Salau of Stella, N.C.

The group spent a week making stops throughout Iraq, and visited with paratroopers of the 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division. They were introduced to soldiers at the headquarters of the U.S. military command at Camp Victory, in a palace believed to have belonged to the late Saddam Hussein, al-Faw

Palace.

"This trip wasn't anything like I expected," Wilson said. "When I was here before, there were IED's, attacks, people being shot at every day."

The program which brought the warriors back to Iraq is sponsored by Troops First Foundation and the USO. The aim is to return military members to the battlefield where they were injured, with the goal of bringing a sense of closure and showing them the improvements taking place in Iraq.

According to 1st Bde. 82nd Airborne Div. Command Sgt. Maj. LaMarquis Knowles, the visit allows the warriors to see first hand the impact of their service.

"You can be assured your sacrifices were worth something," he told the warriors.

NEWS

Oregon soldiers provide theater-wide MEDEVAC

Story and photo by
Sgt. Keith VanKlombenberg,
13th Sustainment Command
(Expeditionary)

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq -- Every day in Iraq, medical evacuations help save the lives of injured servicemembers and civilians who would die without immediate care.

Oregon Army National Guard soldiers with Charlie Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, stationed here cannot afford to take days off because lives are on the line. They perform theater-wide medical evacuations and transport missions constantly.

"We're always on call, on alert," said Maj. Geoffrey Vallee, a UH-60 Blackhawk pilot and commander of Charlie Co. "This mission is very reactionary."

Vallee said the crews always have their helicopters and medical equipment ready, so when a mission comes along the only variables are location and level of urgency.

Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Casha, Charlie Co.'s first platoon sergeant and a flight medic, said the operational tempo is not at a constant high -- crews often wait all day for mission calls that never come.

Not having a mission means soldiers are not hurt, and that is good. "You hope to sit around all day," he said, "but you also want to do your job."

When a nine-line medevac request is called in, the crew on rotation springs into action. An urgent call requires the helicopter to be off the ground within 15 minutes, Casha said.



Sgt. Tracy Braeme, a UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief with Charlie Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment and a Sublimity, Ore., native, prepares her crew's helicopter for a medical evacuation mission Oct. 8 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

"It's a pretty challenging thing," he said, "but everybody does their job as part of a team and we get off the ground pretty quickly."

Each Blackhawk team is composed of two pilots, one medic and one crew chief. The medic provides en route care for the patient and, when necessary, is assisted by the crew chief.

"My first priority is the security of the helicopter and all the people in it, but I also provide assistance to the medic," said Sgt. Tracy Braeme, a crew chief with Charlie Co.

The soldiers of Charlie Co. said the mission, while challenging, can be very rewarding.

"I can't imagine doing anything else," said Casha, who works as a paramedic in Oregon.

Vallee said it is being able to do good things not only for American soldiers, but for the Iraqi people that he finds most gratifying.

"It's an easy mission to be proud of," said

In Iraq, one man's trash is another man's treasure

Story and photo by
Spc. Cory Grogan
41st Infantry Brigade Combat
Team

AL ASAD, Iraq -- Soldiers out of Roseburg, Ore. with the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, are helping local nationals from a village near Camp Korean Village, Iraq, turn trash to treasure.

First Lt. Matt Branstetter said an agreement with the Rupas city council states that ten individuals can come out and sort through the camp's trash, and that they are allowed two truckloads twice a day.

"We go out and guard the trash to make sure they don't grab anything they could make IEDs with," said Branstetter.

The program helps the villagers more than we thought it would, added Branstetter, and it helps Charlie Company build stronger bonds with the locals.

They are able to feed their sheep food that is thrown away from the chow hall and often make use of materials like lumber and



Spc. Josef Lewis, and Spc. Justin Fox, of Roseburg, Ore., interact and play games with local nationals from the village of Rupas prior to supervising them while they collect food for their sheep and other items the village can use from trash outside Camp Korean Village, Iraq.

clothing.

"They are hurting so anything they can take, they appreciate, and it is nice that we can help them a little bit," said Branstetter.

The soldiers often bring the

villagers some of their own things like hygiene products or other items they have bought or received from care packages.

Spc. Josef Lewis said that Charlie Company soldiers are develop-

ing positive relationships with the people from Rupas.

"Anything that they can use on a regular basis they will use. We also set a lot of the things we get from home aside so we can give it to them; we'll give them stuff like toothbrushes and tea," Lewis said.

Spc. Justin Fox said it is a good feeling when the villagers find things like shoes and shirts because he knows they appreciate it.

Charlie Company soldiers have bonded with the people from Rupas who come out to look for treasures that are trash to the soldiers.

They frequently laugh or play games with the villagers and Fox and Lewis say it has been a great life experience.

When one of the villagers was asked why he likes coming out to sort through the trash, he said it is because he can feed his sheep, find shoes, and that the soldiers are good.

41 Brigade soldiers awarded Presidential citations



First Sgt. Scott Davis, Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Johnson, Staff Sgt. Stuart Peterson, Sgt. Alex Starelli and Staff Sgt. Jesse Sapp of 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry, received the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism, during a ceremony in Tallil, Iraq on Sept. 11, 2009. An official presentation ceremony for the award is being scheduled as of this printing.

Photo by Spc. Anita VanderMolen.

Citizen-Soldier: a term of honor



CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 2

9-11; I was in the school library of Stayton High School watching the events unfold on TV.

I went to my principal after the first tower fell and told her I had to leave and went directly to Corvallis, where I was the first sergeant of Bravo Company, 2-162 Infantry.

I was not the first to arrive and by noon there were 30 soldiers there waiting to see if they were needed.

If you remember, we didn't know if there would be more attacks, and if the West Coast was next. That was when I really started to understand the term citizen-soldier.

These warriors, without being asked, put aside their daily tasks and showed up to protect their community. They weren't "on orders", none of them even asked about it, they just showed up to be ready.

They were concerned citizens, who were also soldiers; members of the community, who were ready to drop everything in the defense of their State and Nation.

I saw it again as we went to Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom II, policemen, EMTs, construction workers, delivery men, etc., dropped everything to deploy when needed.

They used their skills as soldiers and citizens to solve every single problem thrown their way.

My understanding of the term grew deeper and more complex.

Since 9-11, I think I have a handle on the term, do you?

Do you share it with your subordinates and leaders?

Do you share it with your neighbors and friends?

It has never been more apparent to me that citizen-soldier is a term of honor and esteem-- if more people knew the definition more people would want to be a citizen-soldier.

I think each of you knows the meaning, and you learned it earlier than a rockhead like me, but my question to you is, "are you spreading the word to those that don't?"

Respectfully,
SCSM Brunk W. Conley

NEWS

OYCP lends a hand on Public Lands Day



Photo by Sgt. Eric A. Rutherford, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Cadets with the Oregon Youth ChalleNge program participate in Public Lands Day by picking up debris left behind by shooters on the Biak Training Area near Redmond, Ore., Sept. 25.

BIAK TRAINING AREA, Ore.-- The Oregon National Guard Youth ChalleNge program has partnered with the Oregon National Guard and provided some much needed community service in observance of National Public Lands Day, Sept. 25, near Redmond, Ore.

Cadets focused their efforts on Biak Training Area and teamed up with members of the Oregon Army National Guard Environmental Branch and Biak Staff. Nearly 60 cadets arrived at 8:45 a.m. and worked until early afternoon to remove fencing and place information signs on the public land in an effort to keep the land in good condition for others to use.

The cadets are part of Oregon's Youth ChalleNge Program, which is an alternative high school where they live

on-site for five months while attending the military-model school.

The school is accredited by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools and is approved by the Oregon Department of Education.

The target population of students are generally students who are considered "at risk", dropped out of high school, not attending school or are failing in school.

Many students go on to earn their high school diploma, go on to community college, enlist in the military, return to high school, join the job corps, start a job or similar vocational interest.

To learn more about the program contact Kim Coleman at (541) 317-9623 ext. 224 or e-mail her at: kim.d.coleman@mil.state.or.us

173rd jets return from 7-month deployment



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

Col. James Miller lands his F-15 Eagle aircraft at the newly minted Kingsley Field runway following a total renovation over the last seven months. His aircraft was the first of four that returned from Boise, Idaho the morning of Nov. 3. Five more returned later in the day. By Nov. 12 all personnel and equipment had returned home. The 173rd Fighter wing deployed 22 aircraft and more than 225 people in support of Sentry Displacement.

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

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. -- The 173rd Fighter Wing flying operation of the Oregon Air National Guard have returned to Klamath Falls after the spending the summer in Boise.

The first nine of 22 F-15 aircraft arrived back at Kingsley Field Nov. 3, followed by the remaining aircraft Nov. 4-5.

Well-wishers from the base including family members greeted the 173rd Fighter Wing Commander, Col. James Miller who was one of the first with wheels-down on the newly minted runway.

"It was a very smooth runway coming in," he said.

He also added that the wing would take a few days off from flying so members can get resettled at home and with friends and loved ones.

"We're happy to be home," he said. "This is the ideal location for training."

Along with the jets, more than 225 Guard members spent time at Gowen Field in Boise while the Kingsley Field runway underwent repairs and upgrades. The project was jointly funded by the Klamath Falls International Airport, the Federal Aviation Administration and Department of Defense.

"The \$25-million runway and aircraft arresting system projects spanned over two years worth of planning and design and the construction was completed in 6 months," said Lt. Col. Lance McCuiston, 173rd Civil Engineer Squadron commander. "The most challenging portion of the actual project construction was the schedule and phasing coordination since the project was

originally planned by the FAA and the city over a 2 year period with 12 months of actual construction."

McCuiston went on to say that the schedule was compressed by roughly half-- a process made possible by intense coordination between the 173rd with the City of Klamath Falls, the design company, and the Federal Aviation Administration.

The project involved 42 different contractors who employed about 300 people. In addition to the runway improvements, taxiways were also upgraded, said Klamath Falls International Airport director, Derek Martin.

According to McCuiston this construction is a significant part of the 25-year Installation Master Plan which postures the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field to assume the entire F-15 Formal Training Unit mission for the active-duty Air Force and the Guard and Reserve components.

"The significant investment in the Runway and Aircraft Arresting System projects will help sustain the Air National Guard's primary mission at Kingsley Field and keep us viable for many more years," said McCuiston.

Perhaps the final touch to the project was the new emergency arrestor system certification Nov. 5. The arrestor system is a complex system of brakes located on either side of the runway with a cable stretched between them. The certification process required one of the newly returned F-15 aircraft to accelerate over the wire with the tail hook down, catching the wire and demonstrating that the cable arrestor functions as intended. McCuiston summed up the test and the overall project with one word, "success!"

Albany hosts Vets day memorial



Photo by Sgt. Eric Rutherford, Oregon Military Dept. Public Affairs

Soldiers from "The Governor's Own" Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team fire 105mm Howitzers in a gun salute during a Veterans Day memorial service at Timber Linn Park in Albany, Nov. 11. The memorial service kicked off the beginning of the 2009 Albany Veterans Day celebration.

OREGON NATIONAL GUARD POST DEPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE (Reintegration Program)

The Oregon National Guard wants to see you succeed, and is ready to help with employment, health care, college, or other matters.

Call toll-free: 1-888-688-2264, 24-hours, 7-days per week

visit our website at: www.orng-vet.org

OTHER CONTACTS FOR ASSISTANCE

- Suicide prevention hotline: 1-800-560-5535
 - Oregon Military Department: 1-800-452-7500
 - VA Hospital, Portland, Ore.: 1-800-949-1004
 - VA Hospital, Walla Walla, WA: 1-888-687-8863
 - VA Hospital, Boise, ID: 208-422-1000
 - VA Hospital, Roseburg, Ore.: 541-440-1000
 - Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs: 1-800-828-8801
 - Veterans Administration: www.va.gov
 - Military One Source: www.militaryonesource.com
- or: 1-800-342-9647

NEWS

Oregon National Guard members can get emergency relief funds

SALEM, Ore. -- The Oregon National Guard Emergency Relief Fund is designed to provide emergency financial assistance to Oregon Army and Air National Guard members and their immediate families.

National Guard members are not eligible to receive Red Cross or emergency relief funds from the Army or Air Force Associations, except when on full time training duty for more than 30 consecutive days.

Even in those cases the application process can be complicated and the applicants can see the approval time for requests take longer than they have time for.

The Emergency Relief Fund has also been instrumental in assisting our soldiers and airmen upon their return from deployment.

Working in conjunction with our reintegration program the emergency relief fund gets the Guard member the help they need to merge back into society.

During this time the career transitional assistance program continues to assist these soldiers and airmen with jobs, medical and family issues.

The Oregon National Guard Emergency Relief Fund has proved to be a critical retention tool by helping bridge the gap for Guard members who are between jobs and helping retain quality individuals that would otherwise consider a transition to active duty.

Who Does ONGERF Help?

- National Guard soldiers, airmen, single or married, and their dependents.
- Surviving spouses and orphans of soldiers or airmen who died while on duty or in a traditional guard member drilling status.

What Can ONGERF Do?

- Help with emergency financial needs for:
 - Food, rent or utilities
 - Emergency transportation and vehicle repair
 - Funeral expenses
 - Medical or dental expenses
 - Personal needs when pay is delayed or stolen

What Can't ONGERF Do?

- Help pay for nonessentials
- Finance ordinary leave or vacation.
- Pay fines or legal expenses
- Help liquidate or consolidate debt

- Assist with house purchase or home improvements
- Help purchase, rent or lease a vehicle

How Do I Find ONGERF When I Need Help?

- First, see your unit commander
- Requests are processed through Unit and then to the State ONGERF section with board member approval.

What Should I Bring With Me?

- Copy of Bills
- Substantiating documents (car repair estimate, rental agreement, utility bill, etc.)
- Copy of your most current bank statement.

How Long Does It Take to Get ONGERF Help?

- You can expect a quick decision on your request for assistance. (Many times an assistance check can be cut the same day as requested.)

What Kind of Assistance Can I Expect?

- A grant (an outright gift of funds) if repayment of loan will cause undue hardship
- When a combination of part loan and part grant is used, Soldiers and Airmen may be expected to pay back part of the funds given out of the loan account. Each situation is different and the need for funds can mandate a loan

Is There A Dollar Limit on ONGERF Help?

- No, ONGERF assistance will meet your emergency need as identified and approved by the ONGERF

How Can You Help ONGERF?

- Know about ONGERF and how to get ONGERF help when you have a financial emergency
- Ensure your family members know about ONGERF
- Give your spouse a power of attorney for emergency use
- Remind other soldiers, who have financial emergencies, about ONGERF
- Oregon Tax Refund availability for contributing donations to the ONGERF fund.

For more information contact program coordinator Staff Sgt. Richard Wirfs at Joint Force Headquarters in Salem at (503) 584-3989 or e-mail him at richard.wirfs@us.army.mil.



Guard retirement guide published

SALEM, Ore. -- The U.S. Army has published the first Retirement Guide for National Guard Soldiers and Families. The 56-page Army National Guard Information Guide on Non-Regular Retirement was written for anyone with an interest in how a member of the Army National Guard can earn retirement points credit, qualify for retired pay for non-regular service and apply for retired pay.

It is the result of a collaboration between the Army G-1 Retirement Services Division, part of the G-1's Human Resources Policy Directorate, and the Army National Guard. However the rules, links, and references covered are not the definitive answer on any subject and may be subject to changes in laws, directives, regulations and the determinations of the agencies responsible for the information.

For matters concerning individual Retirement Points Accounting, contact the RPAM administrator (Retirement Points Accounting Management Administrator) for the state in which the Soldier is a member or held membership.

For specific determinations of retirement eligibility, the RPAM Administrator can refer questions to Human Resources Command - St. Louis (HRC-St Louis).

For more information please visit: www.armyg1.army.mil/rso/docs/ARReserveRetirementGuide.doc

VA extends "Agent Orange" benefits

WASHINGTON -- Relying on an independent study by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki decided to establish a service-connection for Vietnam Veterans with three specific illnesses based on the latest evidence of an association with the herbicides referred to Agent Orange.

The illnesses affected by the recent decision are B cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease.

Between January 1965 and April 1970, an estimated 2.6 million military personnel who served in Vietnam were potentially exposed to sprayed Agent Orange.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness don't have to prove an association between their illnesses and their military service.

This "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits.

The Secretary's decision brings to 15 the number of presumed illnesses recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"We must do better reviews of illnesses that may be connected to service, and we will," Shinseki added. "Veterans who endure health problems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence."

Other illnesses previously recognized under VA's "presumption" rule as being caused by exposure to herbicides during the Vietnam War are:

Acute and Subacute Transient Peripheral Neuropathy, AL Amyloidosis, Chloracne, Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2), Hodgkin's Disease, Multiple Myeloma, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Porphyria Cutanea Tarda, Prostate Cancer, Respiratory Cancers, and Soft Tissue Sarcoma (other than Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or Mesothelioma)

Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services and programs for Veterans exposed to the chemical are available at: www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange

VA warns of phone prescription scam

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is warning Veterans not to give credit card numbers over the phone to callers claiming to update VA prescription information.

"America's Veterans have become targets in an inexcusable scam that dishonors their service and misrepresents the Department built for them," said Dr. Gerald Cross, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "VA simply does not call Veterans and ask them to disclose personal financial information over the phone."

Veteran Service Organizations have brought to VA's attention that callers are misrepresenting the VA to gain personal information over the phone. They say VA recently changed procedures for dispensing prescriptions and ask for the Veteran's credit card number.

"VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines," Cross said. "Nor has VA changed its long-standing commitment to protect the personal information of this nation's Veterans."

Veterans with questions about VA services should contact the nearest VA medical center or call, toll-free, 1-877-222-8387.

Stop-loss pay made retroactive

WASHINGTON -- More than 185,000 servicemembers affected by the military's "Stop-Loss" program will soon be able to apply for the congressionally authorized \$500 a month retroactive payments to compensate them for their added duty.

After 9/11, the military routinely used its stop-loss policy to keep servicemembers on active duty past their contracted time to ensure manpower levels to fight the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Congress recently voted that those servicemembers held over past their rightful discharge dates should be compensated \$500 per month for each month they were held over in stop-loss.

While there still is some debate among Congress and the Pentagon as to who actually is eligible for the stop-loss payment, the Army reports that 136,778 soldiers may be eligible; the Marine Corps states 9,660 Marines may be eligible; the Air Force has 39,199 potential eligible airmen; and the Navy reports about 250 eligible members. Each service is responsible for its own retroactive payment program.

The Army intends to have a web-based application process up and running by November 1, while the Marines are in the process of establishing an office to administer and manage the program that should be available soon.

If you or someone you know was affected by stop-loss between September 11, 2001 and September 30, 2009 please contact your branch of service to determine how you can apply for your retroactive stop-loss payment.

Retiree Service Office

Open Tuesdays, 10 am to 2 p.m.

(503) 584-2891 or
1-800-452-7500, ext. 2891

E-mail/ Web:
ORRSO@or.ngb.army.mil
www.orngretirees.info/

US Mail:
Retiree Service Office
PO Box 14350 Salem, OR 97309

Winter weather brings driving challenges

By Jennifer Bailey
Public Affairs Coordinator
Oregon Emergency Management

Enjoy the great outdoors in the Pacific Northwest this winter season, but keep and eye or ear on the changeable weather...The National Weather Service issues a variety of winter weather watches, advisories and warnings.

Always check the latest weather forecast before heading out and take the warnings issued by the National Weather Service seriously. Before winter weather threatens this season, you should prepare a winter safety kit for you vehicle. Such kits are also available at many retail and auto supply stores.

Remember, if you become stranded on the roads during a storm, run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat, but keep the window open a bit for ventilation. Also, keep the exhaust pipe clear of obstruction to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Finally, make yourself visible

to rescuers by turning on the dome light at night while running the motor.

Avoid overexertion when outdoors. Heart attacks can kill during and after storms, because shoveling snow or freeing stuck vehicles can be quite stressful.

A valuable companion when heading out this cold season is a battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio, the voice of the National Weather Service. It provides you with the latest weather conditions and forecasts. You can purchase such radios at many local electronics or department stores, and over the internet.

Use the 511 phone and internet traveler information services provided by state transportation departments to info on road conditions, road work, vehicle restrictions, and road closures, before you travel.

Finally, if you need more information on winter weather safety, winter weather brochures, or NOAA Weather Radio, please contact your nearest National Weather Service office by phone, or by web.



NEWS

Director of Air National Guard visits with Oregon's airmen

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. John Hughel,
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. -- Looking toward the future of air sovereignty and mission readiness in the Pacific Northwest, the director of the Air National Guard toured the Oregon Air National Guard's 142nd Fighter Wing in Portland.

Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, director of the Air National Guard, visited with Oregon airmen during his two-day trip to the state.

"This is a time of great change for all of us in the Air Force," Wyatt said. "Being able to adapt and grow will be part of that future."

Col. John E. Kent, commander of the 142nd Fighter Wing, escorted Wyatt around the base. During his tour, he met with several airmen who have recently deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and officers and airmen who support the full-time alert mission.

Oregon is one of five states who hold the air sovereignty alert mission—with fully-armed jets which are kept ready to respond to threats to national security and local infrastructure.

"The Air National Guard is well suited

to meet many of the challenges and expanded roles with even higher responsibilities for Airmen in the future," Wyatt said.

Wyatt was briefed on ways the Oregon Air National Guard can adapt to changes in future mission requirements, as well as developing long range plans to secure fifth-generation fighter aircraft like the F-22 and F-35.

"We have the people and assets already in place," Kent said during the briefing.

The Oregon coast and other parts of the Northwest are also ideal for hosting other units to train because of the training sites and air space size, Kent said.

Wyatt then received a hands-on presentation from airmen of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron. The general was able to try out equipment the unit uses in their combat controller and domestic contingency response missions.

According to 2nd Lt. Scot Berg, 125th STS Operations Officer, the Pacific Northwest presents unique and varied conditions, which call for rigorous training and a high level of readiness.

"With so many adventure sports activities and enthusiasts in this part of the country, our mission to train and ability to recruit is perfectly suited for being here," Berg said.



Oregon Air National Guard Master Sgt. Luke Thompson, of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron, demonstrates a heads-up observation device to Director of the Air National Guard, Lt. General Harry Wyatt, during his tour of the Portland Air National Guard Base, Oct. 16.

Oregon retires last F-15A in Air Force inventory

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. John Hughel,
142nd Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. -- On a clear late September day in 2009, Lt. Col. Steve Beauchamp strode from the flight operations building toward one of many F-15 Eagles parked on the ramp at Portland Air National Guard Base.

Master Sgt. Mark Billmyer greeted him with a handshake when he arrived for his mid-morning flight. Both made their way toward a waiting "Redhawk" jet where Tech. Sgt. Andrew Shown was prepping the aircraft.

The journey that Beauchamp flew that day was a one-way trip, as aircraft tail number 77-098 was retired upon arrival to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this aircraft retirement is that this F-15 is the last of the A models in the active U.S. Air Force inventory to arrive at the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center (AM-ARC) in Tucson, Ariz.-- the "bone yard."

"I thought I was going to ride off into retirement when the last of these 'A models' would be retiring," Beauchamp said.

The F-15 A/B models have been slowly phased out of the Air Force inventory over many years. In total, only 384 of the single-seat fighters were built from 1972 to 1979. The Air National Guard has held onto the original productions until the active Air Force began to receive the F-22 Raptors and turn over their C and D models to the Air National Guard.

"It seems strange to stand here and look at this terrific airplane and know I am taking it out of service," Beauchamp said.

Aircraft 77-098 first arrived in Portland on Aug. 1, 1994. It was one of the original jets that came to the fighter wing



A U.S. Air Force F-15A model takes off on its final flight Sept. 16, 2009 from Portland Air National Guard Base. Aircraft 77-098 is the last F-15A model in the Active Air Force inventory and is being flown to retirement by Lt. Col. Steve Beauchamp as he leaves for the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Ariz.

during the second conversion period that began in 1989 when the 142nd converted to the F-15A/B aircraft. Most of those jets had been assigned from the soon to-be-disbanded 318th Fighter Interceptor Group at McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

As the A models have left Oregon, the maintenance and crew chiefs had to part with airframes that had been with the unit for up to 20 years. One aircraft in particular, 73-089, had more than 35 years of total active service before it was retired earlier in 2009. It will be refurbished for its new and permanent home at the Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum in McMinnville, Ore.

For crew chiefs like Shown, the A models were a way of life since he came to the 142nd nearly 20 years ago. The sense of ownership they possess has kept this older fleet of older Eagles clean and in top-notch condition.

"We've had visiting pilots and crews from other units from in the past and fly our jets. They would routinely tell us they were the best F-15's they have ever flown, period," Shown said.

Billmyer first began working

on F-14 Tomcats in the Navy before joining the Air Guard. He felt the F-15A models had a much higher technological advantage. "It's been pretty tough to let go of good airplanes."

Yet as the newer C models arrive and the Golden Eagles make their way to Portland in the future, the sense of losing an old reliable friend was evident as the last careful preflight inspection on 77-098 was done by Beauchamp, Billmyer and Shown.

The morning was not lost on other unit members as many walked out to the flight line's edge to watch the final F-15A leave the air base for the last time. Similar emotions were felt in 1989 when the Eagle's predecessor, the F-4, ended its service in Portland.

Saying good-bye to these old jets is all part of the job. The F-15A-B models are now a part of the legacy of the air defense fighter jets at Portland that have flown from Portland Air Base since the end of World War II.

"We're seeing what we have put blood, sweat and tears into and taken great pride in over many years leave our base. It's watching a part of us leaving, too," Harris said.

142nd gets new commander



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

Col. Michael E. Stencel (right), assumed command of the Oregon Air National Guard's 142nd Fighter Wing from retiring wing commander, Col. John E. Kent (center), during a ceremony at Portland Air National Guard Base, Oct. 17.

Story by
Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy,
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Public Affairs Office

PORTLAND, Ore. -- Col. John E. Kent relinquished command of the Oregon Air National Guard's 142nd Fighter Wing to Col. Michael E. Stencel during a change of command ceremony at Portland Air National Guard Base Oct. 17.

Kent has served as the wing commander of the unit since 2007. Kent is a command pilot with over 3,400 operational hours in the F-15 aircraft, and has been employed with Delta Airlines as a commercial pilot since 2000.

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard, said Kent followed in the footsteps of many great wing commanders who came before him. He thanked Kent for doing a "magnificent" job.

"He has found what was worth doing in his life," Rees said.

Col. Michael E. Stencel served recently as the wing's vice commander. He joined the Oregon Air National Guard in 1984, and became an F-4 pilot with the 123rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron the following

year. He has worked at Oregon National Guard headquarters, and with the 142nd Civil Engineering Squadron before serving as the mission support group commander.

Rees praised Stencel for his wide range of experience as a pilot, working with civil engineers, and his work at state headquarters as the state director of operations.

"He has a broad background that I think will put him in a good position to be another great commander for the 142nd Fighter Wing," Rees said.

Brig. Gen. Bruce W. Prunk, Commander of the Oregon Air National Guard, said Stencel's experience as a traditional guardsman will benefit the unit because of the varied military and civilian experience he brings to his new position.

Stencel added that the ceremony is less about what he plans to do as commander, and more about what every airman at the wing will accomplish in their own careers. He encouraged wing members to serve by mentoring, leading and living the Air Force core values.

"I challenge you to not just be a member of this organization," Stencel said. "But to step up and be a leader."