

The Phoenix Guardian



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111th, 116th test joint fires model

By 1st Lt. Hans Zeiger

CAMP MURRAY—Members of the Army and Air National Guard from Washington State, California, and Oregon joined in a test of battle communications and force integration here over a few days in November. It was the first ever squadron-level live, virtual, and constructive joint fires training event that tied digital simulations involving air support operations squadrons, an air support operations center, and tactical operations centers into live field training. Led by the Washington Air National Guard's 116th Air Support

Operations Squadron and 111th Air Support Operations Squadron, Exercise Cascade Warrior 2015 drew participation from the California Army National Guard's 40th Infantry Division, the Oregon Army National Guard's 41st Brigade Combat Team and Washington's 81st Brigade Combat Team.

Cascade Warrior included core joint terminal attack controller (JTAC) teams operating in a close air support simulator alongside two brigade tactical operations centers (TOCs) at the 116th ASOS, and a new prototype simulator system running at the 111th Air Support Opera-

tions Center with 40th Infantry fires staff integration—all connected digitally and via radios and satellite to 116th ASOS JTACs in the field.

The ASOC simulator is a "prototype for a system of record" for Air Combat Command, said Senior Master Sgt. Greg Kassa, simulations operations chief for the 111th ASOC. A separate simulator at the 116th is a pre-cursor for a large-scale 270-degree dome simulator that is set to be built in 2016 as part of larger Washington Air National Guard Close Air Sup

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A tactical air control party specialist from the 116th Air Support Operations Squadron assesses the exercise battlefield during Exercise Cascade Warrior on Nov. 8 at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (ANG Photo/Staff Sgt. Paul Rider/Released)

Commander's Corner

2016: A Building Year

By Col. Jeremy Horn

2016 will be an exciting year! Following all the successes of 2015, we have the ability to approach 2016 as "**A Building Year**": the opportunity to build on the solid foundation you all have worked so hard to establish. We will make the wing even stronger by focusing on three areas: **Building Airmen, Building Units, and Building Capability**.

By **Building Airmen**, we will focus on enhancing our most valuable resource: our people. We'll continue to build programs that recruit, train, develop, and recognize our Airmen while enhancing their physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Stronger Airmen will help us in **Building Units**. We will continue to build a culture of respect where each of our Airmen comes to work in a safe, inclusive environment where diversity of thought and background is valued; and damaging behaviors of sexual assault, harassment, or discrimination are inconceivable. We'll also improve our programs to ensure that mission ready is inspection ready.

Finally, stronger Airmen and Units will enable us in **Building Capability** on both the federal and state levels. We have a tremendous opportunity to develop and demonstrate our Domestic Operations capabilities during Exercise CASCADIA RISING in June, and we will have the opportunity to execute our federal missions throughout the spectrum. We're mobilizing near-

ly 10% of our Airmen this year, and we will actively support them and their families. Finally, we will explore potential growth areas and anticipate new mission sets to posture ourselves for long-term success.

Our key to building is you—each Airman has something to contribute and is empowered to help make us a stronger wing. As members of your units, this wing, the Washington National Guard, and ultimately the finest Air Force the world has ever seen, we're all a part of something special and much larger than ourselves. I'm honored and humbled to serve alongside of each of you, and ask you to join me in building a stronger Wing.

Building Airmen

Building Units

Building Capability



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Col. Horn talks with airmen who were supporting firefighting in north central Washington in late August 2015 (ANG Photo/Maj. Chyteira Dues/Released)

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port Simulations Center of Excellence at Camp Murray.

The exercise was the culmination of “several years of hard work and progressive steps that started very simply on a bar napkin, and [it] has grown in scope each year,” Lt. Col. Raed Gyekis, commander of the 116th ASOS. “It has now successfully expanded to include amazing out-of-state support by the entire Joint team from Washington, California, Oregon and agencies in the DoD.”

The U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory provided support and equipment for the simulation. It was “the first time ever for an ASOC to be using AFRL equipment in a real world exercise,” said Dr. Leah Rowe, a senior research psychologist at AFRL, headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

“From a research perspective, allowing operators to use the system we designed in a real world scenario allows for better operational alignment for R&D,” said Rowe. “It allows us to design training like we would use in the real world, to train like we



National Guard members participate in Exercise Cascade Warrior at the 111th Air Support Operations Center on Nov. 8 (ANG Photo/Tech. Sgt. Paul Rider/Released)

go to war. We're able to harvest data from the system to make it more applicable to warfighting. Partnering with the Washington Air National Guard here has been a tremendous win for us. It's a win-win. They get training. I get research.”

The AFRL simulator at the ASOC, with the help of several Washington Air National Guard communications experts and a lot of troubleshooting, vastly improved communications with participants throughout the simulation, said Gyekis. “This is a huge step forward, connecting our entire joint fires team in a Washington Air Guard exercise. Like we have in the past, we will continue to build on this year’s success, as we link the new CAS Dome Simulator with the improved ASOC Sim and an even more robust training presence from our partners at the 40th Infantry Division, 81st BCT and 41st BCT,” said Gyekis.

At both of the Tactical Operations Center tents set up in the 116th ASOS compound during the exercise, a team worked to integrate the ASOC system. “We try to mimic the machine at the ASOC,” said Staff Sgt. Justin Fajardo of the 111th. “We want to make sure the players have the same setup as we do. All systems need to be talking with no errors



Maj. Jeffrey Valenzuela, an air liaison officer in the 116th Air Support Operations Squadron, operates from a tactical operations center during Exercise Cascade Warrior on Nov. 8, 2015 (ANG Photo/Tech. Sgt. Paul Rider/Released)

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Airman Snapshot: TSgt Alina Johnson

By Tech. Sgt. Paul Rider

CAMP MURRAY—Tech. Sgt. Alina Johnson has served in the Air National Guard for ten years and recently joined the 194th Logistics Readiness Squadron as a full-time technician. She is serving as a logistics management specialist.

“I am going to be working to get people deployed, helping units with readiness reporting, and managing Camp Murray’s support agreements with outside agencies,” said Johnson.

The new AFSC works well with her personality. “I like working with people. I like contributing to the success of getting our people out the door to participate in missions that they are trained and ready to do,” she said.

After a decade of service, Johnson says the one word that describes her time in the military is “evolving.”

“I started out in vehicle maintenance, then I changed to the personnel career field,” said Johnson, who is preparing to go back to school this year. “I feel I have built a solid foundation with my previous two AF-



Then-Staff Sgt. Alina Johnson (left) stands with Master Sgt. Khalilah Oliver at the Giving Tree they organized in 2014 (ANG Photo/ Staff Sgt. Paul Rider/ Released)

SC’s. I have grown as a person, as an airman, and had a lot of opportunity to learn from a lot of very cool mentors throughout our wing.”

Giving back is a big theme in Johnson’s life. She also currently serves as the head of the Volunteer Committee for the Rising Six. “I work to present opportunities to members to give back to the organization or participate in community events as a group to positively represent the Air National Guard.

Johnson said she is always looking for ways airmen can serve the community. “I would love to be able to pull together a team to work one day on a Habitat for Humanity house,” she said. “I love new ideas and max participation.”

Johnson aspires to deploy, attend the Non-Commissioned Officer Academy in residence, and one day retire as a Chief Master Sergeant.

“The Guard gives you a unique opportunity to guide your career the way that you see fit, and I appreciate that greatly,” she said. “The opportunities seem endless.”

SrA Bender rescues boy from car accident

By Staff Sgt. David Dunlap

OLYMPIA— Around 4:00 p.m. on Halloween 2015, Senior Airman Ashley Bender and her boyfriend were travelling on State Route 101 north of Olympia, taking their son to do some trick or treating, when a red pickup truck came rolling down the hill to their right and settled on its roof directly in front of them on the highway.

Bender yelled to her boyfriend to stop the car. Once out of her vehicle, taking command of the scene, she directed another



Senior Airman Ashley Bender (ANG Photo/ Staff Sgt. Paul Rider/ Released)

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A tactical air control party from the 116th Air Support Operations Squadron confers during Exercise Husky Warrior on Nov. 8 at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (ANG Photo/Tech. Sgt. Paul Rider/Released)

on it. When things are not connecting, we put our brains together to keep the systems up.”

“We’re getting our handshake down,” said Sgt. Ben Wiley of the 41st Infantry Brigade, out of Oregon, as he worked in the TOC alongside TACPs from the 116th ASOS. “The Air Force and Army are putting our ducks in a row for real world situations.”

“We have to work together, support each other with assets and make ourselves more relevant for the fight,” added Capt. Dean Blachly of the 41st Infantry. “We get to come up and see what [the airmen] do and share our perspective from the ground.”

Soldiers and Airmen experienced different aspects of the exercise. “The goal is to flow our Guardsmen through each of the stations, allowing them to experience the field perspective, the simulation perspective, and the operations center perspective---all three” within the span of the same exercise, said Master Sgt. Nicholas Wise, Operations Superintendent for the 116th ASOS.

In a wooded area several miles away at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, JTACs and Radio Operator/Maintainer/Drivers (ROMADs) relayed information from the ground back to Camp Murray.

“The end state is calling in airstrikes to put bombs on target,” said Lt. Col. Erik Eliel, Director of Operations for the 116th.

Army Guard joint fires observers coordinated with the JTACs and ROMADs on the ground. “We’re doing a lot of really good integration, coordinating fires, getting used to talking to each other, just like we do downrange,” said Staff Sgt. Alex Wood, a joint fires observer with the 81st Brigade Combat Team.

“Two wealths of knowledge come together and it’s amazing,” added Sgt. Paul Martinek, another joint fires observer with the 81st. “It’s great to sit down and have face-to-face meetings so when we’re downrange we’ll know who we’re dealing with.”

With a successful test of the ASOC simulator by the 111th ASOS in the books, the AFRL will enter into a memorandum of agreement with the 111th to become the first user of the new system starting in March 2016, around the same time that the 116th ASOS plans to open its immersive dome simulator facility.

Furthermore, Air and Army Guard units will continue their work to improve live maneuver integration at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, said Gyekis.

Air Combat Command observers were on hand at Camp Murray and Joint Base Lewis-McChord for the exercise to “see what’s possible, how to do it and how this same training can be exported to other states,” said Gyekis. “It’s a great opportunity for Washington and our west coast Guard partners to lead the way with joint fires.”

Lt. Col. Craig Sandman, cell chief for the 40th Infantry Divisions Joint Air Ground Integration Cell, who brought his team from California to participate in the exercise, emphasized the opportunity for ongoing collaboration. “Instead of separate efforts, it’s all one team effort,” said Sandman. “We will definitely be a part of this again next year.”

“All Guard” Marathon team takes honors in Florida

Members of the “All Guard Marathon Team” gather on Panama City Beach Pier 56 to show off their “bling” after the Panama City Beach Marathon and Half-Marathon. In the marathon, Senior Master Sgt. Michael “Whitey” White of the 194th Wing (second from left) won first in his age division, and Army Guardsman Trevor Harris (far right) won first place overall. The team includes both Army and Air National Guard members and is part of the Guard Bureau’s Military Competitions Program. (Photo courtesy of Senior Master Sgt. Michael White)



Congratulations to the 194th Wing 2015 Annual Award Winners!

Airman of the Year: **Senior Airman Dessie Larson** (194th Intelligence Squadron)
 NCO of the Year: **Staff Sgt. Jianing Gao** (194th Intelligence Squadron)
 Senior NCO of the Year: **Master Sgt. Michael Frady** (256th Intelligence Squadron)
 CGO of the Year: **1st Lt. Steven Jones** (262nd Network Warfare Squadron)
 First Sergeant of the Year: **Master Sgt. Kellie Barton** (262nd NWS)
 Civilian of the Year: **Mr. Lyndon Deboma** (194th Wing Staff)

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Good Samaritan to call 9-1-1 and report the accident. She made contact with the driver of the pick-up and asked if he was okay. He freed himself and crawled out of the truck and started to walk around.

Bender heard more yelling from the truck. Looking in, she saw a little boy who could not get free of his seatbelt and get out of the truck. “I knew I had to do something, as the father had already gotten on his cell phone and was calling his wife to tell her what was happening,” said Bender. She crawled inside the cab of the truck and located the child, helped him loosen his seat belt enough to where

he could wiggle out of it, and then pulled him out of the cab onto the pavement.

Bender, drawing on her training received from the Air Force, such as Self Aid Buddy Care, immediately assessed the boy’s injuries. She saw minor cuts and scrapes to his hands and face. She kept him immobilized on his back, cradling his head and neck in case of any spinal injuries. She was got the boy to calm down by asking him simple questions, such as what his name was, how old he was, and his favorite sports teams. He was 10 years old.

In approximately 10 minutes, first responders arrived on scene to take over, where they further evaluated the boy and got him the medical attention he needed.