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# Oregon Sentinel

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

## Oregon National Guard assists with wildland firefighting

**SALEM, Oregon** - The Oregon National Guard (ONG) was activated to assist the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) with wildfire suppression efforts following Governor Kate Brown's statewide wildfire emergency declaration on July 18, 2018.

The ONG has an ongoing agreement with ODF known as Operation Plan Smokey, which stipulates how ONG members and assets may be utilized to assist in annual wildland firefighting efforts.

Aviation assets were made available to wildfire crews in Oregon. The Oregon Army National Guard provided CH-47 Chinook helicopters and HH-60M Black Hawk helicopters equipped with Bambi water buckets. Other air assets included an additional HH-60M Black Hawk helicopter on standby for medical evacuations and a UH-72 Lakota to assist with aerial spotting.

Three firefighting teams, each with approximately 125 Oregon National Guard personnel, were trained and "Red Card" certified in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, during the spring and early summer in preparation for wildfire season.

At the request of ODF, the teams of Citizen-Soldiers and Citizen-Airmen, from Oregon National Guard units across Oregon, were called into State Active Duty to support mop-up operations on the Garner Complex, Taylor Creek and Klondike fires in Southern Oregon. Other service members were also activated to provide logistics support and traffic assistance points.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Zachary Holden, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers fight the Garner Complex Fire side-by-side with firefighters from the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) north of Grants Pass, Oregon, August 2, 2018. Soldiers and Airmen from across the state were called-up to help support the efforts of wildland firefighters with mop-up operations. The Oregon Army National Guard also provided helicopters to assist with Bambi bucket fire suppression operations, aerial spotting and a medevac on standby.

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## Awareness and training keeps Northwest region ready

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

**WARRENTON, Oregon.** – The reliable summer weather along the Oregon coast provides an opportunity to prepare for the unpredictable. Annual training activities such as civil defense preparation training or exercises like Pathfinder-Minuteman bring a variety of military and first responders together to learn from recent real-world disasters.

During the recent two-day Pathfinder-Minuteman training, June 18-19, at Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Oregon, simulated post-earthquake and tsunami scenarios were implemented. The training takes into account previous years' lessons and while incorporating multi-player teams.

"We spent about six months planning with our Oregon Disaster Medical Team (ODMT) and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) partners, meeting monthly for this year's [Pathfinder] exercise," said Oregon Air National Guard Capt. Kevin Lindsey, a medical plans officer with 142nd Fighter Wing Medical Group and [CBRNE] Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP).

The refresher training emphasized team building, communication, best-skill practices, and safety in the field when responding to any incident, large or small.

"Camaraderie is key to how we work and to create an environment [here] where



First responders discuss training situations they encountered during Pathfinder-Minutemen Exercise, June 19, 2018, at Camp Rilea, Warrenton, Oregon. The joint multi-agency, multi-state preparedness exercise is based on a possible Cascadia Subduction Zone event.

we can build small, yet effective teams," Lindsey said. "Over the course of a couple of days in the field, people get to know each other and it feels more natural to all the players."

Making those decisions in the field, first responders need to assess the risks and safely manage the changing environment. Depending on the severity of the disaster, keeping a 'culture of safety' in mind is a fundamental component of the training.

"If our responders get hurt or killed, then we lose our ability to respond to others; it's that simple," Lindsey said.

The teams contained a balance of military members working side-by-side with their civilian counterparts. Frequently they are organized to have a variety of skill sets in each group, to include specialist in search and rescue, medicine, and other essential personnel.

Story continued on Page 4

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## COMMAND

## Oregon Air National Guard pins first female general officer

Story and photos by  
Master Sgt. John Hughel,  
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

**PORTLAND, Oregon** – There are various challenges, setbacks, and rewards for the uncommon citizen who makes serving in the military a career; and on some occasions, there are ‘the firsts’ that reflect the distinctive profession and the unique opportunities that present themselves.

Donna Prigmore embraced the chance to be part of something bigger when she joined the U.S. Air Force in 1982. Yet, being selected as ‘the first’ female general officer in the Oregon Air National Guard was one of those unforeseen opportunities that transpired along the way.

As she was formally promoted to brigadier general in a ceremony on Aug. 5, 2018, at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Prigmore became the first female in the Oregon National Guard promoted to a general officer as a traditional, part-time Guardsman. She follows in the footsteps of Oregon Army National Guard Maj. Gen. Julie A. Bentz, who was the first woman in the Oregon National Guard to become a general officer. Bentz is currently serving on active duty as vice director of the Joint Improvised-threat Defeat Organization (JIDO).

“I am deeply humbled to be standing here in front of you as the first female general officer in the Oregon Air Guard,” she told those in attendance who filled the Rosenbaum hangar on base. “Times like these makes a person reflect on their journey, on the ‘how and why’ the path led to today.”

Oregon Governor Kate Brown was on hand to administer the official oath of office. She acknowledged the significance of the moment for those in attendance.

“I am so thrilled to place a milestone on the long and very distinguished history of the Oregon National Guard,” said Brown.

“Colonel Prigmore, you are now joining an elite group both present and throughout history who can claim the title of general officer.”



Col. Donna Prigmore has her new brigadier general stars pinned to her uniform by her sons, Nathan and Brian Prigmore, during her formal promotion ceremony on Aug. 5, 2018.

Prigmore reflected on the passage from enlistee to general, and those that helped shape her experience along the way. She began her military career when she enlisted as an electronic technician and spent four years on active duty before joining the Arizona Air National Guard. In 1990, she obtained her officer commission and graduated at the top of her class from the Academy of Military Science in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Subsequent assignments took her to Oklahoma as the cost analysis officer with the 137th Airlift Wing, and later to Alaska with the 176th Wing as the services flight commander and chief of public affairs. By March of 2002, she joined the Oregon Air National Guard working at Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs.

She has since gone on to serve as the vice commander for both the 142nd and 173rd Fighter Wings and has more than 12 years of command level experience. Most recently she served one-year as the executive officer for the vice chief of staff National Guard Bureau, Washington, D.C. In her civilian career, she is the senior manager, Passenger Terminal Experience at the Port of Portland.

Splitting the time between the two demanding professions has been a challenge at times, all the while being a supportive military spouse to husband, Lt. Col. John Prigmore, and mother to her two sons, Nathan and Brian Prigmore.

“When you have someone of Donna’s caliber she is needed at both places,” noted Governor Brown during her remarks.

With all the varied opportunities along her career path in the Air National Guard, Prigmore

acknowledged those that not only shaped her professional development but also encouraged her when the challenges were demanding.

One of those ‘key people’ she described in her remarks was Mr. Harvey Fink, who served as a coach and mentor for years to Prigmore before his passing this year.

“Harvey taught me patience and perseverance, and he helped to keep the fire burning within me ... during times when my flame was barely lit. When I was at a crossroads a few times, uncertain as to whether I could balance the life any longer of being a mother, wife, friend, Port of Portland employee, officer, and commander in the Oregon Air Guard,” said Prigmore.

One of the most unique unplanned opportunities that guided Prigmore’s compass was during her time at Camp Rosenbaum, a youth-citizenship camp sponsored by the Oregon National Guard. Since 1970, the camp has transformed the lives of many children in the region. Oregon Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Fred Rosenbaum started the camp and recruited Prigmore to help “tell the Camp Rosenbaum story to a larger audience.” Eventually, she went on to serve as a camp counselor, and

later she became the camp director for a five-year period.

“Looking back at that stage in my life, those truly were some of the best memories I have had during my career,” she said while pointing out Mark Rosenbaum, Fred’s son, in the audience. “Mark, I think about your dad all the time and we all miss him, especially on day’s like today.”

As she acknowledged other officers and mentors in her life, she concluded looking toward the future as she described the impact of her two sons, Nathan and Brian, “who have perhaps taught me the most about life.”

“Ironically, I feel at this stage in my life that my boys are teaching me now, more than I am teaching them. It is a strange turn of events, but one I welcome with open



Governor Kate Brown (left) congratulates Donna Prigmore (right) after taking the oath of office during her promotion ceremony.

arms and one that I am eternally grateful for,” she said.

Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon, described how she has kept this special balance between family and career, “A supportive family, and a supportive employer,” he said.

With the promotion to general officer, Prigmore will serve as the Oregon National Guard’s Assistant Adjutant General-Air, which commands and ensures the readiness for both of Oregon’s flying F-15 Eagle units located in Portland and Klamath Falls.

“She (Prigmore) brings not only a proven background to her new role but she has a unique ability to connect with people and cares about their development.”

## New Land Component Commander brings insight from experience

Story by John Hughel and April Davis,  
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

**SALEM, Oregon** – The Oregon Army National Guard welcomed a new Land Component Commander as Brig. Gen. William J. Prendergast IV replaced Brig. Gen. William J. Edwards during a change of command ceremony, August 4, 2018, at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas, Oregon.

The Land Component Command has oversight over the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the 82nd Brigade (Troop Command) and a number of other tenant units from other commands around Oregon.

In his previous role, Prendergast served simultaneously as the Assistant Adjutant General-Army for the Oregon National Guard, and as the Deputy Commanding General and Army Reserve component integration advisor for U.S. Army Africa (USARAF) and Southern European Task Force (SETAF), he also works full-time with a successful ‘local shoe company.’

It was while Prendergast was living in Freeport, Maine, that he began his career with Nike in 1989. Now with more than 25 years with the company, his current position is the (Nike) IHM Inc., director of operations Air manufacturing and innovations.

“I attended a small liberal arts college in Maine and enjoyed experiencing my academic life on the other side of the country,” Prendergast said. It was when he went home to Oregon that he began to feel a greater sense of wanting to give something back to the state and nation.

After graduating in 1990 with a Political Science degree from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, he found that calling with the Oregon National Guard. He first joined the Oregon Army National Guard

in 1992 as a combat engineer and then received his commission in 1994 from the Officer Candidate School at the Oregon Military Academy. Throughout his career, he has served as a mortar and infantry platoon leader, operations officer and executive officer. He served as a commander at the troop, company and squadron levels. He also commanded the 82nd Rear Operations Center, 249th Regional Training Institute, and the 41st Infantry Brig. Combat Team.

Deployments to the Middle East in 2003 with 1st Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, and in 2009 with the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, fostered the ability to balance the dual missions at home and abroad. Balancing two demanding occupations concurrently keeps his itinerary filled.

“Time management is crucial for both jobs,” he elaborated. “Without the support at Nike, I would not be able to take on such an intensive work schedule and the military mission both here in Oregon and other



Photo courtesy U.S. Army Africa Public Affairs  
Maj. Gen. Roger Cloutier, U.S. Army Africa Commanding General, presents Brig. Gen. William Prendergast with the Legion of Merit.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class April Davis, OMD Public Affairs  
Brig. Gen. William J. Prendergast (right), salutes Maj. Gen. Michael E. Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon, as he assumes command of the Oregon Army National Guard, Aug. 4, 2018.

(overseas) assignments.”

This hectic schedule kept Prendergast in Africa one week a month, visiting many of the 53 African nations that make up U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) area of responsibility. USAFRICOM is responsible for operations and security cooperation and for maintaining and building relationships with nations on the African continent, its island nations, and surrounding waters.

“The U.S. plays a vital role in these partnerships by building interoperability with our African partners as we run exercises, which helps enhance security and protect susceptible residents,” Prendergast said.

In one of his first trips to South Africa last year, he participated in Exercise Shared Accord 2017, where more than 200 U.S. Soldiers and Marines joined roughly 830 members of the South African military in a combined field training exercise focused on peacekeeping operations.

“By 2025, one-fourth of the world’s population will be in the African continent,” Prendergast said. “Over the course of the next decade and into the future, the U.S. military will play a vital role in the stability and development in the (African) continent.”

Building relationships are critical to establishing and maintaining international partnerships. Prendergast reiterated how “understanding the people one works with” is essential in these global interactions.

“It begins with our ability to integrate with our global partners and show our similarities,” he said. “Once this is established, we can learn from each other. This is the North Star, a reference point of trust that drives innovation.”

When describing these unique partnerships, Prendergast emphasized the U.S. military’s connection with USAFRICOM much like the National Guard’s State Partnership Program (SPP).

“Through our own involvement in the (Oregon) State Partnership Program with Bangladesh and Vietnam, we’ve learned a lot about assimilating with different cultures through a shared vernacular toward disaster recovery and human assistance preparation,” he said.

As the Land Component Commander, Prendergast oversees all Army operations for the state of Oregon and is responsible for more than 6,000 Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers.

“What I enjoy the most about being part of the National Guard is the opportunity serve and contribute at a very high level while giving something back to the state of Oregon,” Prendergast said. “Whatever the job or position, my expectation is to make it the best it can be.”



NEWS

# 173rd Fighter Wing Airmen volunteer for search and rescue

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

**KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon** – The area surrounding Klamath Falls, Oregon, is typified by forests, wilderness, lakes, streams, mountains, and rivers. This draws people from all over the state to enjoy the beauty and adventure of the outdoors. Many 173rd Fighter Wing Airmen enjoy these activities, and a number of them are combining one of their core values, service before self, and their love of nature.

A group of 173rd FW Airmen volunteer

their off-duty time with a search and rescue group that works to help those who find themselves in trouble and far from help.

“The members of the Sheriff’s [Department] Search and Rescue have, over the years, been credited for finding lost children, hikers and backpackers in the wilderness,” reads the Klamath Country website description of the group.

“It should be noted that this group of volunteers, like many others associated with our Search and Rescue Deputies, give freely and tirelessly of their time and energy to protect and serve the residents and visitors to Klamath County.”

Chief Master Sgt. George Mulleneix, who has volunteered for the group since 2007, says a search starts when his phone rings.

“Whenever we get a call we go out and either look for an individual, or we get individuals who might be hurt on the trail and we’ll go in and get them with a litter.”

He relates that during one such search, two hikers on the Pacific Crest Trail were caught in a storm with heavy lightening. As they ran from the area, one of them slipped while attempting to jump a downed tree and badly dislocated his shoulder. Mulleneix and others hiked in, located the injured hiker, and escorted him to an area where a helicopter could take him to a hospital for treatment.

Another 173rd FW Airman, Master Sgt. Matt Marshall, says the extensive training they receive helps ready them for whatever situation arises--from small boat rescue to ground and mounted search and rescue. He says his background is one of the reasons he volunteers for the group.

“As an avid outdoorsman with extensive survival, navigational and military training, who’s favorite past time is exploring the wilderness areas of the Pacific Northwest. I felt a duty to serve my local community and put my skills to use assisting whomever and wherever possible,” he says.

That service gives him a sense of satisfaction and it provides a lasting camaraderie with the other members of the team Marshall adds.

Another 173rd FW member of the search and rescue team, Tech. Sgt. T.J. Lombardi, 173rd Security Forces Squadron and avid photographer, captures images from one a training event where they learned to use litters to rescue injured climbers from cliff



Courtesy U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. T.J. Lombardi

U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. George Mulleneix, of the 173rd Fighter Wing, rappels down a steep slope while harnessed into a litter during training to rescue fall victims with Klamath County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue.

faces or high places. He says it is the kind of environment where they must rely on each other and in many ways it mirrors the Espirit De Corps he finds in the military.

“One thing I love about the SAR community are the sincere and genuine people—willing to help in any capacity,” he said. “The longer you are in this community, the more stories you hear of missions spent alongside each other and those same people quickly become your friends and mentors.”

For the Airmen of the 173rd Fighter Wing it’s perhaps only natural to combine a love of the outdoors with service to the community, many would say it’s one of their core values.



Courtesy U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. T.J. Lombardi

U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. George Mulleneix, of the 173rd Fighter Wing, is harnessed to a litter and is preparing to descend a very steep slope during training with Klamath County Sheriff’s Dept. Search and Rescue where he is a volunteer member.

## Awareness and Training keeps region ready for Cascadia Subduction Zone disasters

Continued from Front Page

Working on her first disaster response exercise, Allison Journey, a physician assistant from Lincoln City, Oregon, integrated quickly to the changing exercise situations given to her group.

“The biggest part of all of this training is team communication,” she described.

“I watched other teams struggle because of communication issues, but our team has been fantastic during each phase and we have gotten a lot done.”

With her full-time job in Lincoln City, a location directly charted on the coastline, the danger from of a Pacific Ocean tsunami is only one of the troubling elements that she identified.

“One of my biggest fears, especially this time of year, is the influx of tourists visiting the beaches,” Journey said. “The main takeaway from all of this training will be to help build a plan at the (Good Samaritan) hospital because eventually, a disaster like this is going to happen.”

Surviving a magnitude 9.0 earthquake



Allison Journey, (right) a physician assistant takes part in the Pathfinder-Minutemen Exercise, June 19, 2018, at Camp Rilea, Oregon. The joint multi-agency, multi-state disaster preparedness exercise is based on a possible Cascadia Subduction Zone event.

with its combined threat of an almost certain tsunami makes responding to both disasters glaring. The Oregon coastline has its own unique geographic issues factored into any recovery effort. With the coastal Cascadia Mountain range to the immediate east, the shoreline becomes both an obstacle and entrance point for first responders.

Lessons learned in recent hurricanes along the Texas coastline and in the Caribbean Islands of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, showed that having a sustained access point along the water’s edge is part of the recovery plan.

Prior to this year’s Pathfinder Exercise, the situation and operational environment of the Pacific coastline were addressed during the Portland Rose Festival Defense Support of Civil Authority (DSCA) Senior Leadership Agenda, held June 7, at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas, Oregon.

During his opening remarks welcoming other DSCA leaders in attendance, Brig. Gen. Mark

Crosby, Assistant Adjutant General-Air and the commander of the Joint Domestic Operations Command for the Oregon National Guard, reiterated the necessity of seafaring operations following a Cascadia Subduction Zone disaster.

“What we’ve seen in the most recent hurricane that hit in Puerto Rico, and shoreline storms in Texas and Louisiana is the support from Naval and Marine assets to help respond to a crisis.”

The oceans ability to support commerce and attract tourists can transform rapidly when a tsunami or substantial storm surge decimates a coast area. This kind of paradox is also replicated with the recovery operations, as the proximity of maritime assistance becomes a critical factor of aid.

“For those trapped in their communities and for first responders trying to gaining access, we can’t do it without assistance from maritime resources,” Crosby said.

With the likelihood of local hospitals and other urgent care centers being inundated with patients, Mercy class naval vessels like the USNS Comfort, which was dispatched to Puerto Rico, could be positioned along the Pacific Northwest shorelines.

The Rose Festival DSCA seminar brought key leaders together from the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, Oregon and Washington National Guard, as well as many emergency management and civilian

stakeholders to share these lessons learned and best practice recommendations.

“This type of interoperability with various agencies plays a crucial role in building communication between first responders, and multiple resource providers,” said James White, civil authority planner, U.S. Army North, DCE Region X.

A fundamental aspect of the DSCA leadership seminar is keeping important operational concepts in focus of engaging partners, joint training exercises, disaster support base assessments and visit, and planning for disaster response.

Between planned events such as the Senior Leadership seminar and the Pathfinder-Minuteman training, learning from each other and fostering open communication principles was a consistent common denominator with both groups.

“It’s about building a plan with a solid team and a sufficient bench in place,” Rear Admiral David Throop, commander, 13th Coast Guard District, said during the seminar.

“That way, when it’s time to move those assets, first responders can open up a pipeline, and transport those resources where they are most urgently needed.”



Brig. Gen. Mark Crosby (center), Assistant Adjutant General-Air and the commander of the Joint Domestic Operations Command for the Oregon National Guard, along with Rear Admiral David Throop (left), 13th Coast Guard District commander, and Brig. Gen. Jeremy Horn (right), commander of the Washington ANG, listen to senior leaders address the Portland Rose Festival Defense Support of Civil Authorities seminar, held at Camp Withycombe, Oregon, June 7, 2018.



U.S. Coast Guard Rear Admiral David G. Throop (right), 13th Coast Guard District commander, offers final comments and remarks during the Portland Rose Festival Defense Support of Civil Authorities seminar held at Camp Withycombe, Oregon, June 7, 2018.



NEWS

Oregon Airmen respond to Hurricane Lane during training in Hawaii

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Nick Choy,  
142nd Fighter Wing Medical Group

**HONOLULU, Hawaii** — What started out as a typical summer training deployment for the men and women of the 142nd Medical Group (MDG), Oregon Air National Guard, turned anything but, when the Hawaiian islands were threatened by a category-5 hurricane, the week of Aug. 20, 2018.

The annual training for 43 Airmen of the 142nd Fighter Wing, scheduled for Aug. 18-31 on the island of Oahu, was comprised of doctors, nurses, medics, dental technicians, services personnel and medical administrative, public health and bio-environmental specialists.

The group was assigned to three geographically separated locations: Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC), Joint-Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) and Schofield Barracks. They were joined by members of the 1984th U.S. Army Reserve Hospital as part of the Medical Facilities Annual Training (MFAT) mission.

However, as Hurricane Lane approached the islands from the eastern Pacific, TAMC officials determined the overall mission for the deployed Redhawks would change from that of training to one of support and backfill for their full-time medical staff.

According to U.S. Army Master Sergeant Gary Kondo, Reserve Affairs NCO at TAMC, the hospital still needed to operate on a 24/7 schedule, and due to the ongoing shortage of medical personnel, the timing of the annual training for Oregon’s medically trained Airmen turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

“The hospital was able to utilize all 15 medics and 6 services personnel to backfill and support the hospital,” Kondo said. “Without these Airmen, the strain would have been much heavier on the current full-time personnel at TAMC.”

Edwynn Johnson, Reserve Component Specialist at TAMC, agreed that the timing could not have been more perfect.

“If the Oregon Airmen weren’t here, the Reserve Office would have needed a lot more time to request reservists to assist us,” Johnson said. “By that time, the storm would have been over.”

Oregon Air National Guard Col. Eric Schadler, 142nd Medical Group commander, worked closely with TAMC’s emergency operations officials on how best to utilize the deployed medical staff.

“The hospital asked about our ability and interest to help and I told them we were fully on board and would help in any way we could,” Schadler said.

By Wednesday, Aug. 22, it was determined that all medics would remain at the hospital until Aug. 25 to assist primary caregivers and medical providers. Non-essential full-time staff would leave the



Oregon Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Anina Anderson (right), assists U.S. Army 1st Lt. Elizabeth Lane (left), with preparing a patient for delivery in the Labor & Delivery section at Tripler Army Medical Center, in Honolulu, Hawaii, Aug. 28, 2018.

facility and return to their homes, while non-medical personnel from the 142nd Medical Group would shelter in place at their billeting location back at Pearl Harbor, about 15 minutes away.

With the memory of two devastating category-4 hurricanes that caused major damage — Iwa in 1982 and Iniki in 1993 — islanders began purchasing all available bottled water, batteries and canned goods. Storefronts in Waikiki were covered in plywood in anticipation of the storm’s expected landfall early Friday. Packing winds of 156 mph and gusts of 200 mph, Hurricane Lane was a storm to be taken seriously, emergency officials said.

Red Cross shelters were opened and staffed on Oahu. Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell ordered Honolulu International Airport closed by 5 p.m. on Thursday, and Airport officials canceled inbound flights, while U.S. Coast Guard officials ordered Honolulu Harbor closed and requested two large container ships to leave the harbor to anchor off the coast in order to ride out the storm.

However, by the afternoon of Aug. 23, Hurricane Lane was downgraded to a category-3 storm, with wind gusts of 120 mph, and 15-20 inches of rain expected. The storm parked just south of the islands and began dumping massive amounts of rain across the state. Torrential rains caused flooding on the island of Maui and the Big Island of Hawaii, and eventually caused flooding on the islands of Kauai and Oahu.

While the group sequestered at the hotel watched updates on local television news stations and kept in touch with their colleagues at the hotel via text and cell phone, the real-world medical support continued at TAMC. It was determined by hospital officials that their emergency plan would remain in place until State Civil Defense gave the all clear.

Airman Aleec Coyle and her fellow Airmen from the 142nd Force Support Squadron Services, busied themselves

prepping meals for hospital staff who would be staying at the facility over the next couple of days, but to also ease tensions for those non-essential hospital employees who were preparing to evacuate the facility ahead of the storm.

“I feel that those who live here locally felt a tension (as the storm approached) to protect their homes and prepare,” Coyle said. “That definitely trickled down to the rest of us because we felt like we needed to step up our game and help ease that tension.”

Coyle said the experience helped build morale and teamwork among her services personnel staff as they gained a new understanding of how their team worked together.

“I think (this experience) really helped a lot to learn everyone’s learning styles and to adapt to personality differences and how we get things done,” she added.

Thanks to the shift in mission from training to that of support, some of the Airmen from the 142nd MDG were able to perform on a much higher level during an actual emergency, building new skill sets and gaining real-world experience in the process.

Airman 1st Class Jillian Zalunardo, who worked in Labor & Delivery, said she was able to watch a birth — something she would never experience in any training scenario.

“It was really awesome,” she said. “It was the first time I got to see that in person. It was alarming, emotional and beautiful all at the same time seeing a new life come into the world.”

Also assisting with newborns and expectant mothers in the Labor & Delivery department was Staff Sgt. Anina Anderson, who said she was so moved by the experience, she asked her command to continue her work there while her fellow Airmen were rotated to other sections.

“I always wanted to be a Labor & Delivery nurse,” Anderson said. “In fact, after this trip, I plan to switch my career path into L&D nursing.”

While most on the island of Oahu had prepared for the worst, the storm conditions improved by late Thursday going into Friday, with Lane downgraded further to

a category-2 and eventually to a tropical storm. Meanwhile, at TAMC, remaining staff members took note of the professional demeanor of their new, albeit temporary co-workers.

“TAMC staff appreciated the extra help, and appreciated how the Airmen embraced the mission and brought a new level of excitement to the real-world mission,” Kondo said. “It seemed as though their performance level increased and was stepped up a level, and this was definitely noticed by the hospital chain of command and department heads.”

Schadler heard directly from Army leadership and hospital administrators about the level of professionalism and care exercised by the deployed Oregon Airmen who rose to the occasion.

“The Army commented several times on our positive attitude, enthusiasm, and willingness to help,” Schadler said. “And the cool part is that of all the units they’ve had up here, they said we’ve been one of the best in terms of our willingness to help and how prepared we were, and getting our jobs done.”

For her part in the real-world mission, Zalunardo said she would never forget this experience.



Oregon Air National Guard Senior Airman Margo Testa (right) practices applying a splint on her fellow medic, Senior Airman Taryn Lommasson, at Tripler Army Medical Center, in Honolulu, Hawaii, Aug. 28, 2018.

“I’m incredibly grateful for this opportunity. This opens up opportunities and possible career choices for me. Not only do I get to see what the medical technicians do, but this allows me to see what the doctors do — something I’m very interested in becoming,” she added.

For her part as a member of the Air National Guard, Anderson said this experience underscores the flexibility and overall readiness of all members of the National Guard.

“While it was a great experience overall providing medical care and switching to being mission ready for the storm, I think it speaks to the flexibility of the National Guard in being able to switch from one mission to another at a moment’s notice,” she said.

173rd Medical professionals provide medical care, receive training

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

**KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon** - A group of medical professionals from the 173rd Fighter Wing in Klamath Falls, Oregon, traveled to the Hawaiian Islands for real-world medical training that also served a needy community, August 11-19, 2018.

About 350 members of the Air National Guard, Air Force, Army, Navy Reserve, and Marine Corps Reserve are taking part in Tropic Care Maui County 2018, a Department of Defense Innovative Readiness Training mission to provide no-cost medical, dental, and vision services to people in Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.

The Air National Guard Innovative Readiness Training program folded the Oregon Airmen into the joint troops providing nearly 18,000 procedures worth \$1.6 million dollars, said 2nd Lt. Lee Charnow, a 173rd medical administrator.

That team served around the island of



U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Justyn Freeman. Capt. Brian Hopkins, a dentist assigned to Scott Air Force Base, and Master Sgt. Bethany Blevins, a dental technician with the 173rd Medical Group, conduct a procedure on a patient during Tropic Care Maui County, Lanai, HI., Aug. 13, 2018.

Maui and Molokai, an adjacent island. Although Maui is an upscale tourist destination, its high cost-of-living and limited industry relegate a significant number of the population to at or below the poverty level.

Charnow said helping people in this

fashion helps prepare a unit for their deployed mission.

“The main reason for the military part of the training, is the integration of the different services - just being able to work when you are thrown together with limited supplies and still get the job done is part of the training,” Charnow said.

Charnow said the IRT mission replicates many of the actions they will use in a local exercise he is spearheading for a possible Cascadia event response. “Deploy and set up services in a limited amount of time.”

“I’ve got to do a lot of things in the field like in a deployed location,” said Tech. Sgt. Kendall Nielsen, a bioenvironmental troop. “I did water vulnerability assessments and partnered with public health to do food vulnerability assessments—if I deploy I will use those skills.”

Naturally there was an element of service, providing much needed care to those who couldn’t afford it.

“There was a guy who you could tell

probably hadn’t had new glasses in a decade,” Nielsen said. “I handed him his glasses and he was like ‘Wow!’ - it was very endearing to watch people get these services and their appreciation was amazing.”

“It’s an awesome service for our community,” said Mice Kahula, who works for the Maui County Parks Department and served as the civilian logistics manager for the Hana site.

Maj. Thomas Lanigan, a personnel officer with the 173rd Fighter Wing and the mission support officer for Tropic Care Maui County, said that he spent time “drawing upon a lot of mission planning from the real world” as well as his own military training as he planned the bed-down and feeding plan for seven sites in the islands. “A lot of things I learned in my core training paid off,” he said.

The IRT program began in the early 1990’s and continues to provide mutual benefit to units from all the service branches as well as needy communities.



NEWS

Putting out wildfires one charred stump at a time

Story by and photos by  
Maj. John Farmer,  
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**GRANTS PASS, Oregon** - Imagine you're out of bed before the sun rises for your daily workout routine. Maybe you'll lift weights and incorporate some high intensity interval training – really get the heart racing. But instead of gym shorts and a tank top, you're wearing heavy boots, a hard hat and a backpack. Your barbell is a mean-looking axe, and your gym is on the side of a steep mountain, which is covered in hot ash from yesterday's conflagration. Your workout will last 12 hours.

Welcome to the world of wildland firefighting.

The process known as 'mop up' is one of the most crucial elements of fighting a wildland fire. It is methodical, backbreaking, intense and exhaustive and is one of the primary ways in which Soldiers and Airmen with the Oregon National Guard (ONG)

are supporting the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) as they work to bring a series of fires under control in Southern Oregon.

"Right now [the National Guard Soldiers] are digging up all the stuff that's burning under the soil," said Eric Brekstad, a task force supervisor with ODF. "It's really hot and digging out... the stumps, roots, logs and whatever else has been buried over the years is what actually puts the fire out."

Brekstad and his three 20-person crews are mopping up a two-mile stretch of the Grave Creek Fire. By methodically working their way 600 feet in from the main fire line, these 60 people will inspect an area the size of 110 football fields to ensure subsequent fires don't flare up.

"We are securing the fire to keep it within its containment line," said Brekstad.

Brekstad admits it's not a glorious job, but it is vital to successfully extinguishing the fire. Having ONG on the scene eases some of the strain on fire crews that have been fighting the fire for the last few weeks. ODF can release some of their crews to get much needed rest and then prepare for the next incident.

This isn't the first time Oregon Guardsmen have been called upon to assist ODF and other state agencies to fight fires. In 2017, ONG deployed more than 700 Soldiers and Airmen to help battle the blazes that were raging across Oregon.

There is a key difference between last year and this year when it comes to the Guard's level of preparedness and ability to respond. Due to Title 32 federal funding, ONG was able to begin training Guardsmen weeks in advance, which has cut their response time in half.

Master Sgt. Marcus Merrick, the operations noncommissioned officer at the state's Joint Operation Center, said in years past Soldiers and Airmen had to be put on State Active Duty before they could attend the Wild Land Firefighters Certification



Soldiers with the Oregon Army National Guard fight the Garner Complex Fire side-by-side with firefighters from the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) north of Grants Pass, Oregon, August 2, 2018.

Course, a five-day course, which is what certifies them go out on the fire line.

Tack on three days of mobilization on the front end and a day or two of travel after course completion and you're looking at approximately 10 days from the time they are notified and come on to state active duty until they're actually cutting a fire line.

"With the funding we received to put Soldiers on Title 32 training status we were able to train them ahead of time. Now all we have to do is mobilize them, issue their gear and put them on the fire line," said Merrick.

Training the Soldiers early isn't limited to just mop up and cutting fire lines. Merrick said ONG is working to create a Guard force that is entirely capable of managing firefighting on its own.

"Right now we rely on ODF or the U.S. Forest Service to provide people that have the qualifications to be fire line leaders. Our Soldiers typically don't have that depth of experience," said Merrick.

Crew bosses, as they're called, are the ones in charge of the 20-person fire crews that fight fires and conduct mop up. ONG provides the crew and ODF provides the crew boss.

"Going forward, we'll get [our Soldiers] in to the fire line leader course to become certified crew bosses," said Merrick. "So, in the next two to three years we could potentially have an entire National Guard

team with crew bosses that are organic to the military."

Even though there are no Guard crew bosses on the fire line this year, Soldiers who went through the 40-hour Wildland Firefighters Certification course at Camp Rilea in early July said the training prepared them very well.

Sgt. Hannah Fredrickson, a Military Policeman with the 1186th Military Police Company said elements of the training were more intense than what she's seen out at the Garner Complex Fire thus far. In one of the training scenarios, instructors conducted a controlled burn and the trainees had to go through and mop it up.

"That was a lot more intense of a mop up because the area had just been on fire," said Fredrickson, a native of Pendleton, Oregon. "We got to see how long it takes to actually put out a hot spot, because sometimes it goes deep down into the ground. I never realized that before the training."

Despite the long days, hot sun and ever present ash, Fredrickson said this kind of work is particularly rewarding for her because she is helping fellow Oregonians. Not only is she helping those in need, but she is building teamwork and creating memories with her fellow Soldiers, some of whom she sees only on drill weekends.

"I really enjoy being a part of a team and it's a lot fun to meet new people and work together on the same mission," she said.



A CH-47 Chinook helicopters with the Oregon Army National Guard fills its bucket with water from the Rogue River while fighting the Garner Complex Fire north of Grants Pass, Oregon, August 2, 2018.



An Oregon Army National Guard Soldier uses an axe to contain the Garner Complex Fire north of Grants Pass, Oregon, Aug. 2.

A Company, 641st returns from deployment



Photos by 1st Lt. Jessica Clarke, OMD Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard members are welcomed home from deployment by Brig. Gen. William Edwards (right) during a ceremony in Salem, Oregon, July 13, 2018.

**SALEM, Oregon** - Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with Company A, 641st Aviation Regiment, were honored in a demobilization ceremony, July 13, 2018, in Salem, Oregon. Ten Soldiers deployed to Kuwait to perform transportation missions utilizing the C-12 fixed-wing aircraft.

The Oregonians operated a C-12 detachment alongside Soldiers from the Maine Army National Guard for the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB). They transported distinguished visitors and supplies over great distances across multiple locations. They delivered high-priority cargo, including mission-critical parts and equipment to U.S. Army and other coalition forces. The 29th CAB's fixed-wing detachment flew more than 500 hours a month for approximately 350 customers.

102nd CST conducts multi-agency training

**SALEM, Oregon** - Members of the Oregon National Guard's 102nd Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) - Civil Support Team (CST) took part in a full-scale emergency management exercise in coordination with the University of Oregon and first responders, July 12, 2018, at Autzen Stadium, in Eugene, Oregon.

The exercise was designed to facilitate planning and operational communications between the University's Safety and Risk Services staff and local first responders.

This full-scale exercise was a scenario-driven and focused on challenging the University of Oregon and the Eugene community's incident response and management capability, integrating the Oregon National Guard's 102nd WMD Civil Support Team's capabilities into a unified Joint Hazard Assessment Team (JHAT).

This training exercise allowed the University of Oregon's and City of Eugene's Emergency Operations Plans for jurisdictional response, and serves as a Training and Evaluation for the Oregon National Guard's 102nd Civil Support Team. It also supports essential objectives to facilitate interagency coordination and critical communication while partnering with local responders and the CST.



Photos by John Hughel, OMD Public Affairs

Members of the 102nd CST and other first responders work together during a day of training, July 12, 2018.





NEWS

# Oregon Best Warrior Competition tests Soldiers and Airmen

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

**WARRENTON, Oregon** – Sixteen competitors, from Oregon National Guard units across the state, battled it out to determine the top noncommissioned officer (NCO) and junior enlisted Soldier/Airman of the year during the 2018 Oregon Best Warrior Competition, August 16-18, 2018, at Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Oregon.

The annual Army National Guard competition is designed to demonstrate Soldiers' technical and tactical proficiency. However, Oregon set a new precedence this year by making it a joint endeavor and invited the Oregon Air National Guard to participate. The competitors had to outperform their peers at the unit level to participate in the state-level competition.

Tech. Sgt. Jared Boyer and Senior Airman David Garcia, both with the 173rd Fighter Wing, were the first Airmen to compete in the Oregon Best Warrior Competition (BWC). The 173rd Security Forces Squadron put on a series of trial events to determine who had what it takes to represent the Air Guard in the Army competition.

"I wanted to compete in the Oregon BWC to represent my unit and challenge myself," said Garcia. He said the excitement of finishing as an Airman motivated him throughout the competition.



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

Oregon Air National Guard Senior Airman David Garcia, with 173rd Security Forces Squadron, fires an M9 pistol during the Oregon Best Warrior Competition, Aug. 17, at Camp Rilea.

Boyer said his goal was to be a positive, respectful competitor and remained mindful of the people who helped make his participation in the competition a reality.

"I tried hard to realize how lucky I was to be involved in such an event and surrounded by like-minded, fun participants," said Boyer. "I kept trying to remember that I am at someone else's home and competition. It is the Army's world they are offering us to sample."

The competitors put their mental and physical strengths to the test, conquering a series of challenging warrior tasks with very little rest throughout the grueling three-day contest.

"We were always stressed in some way,



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

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Nicholas Alstat, with Bravo Company, 141st Brigade Support Battalion, evacuates a simulated casualty during the Oregon Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea, Aug. 17.



Photo by 1st Lt. Jessica Clarke, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Russell Baghdadi, with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, high crawls through the tide during the Oregon Best Warrior Competition, Aug. 18, at Camp Rilea.

whether it be in terms of time, exhaustion from previous events, or lack of sleep," said Spc. Roger Spain, with Company D, 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion, who earned the title of Soldier of the Year. "It takes a special kind of Soldier and person to volunteer for something like this."

The event kicked off Thursday evening, August 16, with the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). Immediately following the fitness test, the competitors were surprised to learn they had to complete an additional foot race.

"The simple lack of not having a schedule of events is stressful," said Spain. "Being told what we are doing only just before an event begins almost completely eliminates preparation. It forced us to assume the worst and pack accordingly."

Boyer agreed saying the "chess match of unknowns" made the competition more challenging.

After being tested physically, the competitors changed into dress uniforms and reported to a formal board where a joint-service panel of sergeants major and chief master sergeants tested their military knowledge.

"The board interview is where I struggled the most," said Sgt. Paul Mannelly, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, who took home the title of NCO of the Year. "The types of questions asked during the interview cover a vast amount of military knowledge. The board truly tests your military presence, bearing and competence."

The next day of competition began in the dark hours of the early morning with land navigation courses. They moved on to marksmanship challenges with M4 rifles and a timed stress-shoot event with M9 pistols.

"The night navigation caught me by surprise since I only knew my point-to-point line of sight," said Boyer.

By mid-afternoon on Friday, the competitors were already looking tired but the competition was still in full swing. They were marched to the obstacle course where they had to overcome heights, climb, jump and crawl through various different obstacles. Sand grated their skin underneath filthy uniforms but there was no time to shower as the day dragged on with more tests that went on into the evening.

"I kept pushing and stayed motivated because of the guys in my home unit. I knew I needed to perform well for them," said Mannelly. "I was not only competing for myself, but also my section, platoon, and company. I wanted the guys I work with to be proud and see all our hard work pay off."

The third day began at zero-dark-thirty with a long stroll down the beach in full



Photo by Master Sgt. John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Jared Boyer, with 173rd Fighter Wing, climbs through 'The Weaver' obstacle during the Oregon Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Oregon, Aug. 17.



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

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Garrett Wasson, of Alpha Co., 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, low crawls through an obstacle during Best Warrior, Aug. 17.

battle gear for the timed, unknown-distance ruck march. Glow sticks and flashing lights guided the way through the fog and terrain as cadre and medics cheered on the competitors along the route.

"We had no idea if it was going to be five miles or 20, so it was difficult to judge how hard to push," said Spain. "I thought there were a few Soldiers in my category that ran ahead in the beginning, so the whole time I was trying to catch them. As it turned out, I was chasing my imagination and I finished in the lead. My disbelief turned into laughter when I realized what had happened."

There was little time to rest aching muscles or nurse blistered feet, as the day would bring a full array of even more tribulations. Competitors crawled through a maze of concertina wire while enduring CS tear gas during the combat assault course known as "Mogadishu." The gas causes a choking cough and burning eyes, making it difficult to breathe and see where you are going.

Garcia said the gas was the most difficult part of the competition to push through, but when the going gets tough, the tough get going, "I'm really sensitive to CS gas, but



Photo by Master Sgt. John Hughel, OMD Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Edward Semanski, of Bravo Co. 898th Brigade Engineer Battalion, endures CS gas during the Best Warrior Competition, Aug. 18.

the best way to get out of there is to hurry-up and finish."

Before they had a chance to catch their breath, the competitors had to race through a village filled with smoke, noise and other distractions to locate and treat simulated casualties. They engaged targets in the live-fire shoot-house and then took aim at targets with practice grenades.

"The culminating event tested you physically and mentally. Shoot, move and communicate; the basis of all military operations," said Mannelly. "Everyone was beyond exhausted by that time and we had to push ourselves even further."

During the last event, known as "Omaha Beach," competitors high-crawled through the waves of the Pacific Ocean while wearing full battle gear. Once on shore, with drenched uniforms dripping and sagging, they retrieved ammunition boxes filled with cement and carried them to the top of a steep sand dune. Their boots sunk in the soft sand



Photo by Master Sgt. John Hughel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

The 2018 Oregon Best Warrior Competition winners, NCO of the Year Sgt. Paul Mannelly (left), and Soldier of the Year Spc. Roger Spain (right), pause for a photo together during the awards ceremony, Aug. 18.

as they slowly dug each step into the hill before racing back down to the finish line.

"The water was cold, the ammo cans were heavy, the sand was deep, but it was a lot of fun," said Mannelly.

When it was all over, the competitors were relieved, yet proud to count themselves among the rare chosen few who have completed the competition. Mannelly and Spain will go on to represent Oregon in the Region VI Best Warrior Competition and compete with Soldiers from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming. The winners from the regional competition will then progress on to the national level competition.

As for the Airmen who completed the competition, they said will take away Army tasks and skills that they learned as well as a newfound respect for the Soldier lifestyle. Boyer said he appreciated the opportunity to learn how to adapt in an Army-centric competition.

"My number one goal was to have our Army brothers and sisters glad we came and hoping they can see us compete the following year," said Boyer. "To get to hear their stories and diverse backgrounds was inspiring. I hope this leads to more possibilities and joint collaborations."



FEATURES

# Army National Guard’s 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team trains for mobilization, increased lethality

Story by Sgt. Jennifer Lena,  
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**CAMP ROBERTS, California** – Thousands of National Guard Soldiers from Oregon, New Mexico, Washington and California completed intense combat exercises in the hot, harsh training environment of central California, July 21-Aug. 12, 2018. The 189th Combined Arms Training Brigade (CATB), First Army, tested the combat readiness of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), Oregon Army National Guard, during an eXportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) rotation at Camp Roberts and Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif.

Approximately 3,000 Soldiers with more than 10 units from multiple states converged in California to participate in this large-scale training exercise. XCTC is designed to simulate a realistic combat environment in order to test platoon proficiency through a variety of exercises and improve individual Soldier skills.

“XCTC’s primary mission is to prepare units for federal mobilizations and to create skilled and lethal forces at a company, battalion and brigade level,” said Col. Eric Riley, 41st IBCT commander. “It’s important for the 41st Brigade to complete an exercise like XCTC because it builds unit cohesion and it enables units to train for their wartime mission by gaining experience in their MOS.”

From live-fire exercises to simulated combat scenarios, Soldiers honed their tactical, operational, medical, communications and decision-making skills.

“By running us through these scenarios, it can humble us and allow us to see

where we stand,” said Spc. Joseph Curio, an infantryman with the 1st Battalion, 200th Infantry Regiment, 41st IBCT, New Mexico Army National Guard. “Personally, I hope to take home a better idea of how to become more effective in combat.”

Active Duty Soldiers from the 189th CATB out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, served as coaches, mentors and operational controllers. They provided oversight and valuable perspectives for National Guard units that may not have had the time or resources to complete the training necessary for deployment.

“Our mission is to provide feedback and corrective training in addition to setting up and running training lanes, controlling battlefield effects and positional forces, and establishing standardized doctrinal operational statures across the board,” said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Schneider, team leader with 2nd Battalion, 357th Regiment, 191st Infantry Brigade. “We are embedded with the units 24/7, so they don’t just see us as graders walking around with clipboards who are going to tell them what they did wrong. Instead, we have a more personal relationship where we can help a unit all the way through their planning process and into actual execution on the ground.”

This is not the 41st IBCT’s first XCTC cycle, however this year’s rotation has newly integrated combat enablers such as unmanned aerial vehicles and aviation units to provide airlift and medical evacuation capabilities.

“This has been an opportunity to collectively dig deep,” said Riley. “I look forward to where this brigade is going in the future, we’ve done a great job here and I only see amazing things for this brigade going forward.”



Photo by Maj. W. Chris Clyne / 41st IBCT Public Affairs

Washington Army National Guard Soldiers from Company A, 1st Squadron, 303rd Cavalry Regiment, maneuver against opposing forces during the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s field training exercise at eXportable Combat Training Capability, Aug. 7, 2018, at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif.



Photo by Sgt. Jennifer Lena, 115th MPAD

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, load a mortar, August 4, 2018, at Camp Roberts, Calif. during the brigade’s annual training.



Photo by Maj. W. Chris Clyne / 41st IBCT Public Affairs

Spc. Griffin Lowery, with Company C, 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion, provides satellite communication for the command post during the 41st IBCT’s eXportable Combat Training Capability, Aug. 4, 2018, at Camp Roberts, California.



Photo by Sgt. Jennifer Lena, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, practice quickly unloading from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter as they conduct air assault training during a field training exercise known as eXportable Combat Training Capability at Camp Roberts, Calif., August 3, 2018.



Photo by Maj. W. Chris Clyne / 41st IBCT Public Affairs

A Washington Army National Guard Soldier from 1st Squadron, 303rd Cavalry Regiment, scans his sector during the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s field training exercise at eXportable Combat Training Capability at Fort Hunter Liggett, California, Aug. 4 2018.



Photo by Sgt. Jennifer Lena, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Spc. Zachariah Kellogg, an Oregon Army National Guard Soldier with 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion, prepares to launch an RQ-7B Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle during a field training exercise, July 29, at Camp Roberts, California.



Photo by Sgt. Tyler Meister, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

A cannon crew with C Battery, 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, fires a 155mm explosive round from their M777 Howitzer, July 27, during a field training exercise known as eXportable Combat Training Capability at Fort Irwin, Calif.

## Oregon artillery lights up California skies

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

**CAMP ROBERTS, California** – As the hot and arid breezes of the Mojave Desert sweep across the faces of howitzer crews with 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, the quiet morning air is abruptly disturbed by the booming shouts of a fire mission blaring through the radio. Every Soldier on the crew immediately repeated the command and any following radio call-outs as they worked like a well-oiled machine to prepare, load and fire ordnance on the target July 27, 2018, at Fort Irwin, California.

The battalion traveled over 1,000 miles from Oregon to California participate in the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s brigade field training exercise known as eXportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC,) designed to certify platoon proficiency across the brigade in coordination with First Army.

Their first area of operation for training was at the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin to complete their howitzer platoon qualifications. They completed a six-

day live fire training session and then relocated to Camp Roberts to complete the rest of XCTC.

This was the first time that 2-218th has been to NTC at Ft. Irwin to conduct training. Their usual training location in Yakima, Washington, is completely different in size, environment and weather.

“The heat and harsh environment of the Mojave Desert were our greatest challenges,” said Lt. Col. Jason Marshall, 2-218th Battalion commander. “These conditions provided our Soldiers the unique opportunity to be challenged and improve their field craft.”

Marshall explained that unlike Yakima, Ft. Irwin gave the battalion the ability to stretch out and train to their doctrinal distances. He said this realistic scenario provided the leaders a good understanding of the time-distance relationship when planning coordinated fires.

Being able to provide indirect fire support with howitzers is a multi-step process that involved resources and input from multiple teams. All of these teams use constant communication and expert battlefield understanding to guide

successful indirect fire ordnance and destroy the target.

Staff Sgt. Brett Naylor, an artillery section chief with Charlie Battery, explained a basic fire mission would play out like this: the forward observers request a fire mission after locating their target and pass this information to the field direction controllers. The controllers receive that data and compute it into trajectories for the gun crews. The crews verify the information is safe and input it into the howitzer. After completing their munitions loading procedures, the crew fires the round to the target.

“This training experience has stretched our logistical planning and execution beyond what we are used to,” said Marshall. “Our Soldiers proved they can overcome adversity to get the job done and they met every single one of my training objectives.”

Marshall remarked that XCTC will allow his battalion to retain the high standards of readiness the Army demands and at any time they will be able to support the 41st IBCT no matter where the fight takes place.



Photo by Sgt. Tyler Meister, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Cannon crews from Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery, fire 155mm explosive rounds from their M777 Howitzers, July 27, during a field training exercise known as eXportable Combat Training Capability at Fort Irwin, California.



OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD

# ORANG's 142nd Fighter Wing welcomes new wing commander

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

**PORTLAND, Oregon** – Colonel Adam Sitler assumed command of the 142nd Fighter Wing during a change of command ceremony held here Aug. 5, 2018.

Sitler assumed command from Col. Duke A. Pirak who will be taking a new position as the Director, Chief National Guard Bureau Action Group in Washington, D.C.

Major General Michael E. Stencel, The Adjutant General for the State of Oregon, was present to officiate the ceremony. Stencel praised outgoing commander Col. Pirak's talent and influence, which has been felt well beyond Oregon, said Stencel.



Photo by Master Sgt. John Hughel, 142nd FW Public Affairs

Oregon Air National Guard Col. Adam Sitler address the Airmen of the 142nd Fighter Wing and others in attendance during the unit's official Change of Command ceremony, at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Oregon, Aug. 5, 2018.

"In recognition of his body of work," said Stencel. "He now gets the opportunity to use the breadth of his experience and what he learned here to direct the Chief National Guard Bureau Action Group."

As Stencel gave his remarks during the ceremony he brought up the readiness of Sitler to assume command.

"Col. Sitler brings an appreciation for the operations of a fighter wing and an intimate understanding of how to advocate issues on your behalf across the Air Force," said Stencel.

As he relinquished command, Pirak took a moment to thank the airmen he led.

To the men and women of the 142nd, thank you for being the finest America has to offer," said Pirak. "Thank you for your willingness to take risks and challenge convention."

When the incoming commander came to the podium, he addressed the men and women of the 142nd Fighter Wing.

"I will do my best to be a leader of character, someone that you can trust and someone that you can admire," said Sitler.

The incoming wing commander, Colonel Sitler, was commissioned in May



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

Oregon Air National Guard Commander, Brig. Gen. James A. Kriesel (left) hands the unit colors to Col. Adam Sitler, (right) the new incoming commander of the 142nd Fighter Wing during the unit's official Change of Command Ceremony, at the Portland Air National Guard Base, Oregon, Aug. 5, 2018.

1996 after graduating from the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Upon completion of undergraduate pilot training and F-15 Training, he was assigned to the 493d Fighter Squadron at RAF Lakenheath, UK. Sitler served as a combat mission ready wingman, flight-lead, mission commander, and instructor pilot, including combat missions flown in Operation Allied Force and Operation Southern Watch.

In 2001 Sitler was assigned to the 71st Fighter Squadron at Langley AFB, Va. He served as a combat mission ready instructor pilot and weapons officer after completing the United States Air Force Weapons School in 2003. In 2004, Sitler was assigned to the

85th Test and Evaluation Squadron, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida where he served as the chief of F-15 projects.

Colonel Sitler separated from the active component of the Air Force in January of 2007 and joined the 142nd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard. He has served as squadron and wing weapons officer, flight commander, squadron operations officer, wing consolidated unit inspection project officer, fighter squadron commander, operations group commander and vice wing commander.

"You've chosen to serve because it's a higher calling. I'm honored to be a part of that team. I look forward to leading you.

I feel like I am incredibly thankful for today, I'm humbled, I'm enthusiastic, I just can't wait to get to work," said Sitler.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Brandon Boyd, 142nd FW Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon, (left) presents an award to Col. Duke Pirak, (right) outgoing commander of the 142nd Fighter Wing during the Change of Command ceremony, Aug. 5, 2018.

# ANG Explosive Ordnance Disposal units conduct joint training

Story and photos by  
Airman Cameron Lewis,  
115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

**FORT MCCOY, Wisconsin** - 10 of the 17 Air National Guard Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) units and two international partners participated in the annual Audacious Warrior Exercise here and at Volk Field Air National Guard Base June 18 - 28.

EOD technicians from the 115th Fighter Wing, 104th FW, 125th FW, 148th FW, 142nd FW, 158th FW, 147th Attack Wing, 155th Air Refueling Wing, 119th Wing, 166th Airlift Wing, and two state partnership teams from Croatia and the Czech Republic participated in the two-week long intensive training.

The training allowed EOD teams from across the country to gain vital training on conventional ordnances, aerospace systems, vehicles, counter improvised explosive devices and more that otherwise can't be obtained during drill weekends.

"Members come to us for two weeks straight and run exercises back-to-back," said Senior Master Sgt. Gilbert Holcomb, the EOD superintendent at the 115th Fighter Wing. "This year each team



Senior Airman Alec Camp, an EOD technician assigned to the 142nd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard, disrupts a possible explosive during a training exercise on Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, June 22, 2018.

averaged about 15 exercises, which is great considering most of them would be lucky to participate in six exercises at their home unit."

Having so many units involved allows for enhanced interoperability and in depth feedback from outside observers, said Scott South, a counter IED training analyst with Booz Allen Hamilton and instructor for Audacious Warrior.

"The great thing about unit cross-

training is that it allows us to see what tools other units are operating with and how they use specific tools that are shared Air Force wide," said Master Sgt. Jason Ganner, the 142nd EOD resources NCO.

Having a variety of people and training scenarios, while working back-to-back for days on end helps give the feeling of being in a deployed environment.

"That's one of the things that makes this training different from all

the others, said Staff Sgt. Nash Bauer, an EOD technician with the 115th.

"We're able to conduct a wide array of training from peacetime conventional ordnances, to IED training, to basic skill sets such as land navigations, team tactics, and deployment operations."

The Audacious Warrior Exercise has continually grown

since it began in 2012 and will continue to improve and provide better training each year.

"For future years we really just want to get the teams what they need to be better prepared for a real scenario," said Holcomb. "Whether that be providing tactical vehicles, air support, better training aids and exercises, field services, or more involvement from the remaining seven Air National Guard EOD units."



A team of Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians work their way through a land navigation course at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, June 25, 2018. The course allowed Airmen to practice their skills in map reading, compass use, and pace counting.

# 173rd Fighter Wing CDDAR team trains for aircraft crash recovery

Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Penny Snoozy,  
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

**KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon** - The 173rd Fighter Wing's Crash, Damaged, Disabled Aircraft Recovery (CDDAR) team specializes in tasks necessary to recover a crashed or disabled aircraft. During the June regularly scheduled drill, the CDDAR team had the opportunity to practice an aircraft recovery in a controlled environment.

Using a Ground Instruction Training Aircraft assigned to the unit, the CDDAR team was able to simulate a downed aircraft and physically practice what it takes to use an airbag to lift the aircraft off the ground, as they would following a mishap.

"This hands on training provides our team with the closest thing they can get to preparation for situations that have so many unknown variables," said Senior Master Sgt. Israel Mackey, 173rd FW CDDAR team chief.

The CDDAR team consists of Airmen from various



173rd FW Airmen from the Crash, Damaged, Disabled Aircraft Recovery team prepare to lift an F-15 Eagle during training June 2, 2018.

work specialties. Having members with experience in all areas of the aircraft allows the team as a whole to makes quick decisions in emergency situations while having the expertise and considerations for multiple systems.

"This is a thinking team, we have to think our feet,"

said Mackey. "We have general guidelines on how we recover an aircraft, because no situation is going to be the same."

The CDDAR team consists of airmen from various work specialties. The wide array of experience allows for planning to take in all considerations in a short period of time. This allows for quick, well-thought-out decisions which increases efficiency, speed, and safety of the team's operation in what can be dangerous emergency situations, said Mackey.

The training conducted was an airbag lift. This approach would be implemented with a downed or damaged aircraft that needs to be repositioned to allow for safe inspection and removal. This allows the team to remove the aircraft from the scene while minimizing damage during the process, protecting valuable assets.

Having the most experienced maintainers and staff keeps the pilots and aircraft as safe as possible; but for unforeseen accidents that can occur, the skills learned and practiced by this team become indispensable.



OREGON AIR NATIONAL GUARD

# First ever Cascadia Airlift hosted by 173rd Fighter Wing

Story by Staff Sgt. Riley Johnson,  
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

**KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon** - Airmen from the 173rd Fighter Wing collaborate with C-130J crews from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. for a multidepartment disaster relief exercise on Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Ore.

The four C-130J Super Hercules aircraft and Airmen from Arkansas arrived on Kingsley Field, July 12th, 2018 to participate in the three day exercise. Airmen from the 173rd FW practiced airlift operations such as cargo movement and



Photo by Airman 1st Class Adam Smith, 173rd FW Public Affairs

173rd FW Airmen load equipment on a C-130J Super Hercules from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. as part of the joint Cascadia Airlift Exercise July 14, 2018.

logistical planning that could be essential following an earthquake in the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

“The purpose of (the exercise) is to address the current capabilities and limitations of Kingsley Field for disaster response,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Christopher Wright, 173rd FW wing plans officer.

Being the sole formal training schoolhouse for the F-15 Eagle, the 173rd Fighter Wing does not regularly work with cargo aircraft such as the C-130J.

“The challenge is that we are the F-15 (fighter training unit) and we don’t normally host airlift,” said Wright. “It was a blank slate and first proof-of-concept.”

According to the Oregon Office of Emergency Management, the Cascadia Subduction Zone is a 600-mile fault that runs from northern California up to British Columbia. Approximately 300 years since the last quake, the fault line garners the potential threat of a magnitude 9 earthquake that could have a devastating impact on the west coast area.

“(The exercise) was first and foremost to address how Kingsley can be suited to respond to the Cascadia Subduction Zone,” added Wright.

The 173rd FW has a dual mission of

training F-15 pilots and serving the State of Oregon. This disaster preparedness exercise falls under the Oregon National Guard’s mission of “A ready force equipped and trained to respond to any contingency. When we are needed, we are there.”

Additionally, the C-130Js flew with Oregon Air National Guard F-15 Eagles in Dissimilar Air Combat Training scenarios. DACT provides pilots the opportunity to train with and against an aircraft different their own.

“We are taking advantage of having the C-130s here to do total force training between F-15s and C-130s, something that is traditionally not done in the two communities,” Wright said.

The 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron had the opportunity to practice loading their mobile equipment on to the C-130 as part of the exercise. Major Michael Balzotti, 270th ATCS Commander, says this is



Photo by Airman 1st Class Adam Smith, 173rd FW Public Affairs

A TRN-48 mobile Tactical Air Navigation system from the 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron is loaded onto a C-130J Super Hercules from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., July 14, 2018.

something he saw happen first hand when responding to the Puerto Rico hurricanes.

“This increases our readiness when time is a critical need,” Balzotti said. “When the time comes, we will already know what we are doing.”

The Airmen from the 270th ATCS teamed up the C-130J aircrew to load and unload a mobile tactical air navigation system to and from the aircraft.

This exercise paves the way for future, larger scale Cascadia exercises that include other Federal, State, and local organizations.

# 173rd Fighter Wing expands training with Contract Adversary Air

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

**KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon** - A squadron of new aircraft is up and running at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Ore.; the Adversary Air Squadron (ADAIR) is a contract service from Draken International, which provides adversaries for student pilots to train against for the next six weeks.

“You will see some distinctly different jets flying over Klamath Falls over the next few months,” said Col. Jeff Smith, the 173rd Fighter Wing commander. “These Adversary Air aircraft, pilots, and maintenance personnel are contracted by the U.S. Air Force to help us increase our



A Draken International L-159E Honey Badger aircraft heads to the Oregon Test and Training Range, June 5, to simulate an adversary during training for the 173rd FW under a contract to test their services for future use.

training quality and student throughput.”

The new aircraft, called the Honey Badger L-159E, are here temporarily in order to evaluate a longer term contract

that may begin next summer.

“It’s definitely smaller than the F-15 that you see flying around on any given day, but it will still provide a good, realistic threat replication for us, and provide good quality training,” said

Capt. Chris DuBois, an instructor pilot at the 173rd Fighter Wing.

Typically, Kingsley’s F-15 Eagles fly the adversary air portions of training exercises,

which can require up to an additional three aircraft to train a single student pilot. The use of the ADAIR aircraft frees up some of those aircraft and instructor pilots to fly additional students.

“We’re excited to welcome them temporarily in June and July and more permanently starting in 2019,” Smith said.

DuBois says there are additional benefits as well, including the experience level of the visiting pilots, “Most of them have flown F-15s, F-16s, or most of the inventory currently in the U.S. Military- so leaning on some of their experience and depth of knowledge will help our students learn.”

The 173rd Fighter Wing is the sole formal training schoolhouse for the F-15 Eagle.

# 142nd Airmen return from Theater Security Package deployment

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

Courtesy photos by Senior Airman,  
Byron Stumman, 142nd Fighter Wing

**PORTLAND, Oregon** - Airmen with the Oregon Air National Guard’s 142nd Fighter Wing gathered for a demobilization ceremony August 4, following a three-month deployment to Graff Air Force Base, Bulgaria.

The service members deployed as a theater security package, training and building interoperability with NATO nations and were congratulated at the ceremony by Brig. Gen. James R. Kriesel, commander, Oregon Air National Guard

during the ceremony at Portland Air National Guard Base, Oregon.

While deployed, the unit was designated as the 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron.

“It’s nice to fly and a good opportunity to integrate with different nations and to experience training opportunities that you wouldn’t be able to get back home,” said Maj. Jarrod Aranda, of the 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron.

“It’s always a pleasure for us to learn and I hope this process is mutual and beneficial for all of us,” said Bulgarian commander.

The U.S. pilots simulated air-to-air combat with Bulgarian Mig-29’s while maintenance airmen shared knowledge with Bulgarian military counterparts.

“I have a counterpart, a maintenance officer, who I worked with pretty closely and we were in communication a few times a week,” said Capt. Amy Aranda, a maintenance officer with the 142nd Maintenance Group.

Although many of the airmen performed the same duties while deployed they would at home station, supporting our European allies gave them a unique perspective about their work.

“I think it’s nice to be in a deployed location, in the kind of environment where everyone has a job and we stay until the work is done and it gives everyone that sense of purpose,” said Tech. Sgt. Trudell, plans and scheduling manager for the 142nd Maintenance Group.

With a supporting cast from the Massachusetts Air National Guard, Spangdahlem and Ramstein Air Bases, the Oregon Air National Guard remains committed to training with our NATO partners.

“The 123rd Expeditionary Fighter



An F-16 Falcon and other host nation aircraft take part in joint NATO training as part of the three-month deployment in Europe.

Squadron has never been more ready than it is today to accomplish the nation’s business and part of that is in this training environment,” said Lt. Col. Aaron Mathena, detachment commander for 123rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron.

Recently members of the 142nd Fighter Wing have had an opportunity to deploy to multiple locations, increasing overall readiness levels.

“Deploying is like a muscle that has to be exercised. We’re very fortunate that over the last year and a half we’ve had several exercises that have taken us outside the state of Oregon in order to accomplish those objectives,” said Mathena.



An F-15 Eagle assigned to the 104th Fighter Wing, Massachusetts Air National Guard, taxis prior to take off at the Graff Air Force Base, Bulgaria during the TSP deployment with the 142nd FW.



Oregon Air National Guardsman Senior Airman Steven Stutzman works on an F-15 Eagle during the units deployment in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.



FEATURES

3-116th Cavalry Battalion wraps up busy year, ramps up for NTC



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

Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment, conduct live-fire gunnery training with M1A2 SEP V2 Abrams tanks, April 17, 2018, at the Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho.

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

**BOISE, Idaho** – Thunderous booms echo across the high desert plains as Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers unleash rounds on their targets from M1A2 SEP v2 Abrams tanks and M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicles. Their goal is to accurately project fire on steel and master the art of mechanized battle against heavy metal threats.

The 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment (Combined Arms Battalion), headquartered in La Grande, Oregon, had extra time to hone their gunnery and maneuver skills this year with an increased training tempo due to an initiative known as Army National Guard 4.0.

“Selected units get additional training days to meet national security goals,” said Lt. Col. Joseph W. Lundell, commander of 3-116th Battalion. “This is no longer a traditional one-weekend-a-month and two-weeks in the summer type of unit.”



Photo by Capt. Robert Taylor, Idaho National Guard Public Affairs

1st Sgt. Estillore Garcia, with Company A, 3-116th Cavalry Battalion, provides watch as his company establishes a defense during the 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team's eXportable Combat Training Capability at the Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho, June 19, 2018.

The Army National Guard (ARNG) of today is a fully operational combat force, spanning nearly two decades of deployments and integration with active duty counterparts. The ARNG 4.0 initiative is designed to provide a more rapid response to meet the Army's changing needs in the increasingly complex global future of the 21st century.

“We are implementing this transformation because our country needs us to do so. This is due to the current size of the total Army and the multiple threats that our country faces from potential adversaries,” said Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, Director of the Army National Guard, in a National Guard Bureau press release.

That means an increase in the number of training days leading up to a potential deployment, which translates to better readiness and reduced training times when a unit is mobilized. The Sustainable

Readiness Model (SRM), a process for generating trained forces for deployment, lays out a four-year cycle for focused readiness units. The number of increased training days varies depending on the unit and the year of its SRM cycle.

The 3-116th Battalion has been affected by these changes as an armor unit in the 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team (CBCT), a heavy brigade headquartered in Boise, Idaho. Instead of the traditional 39 days, the battalion completed 54 training days this year. Next year, the battalion will train for 60 days in the third year of their SRM cycle. They will train for approximately 50 days in the fourth year, and be ready to potentially mobilize in the fifth year.

“Soldiers want to deploy, they all want to go do something that makes a difference,” said Lundell. “In order to do that we have to maintain a high level of readiness.”

The extra training time can be difficult to balance with civilian careers, but Lundell said communication is the key factor. The battalion hosted town hall events and worked with Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) to get the word out to employers.

“We want to be up front with employers regarding the training dates and let them know the timeframes as soon possible,” he said. “The town halls helped open up lines of communication and we asked for their feedback. Rescheduling and having to hire backfill personnel for long periods of time is costly for them. They all agreed they would rather see two-week annual training periods, spaced out, and know when the Soldiers will be gone well in advance.”

Throughout the month of April 2018, the battalion rotated their companies through gunnery qualifications at the Orchard Combat Training Center (OCTC), near Boise, Idaho. Each company spent 14 days conducting gunnery.

“We spaced the companies out to keep the two-week training aspect for our civilian employers,” said Lundell. “The Soldiers are having fun; they are happy doing the training they joined to do.”

Soldiers qualified on their weapon systems in phases known as ‘tables’ for crew, squad and platoon level gunnery. The battalion fired everything from sniper rifles and mortars to Bradley Fighting Vehicles and Abrams tanks.

“Soldiers get to spend more time in their [Military Occupational Specialty], that’s the biggest benefit of the extra training time,” said Command Sgt.

Maj. Ambrosio R. Siller, the battalion command sergeant major. “The other benefit is spending more time building cohesive teams and bonds to make the unit strong.”

Gunnery was preparation for the larger training objective this year. In June, the battalion headed back to Idaho for another annual training stint at OCTC, where the 116th CBCT conducted eXportable Combat Training Capability (xCTC). The xCTC exercise is a collective field-training requirement designed to certify platoon proficiency across the brigade in coordination with First Army.

“During xCTC we work on platoon and company level tasks; move-to-contact, attack and defend, properly build battle position,” said Lundell. “We practice working with enabler units; engineers and [Unmanned Aircraft Systems]. How effectively do we integrate our mortars and scouts? It’s definitely a chance to get the kinks out and refine our [Standard Operating Procedures].”

The 116th CBCT maneuver units conducted force-on-force simulated battle scenarios against opposing forces (OPFOR) from the Ohio Army National Guard’s 145th Armored Regiment. The units were equipped with a laser tag system, known as Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES), which recorded ‘hits’ appropriate for each weapon’s capability during simulated attacks. Observer Coach Trainers (OCTs) from the 189th Combined Arms Training Brigade, First Army Division West, assessed the brigade’s performance during the exercise.

“The exercise was an overwhelming success due to everyone’s efforts,” said Col. Scott Sheridan, brigade commander of the 116th CBCT, in an Idaho National Guard press release. “During the high optempo, sprints remained high, motivation excelled and the professionalism that was on display was top notch.”

In August, members of the battalion also participated in the Brigade Warfighter exercise, a collective training event for commanders and their staffs.

The computer-simulated war game tested command and control processes during complex combat scenarios as First Army OCTs mentored the staff using Army doctrine.

It seemed the training year was finally coming to a close, but preparing to fight the nation’s battles doesn’t mean foregoing the homeland mission. Nearly 200 Soldiers of the 3-116th Battalion were activated in late July/early August for State Active Duty to support wildfire suppression efforts in Southern Oregon. The Soldiers said the last-minute call-up was the most challenging part of their busy summer.

“It’s been difficult for everybody because they have families, they have normal civilian jobs, they’re single parents, business owners and farmers, and they had very short notice,” said 1st Lt. Calvin Halladay, with Detachment 1 (Scouts), Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3-116th Battalion, who led one of the firefighting crews. “As difficult as it may be for everybody to rearrange their schedules and coordinate with employers, the opportunity to help our fellow Oregonians on the home front is a pretty big deal.”

The time spent away from home is also difficult for families to balance. The battalion has been working with their Family Readiness Groups to invite families into the armories during drill.

“Whether it’s for a self-defense class or



Photo by John Hugel, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment, practice containing wildland fire during a field training exercise at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) in Salem, Oregon, August 3, 2018, after they were called-up to help support wildland firefighting efforts around the state.

discussions about financial planning and military benefits, the goal is to put faces to names and make the families a welcome part of the battalion,” Lundell said.

Next year, the 3-116th Battalion will turn around and do it all over again as the 116th CBCT ramps up for a trip to the Mojave Desert in June 2019 to face off in a heavyweight match against U.S. Army OPFOR at the National Training Center (NTC) in Fort Irwin, California. It’s all part of the plan to prepare for real-world missions.



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

Soldiers with C Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment, conduct live-fire gunnery training with infantry dismounts and M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, April 17, 2018, at the Orchard Combat Training Center in Boise, Idaho.



## FEATURES

## Is the juice worth the squeeze: 1-82nd CAV's journey across three states

Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Zachary Holden,  
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

After more than a year of preparation and just barely a week into their annual training (AT) at Yakima Training Center (YTC) in Washington, Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, had less than 24 hours to re-plan their entire mission.

"We could see the smoke, it was a pretty good-sized fire, and it was moving pretty fast," said Maj. Christopher Kerr, executive officer for 1-82nd Cavalry Regiment.

Due to a nearby wildfire, constant red flag warnings (issued by the National Weather Service to inform about wildfire conditions) had periodically shut down the training grounds and hindered the squadron's ability to stay on schedule and complete the training requirements they had set out to accomplish. They received an evacuation notice from YTC range control at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 19, 2018.

Nearly 300 troops in the squadron had to pack up three different training sites, almost 90 vehicles, and more than 150,000 rounds of ammunition. With such a large footprint, Capt. Candice Ginestar, Forward Support Company commander, 1-82 Cav., had concerns about being able to get everyone and everything packed up and evacuated quickly and safely.

"Teamwork was the word of the day. You want your people to get out safely first, more than anything else, but you also have the equipment. You need to be able to move quickly, but also make sure you have all your people, all your gear," said Ginestar.

Shortly after the evacuation was complete, and all the personnel and equipment were safe, the planning process for the next step was under way.

"Jumping the squadron is a pretty tough deal, lots of teamwork, lots of communication, but we were able to do it," said Kerr. "The next step was to triage annual training, but at that point we didn't have any courses of action."

Kerr explained that this AT was the first opportunity the squadron has had to qualify on gunnery since fielding the Stryker armored fighting vehicles about two years ago, and at the very least had to meet the commander's intent of qualifying crews on the vehicles.

"When we plan for training in the Guard, we have a very specific allotted time that we can be somewhere," said Ginestar, explaining that National Guard units, unlike active duty components, are not as easily able to reschedule large blocks of training time.

The squadron needed to salvage what they could with the remaining training time they had scheduled. Knowing that YTC would no longer be a viable option to complete annual training, the squadron leadership pulled together resources, made phone calls and tried to develop a plan.

"Everybody was utilizing contacts and networks everywhere," said Ginestar.

Looking at a variety of training sites across three states, Orchard Combat Training Center (OCTC), near Boise, Idaho, quickly emerged as the best option.

By 1:00 p.m. on Friday, July 20, Kerr was on a conference call with more than a dozen officials from OCTC. After confirming that the necessary training space was available, all the questions from both sides were checked off.

"All of a sudden it seemed plausible that this course

of action might actually work," said Kerr. "Now, we just have to get there."

There was about a year's worth of planning to accomplish in one day before the squadron could begin the nearly 400-mile convoy to their new training site. Kerr knew that support from above would be extremely limited with most of the Oregon Army National Guard's resources focused on the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team's eXportable Combat Training Capability program at Camp Roberts, in California. However, he believed his unit was suited for the challenge.

"As a cavalry squadron, we have to be able to maneuver quickly and support ourselves," Kerr said.

As plans began developing, several 'roadblocks' were quickly identified. The squadron did not have enough food, fuel, or vehicle recovery support to make the move.

"A lot of our troop commanders and first sergeants had a lot of concerns, and rightfully so," said Kerr.

At the beginning of their AT, the 1-82nd convoyed from their home station near Redmond, Oregon, to YTC. Along the way, the 1-82nd had five Stryker's break down.

"That ratio was concerning, that was only 200 miles,



Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, maneuver M1128 Stryker armored fighting vehicles during their annual training (AT), July 25, 2018, at Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho

and now we're about to double that distance," said Kerr.

Determined, Kerr spoke with his maintenance officer to develop a course of action using the limited recovery equipment they had available.

"Making sure that we had the appropriate [recovery] assets distributed during a large movement like that was probably the number one concern," stated Ginestar.

After analyzing distance, terrain, and potential support facilities along the way, a plan was developed to split the convoy into multiple convoys and spread it out over three days, while using a "slingshot" approach with the vehicle recovery teams. The recovery team would escort the first convoy down the route to a checkpoint, and then return to the previous point to escort the next team.

"[The plan] worked really well," Kerr said. "Our staff just did a phenomenal job of developing solutions to a problem."

The next step was to find fuel, for the trucks and troops. The squadron had about a day's worth of meals-ready-to-eat (MRE) and three days until the mobile kitchens would be operational in OCTC, and only enough diesel to get them a little more than half way.

La Grande, Oregon, is roughly halfway between Yakima and Boise, and was the planned overnight location during the convoy. It just so happened that Kerr's first unit when he joined the National Guard as a private was with 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment, in La Grande.

"I called [them] up, and asked for support," said Kerr. "I asked them if they had any fuel on site. Can I use your fuel?"



Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, conduct live-fire exercises late into the evening during their annual training (AT), July 25, 2018, at Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho.

Can I use your armory?"

The 3-116th Battalion did have enough fuel on hand and was able to support the 1-82nd Squadron. They even had enough MREs, but the rations were being stored in Baker City, Oregon. With one call to his supply staff, located in Umatilla at the time, Kerr received an instant solution. Umatilla had a stake and platform truck available and on the road almost instantly, driving first to Baker City to pick up the rations, then delivering the load to La Grande in time for 1-82nd Cavalry's arrival. With the movement plan in place, there was just one thing left to do, get to OCTC.

Kerr began feeling optimistic, "I think we might actually pull this off."

Ginestar said the squadron experienced minimal issues throughout the entire movement, attributing the success to the exceptional planning.

"I can't believe it went so well!" recalled Ginestar. "We had very little margin for error in this entire movement, because of our compressed timeline. It couldn't have gone any better."

Kerr explained that once they arrived at OCTC, there was still plenty of work. They had to draw all the lumber, the targets, the generators, the fuel, and then go downrange and build all the targets, but the training facility provided everything they needed.

"We had a lot of problems to solve once we got [to OCTC]," he said. "The amount of support that we received from Orchard Combat Training Center was unprecedented, they went above and beyond."

After three days, thousands of gallons of fuel and thousands of miles driven by all the elements involved, all of 1-82nd Cavalry Squadron had arrived at OCTC. Training resumed and they were well on their way to completing the goals they had set out to achieve this summer.

"The amount of logistics it took to move us from Oregon to Washington to Idaho, I don't think I've ever seen that go down as smoothly as it did," said Sgt. Cody Callahan, a senior medic with Delta Troop, 1-82nd Cav., contributing the success of the unexpected move to excellent planning. "The way that Orchard Combat Training Center has accepted us and worked with us so fantastically, is just a huge accomplishment."

During the experience, Maj. Ronald Clement, 1-82nd Cav. operations officer, posed the question, "Is the juice worth the squeeze?"

Kerr thought so. With the need of a cavalry squadron to stay flexible, Kerr developed a motto for the whole experience, "Where there's adversity, there's opportunity."



An M1128 Stryker Mobile Gun System, with 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, Oregon Army National Guard, shoots its 105mm cannon during a live-fire exercise during the squadron's annual training, July 26, 2018, at Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho.



Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers with 1st Squadron, 82nd Cavalry Regiment, train late into the evening during their annual training (AT), July 25, 2018, at Orchard Combat Training Center near Boise, Idaho.



## FEATURES

# Oregon Guard hosts Air Assault Course at Camp Rilea

Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Anita Vandermolen,  
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**WARRENTON, Oregon** - “Air Assault, Air Assault, Air Assault” are the words repeated by every Soldier when their feet hit the ground as they run. The phrase puts the Soldiers rapidly into a training mindset during the first days of Air Assault School, held at Camp Rilea, Warrenton, Oregon, in June 2018.

“It’s to ingrain in them the attention to detail,” said Staff Sgt. Ryan McClung, Phase 3 Chief, Warrior Training Center (WTC) Mobile Training Team (MTT), Army National Guard. “Most of them are Guardsmen who don’t do this type of work everyday, and we need to get their mind set right. We are cramming a lot of information in 11 days. They must get all the information, organize it and be tested on it in a matter of days.”

During the Air Assault Course, students train and are evaluated on combat assault, sling loads, rappelling, physical fitness

and various other critical skills. The course prepares Soldiers for air mobile operations focusing on physical fitness, attention to detail and safety.

Before the course actually begins, known as “Day 0,” all potential students are required to complete intense physical challenges.

Captain James Sturges, executive officer assigned to the MTT for the Air Assault, Pathfinder and Rappel Master courses, explained the requirements necessary to enter the course. He said the Soldiers must pass a 2-mile run and an obstacle course to continue. The students are also inundated with multiple exercises throughout the day.

“On Day 0, they are constantly smoked,” McClung said. “They are pushed mentally and physically. They are reminded what they are here for.”

Proper physical fitness is necessary to be able to conduct combat assault, prepare sling loads for transport, and rappel from aircraft. Soldiers are also assessed on various other critical skills.

“This is the hardest course I have ever been to,” said Sgt. Jonathan Schmidt, combat engineer, with 818th Engineer Company, 164th Engineer Battalion, North Dakota Army National Guard.

The students can be dropped from the course for not passing physical, written and hands-on evaluations, not following directions exactly, and for safety issues and concerns. Two-hundred-sixty-nine potential students arrived on Day 0, but 197 graduated.

Phase 1, Day 1, began with another challenge to overcome: the Soldiers must complete a six-mile ruck march in one and one-half hours, while carrying 35 pounds.

“The ruck march gets them in the right physical condition and their brains into Air Assault mode,” McClung said. “They are in a good mindset, they know what pain is and they know they can get beyond it.”

Phase 2 focused on sling load operations, where the Soldiers learned to hook up a load and inspect it with speed and accuracy prior to it being mobilized for air transport.

“By this time, they are squared away and ready to learn,” McClung said. “Lives depend on making sure every aspect is done with 100 percent accuracy. After Day 0, the sling load test is where we see our most failings. They have two minutes to do four loads; you miss one and you’re done.”

Many of the Soldiers take the sling load information back to their companies for mission essential tasks.

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Cody Brown, radar repairman with 3670th Maintenance Company, 821st Troop Command Battalion, 82nd Brigade, attended the Air Assault course to learn how to sling load radar systems.

“I want to learn how to transfer the systems from base for field emplacement in the battlefield; specifically the AN/TPQ-36 Firefinder, [a weapons-locating] radar system,” he said.

Sling load and Air Assault skills can also be used for combined military and civilian assets in local communities during state emergencies.

Sgt. Jordan Cowart, infantryman with B Company, 3rd Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment, 81st Stryker Brigade, Washington Army National Guard, plans to use his newly developed skills for search and rescue operations.

“I will be able to save lives by hooking up equipment and dropping it in an area where a bird can’t land,” he said.

Spc. Brady Rude, combat engineer, 211th Engineer Co., South Dakota Army



Soldiers prepare to rappel from a UH-60 helicopter during the final phase of Air Assault School held at Camp Rilea, June 6, 2018.



Soldiers rappel from a UH-60 helicopter during the final phase of Air Assault School at Camp Rilea, June 6, 2018.

## Elite Pathfinder School on the Oregon Coast challenges Soldiers

Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Anita Vandermolen,  
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**WARRENTON, Oregon** - “Wow, a bald eagle,” said a Soldier, after seeing one in the most unlikely of places. “Today, it’s the anniversary of D-Day, we are Soldiers on the beach studying to be Pathfinders and we see a bald eagle. What can be more amazing than that?”

National Guard and active duty Soldiers attended Pathfinder school at Camp Rilea in Warrenton, Oregon, for 14 days in June, preparing to become proficient in air mobile operations.

The Pathfinders of World War II were specially trained elite fighting men who volunteered to be among the first Allied Soldiers to parachute into occupied France. As part of a pre-invasion, the Pathfinders were “to seize the drop zones and use special radio sets and signal lanterns to bring Allied aircraft onto the target areas,” as reported in the article “The First Into France - Meet the Elite ‘Pathfinders’ of the Normandy Invasion,” published by Military History Now.

During the course, students are trained and evaluated in establishing helicopter landing zones, pick-up zones and drop zones. They must memorize nomenclature, tables, formulas and algorithms in just a few days.

“It was very mental,” said 2nd Lt. Michael Joyner, platoon leader with 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, Indiana Army

National Guard. “The material was not too difficult, but the amount of time, volume of information and the ability to retain all that information was hard - harder than my class in biochemistry.”

The course is intense. The students not only need to know how to set up the zones, they must know all facets of ground-to-air operations.

Staff Sgt. Ben Lloyd, instructor, Warrior Training Center (WTC) Mobile Training Team (MTT), Army National Guard, explained other aspects Soldiers learn in the course. “They learn study habits, how to read a map for reference while on the radio, to calling in the aircraft, how to sling load a Humvee (HMMWV), and how to properly prepare the vehicle for resupply in remote locations,” he said.

The high concentration of coursework means not all students will earn the Pathfinder patch.

“Students fail at the helicopter landing zone written test and the drop zone written test,” said Capt. James Sturges, executive officer assigned to the MTT for Air Assault, Pathfinder and Rappel Master courses. “We see a higher attrition rate here at Camp Rilea than other sites.”

Staff Sgt. Nicolas Harris, noncommissioned supply officer, 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry Regiment, Colorado Army National Guard, explained how he felt going through the course. “This is the worst thing I have ever done in the Army,” he said. “So much information in 14 days.”

Despite the challenge of the course, the students help each other retain the necessary information to pass the tests. Joyner explained how it’s not a competition; it’s teamwork.

“Everyone helped everyone else,” he said. “Those who knew math, helped those who didn’t, and those who could remember things well, helped others with tidbits of information and memory tools such as [mnemonics].”

The pass rate for this course was 56 percent. The class began with 52 students, but only 29 of them graduated.

“I’ve seen a higher pass rate than usual here at Camp Rilea since I have been teaching,” said Lloyd, who has been an instructor for almost two years, teaching nearly 15 classes all over the United States.

Training culminates with a three-day hands-on field training exercise, where the students put their newly learned



Sgt. Paul Mannelly, scout sniper team leader with HHC, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, judges the distance for a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to drop ready-to-eat meals while attending Pathfinder School at Camp Rilea, June 6, 2018.

National Guard, said, “We can use the sling load operations for fire fighting and moving sandbags during flooding situations.”

Phase 3 consists of three days of rappel operations. “This is the most dangerous, but also the most fun,” McClung said. “They have worked to get to this point; they are not going to mess it up. The reward for them is seeing what they learn about themselves. My reward is seeing them change.”

“It is definitely thrilling,” said 1st. Lt. Justin Ann, information operations officer, 62nd Medical Brigade, Joint Base Lewis-McChord. “This course has helped me to overcome my fear of heights and to challenge myself.”

The overall reason for the intense instruction, strictness of following orders and attention to detail is safety for all. During this cycle, for example, the rappel ropes were compromised. The trainers decided to forego the final rappel with a full pack for safety reasons. Since the students were not trained in that area, they were not tested in it.

“They were strict, and, coming from an infantry background, it was great,” said Pfc. Bjorn Thompson, infantryman, 2nd Battalion, 116th Armor Regiment, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, Idaho Army National Guard. “They focused on details and deficiencies, which are meant to keep us safe. If the rigging comes out or straps break, we could end up paralyzed or dead. Safety - it’s life or death - too easy.”

Upon completing the course the students earn the coveted Air Assault Badge.

knowledge to work. They call in aircraft and coordinate landing, drop and pick up zones by calculating location and terrain, elevation, and weather.

As a symbol of freedom stretches from the beaches of Normandy to the beaches Oregon, these Soldiers are sharing an honored history.



## FEATURES

# Guardsmen learn the ropes at Rappel Master Course

Story and photos by

Capt. Leslie Reed,

Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

**WARRENTON, Oregon** – “Safety is the number one priority,” nearly 50-Soldiers from across the country were told while attending Oregon’s annual summer Rappel Master Course, held June 10-14, 2018, at Camp Rilea, near Warrenton, Oregon.

“The Rappel Master Course is a safety course that teaches young leaders how to properly run a rappel tower or rappel operations out of a helicopter using a rappel system,” explained Massachusetts Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Thomas Presutti, an instructor with Company B, Warrior Training Center.

Army National Guard instructors, broken down into three companies and assigned to the Warrior Training Center (WTC) located at Fort Benning, Georgia, serve as the point-men for training service members in a variety of specialty skills to increase and maintain the operational readiness of the Army National Guard. Company B, is tasked with instructing the Air Assault, Pathfinder and Rappel Master Courses, and regularly travels as a Mobile Training Team. Instructors have already made the rounds this year, completing courses in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Oklahoma before starting the June course in Oregon.

While any highly-qualified Soldier between the ranks of E-4 and O-2, may be selected to attend (regardless of military occupational specialty), Soldiers must also be a graduate of Air Assault, Ranger, Sapper or the Military Mountaineer Course. Often times, Soldiers come straight out of an Air Assault Course to attend Rappel Master.

“They come right in, it’s tough on them, but we don’t beat them up like we do in Air Assault. It’s more of a gentleman’s course,” said Presutti.

Nevada Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Jared Hale, with the 3665th Explosive Ordnance Company in Henderson, believes that doing Air Assault and Rappel Master back-to-back benefitted him.

“One of the good things about it is that it’s all fresh,” said Hale. “I didn’t have to come back like some of my other Nevada counterparts and re-learn. I’ve been doing this stuff for the last two weeks.”

Hale said the 12-day Air Assault Course, which wrapped up on June 8th at Camp Rilea, was “more like basic training...more dress-right-dress, show-up at four-o’clock in the morning, being smoked on zero day, the obstacle course, it’s like that all the way through.”

But he said, having some of the same



Soldiers rappel nearly 90-feet down from an Oregon Army National Guard HH-60M Black Hawk helicopter during the aircraft command and control portion of the Rappel Master Course, June 13, 2018, at Camp Rilea near Warrenton, Oregon.

instructors from the Air Assault Course (for Rappel Master) made things easier, “You have trust, it was actually a great transition.”

Oregon Army National Guard 1st Sgt. Isaac Engle, with Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, went through his Air Assault qualifying course nearly 11-years ago.

“Relearning everything was a bit of a setback. I had to relearn all of the commands,” said Engle. But he said regaining that confidence was important. “I’m a little intimidated by heights. I do like scaring myself. Coming down a 60-plus foot wall to overcome a fear, and instilling confidence and belief in oneself, it’s something that I want to do personally and share to enhance unit morale and retention. My unit wants more hooah stuff.”

The five-day Rappel Master Course is broken down into three main categories; the Rappel Master Personnel Inspection (RMPI), Basic Rappelling and Advanced Rappelling.

Ideally, all students would pass, however it rarely happens. Typically, instructors see around a 10-15-percent attrition rate, which rang true at the Oregon course at Camp Rilea. They started with 46 students and dropped down to 40 for graduation. While the Rappel Master Course doesn’t necessarily have the physical events like Air Assault that knock people out, it is academic and failures typically occur during the RMPI portion.

“These are good Soldiers; they were sent here for a reason and they are going to be leading operations from a tower, where safety is so important,” Presutti said. “But we all don’t think the same way. Some people can just see where the rope goes, and how the knots work, for others it’s much more difficult.”

Day one starts off at a quick pace, consisting of three exams on knots, hook-ups and equipment familiarization. Each exam is timed and only one re-test is administered for individuals that do not meet a passing score.

Day two focuses on what is routinely known for being the most difficult, the RMPI. Instructors drill in what errors or common mistakes to look for and Soldiers are rigged-up “dirty” with an error meant for the inspecting student to catch and correct. These checks are mandatory, and without them could lead to a serious injury or even death. During the RMPI test, students have three minutes and 30-seconds to inspect three rappelling Soldiers in different configurations and must identify all major deficiencies, missing no more than two, and use proper terminology. Many students choose to become familiar with the RMPI process prior to attending the course by memorizing deficiencies in the Rappel Master Hand Book and by becoming more familiar by watching video materials provided by the schoolhouse.

Student-Soldiers utilize these skills from

the classroom when they move outdoors onto basic and advanced rappelling and their aircraft command and control testing, where they must be able to successfully send rappelling Soldiers down from at UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter hovering more than 90-feet above the ground.

“When you are running the helicopter, that’s the most rewarding part,” Presutti said.

However, Hale looked forward to rappelling out of the helicopter, “It was definitely the high for me. I got to do it three times today, whereas with Air Assault you do it once.”

Engle also was most excited about rappelling from the helicopter, but had a unique situation when acting as the Rappel Master, “In a testing situation, you want to have the proper terminology, proper sequence, proper hand and arm signals. Me being a first sergeant, I love talking with my ‘knife-hand’ and so when I was in the bird, I had to keep my hands behind my back at parade rest, because when you knife-hand that Soldier they are jumping. I probably messed that up on almost every single practice.”

Students closed out the course by completing Advanced Rappelling, also known as rescue rappelling, where one Soldier would role play the person in distress while another would rescue them. The last task to complete the course is a cumulative written final exam.

Hale said he recommends the Rappel Master Course. “It teaches you a lot more in depth, especially techniques, things you’re going to see and need to know than just the Air Assault course on its own.”

But Hale warns future students who start with Air Assault Course, to “check their packing lists, get documents off the website, have everything. You will suffer less.”

Company B instructors will finish the year with their final Rappel Master Course in Grafenwoehr, Germany, in September. The Oregon Army National Guard has hosted the Rappel Master Course at Camp Rilea, on the Oregon Coast, for more than 10-years.



California Army National Guard Soldier, Sgt. Nicholas A. Arellano completes a mandatory rappel during a Pathfinder Course at Camp Rilea, June 12, 2018, near Warrenton, Oregon. Arellano was one of nearly 40 Soldiers who successfully completed the course.



## AZUWUR

## Oregon Guard mourns the passing of Brig. Gen. James B. Thayer



**SALEM, Oregon** - The Oregon National Guard is deeply saddened by the passing of Brigadier General (Ret.) James B. Thayer, of Lake Oswego, Oregon. Thayer died Sept. 16, 2018, in Lake Oswego, at the age of 96. He was born March 10, 1922, in Portland, Oregon.

An Oregon native, Thayer grew up in the small town of Carlton.

He joined the Army in 1942 and shortly after attended Officer Candidate School, where he commissioned as a Second Lieutenant on October 3, 1944.

In 1945, Thayer was sent overseas to Normandy, France as a Platoon Leader in the 71st Infantry Division.

He received the Silver Star and Bronze Star for his service in the U.S. Army during World War II, and was credited with liberating the Gunskirchen Nazi death

camp, which he discovered while leading a platoon in Austria in May 1945.

Other awards include the Combat Infantry Badge, Oregon National Guard Exceptional Service Medal, Oregon National Guard Distinguished Service Award, Department of Defense, Oregon National Guard Commendation Medal for Outstanding Service, Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service, Grand Decoration of Honor for Services to the Republic of Austria, and Grand Decoration of Honor Ribbon.

After the war, Thayer served as a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. He was later promoted to brigadier general and commander of the Oregon State Defense Force. He retired from the Army in 1982 and continued to serve his country as a Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army.

He attended the University of Oregon where he earned a degree in economics. In 1954, he married the love of his life, Patricia Cunningham, and settled down in Beaverton, where he started his business, J. Thayer Company, one of the largest office

supply firms on the West Coast.

Over the years, Thayer served as president of the Oregon Historical Society, president of the Port of Portland, and president of the Beaverton Chamber of Commerce. He was also chairman of the Tuality Community Hospital board. Thayer was a member of the board of trustees for Reed College and the board of

directors for General Telephone and Electric of the Northwest, the Oregon Graduate Institute of Science and Technology, and the Knappton Corporation (now Brix Maritime Company). In addition, he served on the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission.



Courtesy photo by Thomas Boyd, The Oregonian

The Oregon Military Museum, under renovation at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas, was named for him in 2012.

Thayer and his wife, Patricia, had five children; Jim Jr., John, Tommy, Michael and Anne.

## Oregon Army National Guard commissions 61st officer class

Story and photo by

Spc. Michael Germundson,

115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**CLACKAMAS, Oregon** - The Oregon Army National Guard's 249th Regional Training Institute (RTI) held a commissioning ceremony for Class 61 of the Officer Candidate School (OCS), September 8, 2018, at Camp Withycombe, in Clackamas, Oregon.

The 14 new lieutenants spent the better part of 18 months training in the part-time OCS program. Local colleges offer Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) while attending school, however the 249th RTI offers the traditional OCS program in a three-phase course for Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers who already have a college degree.

"I wanted to challenge myself after 16 years enlisted - I wanted a leadership role," said 2nd Lt. Brock Eckstein, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment.

For 2nd Lt. Brian Heil, an engineer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion, the 249th RTI's OCS program fit his full-



Newly-commissioned 2nd Lt. Joshua Carr, with 224th Engineer Company, receives his new rank from his daughter, Chloe, and wife, Bridget, during a commissioning ceremony, Sept. 8, 2018.

time job schedule and allowed him to be at home between drills with his wife and young daughter.

"I had deployed to Afghanistan and was a non-commissioned officer, but after 12 years and graduating with my master's degree, I felt there's a lot I can give back

to the Guard as an officer," said Heil. "OCS felt like a marathon, with hard weekends each month, but you come out more calm, collected and resilient."

The Oregon Army National Guard OCS program was established 60 years ago on the site of the former Hill Military Academy in Portland, Oregon. In 1992, the Oregon Military Academy (OMA) was built to house

the OCS program on the Western Oregon University campus in Monmouth, Oregon, and was the first armed service training center on the campus of a four-year, degree-granting university in the country. This year's class is the 61st to commission, but the first to come from the newest OCS

training site at Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center, in Warrenton, Oregon. In 2014, the 249th RTI headquarters was relocated to Camp Umatilla, but the OCS program stayed in Monmouth until a suitable space was secured at Camp Rilea to meet the school's training needs and facility requirements.

Attending the 61st commissioning ceremony was retired Brig. Gen. Robert Wilson, a graduate of the first Oregon National Guard OCS class and the first alumni to become a general officer. He said the candidates and instructors were trailblazers in the new Oregon Guard OCS program at that time.

"There were forty of us and some were World War II Veterans," Wilson said about the first class.

Wilson described what will help this new generation of officers succeed, "Having sensitivity to Soldiers, being the source of council, seeing the Soldiers are taken care of - being the example."

The Oregon OCS program counts many alumni over the years, including Brig. Gen. William J. Prendergast, the current Oregon Army National Guard Land Component Commander.

## Oregon National Guard paves path to higher education for American Samoan youth

Story by 1st Lt. Erin Smith,

115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**SALEM, Oregon** - Students from American Samoa are finding their pathway to higher education through the Oregon Army National Guard (ORARNG). With only one community college, and no university where they qualify for in-state tuition, educational opportunities are limited for many American Samoans.

Simone Sanitoa, currently a sophomore at Southern Oregon University (SOU) and a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) cadet, was planning an active duty career until she made a connection with admissions at SOU and was introduced to the Oregon Army Guard. Sanitoa was not the first Polynesian ORARNG Soldier to attend SOU. The university has recruited students from Hawaii for years, and a handful that have Samoan roots have found a new home in the Oregon Guard. However, she was somewhat unique in her move directly from American Samoa to Southern Oregon, and her experiences helped highlight the obstacles to education that many American Samoan's face.

Last February, representatives from both SOU and ORARNG travelled to American Samoa to determine the feasibility of a program to bring high school and junior college students into the Oregon Guard so they could attend college. Since then, representatives have been over to

American Samoa two times.

"The first was a fact finding mission to see if there were viable recruiting opportunities in the area and there certainly are," said Sgt. 1st Class Sheri Hoddle, Oregon Army National Guard recruiter who is now in charge of recruiting in American Samoa.

The university recently launched their "SOU to American Samoa" program, which provides students with a special tuition rate that is half the cost of out-of-state tuition. For those students who want to reduce their educational expenses even further and to serve their country, the ORARNG offers a welcome opportunity.

Capt. Stephanie Rokes is the human resources technician for the SOU ROTC and has been actively working with some of the new recruits. She has seen the positive attitude of the American Samoans toward serving in the ORARNG.

"They are really religious and very patriotic, so they love us coming over there," said Rokes. "They want their kids



Photo courtesy Capt. Stephanie Rokes and SOU ROTC

New American Samoa National Guard recruits, along with other prior service members from the Samoan Islands and National Guard personnel gather for a group photo at Southern Oregon University.

to join the military, but they also love this aspect of the Guard and Reserve having a dual-status of being military and getting an education versus just going active duty."

Once a student enlists in the ORARNG, they immediately qualify for in-state tuition. They also qualify for Federal Tuition Assistance and the Chapter 1606 Montgomery G.I. Bill upon completion of their Initial Entry Training. With the new Oregon Tuition Assistance program, students must complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA), but any tuition expenses that are left after applying other benefits will be covered. Eligible students who contract with the ROTC can receive scholarships

up to \$10,000 a year, in addition to a monthly stipend and \$1,200 a year for books.

With only a small Army Reserve unit on the island, even access to military service opportunities has been limited. Lt. Col. Travis Lee, who participated in the initial visit to American Samoa, wrote an initiative for funding, called Partnership for Education to American Samoan Youth (EASY) Program. This funding has provided three technician positions to run the program and has allowed the ORARNG to build a presence in American Samoa.

The recruiting mission is not a standard one, because it doesn't do any good to bring someone to Oregon to live off only a part-time drill check.

Lee made it very clear, "We are not recruiting a single Soldier unless they have been accepted to a university first. We will collect all the paperwork but we will wait to process them."

Once a qualifying candidate is accepted to school and is ready to enlist, the Oregon Guard is ready to welcome and assist them.

For Sanitoa the ORARNG has been part of her success story and she wants to share that success with those back home.

"It's a great opportunity, great opening for anyone who feels like they don't have a choice, feels like they are just limited to certain options back on the island," said Sanitoa.