

OREGON SENTINEL

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Oregon Guard's 1-186th infantry regiment mobilized for Egypt mission

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

ASHLAND, Ore. – Nearly 200 Oregon Citizen-Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment were formally mobilized on October 20, 2024, as part of a Multinational Force and Observers Mission (MFO) in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. A warm autumn afternoon greeted a large audience of family, friends, co-workers, as well as members of the community attending the ceremony held at the Raider Stadium on the campus of Southern Oregon University, in Ashland, Oregon.

“Citizen-Soldiers from Southern Oregon have a rich tradition of stepping up when called upon,” said Oregon Army National Guard Col. Paul Dyer, commander (rear), 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, as the unit members make their final preparations before deployment. “1-186 Infantry proudly represents so many incredible communities from Roseburg to Ashland and I cannot thank the local communities enough for their overwhelming support as the unit continues to add to their storied legacy.”

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Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, render a hand salute during the playing of the National Anthem as they take part in their formal mobilization ceremony on Oct. 20, 2024, held on the campus of Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Oregon.

Youth Search and Rescue Team trains with ORNG helicopter crew



Oregon Army National Guard flight medic Sgt. Ryan Cooper demonstrates proper hand and arm signals to Multnomah County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue team members during hot-load litter patient training on November 9, 2024.

Story and photos by Maj. Chris Clyne,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

TROUTDALE, Ore. — High school students from one of Oregon's oldest search and rescue programs became acquainted Saturday as they trained alongside an Oregon Army National Guard helicopter crew at Rooster Rock State Park near Corbett, Oregon.

The training brought together 32 members of the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue (MCSO SAR) team with a National Guard HH-60M helicopter crew to practice aerial extraction techniques — critical skills for rescuing injured hikers in the county's challenging terrain.

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Veterans Day events highlights military and community service



(From left) Albany Mayor Alex Johnson II, Brig. Gen. Alan Gronewold, Adjutant General, Oregon, his son Pete, and wife Rebecca wave to participants during the 73rd Annual Linn County Veterans Day Parade on Monday, November 11, 2024, in downtown Albany, Oregon. The parade, one of Oregon's largest Veterans Day celebrations, drew thousands of spectators to the city's downtown streets.

Veterans Day photos by Oregon Military Department Staff:
Maj. Leslie Reed, Maj. Chris Clyne, John Hughel and Aaron Perkins

SALEM, Ore. — The Oregon National Guard participated in various ceremonies and events around the state on Veterans Day, Monday, Nov. 11, 2024, to honor those who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

Brig. Gen. Alan R. Gronewold, Adjutant General, Oregon, took part in the 73rd Annual Linn County Veterans Day Parade, while watching the annual celebration from the Reviewing Stand, in downtown Albany, Oregon. On Nov. 9, Brig. Gronewold attend the Veteran's Day banquet also held in Albany, for Veterans and members of the Oregon National Guard.

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Deputy Director of the Air National Guard and former 142nd Wing Commander Maj. Gen. Duke Pirak, attends the F-15 Eagle requalification course at Kingsley Field. **See Page 3**



Vancouver 'Veterans Stand Down' allows area veterans the opportunity to connect to resources and service related military benefits. **See Page 9**



The Oregon Army National Guard Sniper Team competes in the National Championships held at Fort Chaffee Maneuver Training Center, in Arkansas. **See Page 11**



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Oregon National Guard members and their families are encouraged to submit articles and story ideas. Stories and letters to the editor from any source, military or civilian, are accepted. All submissions must include the author's name, mailing address and daytime phone number. Names may be withheld in print upon request. All submissions are subject to editing prior to publication, and the Public Affairs staff reserves the right to print or reprint submissions at any time. The Oregon Military Department Public Affairs Office and Oregon Sentinel staff are not accountable for factual errors presented by contributing authors or photographers.

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Send electronic submissions, story ideas or questions to: Sentinel-Editor@mil.state.or.us. Hard copy submissions can be sent via U.S. Mail to: Oregon Sentinel Editor, P.O. Box 14350, Salem, OR, 97309.

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COMMAND

Cohesion is vital to building a culture of teamwork & support

As we move into a new calendar year, we also begin the second quarter of TY25. During this time of transition, I want to reflect on our achievements and share my vision for the Oregon National Guard as we move forward together.

Earlier this year more than 230 of our Citizen-Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment were mobilized, and Soldiers with the 41st IBCT were activated for their upcoming deployment with the NATO-led Kosovo Force for a year-long mission.

Over 50 Airmen from the 173rd Fighter Wing, from every group on base were deployed to support missions and American interests across the globe. In September the 116th ACS were mobilized as part of the 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron in support of USCENTCOM.

My vision is three-fold: that we are the service of choice, admired for our integrity, leadership, and commitment to our communities; we are always trained and ready to fight and win; we are a team of winning units.

I remain committed to our Soldiers, Airmen, civilians, state employees, and families as we focus

on *Our Top Three*: being connected to our people, competent in our skill sets, and committed to improving the organization!

These fundamentals are crucial to our success as we strive to become the service of choice for Oregonians.

Our success is intrinsically tied to the strength of our units, and a winning team is built of qualified individuals who bring their unique and diverse skills and experiences to the table. It is grounded in cohesion where each member understands their role and works seamlessly with others. It is defined by our collective capability, the ability to execute our missions with precision and respond to the needs of our fellow Oregonians during emergencies.

We will continue to prioritize the professional development of our Guard Members, ensuring they are equipped with the mentorship, training and skills necessary to excel in their roles.

We will foster a sense of cohesion, building a culture of teamwork and mutual support that extends beyond individual units.

We will enhance our capabilities by constantly refining our readiness to face any challenge



Brigadier General
Alan R. Gronewold
Adjutant General,
Oregon National Guard

that comes our way.

If we rise together to the standard of excellence, we will not only fulfill our duty to the citizens of Oregon but will exceed their expectations. We will be the service of choice because of our commitment to excellence, our responsiveness, and our reputation as a winning organization. As your Adjutant General, I am honored to lead this remarkable organization, and I look forward to working alongside each of you as we strive for excellence, build winning units, and ensure that the Oregon National Guard remains a source of pride for all.

Always Ready, Always There!

Warrant Officers:
Leaders, Trainers
& Trusted Advisors

Commentary by
Chief Warrant Officer 5
Lenora Landwehr,
State Command Chief Warrant Officer

It is an honor and a privilege to have been selected to serve as your Command Chief Warrant Officer. As a member of the Adjutant General's command team, I am excited to work alongside YOU, our exceptional leaders in both the Land and Air components to make the Oregon National Guard the service of choice for Oregonians!

Warrant Officers are leaders, trainers, and trusted advisors, our unique perspective provides a vital link between officers, and NCOs fostering communication, collaboration and connectedness at all levels of the organization. Leader development is at the core of everything we do, and I am committed to helping develop the next generation of leaders by utilizing the collective experience of our Warrant Officers to mentor others and shape the organization at all levels.

Our Warrant Officer Corps is one of our most valuable assets. With a wealth of experience, expertise and commitment to service, Warrant Officers play a critical role in solving organizational challenges and driving organizational success. I look forward to leveraging the vast breadth and depth of our Corp to help solve problems and build stronger teams as we continue to strive for excellence in everything we do.

I am proud to serve with each of you as we strengthen our connections and build a stronger Oregon National Guard.

Oregon Guard host 2024 Labor Summit

By the Oregon Military
Department Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon National Guard hosted the 2024 Labor Summit at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Salem, Oregon, on Nov. 14, 2024. Brig. Gen. Alan R. Gronewold, Adjutant General, Oregon, along with senior leaders and service members from both the Oregon Army and Air National Guard took part in presentations and hands on demonstrations, highlighting jobs,



Sean McCormick (left) Chief of State Affairs, Oregon Military Department, Oregon Army National Guard Lt. Col. Charles Patzner, Brig. Gen. Alan R. Gronewold, The Adjutant General, Oregon, and Oregon Army National Guard Col. Russell Gibson pose for a photo at the Oregon National Guard 2024 Labor Summit on Nov. 14, 2024.

skills and benefits that the National Guard offers to employers in the local business community.

The event consisted of various presentations for the skills and careers available in the Oregon National Guard.

Some of the careers on display included aircraft maintenance, engineering, technology, law enforcement and other civilian related skill sets. Attendees were able to tour different types of military vehicles and aircraft as well as speak to professionals in different fields of work.



Event photos by Private 1st Class Victoria Paine 115th MPAD
Two Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers speak to an attendee at the Oregon National Guard Labor Summit 2024 held in Salem on November 14, 2024.

Oregon ANG Command Chief retires



Oregon Air National Guard Brig. Gen. David Unruh, Assistant Adjutant General - Air of the Oregon Air National Guard, presents Chief Master Sgt. Dominic Ingle, Oregon Air National Guard command chief, with the Legion of Merit during a retirement ceremony for Ingle's at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon on Oct. 2, 2024. Chief Ingle retired after serving for more than 30 years in the Air National Guard.

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

COMMAND

Deputy Director of the Air National Guard returns to the F-15 Eagle

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Daniel Reed,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. – The 173rd Fighter Wing, home of the premiere F-15C Eagle training school produces new pilots as part of its mission, but it is also home to experienced pilots who require requalification in the Eagle. Pilots from all around the country come to Kingsley to attend school, even the Deputy Director, Air National Guard, Maj. Gen. Duke Pirak.

Pirak, a Portland, Oregon native, is no stranger to military service having grown up with a father who served in the Army. His love for aviation grew as his father fed his passion, taking him to air shows throughout his childhood.

“I was fascinated with aviation as a kid, I mean just absolutely infatuated with it,” said Pirak. “My dad would take me to air shows, and I would just sit there and drool watching them fly by.”

A boyhood dream turned to reality when he joined the Air National Guard and became a pilot, making his way through a myriad of aircraft and eventually landing in the F-15C Eagle. Operational flying was the name of the game, and he felt like he had answered his life-long calling.

“That is what is really wonderful about all this for me, because truly, it was a boyhood dream that I was able to fully realize,” said Pirak. “Not a lot of people get to do that, I feel really lucky in that regard. The idea of being part of something that was so much more important than the individual, I had to be a fighter pilot.”

Flying in an operational unit provided Pirak with a variety of leadership and mentorship experiences which eventually led him stepping away to pursue more varied positions in D.C. He had no idea where these positions in DC would lead or what future roles were in store for him, but he was passionate about taking care of people.

“I had some great mentorship, great leaders, that suggested that I seek other things like higher levels of leadership,” Pirak said. “While it was hard to step away from operational (flying), I realized how important it was to have passion, to take care of us as an Air Force and as a Guard.”



U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Duke Pirak, Deputy Director, Air National Guard, receives his mission briefing before stepping to the aircraft for his first flying mission in over five years during the F-15C Eagle requalification course at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon, on September 16, 2024.



U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Duke Pirak, Deputy Director, Air National Guard, climbs into the cockpit of the F-15D Eagle for his first flight in the Eagle in five years at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon, September 16, 2024.

Transferring from flying to the Pentagon, Pirak has assumed positions such as the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff Deputy Director for Politico-Military Affairs and most recently as Deputy Director, now Acting Director of the Air National Guard, placing him far from the cockpit of an F-15. Although he’s moved out of the flying world, he doesn’t forget how he got to the position he is in today. His office serves as a reminder of the relationships and the people from his past.

“I am in the Pentagon, and I have pictures and paintings all over my office to remind me of this time,” said Pirak. “It truly reminds me of what is important and grounds me. I look at those pictures and I think about the time, and I think about those relationships, and I realize, the job is a grind, but it is about the people. It is about you, the people out here at Kingsley, the

people in the field. That is my purpose, that is my cause and that is what inspires me.”

Pirak said that his desire to connect with the people he supports drove him to seek the opportunity to requalify in the F-15C Eagle.

“It is a unique opportunity in my position to connect with the field in a positive way,” said Pirak. “I specifically wanted to be with the units that are going through a lot of the stress from changes. It is good for me to have boots on the ground.”

Kingsley Field is one of several bases experiencing a transition to a new airframe and getting on the ground level and seeing what Team Kingsley members go through daily was something he felt was necessary.

Pirak says he chose to come to Kingsley Field for requalification training in the F-15C because not

only is Oregon home for him, but Team Kingsley prides itself on a long history of excellence of training premiere fighter pilots.

“This place is incredible; there is a sense that you get about excellence, and it starts at the gate,” said Pirak. “Day one coming here, the interaction with the gate guard, the facilities, how well the lawn is kept, every interaction with every Airman, it just starts to build up.”

Team Kingsley has forged a reputation of excellence decade after decade producing fighter pilots for the operational Air Force and Air National Guard. Pilots leave here fully operational and ready to serve wherever they land.

“Excellence is something that is hard earned over time and this place invested itself for decades, this is decades long history of excellence,” said Pirak.

Prior to becoming the Deputy Director of the Air National Guard, Pirak served in many roles with the 142nd Wing in Portland. Beginning in 1998, he held leadership roles as the Weapons Officer and Wing Training Officer, with 123rd Fighter Squadron, and eventually as the Maintenance Squadron Commander, and serving as the 142nd Wing Commander from November 2016 to August 2018, allowing him to rack up hundreds of hours in Oregon with the Eagle airframe.

The F-15C Eagle is nearing its sunset and a future mission is in the works to replace the iconic bird. Pirak says that no matter what airframe or mission is given to Team Kingsley, their reputation speaks volumes, and they must remain mindful of those that paved the way for success.

“Be mindful of the fact that you are literally standing on the shoulders of giants who have invested in this, who have built this for you, and what you do counts,” said Pirak. “Do not take a step back and rest easy, continue on that journey, continue that drive to invest in excellence. It will bring good things.”



U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Duke Pirak, Deputy Director, Air National Guard, salutes before taxiing during his first flight in an F-15D Eagle as part of the requalification course at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon, September 16, 2024. The salute serves as a sign of respect for the maintainers ensuring the aircraft is safe and ready for flight.

As discussions of mission transition and change circulate, one thing remains--Kingsley Field will continue its reputation of excellence and press forward as the premiere F-15C Eagle training schoolhouse until the deadliest aircraft in history is set free.

“Kingsley Field is flying high; this place is outstanding, and I am so proud of it,” he said. “I will step away from this job eventually, feeling so privileged to be able to come back here and fly.”

LEADERSHIP

Mobilization from Front Page

The unit’s primary mission will be to supervise the implementation of the security provisions of the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace and employ best efforts to prevent violation of any of its terms. The Oregon National Guardsmen will join with Soldiers from other states, and will be rotating into the area of responsibility currently led by the Georgia National Guard.

Addressing the Soldiers and the community as the presiding officer, Brig. Gen. Alan R. Gronewold, Adjutant General of the Oregon National Guard, placed a special emphasis on the unit’s families, “who stand behind you, providing unwavering support and sacrifice,” he said. “Our loved ones are the pillars of our strength, the silent heroes who bear the burden of our absence with grace and resilience.”

Over the past two years, unit members have been preparing for this deployment with extensive preparation

and focused training stages. In August the unit returned from one of the most grueling pre-deployment training environments at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Johnson in Louisiana.



Brig. Gen. Alan R. Gronewold, Adjutant General, Oregon, delivers formal remarks to the Soldiers, family members and others in attendance as the presiding officer for the 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment during their mobilization ceremony on Oct. 20, 2024.

“You took on the ‘crucible of all crucibles,’ – JRTC is the Army’s premier training venue, and there you committed yourself to improving as a unit. You went up against ‘Geronimo,’ and from there you excelled,” Gronewold said.

In describing the mobilization, Gronewold stressed the heavy responsibility for providing peace and security in the Middle East during this unstable period

of the past year.

“Recent events have reminded us of the volatile nature of the world. The Russian federation seeks to undermine the United States and democracy itself. Your mission to keep the peace and enforce the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty continues the ever important thread for democracy in the Middle East.”

In his remarks during the ceremony, Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Joshua Rapp, reiterated this point about the mission ahead.

“No other mission in the United States Army is quite like the MFO mission,” he said. “It will be a year of great value to every Soldier who deploys and will help shape future leaders of the Oregon National Guard.”

The 1-186th Infantry Regiment has previously mobilized to support both homeland and overseas missions to include:

Security augmentation for the 2021 Presidential Inauguration in Washington D.C., COVID-19 operational support in Oregon, and federal deployments supporting Overseas Contingency Operations in the Horn of Africa from 2019-2020, in Afghanistan from 2014-2015, and in Iraq from 2009-2010.

“We’re a battalion that is proud of where we come from and where we are going,” Rapp said, noting the unit’s proud lineage. “We welcome any soldier who wants to serve our great nation and the state of Oregon, in an organization that is fully committed to stepping up in its time of need.”



Brig. Gen. Alan R. Gronewold, Adjutant General, Oregon, (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Lee Smith, CSEL for the Oregon National Guard (right), greet Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment in a receiving line following their formal mobilization ceremony.

ORANG’s 116th Air Control Squadron prepares for final mobilization

Story by Senior Airman
Damien Weaver,
142nd Wing Public Affairs

WARRENTON, Ore. – Members of the 116th Air Control Squadron (ACS) of the Oregon Air National Guard were recognized in a mobilization ceremony held on September 8, 2024 at their home station of Camp Rilea as they prepare to deploy with the 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron in support of USCENTCOM.

Thirty-six deploying members will be divided across several locations, CONUS and OCONUS, in support of multiple air and space operations, including Operations INHERENT RESOLVE and SPARTAN SHIELD, and the Combined Defense of the Arabian Peninsula.

The Adjutant General of the Oregon National Guard, Brig. Gen. Alan R. Gronewold, who spoke at the ceremony, described the 116th as providing “an indispensable capability to our armed forces. Your role of providing expeditionary tactical command and control for joint force commanders worldwide cannot be overstated.”

The 116th ACS holds the distinction of being the largest operational squadron of the 142nd Wing as well as the most-deployed unit of the Oregon Air National Guard since 9/11.

In lauding its rich and storied legacy, Gronewold

noted past deployments in support of numerous stateside and overseas campaigns including Operations NOBLE EAGLE, JUMP START, ENDURING FREEDOM, IRAQI FREEDOM—as well as disaster response assistance with Hurricane Katrina, numerous Oregon wildfires, winter storms, and COVID-19.

With their participation in such varied and significant missions, Gronewold said, “[The 116th ACS] embodies the National Guard’s ethos of ‘Always Ready, Always There.’”

In his speech at the ceremony, 116th ACS Commander, Lt. Col. Casey Robbins recounted the substantial efforts required to prepare the unit for this deployment.

“Over the past 12 months, readiness has been our sole focus,” Robbins noted. “We’ve doubled down on all things administrative, tactical, and operational. We’ve performed over 9,000 Ready Airman training tasks, ... completed 1,626 days of training, [held] 4 dynamic annual training periods, [and] completed 320 live and simulated missions.”

In an interview, Staff Sgt. Gerald Schrader, III, a cyber defense operations specialist

for the 116th ACS, described a general sense of enthusiasm within the unit.

“Airmen are in high spirits,” he said. “There’s a definite boost in morale among the Airmen who are deploying for the first-time or deploying again. They are just happy to go out there and do the job.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nichole Sanchez, 142nd Wing Public Affairs
Brig. Gen. Alan R. Gronewold, Adjutant General, Oregon, greets members of the ORANG’s 116th Air Control Squadron at the conclusion of their mobilization ceremony held at Camp Rilea, Warrenton, Oregon, on September 8, 2024.

Schrader’s work entails establishing secure communications between equipment and operators. As a prior active duty Army infantryman, Schrader has experience serving in the Middle East; however, he is among the members who will be deploying CONUS to Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, to support this mission. He said he is eager to experience a deployment with the Air Force and gain new knowledge of this side of the operation.

Another deployer, Oregon Air National Guard 1st Lt. Summer Cain, an air battle manager and section lead for the 116th ACS, has been part of the unit for 15 years. Having joined the 116th at the age of 17, Cain says she’s basically grown up in the unit. This upcoming deployment will be her fifth and final with the unit as it is now.

Gronewold shared his remarks about the upcoming changes to the unit during the mobilization ceremony.

“The change speaks to the evolving nature of warfare and the trust placed in [the 116th’s] adaptability and skill,” Gronewold said.

Cain reflected on these upcoming changes, expressing eager anticipation.

“It’s going to be different coming back and...meeting the unit where it’s at in its conversion,” said Cain. “It’s going to be a great challenge. I’m really excited about it.”

Cain is set to cross train to become a cyber operations officer post deployment, continuing her career in the unit as its mission evolves.

During the mobilization ceremony, Robbins left his Airmen with some closing thoughts, encapsulating the esprit de corps the unit shares.

“While our mission may change, the heart, spirit, and commitment of our unit and community will endure.”

LEADERSHIP

Oregon Air Nat'l Guard's 173rd Fighter Wing Command changes hands

Story by Tech. Sgt. Daniel Reed,
and photos by
Senior Airman Adriana Scott,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. – A change of command ceremony marked a major transition for the 173rd Fighter Wing when Col. Lee Bouma relinquished command to Col. Adam Gaudinski who stepped into the position on Nov. 2, 2024. Gaudinski was selected for the position after serving as the 173rd Maintenance Group commander where he maintained oversight and command over a 500-member team composed of Total Force Airmen.

“As the ceremony unfolds and we give our heartfelt thanks to the outgoing commander and our heartfelt appreciation for the incoming commander, I want you to think about all the things that transpire to bring us to this day,” said Brig. Gen. David Unruh, Assistant Adjutant General - Air of the Oregon Air National Guard, the reviewing officer for the ceremony.

In his remarks, Unruh charged Gaudinski to remember that all this fraternity, these brothers and sisters, and himself were called to serve for this moment.

The heart of the change of command ceremony is the passing of the guidon, a flag representing the wing, which



Brig. Gen. David Unruh, the Assistant Adjutant General - Air, gives the guidon to Col. Adam Gaudinski, incoming 173rd Fighter Wing Base Wing commander, during a change of command ceremony at Klamath Falls, Ore., Nov. 2, 2024.

is passed from the outgoing commander to the new. This formal protocol shifts the authority and responsibility of the command in a single moment which is rooted in military history.

Once complete, the wing completed another tradition common to Air Force fighter wings—revealing the name of the new commander on the flagship aircraft of the fleet. Gaudinski, the newly minted commander, looked on as a crew chief peeled back a covering revealing a fresh stencil reading Col Adam Gaudinski beneath the canopy of the cockpit.

After accepting the guidon, Gaudinski addressed his assembled Airmen.

“Your unwavering ability to put integrity first, and to place service before self, and your excellence in all you do, will defeat the change and uncertainty we face,” Gaudinski said. “Our greatest strength comes from you, you the American Airmen, more specifically, you the Kingsley Airmen. Rooted in the courage and bravery of our namesake 2nd Lt. David R. Kingsley, you are our nation’s greatest asset.”

Gaudinski is a command pilot who has logged more than 3,400 flight hours and has commanded several Kingsley organizations including the maintenance group, maintenance squadron, and fighter squadron flight. He moves into his role at a unique time in the history for Kingsley Field. Currently the base is slated to transition from the F-15C Eagle to a new platform, potentially the F35 Lightning II.

Gaudinski and Bouma had differing paths with Gaudinski graduating

from the U.S. Air Force Academy and Bouma transitioning from enlisted to officer, eventually leading them to Kingsley Field to the premiere F-15C Eagle training school where they would both take over command.

The ceremony ushers in a new commander and brings to a close the 27-year-career of Bouma, who formally retired earlier that week.

“For the next few years, I have your back, so do the Airmen next to you; we are a team, family, there is no challenge or uncertainty that we won’t overcome,” Gaudinski said. “We will stay humble, stay hungry and we will win, we will not falter or fail as we continue to place our Kingsley legacy well into the future.”



Col. Adam Gaudinski, 173rd FW commander, pauses with his family in front of the flagship aircraft displaying his name after the wing change of command ceremony.

ORARNG Engineer Regimental Association 2024 Hall of Honor Ceremony

Courtesy story and photos by
Col. (ret.) Bill Schutz,
Oregon Army National Guard

HAPPY VALLEY, Ore. – The former 1249th Engineer Battalion Regimental Association held their 2024 Hall of Honor Ceremony at the 41st Infantry Division Armed Forces Readiness Center at Camp Withycombe on Dec. 7.

“The event ushers in the 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion (BEB) into the regiment which will now be known as the Oregon Army National Guard Engineer Regimental Association,” said Col. (ret.) Bill Schutz, Honorary Regimental Commander. On Sept. 11, 2016, the 741st Special Troops Battalion (STB) underwent a reorganization ceremony, transitioning from a special troops battalion to an engineer battalion, becoming the 741st BEB, under the 41st IBCT.

“Combining the Engineer Battalions into the Engineer Regiment is well overdue,” Schutz said.

The mission and purpose of the Engineer Regiment is to perpetuate friendships and relationships of those who have served in any unit of the 1249th Engineer Battalion or the 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion. It is to preserve the heritage, traditions and past

achievements of the Battalions and to provide recognition through its Hall of Honor to current and former members of each battalion who have made significant contributions to the welfare of soldiers, readiness improvement of the battalions, or has contributed to the public good, participated in public service projects, engaged in acts of heroism, or other acts that brought credit to the individual and the battalion.

For 2024, a total of eight current or past members of both battalions were inducted into this year’s Hall of Honor. From the 741st BEB they include: Lt. Col. Daniel Robledo, 1st Sgt. Daymeon Emery, Sgt. 1st Class Nathaniel Bierson and Sgt. 1st Class Christopher McCrow. From the 1249th EN BN they include: Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Richard Barnes, Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Bertilson, Sgt. 1st Class Kyle Criss and Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Deckert. Their induction will be displayed at each of the Battalion Headquarters Hall of Honor room(s). Congratulations to this year’s recipients.

The Hall of Honor event had several distinguished guests on hand; Col. Russell Gibson, 82nd Troop Command Brigade Commander, Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Bertilson, 82nd BDE Command Sergeant Major,

Col. Paul Dyer, 41st INF BDE Commander, Rear Detachment, Sgt. Maj. Adrian Gonzales, 41st INF BDE Command Sgt. Maj., Rear Detachment, and Lt. Col. (ret.) Brian Riese, the first 741st BEB Commander.

If you would like additional information on the Oregon Army National Guard Engineer Regimental Association please contact Colonel (ret.) Bill Schutz at William.j.schutz@gmail.com



2024 ORARNG Engineer Hall of Honor inductees from the 1249th Engineering Battalion pause for a group photo following their ceremony at the 41st infantry Division Readiness Center at Camp Withycombe, Happy Valley, Oregon on Dec. 7, 2024.



2024 ORARNG Engineer Hall of Honor inductees from the 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion pause for a group photo following their ceremony at the 41st infantry Division Readiness Center at Camp Withycombe, Happy Valley, Oregon on Dec. 7, 2024.

NEWS

Oregon Aviators support historic Pendleton Round-Up

Story and photos by Maj. Leslie Reed,
Oregon Military Department
Public Affairs

PENDLETON, Ore. – The Oregon Army National Guard’s own Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, working together with the U.S. Navy Parachute Team, opened the Pendleton Round-Up from September 12-14, 2024, in Pendleton, Oregon. Flying their CH-47 Chinook helicopters, aviation crews dropped members of the demonstration team above the Round-Up grandstands, allowing them to land inside the famous grass rodeo arena, the only one of its kind in the world.



Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class James McKnight, a flight engineer with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment watches outside the door of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter on its way to pick up members of the U.S. Navy Leap Frogs Parachute Team.



A member of the U.S. Navy Leap Frogs Parachute Team drops towards the inside of the Pendleton Round-Up grounds on September 12, 2024, in Pendleton, Oregon.

Cooperation between the Oregon Army National Guard and the U.S. Navy Leap Frogs is now in its second year, after first opening the rodeo together in 2023. Several of the same Soldiers who supported last year’s event, were back this season, including both pilots and flight engineers. Facility Standardization Pilot, Chief Warrant Officer Three, Ray Talkington who flew in support of multiple insertions, recalled the unit last working with paratroopers in November in 2023. “Typically, the [Oregon Air National Guard’s] 125th Special Tactics Squadron is our primary client,” he said. “We often get opportunities based on other individual organizations. These opportunities typically happen when units like the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, or other active-duty,

or reserve units are unavailable to support.” Rodeo attendees on Friday, September 13th, or “Patriot Day” at the Round-Up were also treated in addition to the CH-47 and Leap Frogs, with a two-ship F-15 Eagle flyover supported by the Oregon Air National Guard’s 173rd Fighter Wing, based out of Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls. Named the 4th Best Rodeo in the United States in 2024 by USA Today, and a “Can’t-Miss” Rodeo of the year by Sports Illustrated (SI.com), the 114-year-old Pendleton Round-Up seeks to preserve and celebrate the “rich western heritage, diverse cultures,

and vibrant community spirit” and seeks to “foster the growth of agricultural programs, exalt the beauty of western culture...”



A member of the U.S. Navy Leap Frogs Parachute Team signals his teammates inside an Oregon Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopter assigned to Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment.



Members of the U.S. Navy Leap Frogs Parachute Team can be seen inside the Pendleton Round-Up Grandstands on September 11, 2024, in Pendleton, Oregon, following a practice jump from an Oregon Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopter.

A Team Effort: Post-fire restoration work at Biak Training Center

Story and photos by Aaron Perkins,
Oregon Military Department
Public Affairs

REDMOND, Ore. – After the recent 460-acre McCaffery fire at the Oregon National Guard Biak Training Center on Bureau of Land Management lands in central Oregon that left parts of the landscape bare, six employees of the Oregon Military Department, along with four volunteers from the BLM and 25 cadet volunteers from the Oregon Youth Challenge Program set to work in restoration efforts on the morning of October 11, 2024. In celebration of National Public Lands Day, the volunteers participated in trash clean up, filling a 30-yard bin of trash pick-up across BLM lands, and planted 100 sagebrush plugs in a 17-acre plot within Biak. Also planted was 500 pounds of native grass seed spread within the fire scar of Biak and BLM property. “National Public Lands Day is the single largest volunteer event across the country. This year

alone there are about 700,” said Rhande Shaw, a Natural Resource specialist with the Oregon Military Department. Shaw said, “Our main focus will be restoring our burn scar and establishing habitat for pollinators and doing some garbage cleanup on the lands surrounding Biak.”



After a recent 460-acre fire at the Oregon National Guard Biak Training Center and adjacent Bureau of Land Management Lands in central Oregon that left parts of the landscape bare, Oregon Military Department staff members, along with volunteers from the BLM and 25 cadet volunteers from the Oregon Youth Challenge Program worked on restoration efforts on October 11, 2024.

In the western regions of the U.S., shrub-steppe landscapes are degrading rapidly due to climate impacts and human caused wildfires aided by the presence of a highly invasive grass, Bromus tectorum or cheatgrass. This particular grass after a forest fire

will restore itself rapidly into a monoculture, out-competing native species for resources. “Cheatgrass is an invasive species from Eurasia, which has consistently taken over the western side of the United States,” said Morgan Davis, a Natural Resource specialist and Fire Effects Monitor with the Oregon Military Department. “We hope to plant more native species (Big Sagebrush, Artemisia tridentata) that will hopefully get a leg up and fight against the cheatgrass encroachment.” Cheatgrass provides minimal resources for pollinators and wildlife that rely on native sagebrush and other native species for food and shelter. Long term, transformation from sagebrush to cheatgrass poses a great ecological risk as well as a significantly increased future fire risk. Besides invasive plant reduction, the native planting will help with dust mitigation and erosion near the training sites range

control building, provide habitat for pollinators, and other wildlife such as squirrels, rabbits, and other rodents in the area. Restoration of the site aligns with training needs for the Oregon Army National Guard, conservation initiatives of the Department of Defense, and military readiness, which provides a pro-active approach in the management of Biak Training Center. The Oregon Military Department has another volunteer event at Camp Rilea, in March of 2025. Efforts will be focused on invasive species management and coastal restoration.



Rhande Shaw (center), a Natural Resource Specialist with the Oregon Military Department along with Oregon Youth Challenge Program cadets, helps plant new sagebrush plugs at the Biak training site in Redmond.

NEWS

A Final Homecoming: Memorial Service for WW II Army Private William E. Calkins

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

HILLSBORO, Ore. – The remains of U.S. Army Private William E. Calkins were laid to rest at Fir Lawn Memorial Park in Hillsboro, Oregon on Sept. 13, 2024 during a memorial service honoring the World War II Soldier who died in a prisoner of war camp in the Philippines in 1942. Private Calkins joined the U.S. Army from Oregon and served in Company B of the 31st Infantry Regiment in the Philippines, and was later captured in Bataan province by Japanese soldiers, who took him along with several thousand American and Filipino soldiers as prisoners.



Photo courtesy of the Bettmann Archive/WWII History
In the Bataan Death March, about 75,000 Filipino and American troops on the Bataan Peninsula on the Philippine island of Luzon were forced to make an arduous 65-mile march to prison camps. After the U.S. surrender of the Bataan Peninsula in 1942 during World War II, the Japanese took control of the area, and the prisoner of war (POWs) were subjected to brutal treatment by Japanese guards. An estimated 17,000 men perished during and after the Bataan Death March.

With full military honors provided by the Oregon Army National Guard Funeral Honors team, Calkins remains were laid to rest at his Mother's grave at Fir Lawn after being accounted for 82 years after his death. With a strong desire to serve his country, Calkins lied about his age to join the U.S. Army at the age of 16. William Ezra Leon Calkins was born to Joseph and Ruth Calkins on August 22, 1925 and was just 17 years old at the time of his death on Nov. 1, 1942. The Statesman Journal newspaper in Salem, printed the announcement of his death in 1943.

After surviving the infamous Bataan Death March, from April 9 to April 17, in 1942, Calkins and others faced execution by their Japanese capturers if they stopped or fell to the ground during the 65 mile march. Calkins later died of inanition at the Cabanatuan Prison Camp in Nueva Ecija Province and was buried in Common Grave 704, along with other deceased prisoners. According to the Department of Defense, as many as 11,000 prisoners died during the Bataan Death March and thousands of others died in various prison camps in the Philippines.

Oregon Army National Guard Chaplain (Col). Jacob Scott, Oregon National Guard State Chaplain officiated the memorial service for Private Calkins as

members and others from the community gathered to remember Calkins service to his country.

"American held captive in the Pacific confronted starvation, disease, despair, brutality and death. Behind bars and barbed wire, they waited year after year, looking to the skies and praying for releases or rescue as many died waiting," Scott said, emphasizing the desperate conditions POWs faced.

In total, more than 2,500 prisoners died in the prison camp from starvation as well as a variety of illnesses, to include malaria, dengue, dysentery, hookworm and other disorders related to malnourishment.

"The Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines occupies 152 acres on a prominent plateau in the capital city. In the center of those peaceful grounds stands a beautiful white marble memorial Chapel. A limestone hemisphere monument features the tablets of the missing, and contains 36,286 names," Scott said, describing the memorial grounds where so many American perished. "Billy's name is permanently inscribed on those tablets... but from now on, his name will forever be adorned with a Brass Rosette, signifying that Billy's remains will now rest in a known grave."

At the conclusion of WWII, American personnel began to exhume the graves at the Cabanatuan camp, and Private Calkins' remains along with thousands of others, were then buried at Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines, where they were unidentifiable for more than 70 years. Eventually American troops and Filipino guerrillas began to recapture the island in late 1944. In 2018, Scientists with the Department of Defense's POW/MIA Accounting Agency and the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System conducted anthropological, chromosome, dental and DNA analysis of the remains

from Common Grave 704 would eventually identify Private Calkins. "Part of the Army's Warrior Creed is the promise that "I will never leave a fallen comrade." That's our pledge to each and every service member and their families," Scott said, detailing the many years and lengthy process to ascertain Calkins



An Oregon Army National Guard Funeral Honor Guard member presents the American Flag to family members of U.S. Army Private Billy E. Calkins during his memorial service at Fir Lawn Cemetery, in Hillsboro, Oregon on Sept. 13, 2024.

remains. "And yet, thanks to the Defense POW and MIA Accounting agency, Billy Calkins was finally accounted for April 17th of 2024."

Prior to his burial, Calkins' remains were brought home to his Oregon relatives on Sept. 8 with planeside military honors at the Portland International Airport.



Oregon Army National Guard Funeral Honors members carry the remains of U.S. Army Private Billy E. Calkins during his memorial service at Fir Lawn Cemetery, in Hillsboro, Oregon on Sept. 13, 2024.

"Part of what today is about is that Private Billy Calkins, U.S. Army is not simply recovered, but remembered—that his family is remembered," Scott said, closing the ceremony. "And we remember the thousands whose remains have never been found, and thousands more whose identity awaits to be discovered...and we remember."



Framed family photos, Military Awards and tributes rest on a remembrance table for U.S. Army Private Billy E. Calkins at the Fir Lawn Memorial Cemetery, Hillsboro, Oregon Calkins remains were return to Oregon 82 years after his death in the Philippines where he died at the Cabanatuan Prison Camp on Nov. 1, 1942.

Private Calkins military awards include The Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster (posthumous), The Purple Heart (posthumous), Prisoner of War Medal (posthumous), The Good Conduct Medal (posthumous), the American Defense Service Medal with Foreign Service Clasp, the World War II Victory Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation with two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, the Combat Infantryman Badge (posthumous), the Philippine Defense Ribbon with Bronze Star and the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation.



An Oregon Army National Guard Honor Guard member plays TAPS after a firing party honors are rendered for U.S. Army Private Billy E. Calkins at the Fir Lawn Memorial Cemetery, Hillsboro, Oregon on September 13, 2024.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND REGIONAL EVENTS

Oregon National Guard takes part in Veterans Day Celebrations

Continued from Front Page

In Salem, Oregon Air National Guard Col. Ryan Barton, Deputy Commander, Oregon Joint Domestic Operations Command, delivered remarks as the Keynote Speaker for the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs 2024 Veterans Day event in Salem, Oregon. While in Beaverton, Army National Guard Col. Tannis Mittelbach, Director of Logistics for the Oregon Army National Guard served as the Keynote speaker for the Veterans Day Celebration hosted by the American Legion Post 124.

“We honor the 430,000 men and women who currently serve in the National Guard and all those who have sworn an oath to protect and defend our freedoms,” said Col. Mittelbach during her remarks in Beaverton.



Members of 2nd Battalion, 218th Field Artillery Regiment, Oregon Army National Guard, fire an M119 howitzer during a 21-gun salute at the Veterans Day Memorial Service at Albany, Ore., Nov. 11, 2024.



ORARNG Sgt. Maj. Tasha Cruz, sings the National Anthem during the Veteran's Day banquet held in honor of military veterans and currently serving Oregon National Guard members held at Albany, Oregon on Nov. 9, 2024.



Brig. Gen. Alan R. Gronewold, Adjutant General, Oregon, salutes a Marine Corps Color Guard team marching in the Linn County Veterans Day Parade, Albany, Oregon on Nov. 11, 2024.



ORARNG Sgt. Maj. Christian Watts, renders a hand salute during the 2-218th Field Artillery Battalion performing a 21-gun salute as part of the Linn County Veterans Day Parade, Albany, Ore., Nov. 11, 2024.



Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek, gives remarks during the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs 2024 Veterans Day event in Salem, Oregon, Nov. 11, 2024.



Veterans and current Oregon National Guard members celebrate Veteran's Day during a banquet held in their honor at Albany, Ore., Nov. 9, 2024.



Jessica Bradley, Women Veterans' Coordinator, Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs delivers remarks on Veterans Day in Beaverton, Ore., on Nov. 11, 2024.



ORANG Col. Ryan Barton, Deputy Commander, Oregon Joint Domestic Operations Command, speaks with a cadet from the North Salem Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps at the conclusion of the ODA event on Nov. 11, in Salem, Oregon.



Oregon Army National Guard Col. Tannis Mittelbach, Director of Logistics for the Oregon National Guard, delivers remarks as the Keynote Speaker during the Veterans Day Celebration hosted by American Legion Post 124, held at the Bible Church in Beaverton, Oregon on November 11, 2024.



U.S. Coast Guard veteran Robert Russell plays taps during the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs 2024 Veterans Day event held in Salem, Oregon, Nov. 11, 2024.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND REGIONAL EVENTS

‘Veterans Stand Down’ helps support veterans around the region

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

VANCOUVER, Wash. - The Clark County Veterans Assistance Center held its 2024 Veterans Stand Down and Expo at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Vancouver on Sept. 27, 2024. The event was open to all military veterans and their families with organizations helping to provide services in employment, health and dental care, housing assistance, and numerous agencies providing community resources and information.

The Stand Down began at 9:00 a.m., as nearly 200 veterans attended the five-hour event with over 30 vendors offering assistance, while also featuring live music, haircuts, clothing, and lunch. Three shuttle vans helped provide transportation at different locations around South West Washington. Held regularly across the country, ‘Stand Down’ events are designed to help veterans’ access to critical resources.

“We don’t know what we don’t know,” said Jeff Shermer, an independent agent helping provide support for individual medical plans for veterans. “I help explain what Medicare part A and B entail. If a person is registered with the VA and they have their medications through the VA, then they don’t need a part D, so it’s important at age 65 that they have adequate coverage whether it’s with the Veterans Administration or with other programs.”

After working as a counselor for 10 years, Shermer’s approach is to make sure that veterans are getting all the benefits possible through both the government and private coverage packages.

“Reviewing what people have and walking them through the process is key. When a person turns 65, there is an initial enrolment period that falls within a seven month window; three months before your birth month, and three months after their

birth month to get on a Medicare advantage program.”

The Inflation Reduction Act is helping reduce cost, but formulas for other programs are possibly changing in coverage and prices based on a variety of indicators.

“Programs are updated all the time and for 2025 there are multiple changes that take effect on January 1st,” Shermer said. “This coming year has more changes than have happened over the last 20 years.”

Mental health and other wellness issues were included in the event too as veterans have moved past the COVID-19 pandemic obstacles over the past several years and now focus on quality of life issues.

Military veterans Jacob Drummond and Jason Dong, with Integrated Renewal, work through a spiritual holistic healing process to address PTSD, insomnia, depression and

traumatic brain injury and other areas of mental well-being.

Dong also serves as a Chaplain in the Oregon Army National Guard, and brings his experience with military and first responders to his work.

“As someone who currently serves, I am aware of all the challenges that service member’s experience,” he said. “This work is a new trial for me as well.”

Volunteers from the Clark County Food Bank described some of the programs they offer other than just food distribution. In 2023, the food bank served over 135,000 individuals with food, and provided dozens of dietary education courses.

“There is a real sense of community through our work,” said Marcie Walsh, a volunteer working with the Clark County Food Bank the last two years. “We have classes on cooking, gardening and nutritional education. Coming here [Veterans Stand Down] today helps us with awareness and working with veterans in our region.”



Veterans and military families meet with vendors and other service provider specialist at the Clark County Veterans Assistance Center Stand Down on Sept. 27, 2024 held at the Vancouver Armed Forces Reserve Center, Vancouver, Washington.



Jason Dong and Jacob Drummond take time to meet with veterans during the Clark County Veterans Assistance Center Stand Down on September 27, 2024 held at the Vancouver Armed Forces Reserve Center, Vancouver, Washington. The annual event dates back to 2009, helping bring resources to military veterans and their families throughout S.W. Washington and North Portland, Oregon.

Sparkling Future Leaders: STARBASE 5th graders tour fire department

Story and photos courtesy of
STARBASE Portland

PORTLAND, Ore. — This year, for Fire Prevention Week, the Assistant Fire Chief of the Portland Air National Guard Fire Department offered to give a daily presentation and tour opportunity to the 5th graders at the DoD STARBASE Portland, Oregon.



Local Portland 5th Grade students get a hands on opportunity to learn more about the work that military firefighters do during a tour of the PANG Base fire station.

This exciting event, aimed at spreading awareness about fire safety in the home focused on smoke alarms, the presentation sparked curiosity and offered an up-close look at the essential work done by military firefighters.

The students were thrilled to learn how fire trucks operate, got to investigate the latest technology available to them, and the students were even able to test out some of this gear themselves!

This tour gave a real-world example of how STEAM integrates into life-saving work of firefighting; and not only sparked excitement in the 5th graders, but also planted seeds for future careers.

The fire crew discussed real-life emergencies, the teamwork and bravery that the job requires, as well as how STEAM education plays a vital role in keeping their community and nation safe.

Assistant Chief Joshua Gray said, “As the Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention, one of the most rewarding aspects of being a firefighter is the opportunity to educate the young people at STARBASE during Fire Prevention Week. Engaging students in learning about fire safety not only helps them develop life-saving knowledge but also strengthens community trust and awareness. Interacting with kids, answering their curious questions and seeing their excitement, makes a big difference.

Demonstrating practical skills, like “Get OUT, and Stay OUT” or checking for smoke alarms, gives them a hands-



Portland Air National Guard Base staff members help 5th Grade students try one some of the fire equipment during a tour of the PANG Base Fire Department, to learn more about the career field.

on understanding of fire safety that stays with them, Gray said. “Knowing that these lessons could one day protect them, or their families add purpose to every session. Teaching fire prevention goes beyond duty; it’s a chance to make a lasting impact on future generations.”

The impact of this visit will be long-lasting. By introducing students to the real-world application of STEAM, especially in the context of military service, these young minds are now equipped with a

broad understanding of the diverse career opportunities that are available to them.

The Portland Air National Guard Base Fire Department in partnership with STARBASE Portland is helping build up the next generation of leaders who may one day serve both their community and their country in meaningful ways.

This tour is a wonderful example of how local military units can contribute to education, community development, and career readiness.

TRAINING

Rescue Team from Front Page

“The terrain in Multnomah County is very, very dangerous,” said Col. John Van Horn, Oregon National Guard state surgeon and medical liaison for MCSO SAR. “This training creates a normal partnership between our air crews and ground teams for when real evacuations are needed.”

The youth-led organization, now in its sixth decade, focuses on developing student leadership while providing essential search and rescue services throughout Multnomah County. Team members respond to real missions, from locating lost hikers to assisting law enforcement with evidence searches.

“We’re the main search and rescue resource for the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office,” said Coco Brandenburg, the team’s youth president. “People join for various reasons — some are interested in military or law enforcement careers, others want to be game wardens or rangers, and some just want to challenge themselves.”

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Shane Broom, a maintenance test pilot with the Oregon National Guard’s aviation unit in Salem, emphasized the importance of familiarizing young rescue team members with military aircraft capabilities.

“We work with ground crews during hoist extractions where an injured hiker might be in an area inaccessible to Life Flight or ground ambulances,” Broom explained.



Members of the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue team with ORARNG HH-60M Black Hawk helicopter crew members during aerial extraction training at Rooster Rock State Park near Corbett, Oregon on Nov. 9, 2024.

“This training helps coordinate those crucial radio communications between air and ground teams.”

The program accepts new members each fall, with candidates undertaking a nine-month training program covering everything from grid searches to survival skills. Successful graduates receive certification from the Sheriff’s Association as qualified searchers.

For Van Horn, the program holds special significance. “I was one of these searchers when I was 16,” he said. “Giving back to this organization is why I’m here today.”

For those interested in serving their community through either organization: The Multnomah County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue program accepts applications

from individuals 14 and older who are ready to develop leadership skills while helping others in crisis — visit mcsar.org to learn more about joining one of Oregon’s oldest search and rescue teams.

The Oregon National Guard offers another path to community service, and according to Brig. Gen. Alan Gronewold, Adjutant General, Oregon, the ability to help fellow Oregonians in their community is why the Oregon National Guard is the military service of choice for many state residents.



From left: Col. John Van Horn, Oregon National Guard state surgeon and medical liaison for Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue (MCSO SAR) instructs SAR members Liam Foran, Coco Brandabur and Tate Allen on proper placement of VS-17 panels while establishing a helicopter landing zone.

Army Guard’s 41st IBCT prepares for NATO-led peacekeeping mission

Story by Army Sgt. Grace Wajler,
153rd Public Affairs Detachment

FORT CAVAZOS, Texas – The 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oregon Army National Guard, and supporting National Guard units from across the United States completed a culminating training event Sept. 15, giving them the green light to move on to the next stage of their mobilization training at 7th Army Training Command’s Training Area in Hohenfels, Germany.

For this mission, the brigade, consisting of units from the Oregon Army National Guard, Idaho Army National Guard, Tennessee Army National Guard and West Virginia Army National Guard, will serve as the Kosovo Forces Regional Command-East headquarters. Each unit brings specialties and capabilities, enabling the 41st to be successful throughout its nearly year-long mission in Kosovo.



Photo by Army Nat’l Guard Sgt. Cheryl Madolev, 153rd Public Affairs Detachment
Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, ORARNG, march towards a simulated riot during a Culminating Training Event at Fort Cavazos, Texas, Sept. 14, 2024.

“As a regional command, the 41st needs additional capacity to conduct the full spectrum of peacekeeping and stability operations,” said U.S. Army Col. Peter Helzer, 41st IBCT commander. “By incorporating additional units and capabilities, we are best postured to respond to any contingency that

may threaten a safe and secure environment for all people in Kosovo.”

The 41st IBCT is undergoing post-mobilization training to prepare for deployment to Kosovo as part of the 34th NATO-led multinational peacekeeping mission known as KFOR.

The culminating training event was a week-long training exercise that consisted of job-specific training for each staff section and subordinate command falling under the 41st IBCT. Every day brought a new challenge for the Soldiers in the brigade.

“The Soldiers around me have put in thousands of hours of work in some of the toughest environments on Earth in preparation for this mission,” said U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Tyson Bumgardner, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment. “The CTE here in Texas is significant because it represents a final chance to test our standard operating procedures and develop new ones while still being supported by our active-duty support teams. I think the Soldiers are excited to exercise their hard-earned skills in support of the national effort.”

Each section of the brigade was accompanied by observer, coach/trainer teams from the U.S. Army’s First Army Division. This training ensures the deploying Soldiers are ready for their mission in the Balkans.

The final validation process will occur when they arrive at their next stop, the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany. At JMRC, the Soldiers will be evaluated on their ability

to maintain a safe and secure environment in potential real-world scenarios. This training area will bring together multiple nations in a realistic and complex environment, introducing the teamwork it will take to create a stable and peaceful Kosovo.

“It’s a very important peacekeeping mission,” said U.S. Army Maj. Zantonyo Goodwin, a training coordinator with First Army. “After all, every person deserves to live in peace.”

Upon completion of the validation process, the 41st IBCT will assume the KFOR Regional Command-East mission. They will be the 34th rotation of multinational

commands to serve as an extra layer of security, keeping a safe and secure environment for all citizens of Kosovo.

KFOR, led by NATO, has been a peacekeeping mission since 1999 to maintain a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement in Kosovo. The 41st IBCT will partner with Kosovo Police and the European Union Rule of Law Mission.

“The KFOR mission is significantly different than the missions that we as infantry Soldiers traditionally train for. The training we [received] in Texas and [will receive in] Germany will prepare us to support a safe and secure environment in Kosovo,” said U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Benjamin Hyslop, a platoon leader with the Oregon Army National Guard’s 2nd Battalion, 162 Infantry Regiment, a downtrace unit of the 41st IBCT. “KFOR 34 represents an excellent mission, with an extremely valuable objective, worthy of me and my platoon’s best efforts.”



Photo by Army Nat’l Guard Sgt. Cheryl Madolev, 153rd Public Affairs Detachment
Army Capt. Joe Kaufman, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, ORARNG, communicates radio commands during training at Fort Cavazos, Texas, on Sept. 14, 2024.

TRAINING

Oregon Guard Sniper Team competes in National Championship

Story and photos by Maj. Chris Clyne,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

BARLING, Ark. – In the crisp December air at Fort Chaffee, Staff Sgt. Coertlandt Bauer settles into the prone position behind his Mark 22 Advanced Sniper Rifle. To his left, Sgt. Dakota Hodges steadies a Leopold spotting scope on a tripod, scanning downrange.

“Target identified, 850 yards,” Hodges calls out, his voice barely above a whisper.

Bauer makes his elevation adjustments, the scope’s turret clicking precisely. The suppressed .308 round cracks through the morning air.

“Miss. Come up two,” Hodges says calmly.

Bauer adjusts again, controls his breathing, and squeezes. The distinctive ring of steel echoes across the range as both spotter and lane cadre confirm: “Impact.”

This exchange between the Oregon Army National Guard sniper team from 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team represents just one of countless challenges faced by 35 teams competing in the 2024 Winston P. Wilson (WPW) and Armed Forces Skill at Arms Meeting (AFSAM) Sniper Championships at Fort Chaffee Maneuver Training Center.

“The competition is designed to not only test long-range precision rifle engagement capabilities but also field craft and thinking under duress,” said Capt. Alec Baldwin, Chief of Operations for the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center. “Events vary in complexity and physical requirements, all designed to evaluate some form of sniper-related task.”

This year’s competition draws teams from across U.S. military branches and international forces, including two teams from the Netherlands, one from Italy, U.S. Coast Guard, Title 10 National Guard Soldiers, and Special Operations Forces.

The events showcase advanced target systems, including Marathon Targets’ robotic systems that provide realistic movement and immediate feedback.

Teams face both daylight and nighttime challenges, with competitors like the Oregon team employing specialized equipment, including the Mark 22 Advanced Sniper Rifle, PVS-30 night vision devices, and precision optics. The competition tests their abilities across multiple disciplines, presenting unknown distance targets and scenarios revealed only moments before engagement.

The NGMTC, headquartered at Camp Joseph T. Robinson in North Little Rock, Arkansas, has been the home of National Guard marksmanship excellence since

1968. Through its two-battalion structure, Marksmanship Training Battalion and Sustainment Training Battalion, the center provides world-class instruction and competition opportunities that enhance combat effectiveness across the force.

“It’s a great opportunity to work with other sniper teams and learn about new technology and techniques,” said Hodges, who serves as a chief engineer for Amazon Web Services in Hermiston, Oregon, when not in uniform. “We get to see what other teams are using and how they operate.”

His teammate, Bauer, who recently launched the aptly named One Shot Plumbing in Idaho’s Wood River Valley, adds, “Being in the Oregon National Guard

has been a great opportunity for me to come to training events like this while still being able to own a business and support my community.”

“These championships exemplify what makes the Oregon National Guard the service of choice for Oregonians,” said Brig. Gen. Alan Gronewold, Adjutant General, Oregon. “When our soldiers train in realistic environments and focus on their specialized skills as cohesive teams, they not only become more proficient warriors but also more effective guardians of our communities.”

The centrally-funded competition represents NGMTC’s commitment to increasing lethality across the force while providing National Guard units cost-effective access to world-class training opportunities. For Hodges, who joined the Guard after serving in the Marine Corps, the program offers something equally valuable.

“What I take out of this is we get to come out here, shoot, meet new people, and make great connections with other teams,” said Hodges. “Everything has changed since I went through sniper school six years ago. We’re using different technology and different formulas. Being here, I get to learn that stuff again, update my skills, and prepare myself for future endeavors.”

Soldiers interested in following similar paths must qualify as expert marksmen and meet rigorous physical requirements before attending sniper school. The B4 Additional Skill Identifier, required for competition participation, is available to soldiers in Military Occupational Specialties 11B (Infantry), 19D (Cavalry Scout), or 18 series (Special Forces).

The competition concluded with a vendor demonstration day, where teams examined the latest developments in precision shooting equipment, followed by an awards ceremony. Beyond the competitive aspects, the event served its larger purpose: providing realistic training scenarios, fostering cross-unit relationships, and enhancing the National Guard’s overall combat effectiveness.



A sniper engages a target through a PVS-30 night vision device mounted on his Mark 22 Advanced Sniper Rifle during a night fire range at the Winston P. Wilson Sniper Championship, Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, Dec. 10, 2024.



Staff Sgt. Benjamin Cotten, National Guard Marksmanship Training Center cadre and NGMTC Sniper School instructor briefs competitors on night fire procedures at the Winston P. Wilson Sniper Championship on Dec. 11, 2024.

Kingsley Airmen contend for state-level Best Warrior Competition

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

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. – Eight Team Kingsley Airmen showed up at the base gym, PT gear in hand, at 4 a.m. on a chilly Saturday morning ready to test their warrior skills and compete for one of the coveted spots in the Oregon National Guard Best Warrior Competition. A group of former competitors held the tryouts Oct. 19, 2024, for those Airmen interested in the unique challenge.

The Best Warrior Competition is an annual event that tests the skills of soldiers in a variety of skills including physical fitness, military knowledge, marksmanship, tactical proficiency, leadership abilities, and mental resilience. Though it is traditionally a U.S. Army event, Air National Guardsmen are allowed to compete at the state level.

“Oregon’s Best Warrior Competition validates our Airmen’s resiliency, multi-capable capacity, and the proving grounds for the effectiveness of our professional development methodologies,” said Capt. Jared Boyer, one of the Best Warrior event coordinators.

During the trials, Airmen competed in numerous physical and mental activities that mirrored the challenges they could face at the state-level competition. Boyer said they designed the timeline and directions with uncertainty and ambiguity to mimic the ORNG competition.

“For instance, they were informed to bring a PT uniform and meet at the gym... they never used their PT uniform,” noted Boyer. “Repetitions are not counted out loud; competitors were informed to load

their ruck to at least 35 pounds, some kept going and loaded to 60 pounds plus. This is meant to add an element of stress, just like the Army event.”

The group of eight Airmen spent the day participating in multiple events such as ruck marches, M4 and M18 shooting, interview boards, written essays, Cross-Fit workouts, the Army Combat Fit Test, 9-Line Casualty Report, as well as tactical casualty rescue under fire.

As the day came to a close, the scores for every event were tallied and three Airmen were selected to represent Team Kingsley in the Oregon competition.

Master Sgt. Daniel Gardner from the 173rd Maintenance Group, Tech. Sgt. Cody Cox from the 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron, and Airman Phanuphong Phongprayoon from the 173rd Logistics Readiness Squadron were all selected to move on and compete at the state level with the Army.

“These exceptional Airmen have demonstrated outstanding skills, dedication, and resilience throughout the competition,” Boyer said. “We’re confident that they will represent our team with pride and honor at the upcoming Oregon Guard Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea in March 2025.”



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Daniel Reed, 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs
ORANG Tech. Sgt. Cody Cox, assigned to the 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron, reviews his nine-line information to request patient extraction before making the call during the best warrior tryout at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Oregon, Oct. 19, 2024.

FEATURES

Brothers in Arms: Bond strengthened on 41st IBCT deployment

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Cheryl Madolev,
153rd Public Affairs Detachment

HOHENFELS, Germany – For Soldiers living abroad on deployment, family is usually a limited phone call and thousands of miles away. This is not the case for brothers 2nd Lt. Lincoln Miller and Spc. Markian Miller.

The Millers, assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oregon Army National Guard, are living in the same barracks and preparing for the same mission. The 41st IBCT is training for a nearly year-long deployment to Kosovo to support Kosovo Force, also known as KFOR.

Military service runs in their family, with their father previously serving in the U.S. Air Force and older brother also serving in the Oregon Army National Guard.

Lincoln Miller, 25, knows that deploying with a family member is an uncommon experience.

“It’s really special. A lot of people don’t get that chance ever,” said Lincoln Miller. “We’re not just on the same deployment; we’re on the same team.”

The brothers are part of Liaison Monitoring Teams (LMTs), specialized teams that interact daily with communities in Kosovo to provide KFOR senior leadership with an understanding of the well-being of the Kosovo people.

The brothers are passionate about their mission and supporting the people of Kosovo. Although this is the first deployment of the brothers’ military career, this is not the first time they have been out of the country, especially for Markian Miller.

The Miller family has spent a lot of time in Europe and a certain country holds a special place in their hearts: Ukraine. Markian Miller, 20, was born in Ukraine and adopted into the Miller family at 2. He has a unique perspective on the opportunity to support the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team during the KFOR mission, where the brigade provides a safe and secure environment to the people of Kosovo.

“Now, since I’m older, the conflicts that’s been happening, especially in Ukraine, and seeing how it’s affected the civilians ... it’s really putting a deep cut in their hearts as well as their souls,” said Markian Miller. “Nobody’s really ready to lose something they actually hold dear, right?”



U.S. Army Spc. Markian Miller (left) and 2nd Lt. Lincoln Miller, pause for a photo during Kosovo Force training at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, Sept. 29, 2024. Kosovo Force consists of 28 NATO Allies and partner nations working together to provide safety and freedom of movement for all people of Kosovo.

Lincoln Miller says he has been looking forward to deploying to support KFOR for a long time and understands that to be successful during an LMT mission, a Soldier must possess empathy.

“I prepared myself in just preparing my emotions in a lot of ways,” said Lincoln Miller. “So that when someone’s sitting across from me, I can empathize and show them that they’re heard, it’s important, and hopefully that translates through what we do.”

The brothers feel they have found an extended family with the 41st IBCT, and their leadership takes notice of their dedication to the mission and their teams.

“It’s been a privilege to have 2nd Lt. Miller and Specialist Miller under my command,” said Capt. Tai Danh, their Liaison Monitoring Team commander. “Their dedication to the mission is unwavering and they share a unique bond that strengthens not only their performance but also the morale of the entire unit.”

Danh recognizes they both have individual strengths but similar qualities of leadership and teamwork.

“Having brothers serve together is a rare and special dynamic,” said Danh. “It is inspiring to see how they support one another while keeping their focus on the bigger mission. They truly embody the spirit of service and commitment.”

Lincoln and Markian Miller view this deployment as a chance to strengthen their relationship. They have not been able to see one another often in the past few years due to life circumstances.

Lincoln Miller says he is looking forward to having some time to bond with his brother during the deployment and enjoy the contributions they’ll be able to make together throughout the mission.

Lincoln and Markian Miller are looking forward to leaving the training phase here at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, and landing in Kosovo, where they can initiate interactions

with the local communities. They want to understand the world through the lens of a Kosovo citizen. They feel the more they speak with the people, the better they will perform as LMT members.

“You can’t change the world,” said Lincoln Miller. “But we have a very small sliver of it and can maybe change that

tiny sliver. If enough slivers get changed over enough time, the world may start to look a little different, and that is extremely close to my heart.”



Photo courtesy of Markian and Lincoln Miller
Markian Miller, left, and Lincoln Miller smile for the camera as small children living in Ukraine while their parents were serving as missionaries.

Like Father, Like Son: Two generations of Oregon Army National Guard families deploy to Sinai Peninsula



Photo by Maj. Chris Clyne, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Darrell Burkhardt and his son Private 1st Class Josh Burkhardt stand together at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, Oregon, following their unit’s mobilization ceremony on October 20, 2024. The father-son duo will deploy together with Delta Company, 1-186th Infantry Battalion, marking a rare opportunity to serve side by side in the Multinational Force and Observers mission. The Burkhardt’s among nearly 200 Oregon Citizen-Soldiers who will spend the next year supervising the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace security provisions in the Sinai Peninsula.



Photo by Maj. Chris Clyne, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Twenty-two years after watching his father deploy to the Sinai Peninsula, Squad Leader Oregon Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Elam Daily (center) stands with his parents, retired Sgt. 1st Class John Daily and Regan Daily, at Raider Stadium in Ashland, Oregon on October 20, 2024, before his own MFO deployment. Elam took his first steps the day his father left for the 2002 mission with 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment. Staff Sgt. Daily is among nearly 200 Oregon Citizen-Soldiers who will spend the next year supervising the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace security provisions in the Sinai Peninsula.

FEATURES

142nd Wing avionics technician is ‘Magic on Ice’

Story by Master Sgt. Steph Sawyer,
142nd Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. – Senior Airman Perry Johnston is a drill status avionics technician assigned to the 142nd Wing’s Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

Since he was a kid, Johnston has had an interest in aviation. That interest, coupled with an ambition to pursue a college education, led him to enlist in the Oregon Air National Guard in 2022.

“After touring the base and looking around for different jobs, I really found a love for the electrical systems and the maintenance within [flight line integrated avionics],” said Johnston. “I love doing hands-on work and here I really get to do that...I get to work on a lot of really cool and interesting systems.”

As an avionics technician, Johnston plays an important role in maintaining the electrical systems in the F-15Cs and EXs. Essentially, Johnston explained, anything a pilot would interact with in a jet that falls within the category of electrical systems is what he’s responsible for maintaining, troubleshooting, and repairing.

One of the things that makes the National Guard unique is that most guardsmen perform their jobs only two days per month, typically. These guardsmen are often referred to as “traditional guardsmen,” and many service members who fall into this category have civilian careers outside of the military.

Johnston, for the most part, is no exception to this rule, though his civilian career is a little unusual. Outside of his military service, Johnston is an ensemble skater for “Disney On Ice”. Due to his touring schedule with Disney, Johnston drills on a quarterly basis, that is, once every three months.



Photo by Master Sgt. Steph Sawyer, 142nd Wing Public Affairs
Senior Airman Perry Johnston, an avionics technician with the 142nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, closes a hatch on an F-15C Eagle at the PANG Base, Ore., Feb. 25, 2024.

For several years out of high school, Johnston worked at an ice rink, operating a Zamboni. During his time there, he spent a lot of time on the ice, playing hockey, ice skating, and figure skating. He applied to “Disney On Ice” after one of his coaches, seeing Johnston’s ability on the ice, encouraged him to do so.

Johnston is currently on tour, living on the road and performing in a new town every week. As an ensemble skater, he primarily performs in large group numbers. He’s also an understudy for the role of the host, a very vocally demanding part in the performance.

Shows typically run around two hours long and skaters can do up to three shows per day, making a total of up to six hours of skating in a day.

Johnston says the days can be long and very physically demanding, but the enthusiasm of the crowd makes it worthwhile.

“As performers, we draw a lot of our motivation from the crowds,” said Johnston. “So when you get a crowd that’s super loud, you skate just phenomenally. You can pull energy out and...really give it your all.”

Johnston explained that within the world of skating there are a lot of high stress environments, but his military training and experience help him keep a level head in those situations.

Military related qualities such as discipline and dedication also come into play when Johnston is training. Skating for “Disney On Ice” requires a lot of hard work and diligence to ensure skaters are ready to perform at their peak.

To be successful in the numerous shows they put on every week during the tour season, which is roughly nine months long, skaters train and rehearse their parts for about five weeks before they go on tour.

Johnston’s work doesn’t stop there.

When he’s not on tour and it’s time to report for duty, he has a lot to look after to make sure he’s ready to meet the demands of his work.

“As a [drill status guardsman], the hard part is being able to maintain that proficiency over long periods of time,” said Johnston. “Avionics is a pretty technical job. There’s a lot of jargon and small technical things that you need to remember, so it’s up to me to be able to keep that proficiency over those time periods.”

The reward for his hard work comes with playing a role in maintaining the aircraft and being around the jets he’s admired since he was a kid.

“Every time I’m standing out there, wrenching on a jet, every once in a while I’ll stand back and take a look and say, ‘wow. I’m really standing on an F-15 right now,’” said Johnston. “Whenever they go to taxi, to take off, to land, I sit back, watch, and I just soak it in because I truly love watching the jets.”



Photo courtesy of Disney on Ice
Disney On Ice skaters perform a number from the movie, Coco in this promotional image. Senior Airman Perry Johnston, an avionics technician with the 142nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, performs for “Disney On Ice” as an ensemble skater.

In addition to his military and civilian careers, Johnston is taking online classes at Oregon State University where he’s majoring in mechanical engineering.

One of Johnston’s long term goals is to commission out of college and eventually step into a pilot role.

As for “Disney On Ice”, Johnston says he loves it and he “hopes to stay as long as he can.”

Native American Heritage Month: Dedicated to the beat of a drum

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Daniel Reed,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. – The 173rd Fighter Wing welcomed members of the Klamath Tribes and others of American Indian descent to a ceremony during Native American heritage month, Nov. 15, 2024.

The event was held to commemorate a locally designed Native American nose art; local members of the Klamath Tribes and numerous former and currently serving military members attended the event.

Master of ceremonies, Senior Master Sgt. Eric Harris, 173rd Aircraft Maintenance Flight, welcomed all in attendance before calling forward Lt. Col. Richard Schuster, 173rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander, to speak.

Schuster spoke of the history of Native Americans in various conflicts and the significant roles played by them. He went on to talk about how through the dedication of nose art one member of the 173rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Tech. Sgt. Robert Holster, had learned about his own heritage, that of the Choctaw nation. Having spoken of Holster and his own research he turned the microphone over to him to share what he had learned.

“We’re here today to take the opportunity to not only honor military tradition,

but also to honor past and present Native American Warriors and Veterans through a nose art ceremony,” Holster said.

Holster stated that, “Since September 11th almost 19% of all Native Americans have served in the Armed forces compared to an average of 14% of all other ethnic groups.”



Oregon Air National Guard Lt. Col. Richard Schuster, 173rd Aircraft Maintenance commander, presents the Klamath Tribal Council members in attendance with a memento of the nose art design at a nose art dedication ceremony at Kingsley Field on Nov. 15, 2024. The design was created by Native Fine Artist Gwen Colman Lester and is displayed on a 173rd FW F-15C Eagle.

History finds Native Americans in many iconic moments of military service including utilizing 34 different Native American tribes’ languages to protect secret American military communications during WW1, WW2, and

the Korean and Vietnam wars, eventually becoming known as Code Talkers, he said.

Holster added that 40 enrolled Native American service members are currently assigned to the 173rd Fighter Wing supporting Oregon.

As a member of the Choctaw Nation himself, Holster explained how he commissioned Native Fine Artist, Gwen Colman Lester to make the nose art for his Kingsley F-15 Eagle, derived from the symbolic eagle staff and quail plume.

“The eagle staff represents the wing of an eagle protecting the warriors and veterans, also mirroring the wings of the F-15 Eagle,” Holster said. “The quail plume means family, consisting of the people who support and love you, and the people you can confide in and trust.”

The ceremony concluded with a drum circle performed by the Steiger Butte drum and singers, a tradition dating back several thousand years and shared by many tribes across the nation. The Steiger Butte drum and singers performed “Soldier Boy”, a patriotic song in homage to those who have chosen to serve.

“The symbolism of the eagle staff being located on the nose of this aircraft is more than fitting, and it will proudly fly for the rest of its flying days,” said Lt. Col. Tyler Cox, 173rd Maintenance Squadron commander.

FEATURES

ORNG appoints first Air Force member as Bilateral Affairs Officer

Feature story by John Hughel,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore. – The State Partnership Program has been described as “one of the best kept secrets” within the Department of Defense and the National Guard. The prospect to travel and work with nearly 100 other nations, in every part of the world can be exhilarating yet laden with language barriers and cultural differences. Within these nation-state challenges, having a healthy dose of enthusiasm is a key element for the constant tasks of the SPP mission – a trait that Maj. Angie Hayes has naturally displayed during the course of her Air Force career. When the opportunity to become the Bilateral Affairs Officer for Vietnam was made available, Hayes jumped at the chance to live abroad and serve her country at the same time.

“This is something I always wanted to do,” Hayes said, describing a life-long career goal in the days leading up to her departure to Vietnam. “Now that I am about to leave, I can’t believe how fast the last year has gone.”

A New Military Adventure

It all started for Hayes just over two years ago, when she attended the 2022 annual A-1 workshop and one of the presentations was given by Oregon National Guard SPP Director Lt. Col. Christopher Markesino. She recalls how he described the entire SPP program and remarked on the BAO position, “Oh yeah and we have this really cool opportunity where Oregon National Guardsmen go over to these countries to work and live there.” With that she said, “I remember being on the edge of my seat and listening, but then he said – these positions are just Army funded resources in Oregon.”

Hayes had just transferred from the 142nd Wing’s Force Support Squadron in Portland, taking on the job as the Oregon Air National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters A-1 director in Salem. “Colonel Kosdera (Joint Forces Headquarters - Air Component Chief of Staff) was my boss at the time and he asked me, “What are the things you want to do in your career? I was still new in the job but I told him for my next job, I intend to apply for any overseas assignments that are available.”

As it turned out a month later Hayes discovered she was closer to her revelation than she thought.

“He told me...here is this job,” she said, recalling how Kosdera had new information about Air Force members now being able to apply for the Oregon National Guard, State Partnership Program

Bilateral Affairs Officer overseas positions in our partner nations. “This was the first year Oregon opened it up to let Air Force [members] apply.”

The position became available with a ‘Swap’ with the Wisconsin National Guard through an agreement with the Oregon National Guard. Wisconsin will now pick up Oregon’s Army designate and will be

sending them to their State Partnership nation of Papua New Guinea as Hayes picks up the Air Force duty position, a first for the Oregon National Guard.

In looking back, Hayes said that having prior knowledge of the program from that simple SPP orientation brief made it easier to take the leap and apply.



Photo by Maj. Leslie Reed, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Air National Guard Maj. Angie Hayes, the incoming Bilateral Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy Hanoi speaks with a member of the Vietnamese delegation following the opening ceremony for the 2024 Disaster Management Engagement Activity at Hue University of Education, in Hue, Vietnam on June, 10, 2024.

“I never thought I would have the chance, but it was an easier decision having some familiarity with the role in the State Partnership Program. I don’t think a lot of our Air Force members knew about it or had that familiarity since it had only been offered to the Army before this year.”

The select opportunity to serve as the Bilateral Affairs Officer for the Office of Defense Cooperation, U.S. Embassy in Hanoi is not lost on Hayes. After a break from active duty military service, where she served from 2008 to 2013 at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, she joined the Oregon Air National Guard in October of 2018. A native Oregonian, she grew up in Lincoln City, Oregon, but chose to attend college out of state at the University of Wyoming, in Cheyenne, where she eventually enrolled in the school’s ROTC program, graduating with a degree in criminal justice.

“Growing up in a tourist town, I knew I needed to break free of the ‘beach-life’ mindset, and decided to attend college in Wyoming,” recalling her choice in pursuing higher education. This sense of wonderment fueled Hayes’ desire to return to the military after her two children had started to grow up and the family was settled again in Oregon in 2017. “When I joined the guard I didn’t know about Technician employment or the jobs in the AGR program. Like many who join the guard, I started off as a traditional guardsman, then got hired as a technician before converting recently to an AGR position. It really has been a rewarding learning experience.”

Her foremost deployment prior to her appointment as the Bilateral Affairs Officer was to the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware when serving on active duty. The mission left an enduring impression,

Hayes recalls, “Where the professionalism of armed services is given through honor, dignity and respect to the fallen Department of Defense service member while also providing compassionate care, service and support to the family members.”

Having been in the Force Support career field her entire career, Hayes said the experience was a “huge opportunity to branch out from what I already know, and develop new skills while connecting it to bigger concepts of how we in the Air Force supports the joint fight.”

Vietnam Mission

Leading up to her departure to Vietnam, Hayes has already made three trips to prepare for on-going missions. She was part of the Pacific Partnership last summer working on the Humanitarian Assistance Disaster response team working together on a CERFP exercise at Phu Yen along the coast line.

“It’s a beautiful area, and I was there for two weeks. I participated in the 2020 wildfires in the Pacific Northwest case study leveraging lessons learned during my experience responding with the Fatality Search and Recovery Team to augment the state’s mobile morgue.”

Hayes also attended the Security Cooperation Operations course at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. The two month course provides instruction on how the office supports activities undertaken by the Department of Defense to encourage and enable international partners to work with the U.S. to achieve strategic objectives. The State Partnership Program is a security cooperation program of the DoD.



Photo by Maj. Leslie Reed, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs
Maj. Angie Hayes with other delegates supporting the ORNG’s annual Disaster Management Engagement Activity eat local cuisine after their arrival in Hue, Vietnam, June 9, 2024.

It builds enduring partnerships with partner nations through capacity building, increasing interoperability and enhancing U.S. relations. The Bilateral Affairs Officer is assigned to the U.S. Embassy’s Security Cooperation Office. The overall goal is to strengthen American relationships with allies and partners – a key priority in our nation’s security strategy.

“Oregon’s Guardsmen work on the cooperation end of the spectrum doing these critical military to military engagements. This includes leading DMEA (Disaster Management Engagement Activity), supporting U.S. Pacific Fleet’s Pacific Partnership, cybersecurity capability development, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal training. Recently, one of the long term medical goals was completed with the establishment of Vietnam’s own ITLS (International Trauma Life Support) chapter with the help of Lt. Col. Christopher Webb [142nd Wing Medical Group].”

Hayes describes the ITLS chapter in Vietnam as the ideal security cooperation success. “It started with training the

Story continued on Page 15



Courtesy photo by Maj. Angie Hayes

ORANG Maj. Angie Hayes pauses for a photo with Maj. Keith Peter, Bilateral Affairs Officer Papua New Guinea, representing the Wisconsin National Guard. They both attended the SCO course and in-processed at INDOPACOM together.

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Bilateral Affairs Officer from Page 14

partner on deployment requirements for their United Nations Peacekeeping Operations mission in South Sudan. Then, worked through phases to train Vietnamese instructors to teach ITLS and finally produce an officially-recognized ITLS training chapter. Now, Vietnam has the capability to train their members to meet their deployment requirement.”

“What I am excited to learn the most are the key elements that hold true and the areas of cooperation that are mutually beneficial across the two cultures. But I also know there will be quite a few moments where I will see things from a completely new point of view or a different angle.”

Another benefit of this assignment is taking her family with her, which also includes her husband and two children who will attend an international school in Vietnam.

“They have had a year to think about this assignment and living out of the country for two years so this should be an adventure for the whole family.

Arrival In Country

Now two months after arriving in the country, Hayes describes her daily encounters with some degree of ‘regularity’ starting to take shape. “Like living anywhere, there are good days and others that are challenging,” she said. “The kids are settling into school, making new friends, and we have been shopping in some of the local markets too – if we can carry it.”



Oregon Air National Guard Maj. Angie Hayes, and her family exploring the country during some of their down time after their arrival in Vietnam in early July 2024.



Photo by Maj. Leslie Reed, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs
Delegates from the Oregon National Guard's Disaster Management Engagement Activity wear traditional Vietnamese attire, known as an ao dai, ahead a banquet dinner celebrating the partnership between the Oregon National Guard and members of the Vietnamese National Committee for Incident, Disaster Response and Search and Rescue on June 13, 2024 in Hue, Vietnam.

Working in the Office of Defense Cooperation, she is partnered with a diversity of staff, joint military, civilian, and locals, supporting a variety of activities.

“This job requires a need to always be thinking ahead,” Hayes said, describing upcoming training and engagement exercises. “I will be the Embassy representative attending a cybersecurity course closing dinner hosted by the partner. I have ongoing meetings for Pacific Partnership, which is the Navy’s largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission I am providing in-country support for, and then have oversight for the ongoing Humanitarian Assistance Program EOD course. I am constantly meeting with a variety of new people who support these programs to keep

coordination and strong communication for successful engagements.”

One of the war legacy efforts is working together to responsibly address unexploded ordnance. Since 1993, the U.S. government has contributed more than \$206 million for UXO efforts. The U.S. Army Pacific Command funds an International Mine Action Standard EOD train-the-trainer program to develop a self-sufficient program. This involves American EOD technicians supporting in an advisory capacity.

“A group of active duty and Alaskan Guard members had just recently completed a ‘train-the-trainer’ course. They are working in four very specific regions of the country, one being Quang Tri Province,” she said.

On the horizon Hayes said the Cyber Working Group will soon be taking place, which will involve working with the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and Vietnam’s Cyber Command. “This is an effort that the Oregon National Guard SPP will be supporting.”

As demanding as the job can be, Hayes said that this experience will be something that helps mold her career.

“General [Jenifer] Pardy (Assistant Adjutant General) has been a huge advocate for both the Army and Air to be able to take on this job in the future. I know that this will allow me to grow into future leadership roles in the Oregon National Guard. This role of working in a strategic environment as part of a joint team while operating in an international environment is really a once-in-a-life opportunity.”

ORNG represents partner nation, Vietnam, at the S.E. Asia Regional Forum

Story and photos by Sgt. Emily Simonson,
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

PENANG, Malaysia - Oregon National Guard represent partner nation, Vietnam, at the South East Asia Regional Forum

The Oregon National Guard State Partnership Program helped represent their partner nation, Vietnam, at the South East Asia Regional Forum, hosted by the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) in Penang, Malaysia, Sept. 23 to 27, 2024.

The goal of this weeklong forum, consisting of representatives for Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, is to strengthen cybersecurity in the region.



Representatives from the United States Indo-Pacific Command, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines introduce themselves during the opening discussions of the South East Asia Regional Forum in Penang, Malaysia, September 23, 2024.

“We share information with our partners in the region, and some of that information might be classified,” said Col. Frank Theising, Chief of the Interoperability and Engagements Division for USINDOPACOM Joint Staff Directorate for Command, Control, Communications, and Computer Systems. “So it’s important for the United States that [the partners] we’re sharing information with are able

to protect it once it’s on their indigenous networks.”

To help meet these countries’ cybersecurity needs, USINDOPACOM invited current government contracted cyber experts to offer resources including training, consultation, and equipment. The representatives met with the cyber experts in one-on-one sessions to build tailored plans to improve their defenses. Bringing the five countries together for the forum allows USINDOPACOM to accomplish in five days what would otherwise take five weeks going country to country.

Being able to openly discuss goals and short-comings requires good relations, something Oregon National Guard SPP Cyber Engagement lead for Vietnam, Lt. Col. Christopher Jenkins knows all about after working with Oregon’s partner nation for seven years. He said SPP builds long lasting relationships with their partner nations, laying a foundation of trust that makes events like the South East Asia Regional Forum possible.

“It’s very important to have the shared respect with the other partners,” said Jenkins. “We’re here at their invitation and

by strengthening the overall security of these partners, we raise the global level of defense.”

Jenkins and his team, comprised of Oregon Army National Guard (ORARNG) Defense Cyber Operations Element team lead Maj. Kyle Shield, ORARNG Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) Cyber Defense Warrant Officer William Hansen, and ORARNG JFHQ Cyber Operations Planner Sgt. Brandon Heinrichs, aided in representing Vietnam at the forum. Jenkins said he hopes to see even more participation within the region at future events.

The South East Asia Regional Forum began in 2022 and is part of a five-year plan to foster better cybersecurity in the region.



Representatives from the United States Indo-Pacific Command, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines build connections during the South East Asia Regional Forum in Penang, Malaysia, September 23, 2024. The goal of this week-long forum is to help build cybersecurity in the region.

AZUWUR

JIMMY CARTER AND A CALL TO ACTION: REFLECTIONS ON A LIFETIME OF PUBLIC SERVICE

AZUWUR

Oregon & Military History

Commentary by John Hughel,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore. – Landing at the Portland Air National Guard Base on May 22, 1980, just four days after the massive eruption of Mount St. Helens in S.W. Washington, President Jimmy Carter arrived to personally survey the destruction of one of the greatest volcanic events ever recorded in North America. When the weather cleared the following day, President Carter, along with other federal and state officials, boarded a Marine helicopter and conducted a lengthy aerial examination over the Skamania County blast area; while also touring other impacted areas along the Columbia and Cowlitz Rivers.

“It is a horrible looking site. I don’t know if there is anything like it in the world,” he said, speaking briefly with a group of reporters after landing later at the Kelso-Longview, Washington Airport. “There’s nothing left but massive piles of mud and what used to be mountain...” “There’s no way, I mean, to describe it. It’s an unbelievable sight.”

As for many around the nation, myself included (having graduated High School the day before), who watched the images on television throughout that week – we’re left stunned by the ‘moon-like landscape’ of grayish ash, flattened trees, and swollen rivers.

Now, as the nation pauses to pay tribute to the life of the 39th President of the United States with his passing on December 29, 2024 at the age 100, as his legacy of civic, military, and humanitarian service; which resonated to communities and nations throughout the world, touched our own region over 44 years ago. He was the nation’s oldest living President.

‘There is Nothing Like This in the World’

In the weeks leading up to the eruption at 8:32 a.m. on May 18, 1980, the nation’s attention had already been focused on the seismic activities of the mountain. By this time, the Oregon Army National Guard’s 1042nd Military Intelligence (M.I.) Company (later reorganized as the 641st M.I. Battalion), were already flying, photographing and mapping reconnaissance missions, utilizing their OV-1 Mohawk aircraft as the bulging mountain with more frequent earthquakes, had been intensifying since mid-March. On the morning of the eruption, Mohawks were already in the air over S.W. Washington, as it was also a drill weekend for the unit. Ironically members of the Washington Army National Guard were conducting their own annual training, as aviation crews in Yakima could bear witness to the devastating flank collapse, avalanche, and explosion – were quick to respond, conducting search and rescue operations around the blast zone. National Guard members would be activated to help support the area’s recovery and clean-up operations for several months to follow. President Carter would later call these actions, “perhaps the National Guard’s finest peacetime response.”

The eruption of Mount St. Helens was a significant historical incident – not only in the Pacific Northwest, but to the nation as a whole with ash covering nearly a dozen states. The devastation encompassed over 150 square miles and was the largest environmental disaster since the Dust Bowl of the 1930’s. President Carter also announced during his visit, a federal disaster area declaration, and met with hundreds of evacuated residents at the Longview Middle School, having escaped the volcano’s 26 megaton force. The massive wall of debris and choking ash killed 57 people and caused nearly \$1.1 billion in property damage, while hindering the ports along the Columbia River basin.

Naval Officer and Valiant First Responder

Prior to his election to the nation’s highest office, James Earl Carter, Jr., graduated from the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland in 1946, and to date, is the only president to have attended the Naval Academy. Within days of his graduation, he married Rosalynn Smith, having known since his childhood growing up in Plains, Georgia. The couple were married for more than 76 years and had four children.

When receiving their first duty stations, newly graduating midshipmen had to draw lots to determine their choice of assignments. Ensign Carter’s number was near the bottom and he would be assigned to the oldest navy ship in operation, the USS Wyoming, a battleship first commissioned in 1912. Within a year, he would be re-assigned to the USS Mississippi working as an Engineering officer, and subsequently was



File photo, United States Naval Academy
Midshipman James Earl Carter Jr., graduated from the Naval Academy in 1946 with distinction and was assigned to the USS Wyoming (E-AG 17) as an ensign.

knew one mistake could endanger everyone aboard.”

Lieutenant Carter, now working in the emerging nuclear submarine program under Admiral Hyman Rickover, was being groomed as an engineering officer aboard the USS (SSN-575) Seawolf, just the Navy’s second nuclear submarine. In December of 1952, the Chalk Water nuclear reactor northwest of Ottawa, Canada, experienced a partial meltdown to the NRX reactor core when fuel rods began to overheat after a dual mechanical and operator error.

The Navy sent Carter and his crew to Chalk Water to repair the reactor, which required it to be shut down, taken apart and replaced. They built an identical replica of the reactor on an adjacent tennis court to precisely run through the repair procedures, due to the maximum time humans could be exposed to the levels of radiation present in the damaged area. Each member of the 22 member team could only be lowered into the reactor for 90-second periods to clean up and repair the site. Carter himself was lowered into the building to work on the reactor casing. When the mission was finally complete with no loss of life, the group was tested routinely for the long-term health effects.

“They let us get probably a thousand times more radiation than they would now.” Carter said, reflecting on the incident during an interview with CNN in 2008. “We were fairly well-instructed then on what nuclear power was, but for about six months after that, I had radioactivity in my urine.”



File photo courtesy of the Associated Press
Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin clasp hands at the White House, on March 26, 1979, as they completed the signing of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

Commission and the Pennsylvania State House, in Harrisburg, helping support early response actions, then the president personally toured the site five days later on April 1, boosting public confidence in the ongoing clean-up operations.

Legislator, Governor and President

When his father died during the summer of 1953, Lt. Carter would leave active duty to take over the family farming business back in his boyhood home of Plains. It was a difficult decision for the family, with an unknown future, but one that would take him to serve in local and state politics in Georgia. He won and held a State Senate seat from 1963 to 1967. After an unsuccessful campaign for Governor in 1966, he was elected in 1970 after a run-off against former Governor Carl Sanders. It was during his inaugural address on Jan. 12, 1971, Carter publicly declared that...”I say to you quite frankly, that the time for racial discrimination is over.” He would continue to be an advocate of civil rights throughout his time in elected office and an advocate for human rights and democratic values.

In 1976, in the fallout of the Watergate scandal, Jimmy

given a choice to advance to a specialized career in either intelligence, the naval air force, or submarines.

After being selected for the submarine program, Carter began the demanding training in New London, Connecticut in 1948. In his autobiography, “A Full Life, Reflections at Ninety,” he recounted the dangers and distinctive perils of submarine duty.

“Although some enlisted men could concentrate almost exclusively on their own fields of responsibility as engine men, electricians, torpedo experts, boatswains, quartermasters, gunners or operators of navigation and fire control equipment, every officer was expected to master all of these disciplines...we



File photo by Gus Schuettler, Stars and Stripes
Former President Jimmy Carter waves to a cheering crowd after arriving at Rhein-Main Air Base, West Germany, on January 21, 1981, welcoming the 52 freed American hostages.

Carter began an improbable run for the White House. He won both the Iowa Caucuses and New Hampshire Democratic primaries, and eventually defeated President Gerald Ford in the general election on Nov. 2, 1976, garnering 297 electoral votes. While in office he created two new important cabinet positions; the Departments of Education and Energy, establishing a comprehensive energy program that would increase domestic oil production and focus on developing renewable sources. To highlight the point, he installed 32 solar panels to the White House, setting new goals to save energy while also boosting renewable sources by the turn of the century.

Like all former Presidents, his term in office from 1977 to 1981 has been debated by historians and political pundits; with extraordinary achievements, and with mixed results, interlinked among turbulent global events. He achieved an historic political agreement between Israel and Egypt during the Camp David accords in Sept. of 1978, leading to a peace treaty the following year, yet his administration struggled under economic stagnation and inflation.

On Nov. 4, 1979, militarized Iranian university students stormed the U.S. Embassy and held 52 American diplomats as hostages for 444 days, impeding his re-election bid in the process. Carter worked through the final hours of his Presidency as the hostages were released during the Inauguration on Jan. 20, 1981. As Ronald Reagan was sworn into office, now former President Carter flew to West Germany as a representative of the new President. When Carter arrived aboard Air Force One, he was greeted by West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt at Rhein-Main Air Base.

Just a week before, as a young Army Private, I’d also traveled through Rhein-Main, en route to my new duty station.

On Jan. 21st, a group from our ‘Intel Shop’ listened on Armed Forces Radio as Carter arrived; then later meeting with the hostages at the Air Force hospital in Wiesbaden. It was a captivating moment of history. In the mess hall the next morning, we passed shared copies of ‘Stars and Stripes’ around the breakfast table.

“Wiesbaden, church bells pealed Wednesday morning to honor the 52,” wrote Bill Walker, describing the day’s events and the happy homecoming. “The crowd, estimated at 3,000, waved

American flags and held signs that read, “Welcome Jimmy, you’re still number one with us,” and “We still love you, Mr. Carter.”

Serving with a Greater Sense of Purpose

After leaving the White House, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter returned to Plains, where they established the Carter Center, and in 1986, led an international campaign to eradicate over 3.5 million cases of the Guinea worm disease in Asia and Africa. The disease has been reduced by more than 99 percent, with only 14 provisional cases in five countries in 2023. The Carter Center has also worked with the United National Electoral Assistance Division in over 110 nations, promoting democratic, transparent and fair elections. In 2002 President Carter was awarded The Nobel Peace Prize for his “decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development.” He is one of only four U.S. Presidents to receive this honor.

The U.S. Navy has recognized the former President Jimmy Carter with two distinct honors. On June 5, 2004, the President and his family attended the christening of the USS (SSN-23) Jimmy Carter, as former First Lady Rosalynn Carter sponsored the ship. It was the Navy’s third and final Seawolf-class nuclear-powered submarine. On February 17, 2023 the U.S. Naval Academy announced that Maury Hall on campus was now renamed to honor President Jimmy Carter, as part of the U.S. Congress commission on renaming military assets because of Confederate ties.

The author of over 30 published books, former President Carter also taught weekly Sunday school classes at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains for decades. It was in March of 1984, that Jimmy and Rosalynn first began volunteering with Habitat for Humanity. Together they worked in 14 countries; building, renovating and repairing over 4,300 homes. They worked until 2020 as volunteers with Habitat for Humanity, but while working on homes in Benton Harbor, Michigan, in summer of 2005, a distinct truckload of lumber arrived for building roof trusses.

“I was leading a group of volunteers on building Habitat for Humanity homes,” he detailed in his autobiography, “The lumber had been cut from new-growth trees from the base of Mount St. Helens, and the timber company wanted us to use it on these homes for poor families.”

In many ways, a most fitting and noble tribute to his humanitarian work, and long term vision when establishing the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument in 1980.