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Oregon Brigadier General helps Guantanamo Bay cross milestone, p. 4



VOL 6, ISSUE NO. 1

JANUARY 2008

# Oregon Sentinel

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

## Back in the air again *Oregon's F-15s given green light following structural inspections*

Story by Capt. Lucas Ritter,  
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs



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

A Klamath Falls Airman surveys the early-morning flightline at Kingsley Field, home of the Oregon Air National Guard's 173rd Fighter Wing. Right: 1st Lt. Tyler Cox of the 142nd Fighter Wing in Portland, Ore., looks over his F-15 Eagle after his flight on January 9, 2008. Cox was one of the first group to resume flying after Oregon's F-15s were grounded since November, 2007.



Photo by Senior Airman John Hughel, 142nd Fighter Wing

**KINGSLEY FIELD, Ore.** – After more than two months of being grounded, Klamath Falls' fighter jets once again took to the air Jan. 10.

The 173rd Fighter Wing's F-15s have been grounded since Nov. 2 after an F-15 from the St Louis Air National Guard broke apart during flight and crashed. Since then all F-15 units around the country have been conducting a series of inspections to look for potential cracks that might have caused the St. Louis plane to come apart.

"It will be good to be back flying, getting the mission done," said Col. Tom Schiess, 173rd Fighter Wing commander. "We have been utilizing our simulators everyday to keep students

and instructors up to speed. However, nothing replaces getting in the jet."

The decision to resume flying operations follows detailed information briefed on Jan. 4 to Air Combat Command from the Air Force's F-15 Systems Program Manager, senior engineers from Boeing and the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, as well as a briefing received on Jan. 10 from the Accident Investigation Board president.

See **OREGON** on PAGE 5

## Oregon Guard takes top honors in national environmental security



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

Mr. Jim Arnold, Restoration Manager for the Oregon Military Department's Environmental Branch, in front of the Oregon Military Department in Salem, Ore. Arnold received a first-place award for the 2007 National Environmental Security competition.

Story by Mary Jane Jacobsen,  
Oregon Military Department  
Installations Division  
Environmental Branch

For the second year in a row, the Oregon Army National Guard has been selected as a first-place recipient in the National Environmental Security Awards competition

This year, the award goes to a member of the Installations Division for his work in environmental restoration.

Mr. James G. Arnold, Restoration Manager for the Installations Division, Environmental Branch of the ORARNG received the first place prize in the individual category for 2007.

The award highlights not just the programs themselves, but individuals whose efforts help Soldiers train without interruption, or without any negative impact on the environment.

The award highlighted Arnold's commitment to streamlining and accelerating cleanup processes, environmental stewardship, and improving relationships with regulators. It also highlighted significant advances in three critical program areas: a landfill project at Camp Rilea, a large-scale range cleanup at Camp Withycombe, and environmental restoration at Army Aviation Support Facility #1.

Environmental Branch Chief, retired Sgt. Maj. Gerald E. Elliott, said Arnold's selection for the award highlights his skill and dedication to the Restoration Program, as well as the entire Oregon Army National Guard Environmental Program.

Elliott lauded Arnold's ability to address legal requirements and negotiate the complex processes involved in completing projects, while at the same time protecting the interests of the Oregon Guard.

"These attributes make him a real environmental professional in every sense of

the term," he said.

Arnold's restoration program is tailored to work with the ORARNG environmental Management System (eMS), ensuring planning and reporting processes are compatible not only with the guards sustainability mission, but also with the Adjutant General's environmental policy statement.

"I'm proud to have a role supporting our Soldier readiness and training missions through our Environmental Restoration Program," Arnold said.

"Our efforts focus on implementing timely and cost effective solutions that allow our training to continue uninterrupted while reinforcing Army sustainability initiatives, which is very rewarding—we've worked hard to make our program excel and it's quite satisfying for the Oregon National Guard to receive national recognition for these efforts," he added.

Submissions for the annual award are judged at the NGB level in August and September before moving on to the Department of the Army. If the program is selected by the D.A., it then goes on to the Department of Defense to compete against submissions from around the world.

The award will be presented to Arnold and his team at the National Environmental Workshop in Orlando, Fla., slated for April.

*For more information about eMS, and environmental sustainability in the Oregon National Guard, please contact the environmental staff at 503-584-3914.*

Also see "ORNG to receive TAG's environmental policy" story on p. 8.

OFFICE OF THE STATE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE  
NATIONAL GUARD OF OREGON  
P.O. BOX 14350  
SALEM, OREGON 97309-5047  
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The Oregon Sentinel is distributed to members of the Oregon Army and Air National Guard, and other interested persons by request, free of charge. Circulation: 12,500. The Oregon Sentinel is published by Eagle Web Press, a private firm in no way connected with the DoD, Departments of the Army or Air Force, or the State of Oregon, and is under exclusive written contract with the Oregon Military Department. The Oregon Sentinel is also distributed electronically, and can be found online at [www.oregon.gov/OMD/AGPA/publications.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OMD/AGPA/publications.shtml).

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## COMMENTARY

## The new year is a time to reflect, look forward



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

The New Year gives us an opportunity to reflect on what we've accomplished and a chance to set the course for the coming year.

**Events of 2007:** The year just ended once again shows how important the Oregon Military Department is to the both our nation and the great state of Oregon.

Overseas, the 41 Infantry Brigade Combat Team wrapped up its critical mission in Afghanistan – training both the Afghan National Army and Police. Their dedicated effort will undoubtedly leave a lasting and positive mark on the history of Afghanistan as the Afghani people continue their struggle to become a unified nation able to stand on its own in the world community.

We also saw the deployment of four Oregon Army National Guard units to Iraq: the 115 Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, the 224 and 234 Engineer Companies, and Detachment 1, A Company, 641 Aviation. From the Oregon Air National Guard the 142 Civil Engineer Squadron sent troops to Kuwait, and the 173 Security Forces Squadron sent troops to Kyrgyzstan.

In July, the Oregon Military Department gained new responsibilities as the Office of Emergency Management joined the OMD. The effectiveness of the merger was quickly tested by TOPOFF 4 – a national level

exercise that evaluated how well federal, state, and local authorities respond to a crisis. Despite artificialities inherent in the exercise, TOPOFF 4 demonstrated the state is well coordinated.

This proved true in the real crisis of the December storms that struck northwest Oregon. As floodwaters rose, power and communications went out in four counties; OEM coordinated the response by dozens of state and local agencies to save life and limb in the immediate response and to speed the way to recovery. In the early hours of the storms, a Joint team of the 141 Brigade Support Battalion and the 125 Special Tactics Squadron rescued more than 200 storm survivors trapped by floodwaters and evacuated nearly 300 more in Vernonia. The Oregon State Defense Force, the third leg of OMD, also played a vital role in the response by providing critical communications support until traditional lines could be opened. OEM later created the right administrative structure to allow federal and state aid to flow into the stricken area. The actions by OMD and other state agencies were hailed by media and local officials as the right response from the state.

Though we had many successes, we also faced our share of challenges – perhaps the most profound challenge affected the ORANG. In November, the Air Force directed a stand-down of all F-15s – about 700 aircraft were grounded in the aftermath of a catastrophic structural failure that nearly claimed the life of a Missouri National Guard F-15 pilot. Inspection of the airplane revealed a structural flaw was likely the cause, and all F-15 models were taken from flying status. A few weeks later F-15 E models were cleared for flight, but all A-D models – those flown by the ORANG – were grounded. For more than a month we went without the roar of F-15s protecting the skies of the Pacific Northwest or training the next genera-

tion of F-15 pilots. Though some airframes have been cleared for flight, nearly 40% of the entire Air Force F-15 A-D fleet remains questionable.

**The Year Ahead:** As we enter the coming year it's important that we keep our focus on those issues that have a direct impact on our ability to perform our mission. We must continue our efforts to sustain and improve our personnel readiness, and we must renew our commitment to support the war fighter.

The cornerstone of our ability to successfully serve at home or abroad lies in our personnel readiness. In the latter half of 2009 the 41 IBCT will once again be called on to deploy overseas. Forest fires, flooding, and other crises can emerge at any moment. By focusing our efforts on personnel readiness we will have a fully staffed, trained, and ready force. We must energizing our efforts now to recruit the best Oregon has to offer, to train with a clear purpose focused on mission success, and lead from the front.

Today, about 500 citizen-Soldiers and Airmen are deployed around the world performing a variety of missions. We have an obligation to take care of them and their families with the right personnel and reintegration programs. In addition, we must continue to give them the best equipment possible – either as we reset equipment used in previous deployments, acquire new equipment for future missions, or seek to replace outmoded equipment.

We have before us many great challenges, yet they are also great opportunities for the Oregon Military Department to prove to those we serve that an investment in our organization is an investment in a secure future. I am exceedingly proud to serve with this team. We are engaged in the worthy work of our state and nation, and I'm confident we will once again rise to meet our challenges and exceed expectations.

## Many Guardsmen eligible for bonuses

One of the questions I frequently get from Soldiers as I travel around the state is, "can I get a bonus?"

Unfortunately, most of time I cannot answer the question in a definitive way. Each bonus program has eligibility requirements that individual Soldiers must meet to qualify for the various bonuses. What I do tell them about are some of the programs.

The most common bonus program for Soldiers who are already serving is the Re-enlistment/Extension Bonus (REB). Soldiers who are MOS qualified, and re-enlist or extend for six years within a critical unit or MOS can receive \$15,000.

Soldiers who re-enlist or extend for three years within a critical unit or MOS are eligible for a \$7,500 bonus.

Those who are MOSQ and re-enlist or extend for six years within a non-critical MTOE unit can receive \$15,000. In addition, there is also a MOS conversion bonus (MOSCB) of \$2,000 for eligible Soldiers who voluntarily or involuntarily (due to unit reorganization, transformation, inactivation or the needs of the ARNG) reclassify into a targeted shortage MOS.

There are two Officer Accession Bonus programs for enlisted Soldiers who are considering the officer corps. For new officers – those who have not been an officer in any military service, foreign or domestic – the National Guard offers \$10,000 to those who agree to serve six years in a critical unit and MOS. The National Guard also offers \$10,000 to officers or warrant officers who agree to serve six years in a MTOE unit and critical MOS.

For soldiers who are recruiting under the GRAP or ESAR programs, there are a number of bonus programs.

For non-prior service members (NPS), there is a \$20,000 bonus for new recruits. This is known as the NPS Critical Unit Identification (UIC) Bonus. There is another bonus for NPS Critical Skill (CS) Bonus, and a NPS Non-Critical Skill (NCS) Enlistment Bonus – both at \$20,000. Finally, there is a NPS Civilian Acquired Skills Program (CASP) Bonus, which awards \$10,000 to eligible Soldiers.



**State Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas R. Moe,**  
State Command Sergeant Major,  
Oregon Military Department

The Prior Service Enlistment Bonus (PSEB), is for Soldiers who have previously served, or may currently be serving in another branch, either in the National Guard or on active duty. The \$15,000 PSEB is available to Soldiers who enlist MOSQ for a period of six years within a critical unit.

A \$7,500 PSEB is available to Soldiers who enlist MOSQ for three years with a critical unit. Finally, there is a \$15,000 PSEB for members who enlist MOSQ or (non-MOSQ for one of the State Top Thirty Critical Skills) for six years within a non-critical MTOE unit.

The other bonus program available to potential National Guard Soldiers is known as the Affiliation Bonus (AB). It pays \$20,000 to Soldiers who affiliate MOSQ for six years within a critical or non-critical MTOE unit, or \$10,000 for Soldiers who affiliate MOSQ for three years within a critical or non-critical MTOE unit.

The bonus programs I have mentioned here are the most common for National Guard soldiers. There are several other incentive programs that apply to very specific MOSs and units. Again, each bonus program has eligibility requirements that individual Soldiers must meet in order to qualify for the various programs.

The Recruiting NCO assigned to each unit has the complete information on these requirements. Please refer to SRIP Policy #07-06, dated Aug. 10, 2007 – Mar. 31, 2008.

For more information, contact Sgt 1st Class Ann Browning at 503-584-3816 or via e-mail at [ann.browning@us.army.mil](mailto:ann.browning@us.army.mil).

Oregon Sentinel:  
New year, new look

By now you've taken note of the new look for the Oregon Sentinel.

We made some subtle changes to the front page, headlines, text and overall graphics.

However, in order to continue bringing you this award-winning and nationally-recognized newsletter at the level of quality you've come to expect, we need your help.

If you have a story or a story idea, photo, editorial, or letter you would like to see published in the Oregon Sentinel, please share it with us. The Oregon Sentinel, after all, is *your* paper.

Furthermore, let us know how we are doing. We welcome your feedback and ideas. This invaluable information will help us keep your paper informative, enjoyable and entertaining.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact any of the Oregon Sentinel staff members. Our contact information can easily be located in the column on the left side of this page.

I look forward to reading your feedback and story ideas in the months to come.



**Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy,**  
Editor in Chief,  
The Oregon Sentinel

COMMENTARY

# New year good time to plan for physical training

Story by Lt. Col. Marilyn Woodward,  
JFHQ Safety Officer



So you say you've hibernated this winter, despite your New Year's resolution to stay in shape. So now what?

Spring is a time for many of us to get motivated and prepared for an increase in activities,

which we invariably become involved in the summer and fall. A talk with your primary health care provider should be a starting point, especially if your hibernation has been a long one.

Also, if you are over 40 (yes, I know that really isn't old), muscles are more

easily strained and also take longer to heal.

We aren't necessarily patient people, we want to get healthy as soon as possible, but let's be realistic.

The most important thing you can do before increasing your level of physical activity is to make a plan which includes a moderate pace.

Furthermore, if you have been sedentary for over 30 days, reduce the workout intensity significantly. Several places to look for guidance include the military web-based health connections and the U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services - Center for Disease Control website at: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/components/](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/components/).

If you start a completely new routine or fun activity using different muscles, look up some new and easy stretches, and explore low-stress options to work the

different muscles first. I learned the hard way, hopefully you won't have to do the same.

Adults should strive to meet either of the following physical activity recommendations based on their personal condition.

The American College of Sports Medicine says adults should engage in moderate-intensity (some increase in breathing or heart rate) physical activities for at least 30 minutes on five or more days of the week.

Healthy People 201 advises adults engage in vigorous-intensity (large increase in breathing or heart rate) physical activity three or more days per week for 20 or more minutes per occasion.

And don't forget the proper attire to mitigate the risks associated with your activity.

Have a great spring!

# MOS Conversion Bonus Program: New opportunities for Soldiers

The Oregon Army National Guard is offering incentives to Soldiers who reclassify into selected critical positions.

In some cases, Soldiers may be eligible to receive a \$2,000 MOS conversion bonus.

For more information on the jobs listed below, or to see the complete list of requirements and qualifications, send an inquiry to: [mosreclass@ng.army.mil](mailto:mosreclass@ng.army.mil).

There is an MOS conversion bonus of \$2,000 to eligible Soldiers that voluntarily or involuntarily reclassify into a targeted shortage MOS.

**13F Fire Support Specialist** is primarily responsible for leading, supervising or serving in intelligence activities such as target processing, division artillery and maneuver brigade. Some of the duties include establishing, maintaining and operating communications systems, encoding and decoding messages, and assisting in preparing and disseminating fire support plans, coordinating documents and target lists, assisting in the operation of laser range finders, target designation and night observation devices.

Vacancy locations include Ashland, Bend, Coos Bay, Cottage Grove, Grants Pass, Hood River, Medford, Portland and Roseburg.

**25U Signal Support Systems Specialists** are primarily responsible for working with battlefield Signal support systems and terminal devices. Some of the duties include integrating signal systems and networks, installing, operating and maintaining designated radio and data distribution systems, performing signal support functions and unit level maintenance on authorized signal equipment and associated electronic devices, training and providing technical assistance to users of signal equipment, and operating and performing preventive maintenance checks and services on assigned vehicles and power generators.

Vacancy locations include Ashland, Bend, Clackamas, Coos Bay, Cottage Grove, Dallas, Forest Grove, LaGrande, Portland, Prineville and St. Helens.

**21B Combat Engineers** primarily supervise, serve or assist as a member of a team. They provide much-needed combat engineering, such as building roads, constructing bridges or helping our forces to move across foreign land. Some of the duties include constructing trails, roads and field fortifications such as shelters, bunkers and gun emplacements, assembling floating or prefabricated bridges, operating various light or heavy engineer vehicles, placing and detonating explosives, and loading, unloading and moving supplies and equipment using planes, helicopters, trucks and amphibious vehicles.

Vacancy locations include Clackamas, Dallas, Prineville and Salem.

**92F Petroleum Supply Specialists** are primarily responsible for supervising and managing the reception, storage and shipping of bulk or packaged petroleum-based products. Some of the duties as a Petroleum Supply Specialist include dispensing bulk fuels and water from storage and distribution facilities, selecting and submitting samples of petroleum, oils and lubricants to labs for testing, testing oils and fuels for pollutants, and repairing pipeline systems, hoses, valves and pumps.

Vacancy locations include Baker City, Burns, Coos Bay, Eugene, Forest Grove, Portland and Salem.

**11C Indirect Fire Infantryman** Employs, fires, and recovers anti-personnel and anti-tank mines. Operates and maintains communications equipment and operates in a radio net. Emplace and recover early warning devices. Constructs and camouflages individual/crew served weapons firing position. Constructs and camouflages a mortar firing position. Maintains mortars and fire control equipment. Performs safety checks on mortars. Performs as a member of a mortar squad providing indirect fire support.

Vacancy locations include Coos Bay, Corvallis, Cottage Grove, Eugene, Grants Pass, Klamath Falls, Lebanon, Medford, Pendleton, Roseburg and Woodburn.

If you are interested in any of these positions, please work with your chain of command or E-mail [MosReclass@ng.army.mil](mailto:MosReclass@ng.army.mil)

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

# New Year wishes from Oregon National Guard Aviation unit

All,  
Happy New Year!!!!

We are experiencing a short lull in the flight schedule in the days approaching the New Year but anticipate we will be back to our usual busy schedule very shortly.

For us here, New Years Day 2008 is a milestone: it indicates that we are one-third of the way through our mission here.

To date we have flown 1,230 flight hours and moved 2.8 million pounds of cargo and 5,600 passengers throughout Iraq. The company is continuing to execute at a rate and performance level that is above what we are tasked to provide. That's what you get when you have soldiers engaged in their mission and with a drive to get

the job done- and done right! The soldiers understand their role well. That fact combined with a high degree of skill and motivation combine to yield this stellar performance, across the board.

We have been flooded with packages of snacks and other sundries from communities all over the country. There is no doubt to us here that our country and our communities are behind our effort here; the Army behind the Army!!! We have received hundreds of Christmas cards from children as well. We have these pinned to our wall in our company area. Clearly, a lot of thought and effort went into these and we are most grateful.

Some significant events this month include a visit by the

Governor of South Dakota, Gov. Mike Rounds. He spent several hours with the company and truly demonstrated his deep support of the troops. We also had a USO concert on the 20th that included Robin Williams and Kid Rock as well as several other entertainers. We enjoyed the Task Force Christmas party and a New Years barbeque on New Years Eve.

Thanks again for all your holiday wishes and prayers. During the holiday season especially, we are all very much reminded of what matters most; family and friends. The company is making you proud. We look forward to returning to you all.

I have included a picture (of some of the guys).

On behalf of the company, I sincerely wish you the best that this New Year has to bring.

Take care and God Bless.

Maj. David R. Doran,  
Commander, Alpha Co.,  
641 Aviation Regiment,  
Oregon Army National  
Guard,  
LSA Anaconda, Balad, Iraq



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# A gap in our air defenses

Vancouver, Wash. Mayor, Royce E. Pollard, wrote an open Letter to the Editor of the Washington Post about structural issues with Portland's F-15 fighter jets. The letter was published in the Post on Jan. 4, 2008.



Vancouver, Wash., Mayor Royce E. Pollard.

it", however, he does not take into account these airplanes are exceeding their planned life expectancy. The Air Force has a stated requirement for almost 200 additional F-22's unfunded in the current defense budget. Even if a temporary fix is available, how long will those fixes extend the life of these aging airframes?

Our young warriors willingly put their

lives on the line in defense of our country. We have the responsibility to provide them the best equipment available; the F-22 is clearly the superior fighter for the defense of America! Would you strap yourself into a fighter aircraft with structural failures?

Royce E. Pollard,  
Mayor, Vancouver, Wash.

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

# DON'T MISS A SINGLE ISSUE OF THE OREGON SENTINEL

If you have recently retired from the Oregon Army or Air National Guard, have moved or changed your marital status, and would like to continue receiving our award winning newspaper, The Oregon Sentinel, make sure you update your personnel information!

**Current Army National Guard members**  
See your unit admin. clerk to update your information in SIDPERS

**Current Air National Guard members**  
See your Mission Support Flight office

**Retired Air or Army National Guard**  
Send updates to Randall Witt at: [randall.witt@ng.army.mil](mailto:randall.witt@ng.army.mil)

**Non-military**  
Contact the State Public Affairs Office at: 503-584-3917  
or via e-mail at: [sentinel-editor@mil.state.or.us](mailto:sentinel-editor@mil.state.or.us)

Dear Sir or Madam:  
The Dec. 22nd article detailing the grounding of the F-15 aircraft and the issue to purchase the newer F-22's concerns us greatly here on the West Coast.

As Mayor of "America's Vancouver" in Washington, I believe the most important issue facing our administration is Homeland Security. Here in the Northwest, that protection is provided by the Oregon Air National Guard. However, the grounding of Oregon's F-15's leaves us vulnerable.

The Air Sovereignty of this nation must be an absolute to the policy makers. Winslow Wheeler of the Center for Defense Information suggests we can simply "fix

## FEATURES

# Rilea assists community during recent coastal storms

Story by Maj. Alisha Hamel,  
ORNG Heritage Outreach Program

Clatsop County has a name for the monster storm that hit Oregon on Dec. 2 – “Hurricane Winds 2007”.

The name may be appropriate, given recorded winds of up to 148 mph winds which completely isolated Clatsop County, home of Camp Rilea.

Camp Rilea was asked and expected to help the communities of Clatsop County during the crisis. They exceeded the already high expectations of Clatsop County, said Dean Perez, Human Resources Director and Planning Chief for the Clatsop County Emergency Operations Center.

Perez said during the panic and chaos in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the first 24 hours, officials from Rilea offered every resource they had to offer.

“They let us know that Camp Rilea was up and running and how to get a hold of them,” he said. “We never heard the word

Officials at Rilea also coordinated with the local Red Cross, providing expanded resources for families displaced by the storm.

“By two o’clock on Monday morning, we knew this was a big storm. We hooked up the generators, and everyone who could showed up for work and then worked for three days straight,” said Ron Kinsley, facility manager at Camp Rilea.

The post also provided support for Pacific Power and Light (PP&L), which used Camp Rilea as a staging area for hundreds of power poles. They also parked their vehicles on post, and took advantage of the meals and beds offered by Camp Rilea.

Sgt. Tia Carrar, Lead Supply Technician for Camp Rilea, said she knew her son’s daycare would be closed, so she asked her mother to take care of her son.

“She didn’t understand why I had to go to work,” Carrar said. “I explained that I am in the Guard, and we help when there are emergencies.”

vide 150 pounds of ice to the sheriff,” said Sgt. James Paul, Troop Issue Subsistence Activity (TISA) manager.

Assistance from the Willamette Valley would not arrive for three days, mostly due to downed trees and power lines, and widespread flooding. Volunteer Soldiers and civilians worked long rotating shifts throughout the three days, with many getting little, if any, sleep.

Lt. Col. Steve Beach, Deputy Post Commander and Operations Branch Chief, said when he arrived at the post on Dec. 7, the strain was evident on the faces of volunteers.

“They looked exhausted, like they had been going 24 hours a day for the whole time,” he said.

“About 10 traditional-status Soldiers had stayed on post after the drill weekend,” Beach continued. “The soldiers here did wonderfully. The people that work here at Camp Rilea are very customer service oriented, and it predisposes them in emergencies like this to help wherever possible.”

Perez added that Camp Rilea is viewed by the surrounding area as a community partner.

“Our lives would be very different right now if it wasn’t for Camp Rilea,” he said.

Col. Todd Plimpton, Camp Rilea Post Commander, lauded everyone at Camp Rilea for their efforts and assistance during the storms.



Photos courtesy of Camp Rilea

Above: Line crew vehicles from Pacific Power fill the parking lot at Camp Rilea. Volunteers and crews helped the surrounding community following widespread flooding and power outages caused by severe storms which hit the coast Dec. 2. Below: Some of the wind damage to buildings on the post.



“The 116th Air Guard, 234th Engineers, full time staff, and the M-Day Soldiers worked as a complete team,” he said.

“The personal relationships that were built with the community really paid big dividends,” Plimpton continued. “It is obvious that Ken Klee, Maj. Shaun Martin, Ron Kinsley, Lt. Col. Gregory and their people have great pride in ownership with what they have built at Camp Rilea. That was what was so important in helping the community during this disaster.”

“Our lives would be very different right now if it weren’t for Camp Rilea.”

— Dean Perez, Clatsop County Chief of Plans

‘no’. We just heard, ‘we have it, we are resourcing it out and this is when you can expect it.’”

Because of the widespread power outages, ham radio operators were employed, and according to Perez, a drill-status guardsman stationed at Rilea, the post also provided fuel, generators, housing for displaced families and emergency power.

Carrar said as she drove over the New Young’s Bay Bridge near Astoria, large waves were crashing over the causeway. After work, high winds blew her off the loading dock onto the hood of her car.

Other Soldiers on the post sprang into action when they got the call.

“At 11:45 p.m., I was just getting into my sleeping bag, and I was called to pro-

## Oregon General oversees milestone at Guantanamo detention facility



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Weinert

Guantanamo Deputy Commander, Army Brig. Gen. Cameron Crawford, (left), and the Joint Task Force Chief of Staff discuss detainee transfer options, Dec. 31, 2007.

Story by  
Sgt. Sarah Stannard,  
JTF Guantanamo  
Public Affairs Office

**GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba (Jan. 4, 2008)** – The Department of Defense announced Dec. 28 the transfer of ten detainees to Saudi Arabia. This event marks 500 detainees who have been relocated to other countries via transfer or release.

“Under international law there is no requirement for the U.S. government to have any process, other than just simply keeping them off the battle field.

However, in keeping with the President’s intent to not hold any

single detainee longer than necessary, we have implemented a series of procedures to ensure we evaluate current information on each of them,” said Joint Task Force Guantanamo Deputy Commander Brig. Gen. Cameron Crawford.

Annual review boards are the process by which both classified and unclassified evidence against a detainee is reviewed each year. Three field grade officers make up the board.

Providing only a recommendation on the status of detention, the board members review the facts and offer their findings to the Designated Civilian Official, the Hon. Gordon England, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense.

England then makes the final determination whether to release, transfer or continue to detain.

The Department of Defense has determined, via the annual review boards, that more than 60 detainees currently held here are eligible for transfer or release. Departure of these detainees hinges on negotiations between the U.S. State Department and other nations.

“Some countries are happy to have their constituents back, however, sometimes we have credible evidence that they may be tortured or killed when they return there.

We will not knowingly release a detainee if we have information that he will be tortured or

killed,” Crawford said.

“That causes us to look to third party nations to attempt to take some detainees,” he added.

Since 2002, detainees have been released to other countries including Albania, Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, France, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom and Yemen.

There are approximately 275 detainees currently held at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility.

## Oregon Guardsmen help rebuild Iraq, one mission at a time



Staff Sgt. Edward Lewis, 2nd platoon, 224th Engineers, Oregon Army National Guard, looks upon his Soldiers as they begin the repair of a culvert, one of the many engineer duties their unit conducts in Iraq, on Forward Operating Base Warhorse near Baqubah, Iraq, Jan. 9. The unit deployed in June 2007 for a one-year tour of duty in Iraq.

Story and photo by  
1Lt. Stephen Bomar,  
115th Mobile  
Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers from the Oregon Army National Guard are assisting the 1st Armored Division with some of the most vital missions in northern Iraq: security and reconstruction.

“One of our many missions entails clearing the sides of the road in Iraq to prevent future improvised explosive device placement,” said Army Staff Sgt. Edward Lewis, 2nd Platoon team leader, 224th Engineers, Oregon Army National Guard.

Culvert denial, route sanitation, crater and culvert repair are all a part of the many engineer missions 2nd Platoon, 224th Engineers, ORARNG conducts in northern Iraq.

“We are kind of a ‘jack of all trades’ group, but it does make time go by fast,” Lewis said.

These Citizen-Soldiers were activated for a 400-day deployment to Iraq in mid-2007. All volunteers, many of the Soldiers were not apart of the unit before leaving Oregon.

“We have all become a really tight group,” said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Bright, 2nd Platoon’s platoon sergeant.

The Platoon has encountered four Improvised Explosive Devices and two small arms-fire attacks to include a sniper attack near Taji, which wounded Army Pvt. Gary Phyleder. Despite these hardships, the Soldiers of the 224th maintain great spirits.

“We all just want to do our part,” said Lewis, who was married before the deployment.

“Support back home makes a big difference. (The) family care has been great.”

Now, over half-way through their deployment, the unit’s Soldiers continue to enjoy the variety and change of both locations and missions, but are ready to head back home.

“Camaraderie, seeing the sites and knowing that we are helping the Iraqi kids is the best part of being over here, but Oregon is in sight now,” Lewis said.

The 224th Engineers currently have three platoons in Iraq, making up the 1203rd Engineer Battalion, which is a reserve battalion based in Duthan, Ala. The unit is part of the 20th Engineer Brigade, at Fort Bragg, N.C., which is currently supporting the 1st Armored Division.

# Aging F-15 fleet a 'crisis', says top Air Force General

Story by Associated Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- An Air Force investigation of the crash last fall of an F-15C Eagle fighter jet concluded that a defective metal beam in the frame cracked, causing it to disintegrate during flight.

In a report released Thursday, Air Force investigators said they had found the sole reason for the accident was the faulty support beam, called a longeron, which failed to meet the manufacturer's specifications.

The investigation was led by Air Force Col. William Wignall. "The accident investigation board president (Wignall) found, by clear and convincing evidence, the cause of this accident was a failure of the upper right longeron, a critical support structure in the F-15C aircraft," the report says.

About 20 minutes after takeoff from an airfield near St. Louis on Nov. 2, the forward fuselage of Maj. Stephen Stilwell's \$42 million F-15C Eagle shook violently and then broke apart 18,000 feet above the ground. Stilwell, his left shoulder dislocated and his left arm shattered, barely had time to safely eject as pieces of his aircraft tumbled from the sky over the Missouri countryside.

More troubling, however, are the results of a parallel examination finding as many as 163 of the workhorse aircraft also

have flawed support beams, or longerons. The aircraft remain grounded as the Air Force continues to search for how serious the problem is and whether extensive, costly repairs are needed. Another 19 of the aircraft have yet to be inspected and also remain grounded.

Nearly 260 of the A through D model F-15s, first fielded in the mid-1970s, were returned to flight status Tuesday following fleet-wide inspections.

The twin-engine aircraft are used primarily for homeland security and are a key link in the nation's air defense network.

"Two November, my world really changed," Air Force Gen. John Corley, head of Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base, Va., said at a Pentagon news conference. "And it changed in a catastrophic way."

The Air Force's fleet of 224 newer F-15E Strike Eagles, which are used in Iraq and Afghanistan, do not have the structural problem. Those jets, whose role is more oriented toward ground attack missions, were temporarily grounded after Stilwell's crash, but returned to service shortly thereafter.

The older F-15s are stationed at many so-called "alert" sites around the country, where planes and pilots stand ready to take off at a moment's notice to intercept hijacked airliners and guard protected airspace.

Among the Air Force's other

workhorse fighter jets is the F-16, which performs multiple roles, including air-to-air combat and air-to-ground attack. It entered the operational fleet in 1979.

With the F-15s temporarily grounded, F-16s and other aircraft are pulled away from their regular duties to fill the gaps. That makes it difficult for the Air Force to accomplish its mission and leaves Air Force pilots unable to train properly.

"This is systemic," Corley said.

The longeron helps support the cockpit and strengthen the jet as it moves through high-stress maneuvers while traveling hundreds of miles per hour.

Analysis of recovered parts from Stilwell's jet identified a crack in the beam near the fuselage that investigators say grew over time and was not detected during regular maintenance of the aircraft.

In the report, Wignall said that prior to Stilwell's flight, "no inspection requirements existed for detecting a crack in the longeron."

The F-15A through D models were built by McDonnell Douglas. That company merged with defense manufacturing giant Boeing in August 1997.

Company spokeswoman Patricia Frost said Boeing representatives have not seen Wignall's final report and could not comment on it.

"However, we are working

with the U.S. Air Force to analyze the data gathered from fleet-wide inspections," Frost said. "Once all of the data have been analyzed, a need for further inspection or repair can be determined."

No decision has been reached as to whether Boeing might be liable for the repairs, which could cost as much as \$500,000 per aircraft.

"This is the starting point for looking into that question," said Lt. Gen. Donald Hoffman, a senior Air Force acquisition official. "I'm not going to speculate."

The F-22 Raptor, a stealth aircraft intended to replace the F-15, is being fielded but in smaller numbers than initially planned. The Pentagon has said it will buy just 183 Raptors due to their high cost, but members of Congress are pressing Defense Secretary Robert Gates to buy more. A single Raptor costs about \$160 million, according to the Air Force.

The Air Force has said it needs 381 of the F-22s.

Corley did not endorse more F-22s as the solution to the F-15 problems. But he indicated buying more F-15s would not be the Air Force's preference.

"It was the best of breed at



Photo by John Rossino

Gen. John D.W. Corley, Vice Chief of Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, speaks during the acceptance ceremony for PACAF's first F-22, which is one of several which were assigned to PACAF at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.

its time," said Corley, who was an F-15 instructor pilot in 1979. "It's not anymore."

Loren Thompson, a defense analyst with the Lexington Institute in Arlington, Va., said it may make more sense to retire the older F-15s rather than fix them. Due to their age, another part could fail even after the longerons are repaired.

"This is an aircraft that was designed during the Nixon administration," Thompson said. "It doesn't seem sensible to be making fixes so late in the game."

## Secretary of the Air Force outlines importance of AFSO 21

Our role as an Air Force is to provide an array of capabilities for the Combatant Commanders to use as directed by the President. These capabilities include the widest variety of joint operations from combat operations to humanitarian aid. Like any other organization, we must seek to constantly give value to our "customers." It's not only the right thing to do for the American taxpayer; it's the smart thing to do.

In my December "Letter to Airmen," I talked about expanding LEAN concepts beyond just depot operations. That effort has now grown into *Air Force Smart Operations 21 (AFSO 21)*, a dedicated effort to maximize value and minimize waste in our operations. AFSO 21 is a leadership program for commanders and supervisors at all levels, looking at each process from beginning to end. It doesn't just look at *how* we can do each task better, but asks the tougher and more important question: *Why* are we doing it this way? Is each of the tasks relevant, productive, and value added? In other words is it necessary at all? With AFSO 21, we will march unnecessary work out the door - forever.

AFSO 21 signifies a shift in our thinking. It is centered on processes (groups of tasks) rather than tasks alone, which allows us to gain insights into the value, or lack of value, in each task we perform. For example, why does an EPR take 21 days at some bases to process, and only 8 at another? We must do better across the entire Air Force, and no process is immune from this critical review. AFSO 21 is built on successful principles from the corporate world, and has already yielded results in the Air Force. AFMC has used the tenets of AFSO 21 to put an extra 100 tankers back on the line each day. AFSO 21 is about working smarter to deliver war-fighting capabilities.

We must continue to meet our worldwide requirements even with the continued pressure on our budget. But AFSO 21 is not about cost cutting; it enables our service to take our war-fighters of today and grow them into the most effective and efficient thinkers for 2010 and beyond. The continuous process improvements of AFSO 21 will be the new culture of our Air Force. We will look at innovative ways to use our materiel and personnel more efficiently. For example, we're already planning on using the Guard and Reserve differently under the concept of Total Force Integration, capitalizing on their inherent strengths.

As AFSO 21 training comes to your base, ask yourself, "What have I improved today?" Every idea is worth taking to your supervisor. To learn more about the AFSO 21 program, visit the AFSO 21 website at <http://www.afso21.hq.af.mil/>. I have full faith that by implementing AFSO 21 together, we will make our Air Force not only more effective, but will drastically improve our combat capability.



Michael W. Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force

## Oregon F-15 fleet returns to flight duty after being cleared



Courtesy photo

The Air Force tests an F-22 Raptor over Edwards AFB in California. The ORANG hopes to replace their fleet of F-15s with the new fighter jet.

Continued from FRONT PAGE

The information included an analysis of the health of the Air Force's F-15 fleet from findings from the Nov. 2 mishap investigation, maintenance inspections and actions completed and taken to date as well as historical science and engineering trend data from F-15 fleet management.

Inspections are more than 90 percent complete for the entire F-15 fleet. Kingsley Field is 100 percent complete with all required inspections. Remaining inspections have primarily focused on the forward longerons. The longerons are a critical support structure.

"The 173rd Fighter Wing has 25 jets in our inventory, but we currently have four F-15s that are released to fly on base tomorrow," said Colonel Schiess. "From here jets will be cleared to fly based on further engineering analysis. Four of the 25 aircraft here have cracked longerons that will require at least 6 months to repair."

Additionally, approximately 40 percent of inspected aircraft in the entire F-15 inventory have at least one longeron that does not meet blueprint specifications, Kingsley Field has 15 aircraft in this category. This is a problem caused 25 years ago when the aircraft were built, but is just now being realized with this accident.

Deviations in these longerons will be analyzed at the Warner Robbins Air Logistics Center. The analysis is expected to take approximately four weeks to complete. Once the analysis is complete, Air Combat Command will be able to better determine which aircraft will need further inspection, or repair, before returning them to flight.

## FEATURES

# Orange County Choppers unveils first of three National Guard bikes



Photo by Sgt. Mary Flynn, National Guard Bureau

Paul Teutul Sr., of Orange County Choppers fame, rides the National Guard's "Patriot Chopper" in front of the Army National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Va., during a Sept. 27 unveiling ceremony.



Photo by Sgt. Mary Flynn, National Guard Bureau

Chief Warrant Officer 3 David Vasquez and Pfc. Joseph Scheibe admire the "Patriot Chopper" in Arlington, Va. The two were among four Army National Guard Soldiers whose ideas were incorporated into the design by Orange County Choppers, which is featured on the TLC television series, "American Chopper".

### Story courtesy of National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

**ARLINGTON, Va.** -- Hundreds of Soldiers gathered in front of the Army National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Va., in late September to witness the unveiling of the "Patriot Chopper," the first of three bikes to be built by Orange County Choppers (OCC) for the National Guard.

The ceremony was filmed by the American Chopper production crew and two episodes airing Jan. 17 and 24 on The Learning Channel (TLC) will feature the construction of this bike.

Metalworker Paul Teutul Sr., and son Paul Teutul Jr., who is referred to as "Paulie" by his fans, founded OCC in New York

after introducing their first bike, "True Blue," at the Daytona Biketoberfest in 1999.

The Teutuls quickly became a household name for chopper enthusiasts, and the family, including the youngest son, Mikey, shot to fame when their own show, "American Chopper," debuted on the Discovery Channel in 2002.

The Teutuls have a history of building patriotic bikes, and they have produced multiple theme bikes for several branches of the military.

The "Patriot Chopper" was the result of a collaborative effort between the OCC and four National Guard Soldiers.

In early 2007, the Army Guard invited Soldiers around the country to submit their ideas for the custom design of the Guard-sponsored bike. Four winners were chosen: Chief Warrant Officer David Vasquez of Colorado; Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Billet of Georgia; Sgt. 1st Class Richard Crawford of Illinois and Pfc. Joseph Scheibe of Ohio.

Maj. Gen. James Nuttall, deputy director of the Army National Guard, presented certificates to the four winning Soldiers during the unveiling ceremony. He congratulated them on a job well done and a bike well-designed.

The ceremony was highlighted when Paul Sr., made his grand entrance on the bike, coasting in coolly and revving the engine to the enthusiastic cheers of the crowd.

The winning Soldiers were in awe. "To be a part of something like this is pretty cool stuff," said Scheibe. "We went to the OCC shop in New York last month, and we saw pieces and parts of the bike. But to see it finished was just really cool."

The finished bike showcases a minuteman air cleaner. The blade spokes of the wheels feature 3-D

inlaid spearheads, representing the seven Army values and an ammunition belt lines the handlebars. Chromed M-4 magazines serve as the struts, and an M-4 rifle is mounted on the side of the rear wheel.

The color of the bike is red, white and blue with an Army Combat Uniform pattern used throughout. A list on top of the bike includes every war and conflict the National Guard has been involved in since its founding in 1636.

"We took [the Soldiers'] ideas and put them to work," Paulie explained, "I think for them, it really is their bike. It was a bike they designed and that we fabricated. I think it made it that much more special."

The "Patriot Chopper" is the first of three bikes commissioned by the Army National Guard. The purpose is twofold. First, the bikes are intended to be a recruiting tool. Army Guard recruiters will display them at rallies across the country to entice potential Soldiers to talk with them.

Second, the bikes can also convey important messages about safety.

Despite the television program's tough-guy image, the American Chopper stars remain extremely conscious about safety. The stars wear helmets and other protective gear religiously, a practice they hope to impress upon Soldiers.

"They're very willing to help us out in terms of safety awareness and wearing the proper gear for our Soldiers," said Nuttall. "The bike is one part of it -- the build. But the safety is really what we're trying to get after."

Before the ceremony in September, Paul Sr., joined Nuttall to record a public service announcement about motorcycle safety aimed at National Guard members.

## Documentary on Iraq War thrusts Oregon Soldiers into national spotlight

Story by Army Staff Sgt. Mary Flynn,  
National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

**ARLINGTON, Va. (November, 2007)** -- Like many Soldiers deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, the Soldiers from the Oregon National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry, brought their personal cameras along during their deployment to Iraq in 2004.

They snapped photos of each other firing weapons, shot video of explosives they detonated and logged plenty of footage of their own commentaries inter-mixed with Soldier humor.

Little did these Soldiers know that their day-to-day antics would one day represent deployed Guardmembers everywhere, preserved in a feature-length documentary film called, "This is War: Memories of Iraq."

The National Combat History Archive with Lucky Forward Films used the unscripted testimonies of nine Soldiers of

varying ranks and experiences to narrate the events. Photos and video the Soldiers shot with their own personal cameras depict their experiences.

"We wanted to make a very non-political film that took someone who's never been to Iraq ... to show what it means to go into combat," said the film's director, Gary Mortensen.

"We told it in a non-specific way so that it could represent soldiers everywhere -- we wanted to tell a tale that anyone who

through over there. They're the ones fighting the war. You might as well hear their story."

Having been present at various screenings of the film, Jacques noticed that the audience reaction was often one of awe.

"Whether they support the war or not, they come away with a whole different view of what Soldiers are doing over there," Jacques said.

National audiences are also beginning to take notice.

**Whether they support the war or not, they come away with a whole different view of what Soldiers are doing over there.**

— Sgt. 1st Class Vincent Jacques

has been over there can identify with," he added.

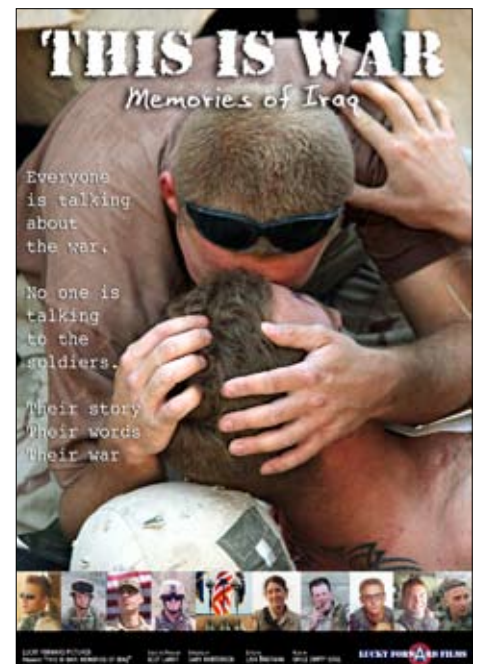
Mortensen said the unique thing about the film is that these Soldiers had their own personal recording devices on hand, giving an intimate view of what they saw on a daily basis. The Soldiers had no idea any of this would be turned into a film, so the result is a very honest and raw portrait of their experiences.

"It's very powerful," said Sgt. 1st Class Phillip "Vince" Jacques, one of the Soldiers featured in the film. "It really represents the professionalism of these guys and shows exactly what troops are going

"This is War" won the Audience Choice Award and Best Documentary at the Idaho International Film Festival, and was later awarded the Jury Award: Best Documentary at the Florida International Media Market. It also took home awards for best documentary and best director at the Sweet Onion Film Festival in Walla Walla, Wash.

Unfortunately, the film isn't available at your local video store just yet; Mortensen explained that they are working on the distribution and broadcast rights to the film.

However, those interested in purchasing



Photos courtesy of National Combat History Archive

Cover artwork from the documentary, "This is War".

the film can call 503-597-7030, or visit the National Combat History Archive's Web site at [www.luckyforwardfilms.com](http://www.luckyforwardfilms.com).

According to the site, all sales of the film help support the Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund, the National Combat History Archive, the Iraq/Afghanistan Oregon Memorial Fund and the Wounded Warriors Project, a non-profit organization that helps injured service men and women by providing programs and services to meet their unique needs.

## NEWS BRIEFS

## Army goes 'green' with new hybrid Howitzer

The Army's new hybrid electric system, which passed initial tests at a BAE Systems lab, could debut next year in a howitzer.

There are lots of eco-friendly reasons to switch to a hybrid. And then there's the Army, which has announced that its entire family of Manned Ground Vehicles (MGV) will use a new hybrid electric drivetrain, starting with the Non-Line-of-Sight Cannon, a 155mm self-propelled howitzer. Of all the potential advantages listed for the system, including better low-speed maneuverability than those with traditional drivetrains, none has to do with limiting emissions or reducing carbon footprints.

Much like the diesel/electric off-road "Aggressor" prototype announced by the Army this past May, the new hybrid howitzer bears little resemblance to a Prius. The vehicle will generate more electrical output than a commercial hybrid to provide power for sensors, on-board computers and other integrated systems. All eight MGV variants, which range from artillery pieces to recon vehicles, will double as portable generators. And while the Aggressor will potentially be able to switch to a battery-only "stealth" mode, the MGVs will simply have a lower acoustic signature. The new propulsion system passed its first complete test, conducted at a BAE Systems facility in Santa Clara, Calif., and the Non-Line-of-Sight Cannon is scheduled to enter production late next year.

## Governor's Food Drive to begin in Feb.

The state of Oregon is holding its annual Governor's Food Drive, "Take a Bite Out of Hunger", from Feb 1-29, 2008.

According to experts, every day in Oregon, thousands of the states' citizens have no idea where their next meal will come from. Contributions from the Governor's Food Drive will benefit over 600 local and regional agencies.

The Oregon National Guard will participate in the drive by accepting food and cash donations.

The Oregon Food Bank can use monetary donations to purchase bulk food items at a reduced price. Food donations should be in the form of non-perishable, undamaged items.

State employees may donate through a payroll deduction with either a one-time donation, or by contributing to activities and fundraisers through the month of February.

For more information, contact Tracy Ann Gill at 503-584-3991, or via e-mail at [tracy.a.gill@ng.army.mil](mailto:tracy.a.gill@ng.army.mil).

## VA Benefits see cost of living increase

WASHINGTON – Millions of veterans and eligible family members will see their disability compensation, pension, and survivors' benefits increased as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides an annual cost-of-living increase for key benefits.

"This increase ensures that those veterans who have earned this benefit for incurring a disability in defense of our country receive payments that keep pace with today's cost of living," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "VA is committed to the needs of our veterans and their families. We owe America's defenders no less."

A recent law signed by President Bush provides a 2.3 percent increase in disability compensation and survivors' benefits. Eligible veterans and family members will see this increase starting in their January 2008 checks.

Under the veterans' disability compensation program, tax-free payments will generally range from \$117 to \$2,527 per month depending on the degree of disability. Special payments up to \$7,232

per month apply to the most severely injured veterans.

Pension disability benefits will also be increased by the same percentage and effective on the same date. The maximum annual rate for permanently and totally disabled veterans or veterans over age 65 can range from \$11,181 to \$18,654, based on household income and whether veterans are in need of help with activities for daily living.

This increase also applies to survivors of veterans who died in service or from a service-connected disability. Dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) survivors' benefit payments can range from \$1,091 to \$2,499 per month.

## TRICARE enhances website usage with new consumer toolkit

The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program is starting off 2008 with a dynamic new enhancement to the Consumer Toolkit for enrollees.

The Toolkit, which can be found under the "Current Enrollees" section at [www.trdp.org](http://www.trdp.org), already enables TRDP enrollees to manage their program by allowing them to view their eligibility, benefits, claims and maximum information, print ID cards and claim forms and much more.

We've just added an online tutorial, which now lets members learn about the TRDP at their own pace and makes using the Consumer Toolkit a breeze.

## Pay in Vet's program ruled tax-free

WASHINGTON D.C. -- Payments provided to veterans under two specific programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) -- the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) and Incentive Therapy (IT) programs -- are no longer taxable, according to the Internal Revenue Service. Veterans who paid tax on these benefits in the past three years can claim refunds.

Recipients of CWT and IT payments no longer receive a Form 1099 (Miscellaneous Income) from VA. Veterans who paid tax on these benefits in tax years 2004, 2005 or 2006 can claim a refund by filing an amended tax return using IRS Form 1040X. Nearly 19,000 veterans received CWT benefits last year, while 8,500 received IT benefits.

The IRS agreed with a U.S. Tax Court decision earlier in 2007 that CWT payments are tax-free veterans benefits. In so doing, the agency reversed a 1965 ruling that these payments were taxable and required VA to report payments as taxable income.

The CWT and IT programs provide assistance to veterans unable to work and support themselves. Under the CWT program, VA contracts with private industry and the public sector for work by veterans, who learn new job skills, strengthen successful work habits and regain a sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

Veterans are compensated by VA for their work and, in turn, improve their economic and social well-being.

## Army changes leave policy for Soldiers

ARLINGTON, Va. -- Soldiers who combine regular or special passes with leave will now have the total block of time charged as annual leave, according to a new Army policy.

Until now, Soldiers doing a back-to-back pass/leave combination usually got charged only for the personal leave, with the pass time counting as "free" days off.

That was allowable under the Army's old leave policy, which included wording that said "both leaves" could be taken in conjunction.

But those words conflicted with another section of the policy, which told commanders they were not allowed to approve back-

to-back absences for soldiers without at least one duty day in between.

The conflicting passages were causing "major confusion, and some pretty creative interpretation," Victor Bosko, the Army's staff policy proponent for leave and passes said.

Faced with a large volume of inquiries from Soldiers and their commanders, Army officials issued a military personnel message this week to clear the matter up.

Soldiers most affected by the change will be those who plan their leave around holiday periods such as Christmas, because there are so many "free" federal and unit training days off built in, Bosko said.

Now, if those Soldiers are not physically present at their duty stations at the start and finish of the "free" days off -- the Army calls this "special pass" time -- the soldiers will forfeit them.

## BAH Rates adjusted for 2008

The new Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates for 2008 have been released. Visit <http://perdiem.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem/bah.html> to see the new rates.

To get your BAH rate, type the BASE Zip Code in the ZIP Code box and chose your pay grade from the drop-down menu. After you click the Execute button, a new window will open with the MONTHLY "With Dependents" and the "Without Dependents." To pro-rate BAH for less than 30 days of active service in a month, divide the monthly BAH rate by 30 days (regardless of the actual number of days in a month).

The CY08 Basic Allowance for Sustainance (BAS) rates have also been released. For enlisted personnel, the CY08 BAS rate is \$294.43/month (\$9.81/day), and for commissioned personnel, the rate is \$202.76/month (\$6.75/day).

## Marshall, others to be honored in Nobel Peace Project

Five-star General George Marshall, army chief of staff during World War II, and former Secretary of War Elihu Root will be among the 23 American winners of the Nobel Peace Prize to be honored by the Nobel Peace Laureate Project. Marshall and Root will have individual plaques mounted on a tall stone pillar along a tree-lined peace path monument in Eugene's Alton Baker Park.

Each plaque will feature an image of the Peace Laureate, a quote by the individual, and a short description of what he did to merit the award. Root negotiated numerous mediation treaties designed to settle international disputes and Marshall is famous for the Marshall Plan, an unselfish foreign aid program that helped rebuild Europe after World War II.

For more information about the Monument, the Nobel Peace Laureate Project's education program, and how one can help bring the Project to life, go to the Project's website at: [www.nobelpeace Laureates.org](http://www.nobelpeace Laureates.org).

## Lloyd Center to host Chronic Fatigue photo exhibit

The Faces of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), a traveling photo exhibit that is part of a national health education initiative sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the CFIDS Association of America, will open in Portland in February.

Faces will be displayed at Lloyd Center Mall in Portland, on the first level in the Nordstrom Court from February 4-11. This event is free and open to the public.

The compelling display features portraits (shot by celebrity photographer George Lange) and stories of patients, family members and health care professionals.

The CDC has announced that CFS is a real illness and a public health concern. Although more than one million Americans

suffer from CFS, less than 20 percent have been diagnosed.

CFS is characterized by at least six months of profound, incapacitating fatigue and post-exertional malaise — a worsening of symptoms following physical or mental activity. Other defining symptoms include impaired memory or concentration, sleep problems, muscle pain, joint pain, headaches, sore throat and tender lymph nodes.

The initiative is designed to educate the public and health care professionals about diagnosis and treatment of CFS. Learn more at [www.cfids.org/cfs](http://www.cfids.org/cfs) or [www.cdc.gov/cfs](http://www.cdc.gov/cfs).

## Guardman may be next Miss America

ARLINGTON, Va. (01/17/2008) - Utah Army National Guard Sgt. Jill Stevens' "personal combat zone" has shifted from Afghanistan to Nevada, from a minefield to a beauty contest and from combat boots to high heels.



The 24-year-old Stevens is also Miss Utah, and she is a contestant in the Miss America Pageant in Las Vegas. The pageant will be televised on TLC Jan. 26.

If she wins the crown, Stevens would be the first Miss America to have served in a combat zone, a pageant spokesperson said. She would become the 80th Miss America overall for the pageant which began in 1921, according to the Miss America Web site. There were eight years when a new Miss America was not named.

In her duties as Miss Utah, Stevens has traveled from Florida to California, from the destruction of Katrina in Louisiana to the streets of Washington, D.C. She has spoken to generals from 40 different countries.

Back in Utah, she talks about her military experiences with students from preschool through college, challenging them to pushup contests.

"We have our personal combat zone," Stevens tells students. "I served in one in Afghanistan. We all have them in life, whether it be with school, family, peer pressure, finding a career ... it's our own minefield and we have to learn to dodge the mines by keeping focus on the target, not doubting ourselves, and believing what our potential is and what we can do."

Like other Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen, Stevens leads a busy lifestyle in which she balances life out of uniform with life in uniform; family, school and unit; the citizen piece with the Soldier piece. She recently said she hopes the pageant audience and judges see beyond her military uniform to the full complexity of her life.

"I don't want to showcase this in a, 'Oh, look at me, I'm a Soldier, I serve my country, you should pick me' kind of way," she said. "I want them to think. I want them to look at Jill Stevens and see the whole picture of everything that I do, and being a Soldier is a huge part of that, but there's a lot more."

As she goes into the competition, Stevens said "My target is Miss America. The military has taught me if you practice, work hard at it and keep focus on the target, I'll be ready."

### Retiree Service Office

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## Dean leaves Oregon for D.C. post



Brig. Gen. Garry Dean (right), salutes Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, the Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard at a farewell ceremony for Dean.

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

The Oregon National Guard bid farewell to Brig. Gen. Garry Dean, during a formal ceremony held in Salem, Ore., Jan. 6, 2008.

Dean will assume the position of Deputy Inspector General for the Department of the Air Force in Washington, D.C.

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, the Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard said the new position will help Dean understand the National Guard's relationship to its active duty counterparts, but if he chooses to return to Oregon, he will bring back a new level of expertise.

"I think it (also) informs others around the country about the high degree of professionalism and the great people we have in the Oregon Guard," Rees said.

Dean said he looks forward to the new opportunity, which will place him at the "tip of the spear."

"My bread and butter has been defending our nation," Dean said. "Now I'm moving into an area where I am defending standards of our nation, defending the efficiency of our Air Force, (and) working with the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff. It's an honor to be selected for this (position)."

Dean joined the Oregon Air Guard in 1990 after serving in several leadership positions in other Air Guard units and the active duty Air Force. He served as the State Director of Operations, and the Assistant Adjutant General for the Oregon Air Guard prior to his appointment in Washington, D.C.

About 150 people were in attendance for the afternoon event. Dean's family and close friends, including many retired leaders of the Oregon Air Guard were also present.



Dean admires a custom lithograph painted for him by local artist, Geri Ghiglieri.

## Feds pass tax-cut laws benefitting Guardsmen

Story by Kimberly L. Lippert,  
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

One in three guardsmen take a pay cut to serve on the battlefield. While some employers voluntarily pay the difference in salary, many do not. The U.S. Senate recently signed some legislation that may help alleviate the burden. The Defenders of Freedom Tax Relief Act is aimed at helping military families keep more money in their pocket.

The legislation will offer guardsmen several tax breaks including a refundable federal income tax credit which allows soldiers to count their non-taxable combat pay towards the earned income tax credit. Guardsmen and reservists will also be able to take advantage of a tax credit for small businesses.

Survivors who lost their military spouse will be allowed to invest their \$100,000 death gratuity payment in tax favored savings accounts, such as Roth IRA's or Coverdell Education Savings Accounts.

"The holidays are a tough time to be separated from a loved one," U.S. Senator Gordon Smith said. "Our troops lay their lives on the line to protect our freedom. Their service should not bring financial hardship. These tax cuts will help ease burdens and pay bills."

Some of the other benefits of the Defenders of Freedom Tax Relief Act include issuing qualified mortgage bonds to finance mortgages for veterans who served in active military without regard to the first-time homebuyer requirement. This exception expired on December 31, 2007. The proposal would make the provision permanent.

Another piece of the legislation benefits disabled military retirees, whose claims can be delayed for years. The VA disability award is retroactive to the date of the application and makes a portion of past military retired pay tax free.

But to claim a tax refund, the statute of limitations expires after three years and disabled veterans are barred from receiving tax refunds. The proposal extends the statute

of limitations until the end of the one-year period beginning on the date of the VA disability determination.

Many employers voluntarily eliminate any pay gap between the Reservists' civilian pay and military pay by paying the difference. The proposed legislation would treat the pay gap as wages requiring the information reporting and subject the differential pay amounts to withholding. The proposal would also make it easier for employers to contribute to their activated employee's retirement plans.

The Defenders of Freedom Tax Relief Act must be approved by the U.S. House before becoming law.



Sen. Gordon Smith, (R-OR).

## Guard leaders explore future training, collaboration with Israel

Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill,  
National Guard Bureau  
Public Affairs

**BALADIA CITY, Israel** – National Guard Soldiers and Airmen could one day exercise at a state-of-the-art urban warfare training center here.

From a distance, the National Urban Training Center (NUTC) looks like a bustling desert town. But it's a purpose-built mock-up on a real-life scale designed as a training ground for military operations on urban terrain (MOUT).

"This is a world-class site that the Israelis have built," LTG H Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, said during a December visit. "We probably should have a facility like that of our own; in the interim, we should explore the opportunities to train here."

Blum and other National Guard leaders toured the NUTC with Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) officers during a four-day visit to Israel to bolster the Bureau's relationship with the IDF Home Front Command and discuss joint exercises and other possible exchanges under the aegis of the U.S. European

Command.

The 7.4-square-mile NUTC is at the IDF's National Center for Ground Force Training in the Negev Desert, west of the Gaza Strip and north of Egypt. The 4,700-square-mile Negev covers more than half of Israel and includes thousands of miles of open space ideal for the country's premier military training facility.

Some 472 structures line four miles of roads in this concrete town dubbed Baladia City.

"It is the most realistic, extensive replication of the sort of urban area typical of this region of the world that I've ever seen," Blum said.

The NUTC includes high-rise buildings typical of business or high-density residential districts, streets lined with single-story buildings, a complex tunnel system and labyrinthine areas typical of some older Middle Eastern city centers. A stripped vehicle blocking a road adds to the realism.

"It is just such a superb training facility for all the nuances and the situational awareness and the battlefield conditions that Soldiers face in this part of the world," Blum said.

Soldiers have lost their way



Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau (center foreground), and other National Guard leaders and members of the Israeli Defense Forces pause during a Dec. 3, 2007 visit to an Israeli MOUT facility in the Negev Desert, Israel.

training here. They are found thanks to force-identification and location systems built in to the training area.

Every movement is recorded, every building bristles with sensors and every troop is wired for after-action review.

"I'd like to see Soldiers go through a facility like this somewhere before they deploy to counterinsurgency missions abroad," Blum said. "You get the advantage of the identical climate, the same geography, topography. You have the benefit

of being in the environment, yet you're totally secure and you're able to train."

When the topography doesn't exactly match training requirements, the Israelis bring in bulldozers that move the desert sand until it more closely resembles what trainers need.

"It's a first-rate place," Blum said. "It couldn't be more realistic unless you let people actually live there."

Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, and other sources contributed to this report.



Photo by Capt. Dawn DeLand, State MEO Office

### WELCOME HOME!

Staff Sgt. Samuel "Sam" Hill, is welcomed home by his wife, Amanda, and son, Cayden, at the Portland International Airport, Jan. 6. Hill and 37 Airmen from the Oregon Air National Guard's 142nd Civil Engineering Squadron deployed to Kuwait for four months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

## ORNG to receive TAG's environmental policy

The Oregon Army National Guard's Environmental Management System, or eMS, ensures planning and reporting processes are compatible not only with the Oregon Guard's sustainability mission, but also with the Adjutant General's environmental policy statement.

The statement reads: "A strong professional force that employs sustainable practices to meet current and future challenges while safeguarding the natural resources essential to military operations."

Robin Howard, eMS Manager, said the Oregon National Guard's recent environmental award highlights not just the programs themselves, but individuals whose efforts help Soldiers train without interruption, or limit the impact of their training on the environment.

Posters which highlight the Adjutant General's environmental policy will soon be posted at all of Oregon's military installations. Further discussions about the eMS policy will follow through each of the units' command structure.