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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

“WELCOME HOME!”



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

Governor Kulongoski greets the returning Soldiers of 234 EN CO

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

WARRENTON, Ore.— The City of Warrenton, Ore. honored Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers from the 234 Engineer Company during a ceremony at the Warrenton High School Gymnasium, May 2, 2008.

About 250 family, friends and visiting dignitaries attended the morning event.

The 234 Engineering Company, based at Camp Rilea, Ore., returned in April from their first deployment since reorganizing from Charlie Company, 1249 Engineers.

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski was on hand to greet the returning Soldiers saying, “I have one piece of formal

business to take care of first—welcome home!”

“On behalf of the people of Oregon, it’s good to have you back!” said Kulongoski.

The 144 engineers; 131 men and 13 women returned after a two-month mobilization at Camp Shelby, Miss., and an eight-month deployment to Balad, Iraq.

Their primary mission was to conduct security escort missions along supply routes throughout the country of Iraq.

The 234 Engineer Company provides crucial vertical construction assets to the Oregon Army National Guard and the State of Oregon.

Perhaps the most notable piece of the ceremony was the Governor’s summation of what the Soldiers of the unit

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski greets each Soldier following a demobilization ceremony held May 2, 2008 at the Warrenton High School gymnasium in Warrenton, Ore. The Soldiers are part of the 234 Engineer Company, which provided convoy security during their deployment in and around Balad, Iraq.

See 234 on PAGE 5

U.S. Forest Service partners with Oregon Guard

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

It seems the Oregon National Guard has a few skills worth sharing.

And according to the National Director of the U.S. Forest Service, Law Enforcement Division, the knowledge Guard Soldiers employ on the battlefield in the Global War on Terror, will also help with the war on drugs.

Soldiers from the Oregon Army National Guard trained officers from the U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement division in Hood River, Ore.

The training is an effort to step up drug enforcement on public lands by teaching Forest Service officers valuable military skills, such as land navigation, hand signals, troop movement, and spotting and tracking, said Forest Service officials.

According to John Twiss, National Director for the U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement Division in Washington D.C., the training helps Forest Service officers acquire valuable Soldiering skills to deal with an increasing threat coming from drug cartels.

“The National Guard is an excellent partner,” Twiss said. “They’re

highly skilled, be it in ground or air operations, or providing air assets and equipment that we badly need. We couldn’t be more thrilled to have a better partner.”

On a cold, rainy day, deep in a forest just north of the town of Hood River, about 75 Forest Service law enforcement officers broke into nine-man teams following a morning briefing by Oregon Army National Guard Capt. John Caughran.

A member of the Guard’s Counter-Drug Division, Caughran helped organize the training, which began in 2005 with a training exercise with the DEA and U.S. Forest Service.

“Since then, we have been the primary mode of training for the Forest Service,” Caughran said.

“This is their version of annual training,” he added.

Larry Ried, Reserve Law Enforcement Officer for the U.S. Forest Service, said the training is particularly valuable coming from Soldiers who do the work every day.

“We do this seasonally,” he said. “So to work with people who do this all the time not only gives us new skills, but helps us feel more confident in what we’re doing.”

The groups headed into the forest, working their way through the dark canopy, quietly picking their way through the thick underbrush. Every man on the team wore camouflage,



U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency employee, and Oregon Air National Guardsman, Chris Sewell, role playing as a marijuana grower, stands near a “fake” marijuana plant, as he waits for U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers during training with Oregon Army National Guardsmen during an inter-agency exercise.

See Oregon Guard on PAGE 5

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COMMENTARY

Fundamentals the key to successful deployments



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

We are blessed with the safe return of our friends and fellow citizen-soldiers from the 234th Engineer Company from Camp Rilea; A Company, 2nd Battalion, 641st Aviation from Portland; and the 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment from Salem. In a few short days we'll also welcome home the 224th Engineer Company of Albany.

Each of these units served in Iraq with distinction, and we are rightfully proud of their accomplishments. Whether providing security, transporting troops and materiel, telling the soldiers' stories, or helping build

Iraq's infrastructure these troops shined in the course of their duties.

Just as Army MTO&E units have deployed and redeployed, we see Air Force UTCs and individuals deploy and return from supporting Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. We also have an embedded training team from the Oregon Army National Guard in Afghanistan now.

Our cycle of deployments will continue for the foreseeable future as we prepare to deploy the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 641st Aviation in August and C Company, 7th General Support Aviation Battalion, 158th Aviation in January, and the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team in the summer of 2009.

All our personnel perform their duties with vigor and dedication, and I'm proud of everything the Oregon National Guard has accomplished at home and overseas in recent years, yet the challenges of the Global War on Terror remain for us to conquer.

At the core of our success and our ability to accomplish the mission lies our adherence to high standards and mastery of the fundamental skills that make us the most respect-

ed, admired, and when appropriate the most feared military organization in the world.

As we prepare for the bulk of our Annual Training events this summer, I challenge you to commit yourselves to mastery of the core tasks that make us the professional corps of officers and enlisted troops our nation has come to rely upon.

The Soldiers Manual of Common Tasks (STP 21-1-SMCT) and the Airman's Manual (AFMAN 10-100) outline those fundamental skills that every Soldier and Airman must know. These skills are necessary to each of us; they are foundational.

In the Global War on Terror, we won't necessarily be called upon by Military Occupational Specialty or Air Force Specialty Code. We will be called upon as Soldiers and Airmen. Mastering the core skills ensures that no matter what situation we face or what environment we're thrust into we will be able to function and succeed.

At annual training and at every drill period, commit to mastering the fundamentals; sharpen those skills and hone them. They are the foundation of our ability to accomplish the mission.

The importance of the NCO education system

Why is Noncommissioned Officers Education System (NCOES) important?

To quote Sgt. Maj. of the Army Glen E. Morrell, the 7th Sgt. Maj. of the Army, "NCOES does not produce noncommissioned officers, it will not, nor was it ever intended to do so," said Morrell.

"The NCOES builds upon the training conducted by the unit to further the development of that noncommissioned officer. NCOES teaches NCOs how to be better NCOs. It teaches them things that can't be taught in a unit. The curriculum and association with fellow NCOs prepares a young sergeant for leadership. Any time we give NCOs more knowledge, we make them, their unit, and the Army better. Leaders are made, not born," he adds.

To me it is important for all the reasons Sgt. Maj. of the Army Morrell stated. We have many great NCOs who have learned the lessons of the field and combat; they have led and are capable of leading Soldiers in the field, but this does not necessarily mean they know how to make the Army operate. Do they know how to overcome the challenge of counseling Soldiers for promotion and doing evaluations and Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Reports (NCOER)? Can they Plan, recommend and execute training in formats the Army recognizes? Can they learn the skill sets of the next higher grade, where they are often expected to operate? These are

just few of the things NCOs are expected to do, but these skills are not taught in the units. Not a fault of the unit or the NCO, it is not the mission focus of a unit.

A valid question that Soldiers ask, often not out loud, is "what's in it for me?"

The Army personnel structure is built on the idea that new Soldiers will join the force and older Soldiers will gain rank and take charge of the younger Soldiers. The force is not designed to be static. Because we are at war the Army chose to speed up the promotion of NCOs, allowing specialists to be promoted to sergeant before completion of the Warrior Leadership Course (WLC). Sergeants are allowed to be promoted to staff sergeant after completing WLC but before completing Basic Non-Commissioned Officers Course (BNCOC). Staff sergeants can be promoted to sergeants first class after completing BNCOC but before completing Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers Course (ANCO). What the rules also say is that until the Soldier, sergeant through sergeant first class, completes the NCOES for their current rank they will never be considered for promotion again. While there are some exceptions to these rules, they are very limited and require unusual situations.

This promotion year Oregon had 1200 plus Soldiers who were otherwise qualified for promotion who were not even considered because they had not completed the NCOES



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

for their current rank.

Completing NCOES has some other benefits. Completion of WLC merits 16 promotion points; completion of BNCOC merits 40 promotion points plus 4 points a week for any additional BNCOCs completed.

If you are a leader who is up to speed on your NCOES you need to counsel and direct those Soldiers who you are responsible for to complete their NCOES.

If you are an NCO who is not up to speed you need to complete your NCOES for your current grade and if possible for the next grade. I quote another Sgt. Maj. of the Army, Richard A. Kidd.

"NCOES provided the foundation for building an Army that is second to none and a quality NCO Corps that is admired and respected by countries throughout the world."

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

A Co., 641 Commander reflects on a successful mission

During the deployment of the A Co. 641st Aviation Regiment to Iraq we have published a series of letters from Maj. David Doran.

We publish this letter in order to wrap up the series, while recognizing that A Co. 641st Aviation has returned prior to the publication of this issue of the Oregon Sentinel. ~Ed.

All,

Today, we hand over the mission to our successors, TAC 6. It is bittersweet.

It has been a tour of which we are all enormously proud. We have courageously done our job and are now ready to return to our family and friends. As the last Alpha Company plane rolled in, I breathed a long awaited sigh

of relief. It is a good feeling to have successfully flown over the skies of Iraq for six months and an even better feeling now that all my aircrews are safely back. Now, we look forward to the long journey home to our respective states.

You have reason to be enormously proud of this company. In the six months and five days that this company has run the mission, our aircrews have flown 4,045 flight hours, and transported 21,047 passengers and 9,140,165 pounds of cargo.

These numbers have never been achieved in this timeframe by any unit that has come before Alpha Company.

In short, the Soldiers in this company gave their very best effort, day in and day out. They held nothing back; they left it all

out on the field.

Today, Alpha Company's mission in Iraq comes to an end, but for our comrades in arms, the mission continues. I wish them all the greatest success in this noble endeavor, and won't be truly at peace until they are all home safely.

I have enjoyed bringing you these "commo checks," as much as I hope you have enjoyed receiving them. Thanks you for your support. Thank you for supporting your Soldiers. We will be home soon.

I'll be signing off now. It has been a great honor to lead this company in combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. It will be a great honor to return them all to their families and friends.



Very Respectfully,

MAJ David R. Doran
Commander, A Co, 641 Aviation
Regt. (CELTS)
Oregon Army National Guard
LSA Anaconda, Balad, Iraq

FEATURES

Oregon celebrates Armed Forces Day

Story by Kim Lippert,
Oregon Military Department,
Public Affairs

SALEM, Ore.- Under sunny skies four F-15s from Kingsley Field, in Klamath Falls and Portland Air National Guard Base flew in formation over the Oregon State Capitol in honor of Armed Forces Day. All past and present members of the military were honored during the ceremony Thursday, May 15, 2008.

"All have paid a price," said Oregon State Senate President Peter Courtney. "Some with their blood, some with their mind and some with their lives," he added.

With a toddler in her stroller and her three older kids looking on, Ruth Carter and hundreds of others listened intently as speakers explained the importance of recognizing our nation's veterans.

"I teach my kids how our country fights for freedom and if it wasn't for our country who knows what our world would be like," asked Carter.

For Carter's 10-year-old twin girls the best part of the ceremony was clearly the loudest, "When the jets flew over!" said Michaela Carter.

"It was cool," added Katrina Carter.

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon, recognized Thomas P. Moyer, Sr. as an honorary member of the 186th Infantry Regiment. Moyer, a World War II veteran served in the Pacific Theater with the 41st Infantry Division, the first National Guard unit to deploy after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Two other Oregon residents, also former members of the 41st Division, attended the event.

"When we went by the band it was very hard to stand still," said 87-year-old Bud Lewis, a WWII veteran who served with the 41st Infantry Division.

"You want to march, even though I don't



march as fast as I once did I still want to march," added Lewis.

"We all appreciate being appreciated," said Bud Jensen, another WWII veteran who served with the 41st Infantry Division.

The Oregon National Guard's 234th Army Band played music, while residents viewed a static display of special equipment including a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, 105mm Howitzer cannons, a light armored vehicle, military fire-fighting equipment, a HEMTT, and a Humvee. In addition, there were displays of special communications equipment, as well as equipment used by the 125th Special Tactics Squadron – one of only two special operations units in the National Guard.

The ceremony ended with a cannon salute.

For the Carter's the day proved to be an educational one, marked with gratitude for the Armed Forces.

"Thanks to the troops – we love them," said Carter.

President Harry S. Truman led the effort to establish a single holiday for citizens to come together and thank our military members for their patriotic service in support of our country.

On August 31, 1949, then Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson announced the creation of an Armed

Forces Day to replace separate Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force Days.

The single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the Armed Forces under one department -- the Department of Defense.

May is National Military Awareness month.



Maj. Gen. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon, recognizes Mr. Thomas P. Moyer as an honorary member of the 186th Infantry Regiment during a formal ceremony designed to highlight the importance of the armed services.



Above: The ceremony featured a 21-gun salute by three 105mm Howitzer cannons which were located at the north end of the Oregon State Capitol Mall grounds for the celebration.

Left: Salem-area youth Logan Davis is dwarfed by a 125th Special Tactics Squadron all-terrain vehicle after he climbed aboard during Armed Forces Day, May 15, 2008.

Photos by Spc. Josh Hudson, 115 Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, and Staff Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Oregon Guard marathon team: "sitting at the top"

Story by Maj. Kevin Hynes,
Nebraska National Guard,
Public Affairs Officer

LINCOLN, Neb. -- After a three-year hiatus, the Oregon National Guard is once again sitting at the top of the National Guard running world.

Competing in the annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon held May 4 in Lincoln, Neb., the Oregonians cruised through the 26.2 mile course under picture-perfect clear skies to win this year's team chase over the Utah National Guard Marathon Team by a slim seven-minute and 11-second margin.

According to Oregon team captain, Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Vandervlugt, it feels good to win the team title after finishing second in 2006 and fifth last year.

"We're happy because it's a big deal for us to win," said Vandervlugt, who also won the Guard's Master's title with a time of 2:50.06. "It's something that I can take back to my state and say, 'Hey sir, look at what we did. We got you another trophy.'"

"We couldn't do this without the support of our commands in Oregon," he added. "They're the greatest."

This year's National Guard Marathon team competition attracted 18 team entries from across the United States. The team match results are determined by combining the overall running times of the top

"We're happy ... it's a big deal for us to win!"

— Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Vandervlugt,
Team Captain

three declared members of the team.

The Oregonian team – which consisted of Vandervlugt, Edward King (2:52.06) and Sean Nixon (2:58.09), defeated the Utah National Guard Marathon Team – made up by Eric Peterson (2:59.46), Glen Tucker (2:47.08) and Raymond Workman (3:00.16) – by the score of 8:40.21 to 8:47.32.

The Wisconsin National Guard finished third with an overall time of 8:50.13. The Wisconsin team consisted of Jason Kirch (3:02.53), Michael Western (2:47.04) and Mike Zeigle (3:00.16).

The Oregon National Guard team also



Photo by Master Sgt. Alan Brown, Nebraska National Guard Public Affairs

Sergeant 1st Class Timothy Vandervlugt passes mile 14 on his way to the best time for the Oregon Guard Team. His average pace during the race was 6:30 per mile, for 26.2 miles.

won the Military Team Division title at the Lincoln National Guard Marathon.

Vandervlugt, who has been part of several Oregon National Guard national championships over the years, said it's always been difficult to maintain the level

of talent and consistency needed to maintain a championship-caliber team. That's even more the case now, especially considering the nature of overseas conflict the National Guard is currently engaged in.

"Two of the guys who were on the team this year were deployed last year... and one of the guys who was on the team last year is deployed now. Two of the guys who are here now, they're going to be deployed next year. And I'm going to be deployed the following year," said Vandervlugt, adding that the runners know where their priorities have to lie. "It's part of our job. We're Soldiers first, runners second. That's always a given."

The key, said Vandervlugt, is planning for those deployments and developing a group of runners to fill in when vacancies occur.

"I've got a good pool," he said. "Next year is going to be even harder... there might be three of us who are solid runners here next year, but with the deployments, you really just don't know. If I get my unit alert notice before, you don't know... I might not be here."

That's why the Oregonians have developed a motto that they take with them to each race they compete in.

"Run each race like it's your last until deployment," he said. "And then come back and try again," he concluded.

FEATURES

Oregon Guard officer's idea to 'repay' Iraqi interpreters leads to innovative training for his Soldiers

Through The Assassin's Gate

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

The names of several sources in this article were changed or abbreviated to protect the individuals' identity. For any of the Iraqi interpreters to reveal their true identity means certain persecution or even death for family and friends who remain in Iraq.



Left: Soldiers from the 41st Brigade Combat Team debrief with Iraqi interpreters following a training scenario in Tualatin, Ore. Right: Jason Faler, cofounder and executive director of Checkpoint One Foundation in front of the Oregon Military Department in Salem.



This is part-two of a two-part series on the Oregon National Guard's 41st Brigade Soldiers training with Iraqi interpreters and the plight faced by Iraqi expatriates who have relocated to the United States. Part-one appeared in the April 2008 issue of the Oregon Sentinel.

The Iraqi shop-keeper kept a suspicious eye on the uniformed Soldiers standing guard in front of his store.

Two Soldiers, speaking through an Iraqi translator, asked questions about stolen computer equipment. After a flurry of gestures and Arabic words, the translator turned to the Soldiers with disappointing news.

"No, he doesn't know about any stolen goods," he said.

Then the interpreter leaned in closer and lowered his voice. "But he said his neighbor is involved in illegal dealings with the insurgents."

While this interaction could have happened anywhere in Baghdad, it was part of a training scenario which took place right here in Oregon. The event was organized by the Oregon Army National Guard's 41st Brigade Combat Team to help prepare its Soldiers for the unit's upcoming deployment to Iraq.

Capt. Jason Faler, one of the chief organizers of the event, said this particular training cycle was one of the most ambitious his unit had undertaken. Moreover, he said the cultural awareness and sensitivities afforded by the Iraqis provides valuable intelligence and insight play actors cannot.

Faler, who is the Commander of the 41st Brigade Combat

Team's Bravo Company 41 STB, envisioned placing actual Iraqi interpreters—many of whom have years of experience working as interpreters with coalition forces inside Iraq—alongside Oregon Soldiers.

His vision became a reality when Soldiers from his unit trained with Iraqi translators during the April drill weekend at the Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue facility near Sherwood, Ore. Participants said the experience was not only unique and groundbreaking, but very rewarding.

But the training—and indeed the Iraqis' asylum in the United States—was only possible because of the realization of Faler's idea to 'help a few Iraqi friends'.

The non-profit group, Checkpoint One, was created by Faler in Aug. 2007, out of a need to "repay" the Iraqi interpreters who "gave so much" during his time in Iraq. Faler worked as a liaison to the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, during a year-long deployment in 2005, during which he worked closely with several Iraqi interpreters.

"There's a brotherhood that develops in the combat zone between Soldiers, and it's not a whole lot different between Soldiers and interpreters," Faler said.

According to Faler, because of their involvement with U.S. troops, many Iraqi interpreters faced persecution, and even death by insurgents, who deemed them 'traitors' to Iraq. Many of the interpreters come back to work day after day despite threats to their lives. They continue to work out of a sense of loyalty and commitment to rebuilding Iraq, Faler said.

"They stand shoulder to shoulder with us every day, except they're not armed," he said.

As a result, Faler became very close to three Iraqi interpreters, who he ultimately helped gain U.S. citizenship—the same three who now help his Soldiers learn the nuances of Iraqi culture and language—Motassem, Ahmed and Waleed.

Checkpoint One, he said, was a way to rescue his three friends.

"It's what I'd do for my own blood brother," Faler said. "Creating the foundation was a means to that end."

Faler, who works full-time at Providence Health System, roughly figured it would cost about \$20,000 to bring an Iraqi citizen and his immediate family into the U.S. The cost included paperwork, airfare, temporary

lodging, visas, and various expenses.

He quickly realized there was no way he could personally afford to foot the bill for one, let alone three of his Iraqi friends and their family members.

"I knew I would need to acquire donations, so we created the foundation," Faler said.

The 'we' includes Salem attorney, Scott McGraw, who was

For someone who has worked with westerners for several years, Ahmed still found the transition to the United States a challenge.

"I have an idea about the American personality and culture, so it wasn't that difficult for me," he said. "But for my wife and two kids it was very new. At first I thought I would be the one encouraging my wife, but I

foundations like Faler's.

"In a perfect world, the U.S. government would put me out of business, and take on the task we're doing right now," Faler said. "We've made some progress I didn't think was possible, but it's probably not enough."

While Ahmed and Waleed had a relatively easy time making their way to the United States, Motassem was held up

Understanding culture is extremely important for these Soldiers.

— Sgt. 1st Class P, Bravo Co., 41st Special Troops Battalion

approached by Faler in mid-2007.

"I was thrilled and honored," McGraw said.

McGraw got involved in Checkpoint One because of the work he does with non-profit organizations, and his business background. He met Faler through a Salem rotary club of which both men are members.

McGraw said his personal involvement in the organization comes from a need to make a difference in the lives of Iraqi citizens oppressed by what he terms "a fascist regime" in Iraq.

"A great deal of thought and effort went into the foundation," he said. "I think Jason (Faler) is very pleased with how things have turned out."

The name of the foundation takes its name from one of the primary entry points to the Green Zone in Baghdad, Iraq. According to local tradition, the sandstone arch is a scaled-down replica of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, built during the rule of Saddam Hussein, after his effort to relocate the original Qubbat AsSakhrah was rejected by Israel.

In more recent times, the gate acquired the more sinister moniker of "Assassin's Gate" after insurgents left the bodies of a number of executed Iraqis who they deemed loyal to the U.S. and coalition forces' goals of rebuilding a democratic Iraq—many of whom were Iraqi interpreters.

For one Iraqi expatriate, the traffic jams in Tigard, Ore., are a far cry from the specter of gun-toting insurgents in his home country.

"I feel absolutely safe here with my wife and two kids," said Ahmed, an Iraqi interpreter helped by the Checkpoint One foundation.

find myself getting disappointed from time to time, and my wife has been the strong one."

Ahmed and his family also found very strong support in the local community, due in large part to the number of Iraqi nationals who live in the Portland-Metro area.

But according to Faler, support went beyond the local community. He said the initiative to help provide sanctuary for persecuted Iraqis and their families has found support from Salem, Ore., all the way to Capitol Hill.

"We have had bipartisan support from both U.S. Congressman Earl Blumenauer and U.S. Senator Gordon Smith," Faler said. "And I think that speaks to how fortunate we are here in Oregon, and how non-controversial this cause really is."

Faler said he never thought the foundation would receive this much attention. In late 2007, the New York Times wrote an editorial about Checkpoint One.

"I never envisioned this," he said. "While the media coverage has kept this issue at the forefront of the American consciousness, there has not been parity between the donations and the attention we've received."

Ideally, Faler would like the U.S. government to take a more active role in helping displaced and persecuted Iraqi citizens and their families.

While the Feds allowed for emigration of certain Iraqi citizens to enter the United States under section 1059 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-163), and subsequently increased the number of Iraqis who can enter the country under SEC. 1244, "Special Immigrant Status for Certain Iraqis", funding has been left up to private citizens and

in Jordan for five months due to a paperwork glitch by the State Department. During this time, both Jordan and Syria permanently closed their borders to Iraqi refugees. This news, along with Motassem's delay crushed everyone involved.

"I took on his despair," Faler said.

Motassem said the delay was incredibly depressing.

"I had used up all my savings," he said. "I thought I would have to go back to Iraq. Surely I would be killed," he added.

Finally, in October 2007, Motassem received an e-mail from the State Department notifying him to go get his approved visa and immigration paperwork from the U.S. Embassy in Jordan.

"I read the e-mail ten times," Motassem said. "I could not believe my eyes."

To Faler, the news was overwhelming.

"The wave of relief was indescribable," he said. "It was very emotional."

For Faler and the Checkpoint One Foundation, the effort has gone beyond saving his three friends.

"I'm repaying a debt," he said. "These interpreters risk everything for us. I'll do anything to help them."

For Iraqis like Ahmed and Motassem, while the relocation to the United States might be bitter-sweet, many harbor a longing to someday return to their native land.

"I left behind my parents, my siblings, my friends, my belongings, my memories and my history," said Ahmed. "I cannot go back there now because it will be a death sentence. But I have hope that one day I'll be able to go back without any concerns. Iraq is still a part of me."

Checkpoint One

The Checkpoint One Foundation is chartered with bringing Iraqi and Afghan interpreters who have served with U.S. Armed Forces to safety in the United States.

The Checkpoint One Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit group, and all contributions are tax-deductible.

Many Iraqi and Afghan interpreters and their families have been killed or exiled due to their work with Coalition Forces.

The foundation accepts electronic funds, cash, or personal checks via the website.

For more information on Checkpoint One, or to become involved in helping Iraqi or Afghan citizens, please visit www.cponefoundation.org, or contact the foundation at 503-871-3238.

NEWS

234 EN CO Soldiers demobilize

Continued from FRONT PAGE

accomplished while deployed, when he said, "Your efforts have saved lives and your contributions made a profound difference in the future of the new Iraq . . . you have proven you are the best this state has to offer," Kulongoski said.

Success for Company Commander, Maj. Jeffrey S. Brown of Keizer, Ore., meant being "the best security company that the 234 Engineers could be."

By the end of their mission, the 234 Engineer Company had escorted nearly 6,000 vehicles for 44,000 miles across Iraq; conducted 260 convoys; and maintained the fleet of vehicles.

"I want to thank you for your service, because what I saw over there personally was a lot of pride, professionalism and expertise," said Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon, in reference to a trip he took to Iraq to see first-hand the situation on the ground for Soldiers of the 234 EN CO and others.

"I appreciate your being great ambassadors for the State of Oregon and the Oregon National Guard," he said to the 144 Soldiers standing in formation.

The unit's deployment came just before an even larger deployment warning order was issued for Oregon's 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

For now these Soldiers don't need to look that far down the road, they can relax and enjoy being reunited with family and loved ones.

"The best part is the kisses, you know



Photo by Spc. Josh Hudson, 115 Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Spc. Holden Isaac is reunited with his wife Kristi Isaac, and their son just in time for his first birthday following a demobilization ceremony held May 2, 2008 at the Warrenton High School gymnasium in Warrenton, Ore.

they miss you because they hold you so tight when they hug you," said Sgt. Shawntel Jackson, while holding her young daughter for the first time in 10 months—both of them with broad smiles on their faces.

The first thing on the agenda for the Jackson family was finding a restaurant for dinner.

"Hopefully we'll go to the Mongolian Grill," said her husband, Staff Sgt. Corey

Jackson. "It's a buffet and all I know is I'm hungry, so it has to be a buffet," he added.

The ceremony marks one of several homecoming events which took place in the month of May.

The 115 Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and A/641 Aviation Regiment both returned in May.

Both of these stories will be covered in the June issue of the Oregon Sentinel.

Afghanistan, Iraq stars authorized

The Department of Defense announced April 21, 2008 that campaign stars are authorized for wear on the Afghanistan Campaign Medal (ACM) and Iraq Campaign Medal (ICM).

The campaign stars recognize a service member's participation in DoD designated campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. Qualified service members, for the ACM or ICM, may display a bronze campaign star on their medal for each designated campaign phase in which they participated.

The three campaign phases and associated dates established for the ACM are:

- (1) Liberation of Afghanistan – Sep. 11, 2001 to Nov. 30, 2001.
- (2) Consolidation I – Dec. 1, 2001 to Sep. 30, 2006.
- (3) Consolidation II – Oct. 1, 2006 to a date to be determined.

The four campaign phases and associated dates established for the ICM are:

- (1) Liberation of Iraq – March 19, 2003 to May 1, 2003.
- (2) Transition of Iraq – May 2, 2003 to June 28, 2004.
- (3) Iraqi Governance – June 29, 2004 to Dec. 15, 2005.
- (4) National Resolution – Dec. 16, 2005 to a date to be determined.

Service members should contact their respective Military Departments for specific guidance.

Oregon Guard helps Forest Service fight 'War on Drugs' by teaching Soldiering skills

Continued from FRONT PAGE

with matching subdued colors smeared on their faces. Several wore "boonie" hats, made popular by jungle warfighters during the Vietnam conflict. The still morning air amplified every snap of a twig or rustle of leaves as the group moved carefully toward their objective—a simulated marijuana grove in a clearing about two miles into the forest.

Carefully watching their movement was Sgt. 1st Class Seven Richmond, Readiness NCO with Bravo Co., 2-162 Infantry Battalion. He said the group knew the basics, and were moving very smoothly through the exercise.

"I didn't teach them this," he said. "I taught the tactics class yesterday, but you can tell they've been rehearsing. Their land navigation is spot-on," Richmond said.

Richmond, a native Oregonian, brings a wealth of real-world experience to the training. The former Marine, who has deployed with the 41st Brigade Combat Team to both Kuwait and Iraq, said the training was not only about learning Soldiering skills.

"You're building a network with other agencies," he said. "It's really important to share information and knowledge with these guys."

Twiss echoed the importance of inter-agency relationships.

"We've gathered more partners like the Oregon National Guard," he said. "Along with our new strategy, I believe we're going to be more effective in running these people off our public lands."

According to Twiss, the problem goes

beyond groves of illegal marijuana. There have been shootings.

"They're dangerous, they carry guns, and they're willing to kill in order to protect their interests," Twiss said.

While most of the altercations occur within the various drug groups—due in part to the increasingly competitive nature of drug traffickers and the rise in drug-related arrests—Twiss said individuals involved in the production of illicit drugs are growing bolder. Recently, a California Bureau of Land Management employee was kidnapped and threatened while surveying a plot of BLM land.

"He didn't tell anyone for two years because the drug growers threatened his family," Twiss said.

Officials say the incident underscores the length to which marijuana growers are willing to go in order to protect their crops. The effort to train Forest Service law enforcement officers alongside Oregon National Guardsmen is one way to level the playing field, Twiss said.

The other way is to work smarter, he added.

"You're not going to be able to out-spend these people," Twiss said about the drug cartels. "They have billions of dollars invested in their operations. We're going to have to use the best technology available in this country, and partner with every agency we can in order to win this war."

While Caughran said the training Oregon Soldiers provide to the Forest Service agents and officers is critical to their mission, it also gives the Oregon National Guard an opportunity to demonstrate competence in Soldiering skills.

"What we teach here will determine how safe these guys are in the field, and if they can complete their mission," he said.

But Twiss adds America's approach to the war on drugs is multi-pronged.

He said support needs to come from multiple angles and various agencies. And while the effort is receiving more federal support, the key to success crosses international borders, and involves a theory coined by "Deep Throat," a char-



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

Oregon Army National Guard Capt. John Caughran briefs law enforcement officers from the U.S. Forest Service before the start of the training event held April 24 in the Mount Hood National Forest.

acter made famous during the Watergate scandal surrounding Nixon's presidency.

"You have to follow the money," Twiss said.

Officials say investigators have seen proceeds from the sale of marijuana grown throughout the western region sent back to drug cartels in Mexico.

"We're receiving some support from the Mexican government," Twiss said.

Furthermore, according to officials within the U.S. Forest Service, most Americans are unaware drug traffickers are illegally occupying public lands—something Twiss said is unacceptable—and on the rise.

With stronger enforcement of illegal immigration, drug traffickers have moved more of their growing operations into the U.S. While finding a 10,000-plant grove was common a couple of years ago, law enforcement officers typically find 50,000-plant groves hidden in forests throughout America.

In 2007, agents raided a grove in California, where 90,000 marijuana plants were sized.

"Do you want to take a hike into our national forest and have a Mexican national point a weapon at you and tell you to leave?" he asked. "It's outrageous."

"You don't have to have an interest in marijuana," Twiss continued. "But you certainly should have some interest in somebody illegally occupying federal land, and shooting at you simply because you go for a hike."

Twiss said there's little difference between the forests in Georgia, North Carolina, California, or the one on the banks of the Columbia River where the group of Oregon Soldiers and U.S. Forest Service officers were training.

"These forests are very sacred to the American public," Twiss said. "When they're threatened—be it from some weather event, a fire, or a drug operation—we need to deal with it effectively."



U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement officers trek through the woods.

NEWS

Bangladesh exercise involves Oregon Guard contingent

Citizen-Soldiers deployed to "Shanti Doot-2" in support of bilateral exercise involving 12 other nations

Story by 1st Lt. Mike Odle,
173 Fighter Wing Public Affairs Officer

DHAKA, Bangladesh – The country is plagued with regional instability, a history of territorial disputes and ethnic unrest. The United Nations issued a mandate for peace operations to commence. This is the fictional subcontinent of Pacifica,



Sgt. 1st Class Phillip "Vinni" Jacques oversees an after action review as soldiers of the Indian Gurka Regiment listen to the lead trainer during Shanti Doot-2.

the stage for Exercise Shanti Doot-2 (Ambassador of Peace), a peace support operations exercise being conducted in the capitol Dhaka, Bangladesh and at the Bangladesh Institute for Peace Support Operations (BIPSOT).

Eight members of the Oregon National Guard deployed to the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to participate in a three-week long Exercise Shanti Doot-2, which commenced April 2.

The team, comprised of both Army and Air National Guard members, joined over 600 soldiers from 12 countries.

The exercise was designed to enhance

regional capacity for peacekeeping operations, improve bilateral operations between Pacific-rim countries, promote professional relationships and good will, all while demonstrating U.S. resolve in support of the security interests of regional allies.

The Oregon Guard team provided command and control in Exercise Shanti Doot-2. The exercise involved a wide range of operational skills and tasks, including checkpoint operations, patrolling, security of distribution sites, convoy operations, cordon and search and disarmament following United Nations (UN) protocol.

"We are practicing the core competencies needed to execute UN peacekeeping operations," said Lt. Col. Edward Tanguy, Commander, 249th Regional Training Institute and field training exercise commander for Shanti Doot. "Our goal is to enhance the readiness and interoperability of the Bangladesh Armed Forces, the U.S. Army, and other multinational forces."

The National Guard is considered



Photos by Maj. Arnold Strong

Oregon Air National Guard 1st Lt. Mike Odle facilitates an interview with Al-Jazeera Television with Indonesian 1st Lt. Briand Prang during Exercise Shanti Doot-2, a peace support operations training in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

ideal for conducting UN peacekeeping training because of its dual federal and state mission and civilian professional experience.

"We bring a unique skill-set as Guardsmen," said Tanguy. "From natural disaster response to peacekeeping to combat operations on the battlefield, there is no other organization that can muster such diverse capabilities to today's military environment."

The Oregon Guard is well suited for this exercise due to prior UN training experience. In 2006, the Oregon National Guard provided command and control for

Exercise Khan Quest in Mongolia.

"Exercises and military-to-military contacts are the building blocks of partnership and friendship," said Tanguy.

From a Soldier's perspective, the exercise was also a great opportunity for members of the Oregon National Guard to acquire a global perspective, expand cultural awareness and understand the nuances of cross-cultural communications.

The countries participating in this exercise were Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Mongolia, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, USA and Tonga.

"It is my hope that when we leave here all 12 nations will be successfully trained in UN peacekeeping standards and our Oregon contingent will also return with an appreciation for cultural insight and friendship between the participating nations," Tanguy concluded.

Bangladesh is a predominately Sunni-Muslim nation located in south Asia, bordering both India and Myanmar. Despite being one of the poorest and most densely populated nations in the world, it is a significant contributor to international peace operations worldwide. Exercise Shanti Doot, which means Ambassador of Peace in Bengali, is held at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training. Additional information can be found at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training's website at www.bipsot.net/index.html.

Suicide bomber solidifies "Sons of Iraq's" resolve in Hawijah

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Margaret Nelson,
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Hawijah, Iraq – Khalaf Ibrahim Ali had just finished checking up on his fellow Sons of Iraq around the city. It was April 2.

The day was turning out to be another hot one in Hawijah, located approximately 60 miles south of Kirkuk City in the Kirkuk Province. He had just sat down to cool-off with an ice cream when a young man he did not recognize approached.

In a blink-of-an-eye, Ali would be wrestling with a suicide bomber bent on killing him.

"I heard him ask someone if I was Abuna," Ali said. Abuna (Arabic for our father), is Ali's nickname. And then Ali noticed how nervous this person appeared, sweat visible on his face and clothing, and how one half of his body did not appear normal... "much larger and bumpy," is how he described it.

"I looked into his eyes, and saw fear." Ali's gut told him to react to a threat. "I saw his arm moving by his side and his hand was squeezing something." What Ali saw was the suicide bomber's failed attempts to trigger an improvised explosive device strapped to his upper body. It malfunctioned. This opportunity allowed Ali to fire a round from his weapon into the attacker's chest.

At the conclusion of this encounter; a suicide bomber and an innocent bystander would be killed.

Ali was back to work the next day. Undaunted by this and other failed attempts on his life in recent months; these attacks and those against other Sons of Iraq in the area; seem to fuel his determination further.

"If those that try to kill me think that I am afraid, they are wrong," the father of 11 children said. He believes it is the extremists that fear the Sons of Iraq who number over 7,000 in Hawijah.

"They are trying to stop Sahwah efforts here. They will not," he said. Sahwah is what the locals refer to reconciliation efforts here, also known as Musalaha elsewhere. "When the cowards kill us, they give us more reasons to go forward."

He is confident that Sahwah will succeed and he encourages anyone who may be undecided to "give up their arms and join



Khalaf Ibrahim Ali, greets Capt. Quinn Eddy, commander, Company B, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division during a recent visit. Ali, a Sons of Iraq leader in Hawijah, Iraq, shot and killed a suicide bomber, April 2, who was attempting to assassinate him.

their brothers in their efforts to take their villages, towns, and cities back from terrorists who kill us, our wives, our children, our dreams and our future," he said.

While his men consider him a hero, Ali considers his coalition brothers the heroes, referring to Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division whose area of operation includes the city of Hawijah.

"Lt. Col. Vanek and Capt. Eddy are the heroes. Their Soldiers continue to risk their lives to help us establish peace here and are always doing good for our people and assisting in their efforts to rebuild. We owe them so much... they are the true heroes," he said.

The heroes Ali credits are; Lt. Col. Christopher Vanek commander of 1-87, and Capt. Quinn Eddy, commander, Bravo Company, 1-87.

Since Sahwah's inception in December 2007, overall violence in the Sunni-Arab dominated portion of north-eastern Iraq has dropped nearly 80 percent.

The Sons of Iraq continue to sign up throughout the Kirkuk Province, which currently numbers over 9,000, according to Maj. Sean Wilson, 1-10th Mtn. Div., Public Affairs Officer.

OREGON NATIONAL GUARD POST DEPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE (Reintegration Program)

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

Call toll-free: 1-888-688-2264, 24-hours, 7-days per week
or visit our website at: www.orn-g-vet.org

OTHER CONTACTS FOR ASSISTANCE

- Suicide prevention hotline: 1-800-560-5535
- Oregon Military Department: 1-800-452-7500 / 503-584-3980
- VA Hospital, Portland, Ore.: 1-800-949-1004
- VA Hospital, Walla Walla, WA: 1-888-687-8863
- VA Hospital, Boise, ID: 208-422-1000
- VA Hospital, Roseburg, Ore.: 541-440-1000
- Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs: 1-800-828-8801
- Veterans Administration: www.va.gov
- Military One Source: www.militaryonesource.com
or: 1-800-342-9647
- ESGR: 1-800-452-7500 / 503-584-2837
- Family Readiness Program: 1-877-881-5181 / 503-584-3543
- CTAP Employment Assistance: 1-888-688-2264
or: 503-584-2393
- TriCare (TriWest): 1-888-874-9378

NEWS BRIEFS

Environmental award winner from ORNG



Photo by Kay Fristad,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Mr. Jim Arnold, Restoration Manager for the Oregon Military Department's Environmental Branch.

Story by Kim Lippert,
Oregon Military Department,
Public Affairs

His strategy is simple – find safe, cost effective approaches to environmental projects within the Oregon National Guard. The results have thrust Jim Arnold, Restoration Manager for the Oregon National Guard, in the national spotlight after he received the Secretary of the Army Environmental Award.

"I am very honored to receive this award," said Arnold. "This is the highest level of recognition given in environmental science, and I think it gives validation to the approaches we use in the Oregon National Guard," he added.

As we reported in the Jan. 2008 issue of the Oregon Sentinel, Arnold was selected as the first place recipient at the National Environmental Security Awards competition. That award automatically entered him in the contest for the Secretary of Army Environmental Award, which is the next level of recognition.

The awards highlight Arnold's commitment to environmental stewardship and restoration.

WWII vintage aircraft to visit Salem in June

A flying tribute to the air and ground crews of vintage World War II-era bombers will arrive in Salem June 11, 2008 as the Wings of Freedom Tour touches down at McNary Airport.

The aircraft display will be parked near the airport's Flight Deck Restaurant located off of 25th Avenue S.E., at 2680 Aerial Way S.E.

Visitors may explore the aircraft, both inside and out, for a \$10 donation for adults or \$5 for children under age 12.

The planes are available to tour on June 11 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., June 12, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and June 13, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Visitors also may take a 30-minute flight in any of the aircraft. The cost is a tax-deductible donation of \$425 per person to fly in the B-17 or B-24. Flights in the B-25 are \$400 for the nose and \$325 for a ride in the fuselage.

The flights are scheduled before or after the ground tour times.

The Collings Foundation sponsors the tour of these rare B-17, B-24, and B-25 bombers. Currently, the tour has made more than 2,000 visits to airports across the United States, and millions of people have seen the traveling aircraft displays. For more information or to schedule a flight, call 800-568-8924, or visit their website at www.collingsfoundation.org.

Salem museum to host Guard appreciation day, Aug 2 & 3

The Antique Powerland Museum Association will be the driving force behind the Guard Appreciation Days at the 2008 Annual Great Oregon Steam-Up. On Aug. 2 and 3, the Antique Powerland Museum in Brooks, Ore. will offer free admission to all Oregon National Guard members and their dependents. The museum is located at 3995 Brook Lake Road NE. Gates open at 7 a.m. and close at 6 p.m.

Antique tractors pulling four wheel people movers serves as parking lot transportation on the 62-acre museum, and Willow Creek Railroad a 1-1/2 scale railroad is available to ride for children and adults. The trolley car line circles the park and offers displays at their indoor trolley car museum. Other activities include different antique engine, tractor, car and motorcycle museums traditional tractor pulling; flea market and vendor sales; food concessions; live musical entertainment and more.

Antique Powerland's roots began in the 1950s when farmers would showcase "heritage apparatuses" and test the power of their tractors. Eventually, these events generated enough popularity, which eventually gave way to the 62-acre plot of land acquired by Western Antique Powerland Inc. known today as the Antique Powerland Museum.

On display will be antique tractors, large trucks, vintage automobiles and motorcycles. Vintage military vehicles will also be on display. Also on site is a steam-powered sawmill that cuts logs into dimensional lumber that is used to build some of the buildings at the museum. The museum also has several stores, swap meets and craft shops. Great place to bring the entire family at no cost to enjoy the day.

New Education benefit passed by OR legislature

Dependents of active-duty service members killed, or 100 percent service-connected disabled after September 11, 2001 may have their undergraduate tuition waived due to a bill passed by the Oregon Legislature during its February supplemental session.

Senate Bill 1066 (SB 1066) provides waiver of tuition and fees at Oregon state institutions of higher education, including Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU), for eligible dependents.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 1442 testified before the Legislature stating that troops who are being deployed deserve assurance that the education of their families is taken care of should they become severely injured or killed.

Despite tight deadlines, the Legislature passed the bill that directs post-secondary institutions to waive tuition for the child or spouse of a service member who dies on active duty or is certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as 100 percent disabled as a result of their military service.

The bill passed with no opposition. Senate Bill 1066 was signed by Governor Ted Kulongoski and took effect on March 11, 2008.

If you have any questions regarding this veteran benefit, please contact the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA), 503-373-2085 or toll-free at 1-800-692-966.

Freedom Alliance offers scholarships

Freedom Alliance is offering scholarships to the sons and daughters of military personnel killed or deemed 100 percent disabled (100 percent VA disability rating) during the Global War on Terror.

Students must be a high school senior

or graduate, registered as a full-time under graduate, and under the age of 26 to qualify. The application deadline for the 2008-2009 academic year is July 18, 2008.

For more information, please visit www.freedomalliance.org.

Freedom Alliance is a charitable foundation founded by retired Lt. Col. Oliver North, and the late Lt. Gen. Ed Bronars. The foundation's mission is to advance the American heritage of freedom by honoring and encouraging military service, defending the United States and promoting a strong national defense.

TSP limits change for those who deploy

If you work in a combat zone anytime during the calendar year and also contribute to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), the annual addition limit is important to understand.

Learn more about the annual addition limit of TSP at www.dfas.mil/mil-news/mar2008/annualadditionlimit.html.

DMDC website offers free service for active duty personnel

A new free service is available on a Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) Web site to obtain certificates of current active duty service needed for creditors under the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act of 2003 (SCRA).

Learn more about the DMDC at www.dfas.mil/mil-news/mar2008/freeActiveDutyServiceCertificates.html.

PAL day camps for Portland area youths

The Police Activities League of Portland is hosting several youth camps and activities this summer.

Beaverton PAL Day Camps are scheduled for June 16 through Aug. 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The activity is open to youths, 8 through 18, and is located at 12500 SW Allen Blvd. in Beaverton, Ore. Cost is \$50 per week.

The Day Camps feature large recreation rooms with pool tables, air hockey and foosball tables, a learning center sponsored by IBM, an art room, a snack bar and cafe, and the Nike Fitness & Training Gym. For more information, contact Jocelyn at 503-469-9137.

The Greater Portland PAL Youth Center is open June 30 through Aug. 20, from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. for youths 8 through 18. The center is located at 424 NE 172nd Ave. in Portland, Ore. Cost is \$50.

The Youth Center features sports activities, educational enrichment, field trips, arts & crafts, computer games, teen programs, swimming, museum visits, hiking, and more. For more information, contact Mike at 503-256-3479.

The Greater Portland PAL Sports Camp held at Marshall High School is June 23-27 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and features sports such as basketball, archery, golf, tennis, and football.

The one-week camp is coached by Portland Police Officers, law enforcement volunteers and high school coaches. Transportation and lunch are provided. The camp is open to youths 8 through 14, and the cost is \$35. For more information, contact Tracie at 503-823-0250.

AFS offers study abroad programs

A study abroad experience is a valuable addition to a college application, and so much more.

If you're in high school or about to graduate, there's still time to apply for a summer

study abroad program or 'gap year' experience. AFS has been sending high school students abroad for 60 years. Can't decide where to go? Let AFS provide advice or connect you with students who have just returned. Financial aid is still available, especially if you let AFS suggest destinations for you.

Call 1-800-AFS-INFO today or visit www.afs.org/usa to learn more.

New website works to help OR Guard

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) would like to provide the community an opportunity to assist the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. A website is being developed to catalog Oregon resources for Service Members and Military Families through Military Homefront, <http://www.military-homefront.dod.mil>.

Military OneSource Consultant Michelle Kochosky of the Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP) is seeking to enlist community help in building this Internet resource online at <http://www.mystate.mhf.dod.mil>. JFSAP is available, at no cost, to all active duty, Guard and Reserve members and their families.

The MySTATE website provides users access to organizations that provide special discounts and services to members of the military community. Nike, offering a 10% Special Military Discount, is one of the first business organizations to go online with the Oregon MySTATE website.

If you as a member of the greater Oregon community would like to begin free participation in this web-enabled effort to support the Oregon Guard and Reserve please contact Michelle Kochosky at (503) 956-4859 or at michelle.kochosky@militaryonesource.com.

First Swing Golf Tour stops in OR cities

The First Swing golf tour for disabled veterans will make two stops in Oregon this summer, including Bend and Eugene. The free events will be held at River Ridge Golf Course for Eugene-area veterans on June 6-7. First Swing will be in Bend at The Lost Tracks Golf Club on June 9-10. Those interested in golfing at the First Swing event in Bend must contact Amber Blanchard at 541-419-0314 or by email at amber@bendparksandrec.org. To golf at the Eugene event contact Patty Prather at 541-682-6365 or email patty.l.prather@ci.eugene.or.us.

U.S. Treasury Bonds available on internet

Did you know that you can buy U.S. Savings Bonds in electronic form and hold them directly with the U.S. Treasury over the Internet? You can even convert your paper savings bonds into electronic form and hold them in an account with the government. Both are possible when you open a TreasuryDirect account. Be sure to check out more information on the TreasuryDirect Program at www.dfas.mil/mil-news/mar2008/treasurydirectprogram.html.

Retiree Service Office

Open Tuesdays,
10 am to 2 pm
(503) 584-2891
1-800-452-7500, ext. 2891
E-mail:
ORRSO@or.ngb.army.mil
US Mail:
Retiree Service Office
PO Box 14350
Salem, OR 97309

Air Guard extends winning streak to four years running



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

Staff Sgt. Scott Geisser, NCO of the Year for the Air National Guard

For the fourth year in a row, an Oregon Air National Guardsman has been selected as the Air National Guard Airmen of the Year. In 2005 it was Senior Airman John Lockheed for Airman of the Year; in 2006 it was Staff Sgt. Dan Dierickx for Non-commissioned Officer of the Year; and in 2007 it was Master Sgt. Lawrence Taylor for Senior Non-commissioned Officer of the Year.

This year, Staff Sgt. Scott Geisser took that honor.

The process began with unit-level and wing-level competitions and progressed to state selections. Six national winners were selected by the Air Guard's top leaders from entries submitted by the 54 states and territories. Winners are invited to bring one guest for an all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C.

As the Non-Commissioned Officer of the year, Geisser will travel to Washington D.C. June 16-20, 2008 for Airmen of the Year week.

Geisser belongs to the 125th Special Tactics Squadron at Portland Air National Guard Base, Portland, Ore.

ORARNG names NCO, Soldier of the Year



Photos courtesy Kay Fristad, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Sgt. Jesse Haggart, Non-commissioned Officer of the Year



Spc. Zachary Driscoll, Soldier of the Year

In a competition held March 6-9, 2008, two Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers took top honors as Soldier and Non-commissioned Officers of the Year. Sgt. Jesse Haggart, of A Co. 2nd Battalion 162 Infantry, was selected as Non-commissioned Officer of the Year. Spc. Zachary Driscoll, of HHC 1249 Engineer Battalion, was selected as Soldier of the year. The Soldiers competed in warrior tasks during a weekend event held at Camp Rilea.

Guard mourns loss of friend, co-worker

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

The Oregon National Guard bade farewell to one of its Soldiers.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Brian Moore passed away April 24, 2008 at 36 years of age. Moore was born Feb. 27, 1972 in Portland, Ore. and was most recently assigned to the Oregon Joint Operations Center and Joint Force Headquarters in Salem, Ore. as an Operations Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO). Moore graduated from David Douglas High School in Portland, Ore. in 1990 and later attended both Mt. Hood Community College and Lane County Community College.

Moore was awarded medals including the Army Commendation Medal with two oak-leaf clusters and the Army Achievement Medal with two oak-leaf clusters.

The following is a message to Matt's Guard family from his relatives.

"Our beloved hero, Staff Sgt. Matthew B. Moore passed away on Friday April 24, 2008. Matt had two loves, family and the Army. He was a good father, dedicated to his sons Steven and Christopher. He was engaged to a wonderful woman, Anna, was a great comfort to his mother, and a friend to his father. He always made time to help others.

His 18-year career included service in Desert Storm, Ft. Lewis, Wash., Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and other overseas sites. He separated from the Service several times before he decided that the Army was where he belonged. He felt that there was a certain esprit de corps you got in the Army that you don't get anywhere else. He was preceded in death by his son Cody. He is survived by his sons Steven and Christopher, father Edward Moore, mother Judy

Sharp, brother Lt. Cdr. Christopher Moore, sister Angela Guenzel, step-sister Amanda Hadley, and fiancée Sgt. Anna Nam. Matt will be remembered for his gentle patient spirit and strength of character. He was loved and respected by those who knew him."

As daytime supervisor, Moore was a critical team member in the Joint Operations Center. He oversaw staff scheduling, disaster planning, and maintained quality control for the various products and services the JOC provided.

Moore's co-workers and friends remember his service with the following words:

"He was a rock solid, reliable, and calm NCO. He was great to get along with, and work with. I enjoyed working with him," said Master Sgt. Andrew Foland.

"I relied on him a great deal; I could always depend on him; He was my lynchpin assistant and day supervisor; he was an excellent Non-Commissioned



Staff Sgt. Matthew Moore.

Officer," said Sgt. Maj. Steven Gates, Moore's direct supervisor.

"It is a terrible void to work without Staff Sgt. Moore right now, I miss him," said Staff Sgt. Jesse Eastes.

In lieu of flowers and cards donations may be sent to the Matthew B. Moore Benevolence Fund at Washington Mutual Bank.

34-year Soldier says "goodbye" to Oregon Guard

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs Office

About 200 people gathered in Salem, Ore., the first week of May to bid farewell to a Soldier and a friend.

Brig. Gen. Cameron A. Crawford, formerly the Commander for the 41st Infantry Brigade, Oregon National Guard, was honored in an official retirement ceremony held at the Anderson Readiness Center May 4, 2008.

The ceremony was attended by Soldiers, Airmen, coworkers, family, friends, and distinguished guests.

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, The Adjutant General, Oregon, attended along with retired senior leaders of both the Air and Army National Guard, and civic leaders and business owners who were part of the official party of well-wishers.

Crawford's father, Douglas A. Crawford, a former member of the Oregon Army National Guard, was also there.

"I never dreamed when I was an E-5 with 3rd Battalion of the 186, that I would have a son with a star on his shoulder," said the elder Crawford. "I can remember taking him over to the armory when he was just two or three years-old, and who would have thought!"

In a unique aspect of military protocol, Mr. Crawford presented his son with a

side arm—a 9mm pistol, which Brig. Gen. Crawford later explained was his service side arm.

"Actually general officers are authorized by law, to pay for and retain their military side arm, and I've only been a general officer such a short time that it took the Army the entire time I was a general for it to come in and so we did the presentation today," said Brig. Gen. Crawford.

During his most recent assignment, Crawford performed as the Deputy Commanding General of Joint Task Force, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for his time there from Feb. 2007 until March 2008.

Crawford was awarded the Oregon Distinguished Service Award and the Defense Superior Service Medal, which were presented to him by Rees during the Sunday afternoon ceremony.

Crawford credits the Guard for much of his own successes, as well as the success of military missions all over the globe.

"I think it's important for people to know what a huge contribution the members of the Oregon National Guard are making all around the world," said Crawford.

"Everywhere I go the senior commanders, when they find out I'm a guardsman, they tell me 'we could not do this mission without you, without guardsmen and reservists,'" he said.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

During the retirement ceremony Brig. Gen. Crawford's father, Mr. Douglas Crawford, presented him with a 9mm side arm.

During his remarks Crawford chose to read a letter he received from one Earl McLain an 89 year-old World War II veteran, during his assignment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

McLain's letter to Crawford highlighted the sacrifices servicemembers are called to make in the course of their duties, and recollected that from one generation to the next a Soldier's duties change little.

"The bottom line is the blood runs and battle is fought... but it's nice to hear that I did some good," McLain said. "My feelings were regardless of the rank we are all men underneath and we all bleed the same, so I thought he could use a letter," said McLain.

Crawford began his career at the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY, graduating in 1978. He then entered active-military service as a second lieutenant in the Military Police Corps.

After nearly 15 years on active duty his final assignment was as an assistant professor of military science at Oregon State University. Crawford immediately joined the Oregon Army National Guard and served primarily in the 41st Separate Infantry Brigade in several capacities. In 2003, Crawford took a military leave of absence from his civilian position at Weyerhaeuser, and accepted a full-time tour as deputy brigade commander for the 41st Infantry Brigade. He later assumed command of the brigade in Jan. 2006. His service to the State of Oregon and the nation encompasses 34 years.

Members of the Oregon National Guard wish Brig. Gen. Cameron Crawford and his family all the best as he enters retirement and returns to civilian employment at Weyerhaeuser.

Commissary Comes to Oregon

On-Site Case Lot Sale

Sponsored by the McChord AFB Commissary

June 27, 28 & 29

Camp Rilea

Warrenton, Ore.

Sale open to all military ID cardholders
both active and retired

In an effort to bring the commissary benefit to Guard and Reserve units who do not have commissary facilities nearby, DeCA is bringing the benefit to you. The sale is scheduled for June 27-29 and will feature a variety of staples and dry goods including meat and vegetables. The sale is open to all veterans, active, Guard, Reservists, and retirees.