

Special Commemorative Edition

In This issue

Spec. Justin Linden is laid to rest, along with four of his fellow soldiers, pg. 5



PGE spearheads corporate donation to deployed Oregon troops, pg. 8



ORARNG prepares for major exercise by moving equipment, pg. 9



THE
OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

Oregon Sentinel

OF THE
OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Vol.2....Issue No. 4

July/August 2004

ORARNG's 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry mobilized

Soldiers from La Grande, Baker City, Hermiston, Pendleton, Ontario, and The Dalles will deploy to Iraq



Photo by TSgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

A mounted-cavalry post presents colors as members of Oregon National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry stand in formation at a mobilization ceremony held at the Eastern Oregon State University's Tiger Community Stadium in La Grande, Ore. on June 30. Family and friends of the soldiers, as well as Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski, Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne, Acting Adjutant General, and Brig. Gen. Gayhart, Commander of the 116th Brigade (Idaho Army National Guard) attended the ceremony.

By Kay F. Fristad,
State Public Affairs Office

Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry stood in formation in front of hundreds of family and friends at the Eastern State College Community Stadium on June 30, 2004, as they prepared to depart for pre-deployment training at Ft. Bliss, Texas.

After completing their training there, the unit will then move to Fort Polk, La., and eventually travel to Iraq, as part of an anticipated year-long rotation as part of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Division.

A mounted color team presented the colors while soldiers stood at attention. "Oregon's Own" 234th Army Band played the National Anthem while the patriotic crowd waved flags and sang along. Governor Ted Kulongoski was on hand to commend the soldiers for their patriotic spirit and willingness to stop the spread of terrorism. He also reminded the soldiers that America shall make a stand – not for itself alone – but for the entire world.

Brig. Gen. Alan C. Gayhart Jr., Commander of the 116th Brigade, welcomed the families, friends and co-workers of the Great Warriors of the Snake River Brigade Combat Team. He also encouraged the soldiers, pointing out their professional training and

demeanor.

"You come from all walks of life. You represent our Nation's best and brightest, and typify what it means to be an American. You are patriotic to the core, and recognize the special mission that this country has entrusted to you." Gayhart said.

"The World recognizes the indomitable spirit of the American Soldier, each of you personifies the values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless-service, honor, integrity and personal courage." Gayhart said. "I know that you are fully aware of the special risks you have been asked to undertake, just like every other generation of Americans. Without a doubt, you are the best educated, best equipped, and best trained soldiers this nation has ever produced."

"For over two years, we have been a nation at war. Terrorists are trying to defeat what we Americans stand for . . . peace, freedom, tolerance and respect for human life. So, we have undertaken an enormous effort to prevent them from spreading their creed of bloodshed, hatred and intolerance. This war on terrorism requires our patience, commitment and our will. Make no doubt about it, we are winning and we are winning

See **Deployments** PAGE 4

G-Troop, 82nd CAV heading for Ft. Bliss, Texas, then Iraq

By Kay F. Fristad,
State Public Affairs Office

It was standing room only at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds on July 29, 2004, as families and friends of G-Troop, 82nd Cavalry gathered to bid farewell to approximately 150 soldiers who have been activated in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Not only were there many family members and friends, but representatives of the local community were out in force. Businesses donated refreshments, decorations, and snacks, and the Outback Steakhouse provided a BBQ lunch for all soldiers and their families and friends. The show of community support was overwhelming.

For a ceremony that was to begin at 11 a.m., families and friends had filled the facility to overflowing several hours prior to the arrival of the troops, who had previously formed up just outside the building.

Friends and family members continued to flow in even as the ceremony began and the crowd of wellwishers continued to grow throughout the entire ceremony.

United States Representative Greg Walden was in attendance to honor the soldiers who will be spending the next 18 months in service to our nation.

"Your sacrifices will not go unnoticed", Walden said. "I understand the long separation from families, communities and jobs is going to present its own problems, but you will play a large part in securing personal freedoms for people who have never before had the opportunity to enjoy them."

Craig Campbell, representing the Governor stated, "The Governor regrets that he was unable to be here today to see you off and recognize your many contributions to the State of Oregon, the nation and the world. The Governor will proudly place

See **Unit** PAGE 4



Photo by TSgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

Capt. Teruo Chinen, Jr. is presented with the Oregon State flag by Gov. Ted Kulongoski's Chief of Staff, Mr. Craig Campbell. The unit will fly the flag over their compound in Iraq. G-Troop, 82nd CAV was mobilized for duty on June 29 in Redmond, Ore.

Your Letters

This is your chance to air your thoughts about any subject! Send your rants and raves on any topic, or current affair issue via e-mail to the following address: sentinel-letters@mil.state.or.us

Eyerly family grateful

To everyone at the Oregon Military Department:

Please extend our gratitude for the overwhelming support and kindness everyone has shown to our family.

We are most grateful for your help to put my brother to rest.

Sincerely yours,

Stacia Eyerly and the rest of the Eyerly family; Lynn, Sue & Paul

Deaths hit comrades hard

The boys were simply magnificent. They executed flawlessly and gave as good (we killed one wahabbi) as they got and generally kicked ass. I could not be prouder of them. However, with the family's seemingly bottomless grief, they can take what comfort they can that Eric and the boys did a spectacular job. I will not go into details, but suffice to say they gave better than they took. The boys are now blooded, combat veterans. Realizing the deep waste of this, they can also hold their heads very high. For what it's worth, Eric never knew what hit him – it was that quick. Eric was a hell of a soldier.

Sgt. 1st Class Pete Salerno
2nd Platoon Sergeant
Bravo Co., 2-162 IN BN

McCrae will be missed

The death of Spec. Eric McKinley has been a huge loss to his family, Bravo Company and to the world. Corvallis will not be the same without his spirit. We are sad and sorry he is gone, but we also remember that Eric was a very good soldier and friend. He died quickly and never knew what hit him. He died a hero. We will miss him & will carry on with him in our hearts.

Staff Sgt. Bill Woodke
Headquarters Platoon
Bravo Co., 2-162 IN BN

Reporter's actions appalling

I am disturbed to learn that in the recent tragic deaths of Oregon National Guard Soldiers in Iraq, a reporter from the Oregonian, ostensibly motivated to gather information in advance of the scheduled news release, called several local families of deployed soldiers and asked them if their loved ones were the ones killed.

This is not only an incredible disservice to the families of fallen soldiers, but it planted the seeds of doubt in the minds of those families whose soldiers are safe. At the time they were called, the family members had no knowledge of the deaths, and she hung up on them after asking the question. This caused a level of discontent in the unit that we are still coming to grips with. We are already committed to a difficult mission 7,000 miles from home. We do not need people like this type jeopardizing a soldiers' focus on the task at hand.

Release of information of this sort is done in a manner to balance the needs of the American People to be informed with the rights of the families of the deceased. Reporting practices of this nature are a shame to the journalistic profession and an embarrassment to the service. Speaking as a one currently in harms way, I certainly do not appreciate that our families must fear being engaged by the press in this manner.

Thank you,

Maj. Michael Warrington
1st Cavalry Division, 39 BCT
2-162 Infantry. Baghdad, Iraq

Letters From The Front



Soldier's wife provides great list of needed items

Hello again everyone.

The boys are still doing well. Spirits are high and the boys seem really happy. They have long hours and it's really hot! Matt laughs every time I complain about the 86-degree weather.

Slowly but surely they are rebuilding their camp. After the pulling of their roommate unit they were left without mail, a gym or computer access. Some of the guys have gone in groups and bought Haji cell phones. They work but not very well. Matt hopes that he will be able to send more pictures soon but for now these are wonderful, don't you agree?

They are now running missions pretty regularly, mostly working with the Iraqi Security forces, doing things like traffic control. And everything has been really quiet for them. Thank God. They want to send their love but with the limited access to things it has been really hard. They have worked out a system with the mail; sending letters with missions that travel to other camps. That way takes longer but seems to be working. Incoming mail has been a more difficult task and they don't have that one worked out yet.

I'll keep you posted. Matt recently sent me a wish list:

Envelopes
Stamps
2-ply toilet paper
Huggies Baby Wipes
Pads of paper
Payday candy bar
Blank CD-R's and the padded envelopes to send them home
Pictures, lots and lots of pictures
Crew Shampoo
Toothpaste
Magazines and Newspapers (Clean ones only. They'll take the dirt ones away)
Tuna in pouches

I hope that makes it easier for those of you chompin' at the bit trying to shop for these boys. I don't have Cline's list yet but he's working on it. Not much else to report I just thought you guys would like to see the pictures. If anyone needs anything let me know!!

Nicole

Picture Postcards from Iraq

"I miss fishing and hunting in Oregon. I want to send a big thanks to PGE for the care packages they've sent."

Spec. Bill Kirk, 39 (Molalla, Ore.),
2nd BN, 162 IN

If you would like to see more stories and pictures from Oregon National Army Guard soldiers, please visit the Oregonian "Iraq Weblog" at: <http://www.oregonlive.com/weblogs/oregonianblog>



1186th Military Police settles in at Guantanamo Cuba



ORARNG's 1186th Military Police Company (above) deployed to Guantanamo Bay Cuba for approximately one year, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Left: Pvt. 1st Class James Bond (no joking), from Milton-Freewater, Ore., is promoted to the rank of Specialist against the picturesque backdrop of the Gulf of Mexico near the base at Guantanamo, Cuba.

According to Pvt. 1st Class Matt Dill, since the unit is confined to the base, they've passed their free time chasing banana rats and 3-foot iguanas, as well as occasionally snorkeling in the azure tropical waters of the Gulf.

Tell us what you think!

Address your comments, feedback and ideas to:

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The Oregon Sentinel

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Stories and photos from the field are gratefully accepted. We need your input to insure better coverage.

Guard members and their families are encouraged to submit any articles meant to inform, educate or entertain readers of the *Oregon Sentinel*, including stories about interesting Guard personalities and unique unit training. Letters to the editor are also welcome. All letters must include the author's name, address and daytime phone number. Names may be withheld in print upon request, but all letters must be signed, and are subject to editing prior to publication. For publication schedules, or for any other questions, please see your unit Public Affairs Representative, or contact the State Public Affairs Office or any of the *Oregon Sentinel* staff members listed below.

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Command Message

A recent article by a Portland newspaper covered the activation of members of the 41st Brigade who were mobilized for duty in Afghanistan. The unit would act as an infantry training team with the 76th Infantry Brigade, of the Indiana Army National Guard. The mobilization and deployment was used as a point and counterpoint on the war in Iraq as well as providing a venue to discuss patriotism.

As service members we take an oath to support and defend the constitution of the United States. That support extends to the constitution as a whole, not just those parts we agree with. Patriots do come in all stripes.

There are many parallels that can be made between the war in Viet Nam and the conflict in Iraq. The newspaper article points out several, but a major difference is the impact felt by local communities, families, and friends by virtue of the Na-

tional Guard and other reserve forces being mobilized and deployed. America, for better or worse, is committed to following through on its commitment to Iraq.

Another major difference between the conflicts in Viet Nam and Iraq is how the public has separated the soldier their service to our nation out of the national controversy. Military service is still consistently seen as the most respected vocation in the nation.

As an organization, ours is truly unique. Since its inception nearly 370 years ago, the National Guard has been made up of men and women from local neighborhoods and communities. Your local dentist may be a Squadron Commander at PANG Base, the clerk at your local grocery store may be an infantry soldier in the 1186th Military Police Co., or the woman who cuts your hair once a month might be a Blackhawk pilot with the 1042nd Med. Co. in Salem. When these men and women finish their training

in the National Guard, they return to their homes and their loved ones and their communities. The philosophy of the "Citizen-Soldier" is the basis for the strength of our local communities, and indeed, our nation.

Our primary focus at Joint Forces Headquarters is, and will continue to be, taking care of the families of deployed Soldiers and Airmen. We need to ensure that members' pay and personnel issues are resolved to the best of our abilities, and that service members' families are given the support they need while their loved ones are away. We need to accomplish this goal while being mindful of our traditional requirement of providing fully trained and ready Soldiers and Airmen for state and federal missions. To this end, the men and women of the Oregon National Guard do an incredible job – one that any of our colonial forefathers would view with pride and respect.

I am proud of your professionalism and hard work. Thank you for your service and



Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne,
Acting Adjutant General, State of Oregon

sacrifice to our organization, our state, and our nation.

First off I just want to tell you how honored I am to be selected as your new State Command Chief. I look forward to serving all your enlisted needs and issues. I am always looking for new ideas and input on how we can continue to make our enlisted force the best in the nation. Please feel free to e-mail me with your ideas and comments. My e-mail address is: Rodney.smith@orport.ang.af.mil.

Once again we are in the fire-fighting season, and OPLAN Smokey is running in full force. I want to thank all of you that volunteered to leave jobs and families to go out and fight the fires that will otherwise threaten to destroy our homes and businesses. As you are all aware by now, the Oregon Air National Guard will be the first group to deploy in support of the fire-fighting mission should the effort require more personnel. My thanks go out to everyone that has stepped forward to take on this tasking.

The Military Ball was another success this

year. Some 750 people attended the ball and as they say; "a good time was had by all". Again this year it was held at the Evergreen Aviation Museum in McMinnville. The venue provides us plenty of room and nice surroundings. This is an excellent place to hold this function and we thank Evergreen for being able to host our group.

From July 12 – 18, I had the opportunity – along with Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne, Jr., Brig. Gen. James Cunningham and Maj. Elaine Encabo – to visit our deployed officers and airmen at Keflavik Iceland and Spangdalem, Germany. The 142nd Fighter Wing at the Portland Air Base deployed 5 jets and approximately two-hundred personnel cycled through Iceland during three rotations between June 2nd and July 20th for the purpose of deterring aggression in the North Atlantic, protecting Iceland's air space, and supporting contingency operations with air superiority. Along with visiting the troops we had the pleasure of meeting with Rear Admiral Noel G. Preston, the Chief of Staff, Regional Headquarters South Atlantic, and

Col. Steven F. Dreyer, Deputy Commander for the 85th Group at Keflavik Naval Air Station.

The 142nd Fighter Wing/Civil Engineering Squadron also deployed 43 personnel to Spangdalem A.F.B., Germany during the period of July 11 – 27. These airmen were in direct support of the 52nd Fighter Wing. While deployed, they built a gazebo, repaired roadways, generators and numerous electrical equipment, and completed various plumbing projects. We visited with, and were briefed by Col. (Brig. Gen. select) Stephen P. Mueller, 52nd FW/CC.

After talking with leadership from Keflavik and Spangdalem, it was not surprising to me to hear their accolades about our personnel. Time and time again, I heard them say Oregon Guard personnel did outstanding work and presented a very professional attitude. Every one of you in the Oregon Air National Guard are all ambassadors of Oregon and your professionalism and 'can-do' attitude puts you heads above any other guard unit in the United States.



Chief Master Sgt. Rodney R. Smith,
State Command Chief Master Sergeant

I am very proud of each and every one of you and couldn't think of a better group of men and women to represent.

You are the best.

An old Major, a veteran of long service and some hard campaigns, was giving some officer candidates a practical exercise in how to lead troops. The problem involved putting up a flagpole. To do it he had provided a sergeant and a detail of three privates with tools. But, it was up to the officer candidates to figure out the best way to do the job.

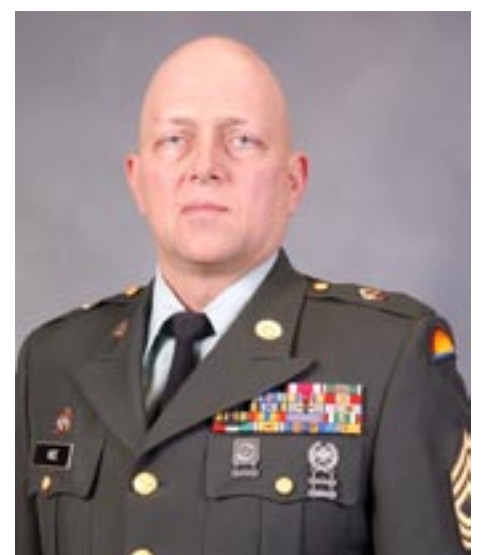
They pondered the situation carefully. Several false starts were made; solutions were advanced and tried but failed because nobody seemed to be in charge; each candidate thought only he knew the right way and competed loudly with the others to be heard.

Finally the old Major stepped in and with a gesture silenced the babble. "Gentlemen" said he, "allow me to demonstrate how a good officer would do this job."

He turned to the Sergeant and said, "Sergeant, please have the men put up the flagpole." Nothing more was said and in a few minutes the pole was up.

"The good officer knows that the good NCO gets the job done."

"The good NCO knows that the officer will let him do it."



Command Sergeant Major Thomas Moe,
State Command Sergeant Major

FROM THE EDITOR



An Open Letter to the troops of the Oregon National Guard:

Over the past several months, the daily hazards of the environment you are in have resonated across the globe. As we have communicated publicly the courageous actions of you and your peers, we have tried to do so in a way that acknowledges the sacrifice of your brothers in arms while honoring your service and recognizing the extraordinary work you have accomplished. We have built this special issue of The Oregon Sentinel as a salute to the "Volunteers."

We hope this extends recognition of your performance of duty. In Oregon, we have the leisure of reflection many of you do not due to the harsh nature of the environment you serve within. We sincerely hope you have been able to see or hear of some of

the coverage we have facilitated on your behalf. As many of you know, The Oregonian had a team embedded with you for a month and that has caused a positive ripple affect in many communities. We hope the coverage of your efforts has helped to keep your friends and families here at home aware of the successes and challenges you each face.

While you have been deployed, the Oregon National Guard has been focused on mobilizing other units as well. By the time this issue reaches you, your Cavalry brothers from 3-116, and G-Troop, 82nd Cav, will be well into their pre-deployment training at Fort Bliss, Texas. We have already mobilized the 1186th Military Police to Guantanamo Bay, Detachment Lima, 115th Aviation is close to you in Balad, Iraq, and the Afghan Imbedded Training Team

from the 41st Brigade to train the Afghan National Army.

Please send your comments and contributions our way. We can only print what we receive and photos and stories of your success are what we need most. Please do not hesitate to send your stories our way and know that, as always, our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thank you for all that you do for Iraq, for the United States, and for the world!

Sincerely,

Maj. Arnold V. Strong
State Public Affairs Officer,
Oregon National Guard

ORANG's 101st Combat Operations Group holds exercise in California

Unit takes to new mission with enthusiasm

By Maj. Donna Prigmore,
Director of Personnel, 101st COG

HERLONG, Calif. – In mid-May, forty members from the 101st Combat Operations Group deployed to Amedee Airfield in Hurlong, Calif. for nine days of field and combat training. This was the second exercise of its kind since November 2003 and involved members from the 244th Combat Communications Squadron, the 272nd Combat Communications Squadron, the 123rd Weather Flight, and the 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron. One combat controller from the emerging Oregon Air Guard's 125th Special Tactics Squadron also participated

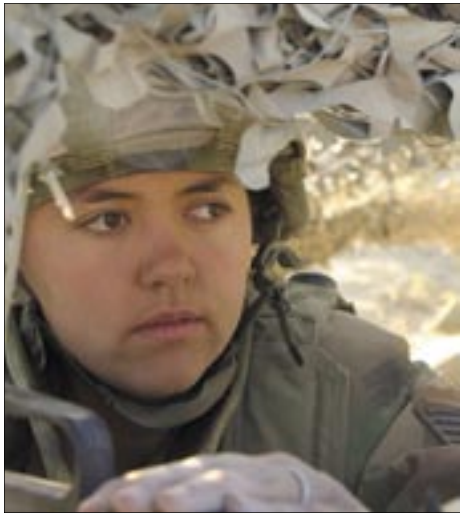


Photo by TSgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office
A member of the 101st COG guards an entry control point at the edge of the camp. Other personnel set up periodic ambushes and raids over the course of the exercise.

in the exercise.

According to Capt. Leon McGuire, chief of air traffic control operations and officer-in-charge of the deployment, the purpose of the exercise was to train Guard members — under enemy fire, and in austere conditions — on the takeover of an existing airfield and the establishment of air operations through the set-up of an air traffic control tower, TACAN, radio/satellite communications equipment, and weather equipment.

“For many, the exercise meant a paradigm shift from a support mindset to that of an operational one,” explained McGuire.

“Many of our members were tasked to perform their functions in unfamiliar and challenging environments [such as controlling aircraft with night vision devices] which they had never done in the field before.”

The change was beneficial for members of the 272nd and 244th Combat Communications Squadrons. Prior to the establishment of the 101st COG, the combat communications members trained to set-up their radio, satellite, and computer equipment at an established military base overseas or in a forward operating location. With the requirement now being one of securing and operating from a location sometimes deep in enemy territory, a different approach to the way they do business and train has quickly surfaced.

All 101st COG members who participated in the exercise not only had to set-up defensive fighting positions and their own tactical equipment, but also had to erect tents with CCD (camouflage, concealment and decep-



Photo by TSgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

A California Air National Guard C-130 lands at Amedee Airfield near Hurlong, Calif. during a joint training exercise with the 101st Combat Operations Group in May 2004.

tion) netting, protect the compound, and respond to enemy fire in a sometimes chaotic, frustrating “fog of war” environment.

Once the compound was set-up and all equipment established, air traffic controllers (later in the deployment phase) began conducting air operations at night with C-130s from the Nevada and California Air National Guard units.

“Our ultimate goal, as a team, is to wield the airfield as a weapons system in real world situations,” explained McGuire, “and get aircraft flying into and out of the combat zone as soon as we can.”

According to Lt. Col. Michael LaBounty, vice commander of the 101st COG, Oregon's new combat operations group represents a conglomeration of tactical C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) – all of which are capabilities that represent one of the fastest growing war-fighting trends in the Air Force today.

“We are designing the C4ISR package to train like we fight”, said LaBounty. “Going into harm's way is the ultimate test.”

“Just like in sports,” he added, “it's a game we want to win 100 - 0.”

Unit will join other ORARNG troops at Ft. Bliss

Continued from PAGE 1

your Guidon in his personal office as a reminder of the dedication and sacrifice of the citizen soldiers of the Oregon Army National Guard.”

Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne, Jr. also addressed the troop formation, recognizing the importance of Oregon's soldiers, their families and the continuing support of the local communities. He cited the outstanding work of the Family Readiness Group Coordinators and their teams in helping the families through the problem of extended military life, while commending the soldiers for their professionalism, training and dedication.

G-Troop departed for Ft. Bliss, Texas on July 3, and have joined Oregon's 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry, Idaho's 116th Brigade and the 3rd ACR from Ft. Bliss, for training in preparation for their rotation into Iraq later this year.



Photo by TSgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

Members of G-Troop, 82nd CAV form up before their mobilization ceremony.

Deployments will put almost 1,000 troops in Iraq by year's end

Continued from PAGE 1

because we have a superb team of soldiers and heroes, like the warriors of this brigade dedicated to winning this war,” stated Gen. Gayhart.

“I am honored and humbled to be among the great warriors and families of this battalion, who like other patriots of this nation, are the next greatest generation.” Gayhart continued.

Gayhart concluded his address with this message. “I look forward to another great celebration when we return. Rest assured, this brigade will do what our nation has asked of us and return in keeping with the motto of our heritage ‘Sine Mora’ – without delay.”

The many communities of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry banded together to place yellow ribbons and American flags through the stadium area, and followed it up with a complete luncheon barbeque for everyone in attendance. The showing of love, respect and patriotism displayed by the citizens in Eastern Oregon showed through like a beacon of light to remind our soldiers of their importance to their towns, their state, their nation and the world.



Photo by TSgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

Members of 3rd Battalion, 116th CAV await ceremonies which will mobilize them to active duty, while friends and family members look on.



Photo by TSgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office



Photo by TSgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

Above: Friends and family members cheer for soldiers of Oregon's 3-116 mobilized on June 30. Left: Lt. Col. Dan McCabe, commander, 3-116, accepts the Oregon state flag from Gov. Kulongoski.

Special Commemorative Section

THE
OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



Oregon Sentinel



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OREGON NATIONAL GUARD



Vol.2....Issue No. 4

Salute to the Volunteers

July/August 2004

Oregon mourns the loss of four of her sons

By Capt. Michael S. Braibish,
State Public Affairs Officer

In solemn ceremonies performed with deeply held tradition, honor, and the unique respect the military bestows upon fallen heroes, the citizen-soldiers of Oregon bid their final farewells to four brothers whose lives were taken in combat in Baghdad, Iraq.

The deaths of these soldiers, who were killed in two separate attacks, sent shock waves through the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry family, their communities and the state.

In the first attack on June 4, according to accounts from Delta Company, 1st Lt. Erik McCrae, Sgt. Justin Eyerly, and Spec. Justin Linden were on patrol when an explosion in the distance caught their attention. Taking immediate action in their "Humvee" (High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle), the soldiers responded to the scene of the explosion and found that a patrol from the New Jersey National Guard had come under attack by insurgents using an improvised explosive device, or IED.

Instinct and training took over as McCrae and his soldiers rushed to establish security and deliver lifesaving care to the injured soldiers. As they did so, insurgents



Photo courtesy of the Eyerly family

Spec. Justin Eyerly relaxes at home with his niece, Macy Jade Hatfield.

detonated a second IED killing Eyerly and Linden. McCrae later died as doctors at a combat support hospital desperately tried to save his life.

Hundreds of family, friends and co-workers memorialized Eyerly June 13 at the Rose Garden Arena. He was remembered for his love of music, his passion

See **ORARNG soldiers** page 6



Photo by Kay F. Fristad, State Public Affairs Office

Governor Ted Kulongoski presents the Oregon State flag to Sue Eyerly, mother of Sgt. Justin Eyerly, Oregon National Guard soldier killed in Iraq during a June 4 road-side ambush. A public memorial ceremony was held at the Rose Garden's WWII Memorial on Sunday, June 13.

Fellow soldier in Iraq remember fallen comrades

By Staff Sgt. Rebekah Mae-Bruns,
39th Brigade Public Affairs Office

BAGHDAD, IRAQ – Recently in Baghdad, a platoon of Infantrymen from the 2nd battalion, 162nd Infantry, Company D, were on a routine patrol when they heard an explosion and saw smoke billowing into the air. The platoon leader decided to investigate thinking someone might need help.

Upon arrival, the young platoon leader learned an improvised explosive device (IED) hit a small convoy of military police.

A military vehicle was on fire and there were injured on the ground. While the gunner remained in the turret to maintain security, the lieutenant and two of his men quickly jumped from the vehicle to render aid to soldiers from New Jersey.

As they hurried off, with combat lifesaver bag in hand, a second IED was hand-detonated killing a total of five soldiers, including Oregon National Guardmembers Sgt. Justin Eyerly, 23, and Spec. Justin Linden, 24, of Portland, Ore., instantly. The blast also mortally wounded 1st Lt. Erik McCrae, 25, of La Grande, Ore.

The following is a eulogy and account of events written by the gunner, Spec. Nathan Melton, who also spoke at Lt. McCrae's memorial service.

I had been with Lt. Erik McCrae ever since he first joined the military. I remember when he was a brand new Lieutenant in E Troop, and I was his driver. Even then I was impressed with his knowledge and professionalism. Over the years on his truck I saw him develop and grow into a platoon leader anyone would be proud to have.

When we heard the first explosion he immediately had us investigate, and after seeing the MPs (Military Police) in trouble he knew they needed help and didn't hesitate to get over there. Shortly after we arrived, there was a second explosion. I was the first to try and help him, and despite being



Photo by Sgt. Matthew D. Robinson, Co. D, 2nd BDE, 162 IN

(l. to r.): Pfc. Clark Phillips, Sgt. Justin L. Eyerly, Spc. Justin W. Linden, and Sgt. Nathan H. Melton pose in an Iraqi "tank graveyard" near Baghdad. Eyerly, Linden and 1st Lt. Erik S. McCrae (not pictured) were killed on June 4 when their patrol was ambushed just North of Baghdad. Melton was seriously injured in the attack, and has since returned to duty.

very badly wounded and in extreme pain he wasn't concerned about himself.

He asked me, "How's Linden? How's Eyerly? Is everybody O.K.?" I told him they were fine though I didn't know at the time that the two had died. Throughout the time I was with Erik he kept wanting

to make sure everyone was safe and okay and never complained about his wounds. His worrying about his men and not about himself speaks more about his character than I ever could.

I met Spec. Justin Linden after he en-
See **National Guard** page 8



Photo by Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD
A soldier says pauses to remember Spec. Eric McKinley during a memorial service June 17 at Camp Cooke in Iraq.



Governor Ted Kulongoski, Governor, State of Oregon

A Message From The Governor

Dear Members of the 2-162:

I want to say a few words to the brave men of the 2nd Battalion, 162nd infantry. I know that you are in perhaps the most dangerous place in the world. Since the very day you arrived you have been in harm's way. Why you are there is not a mystery to me; in you, the soldiers of the 2-162, Oregon has produced some of the best soldiers in the world. You have been well trained, you know what you are doing, and you can be counted upon

to take on any challenge and to face any danger. I am so very proud of you.

I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you so that you would know that we here in Oregon are thinking of you. We are grateful to you for the courageous sacrifice you are making and you are never far from our thoughts and our prayers.

Since arriving in Iraq, you have paid a very dear price as you have fought for the freedom of others. Four of your own have come home before their time - four valiant men who will never be forgotten. But neither shall you. Every day I look upon your guidon, proudly hanging in my private office at the capitol, and every morning I say a prayer for your swift and safe return.

Oregon will be here for you when you return. With your return you will replace hot sun with temperate winds and cool rains; parched sand with lush green, and the faces of strangers and enemies with the smiles of your loving friends and family. You will be able to rest in the freedom and safety that your actions in Iraq have provided. It is a rest you richly deserve.

To us - as to you - it may seem an eternity, but the day of your return comes closer with each day. You left as soldiers; you will return as heroes.

Ted Kulongoski, Governor, State of Oregon



Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne, Acting Adjutant General, State of Oregon

To the men and women of the Oregon National Guard:

Since the war in Iraq began over a year ago, The Oregon National Guard has lost five soldiers. These soldiers were the first casualties that we sustained since World War II. Their deaths have had a profound effect on our entire organization, and we collectively mourn their loss.

The National Guard is unique among all

the service components. We draw our soldiers and airmen from the local communities and when they finish their training they return to their homes and their loved ones.

Governor Ted Kulongoski, the Commander-in-Chief of the Oregon National Guard has provided comfort and support to all families who have lost a loved one. Additionally, support from the local communities for both memorials and funerals to honor these fallen heroes has been overwhelming and moving for all those who attended.

I would ask each of you to keep Spec. Nathan Nakis, 1st Lt. Erik McCrae, Sgt. Justin Eyerly, Spec. Justin Linden, and Spec. Eric S. McKinley, and their families in your thoughts and prayers. Let not their passing be in vain, and let not the memory of their exemplary lives and service be forgotten.

These brave soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice defending the Iraqi people – who are now on the outset of their journey toward democracy, freedom, and self-governance – ideals we in America hold dear.

Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne, Jr. Acting Adjutant General, Oregon National Guard

ORARNG soldiers ambushed while on patrol in Baghdad

Continued from PAGE 5

and expertise in information technologies, and for his compassion for the people around him.

“He was everything I love about this state and its people,” said Gov. Ted Kulongoski, who attended ceremonies for each Oregon guardsmen killed in Iraq. “He was a great hero, and while he certainly died too young, he did not die in vain.”

Eyerly was buried at a private cemetery in Portland on June 14, and he is survived by

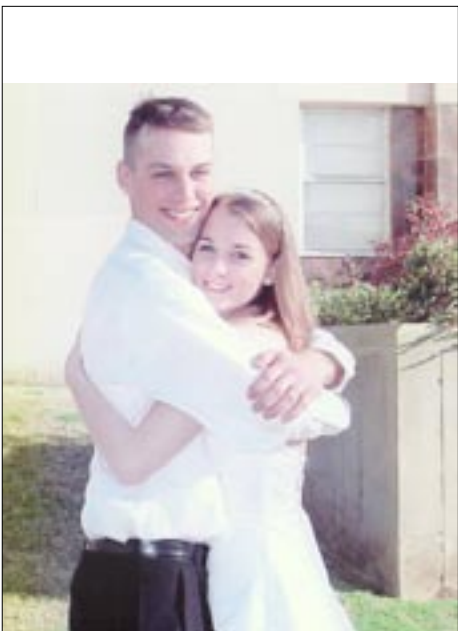


Photo courtesy of the Linden family

Spec. Justin Linden.

his parents, a brother, and a sister.

Linden was buried at Willamette National Cemetery on June 14. His widow, Sarah, had just married Justin in February prior to the unit deployment to Iraq.

“I am so grateful that I can say that Specialist Justin Wayne Linden was my husband, my hero, and my everything,” said Sara. “Nothing will ever compare to the love that I shared with him and the joy that he brought to my life ... You will be greatly missed, and we all love you.”

Linden is survived by his wife and parents.

McCrae, the son of Oregon Army National Guard Col. Scott McCrae, was laid to rest at Willamette National Cemetery after a memorial ceremony at Beaverton Christian Church on June 18.

“What we have is an incomparable sense of loss,” said Pastor Steve McCracken. “The United States lost her son, and Oregon lost her son. There is an almost suffocating sense of loss. He was uncommonly humble and wore lots of hats — husband, son, brother, grandson, proud Scotsman and proud soldier.”

McCrae was also married in February prior to the unit's deployment. He is survived by his parents, his wife, and his brother who is a Captain in the Oregon Army National Guard.

In the second attack on June 13, Spec. Eric S. McKinley of Bravo Company was on a patrol when his vehicle came under attack from insurgents who detonated an IED.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

Soldiers from the Oregon Army National Guard carry Spec. Justin W. Linden out to a waiting hearse shortly following memorial ceremonies at New Hope Community Church in Clackamas on June 14.

McKinley was memorialized at Starker Arts Park in Corvallis on June 26. Family and friends remembered him fondly and with admiration. McKinley had planned to open a juice bar to provide a safe and drug free environment for youngsters in his community.

“Being a soldier gave meaning and purpose to Eric's life,” said Governor Kulon-

goski. “It gave him home and opportunity for the future.”

McKinley is survived by his mother and father.

There are more than 700 soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry on duty in Baghdad and 15 soldiers with Detachment 2, L Company of the 115th Aviation Battalion.



Photo courtesy of the McKinley family

Spec. Eric S. McKinley (l.) and his fellow soldiers watch as another soldier rappels down from a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter during a training mission.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

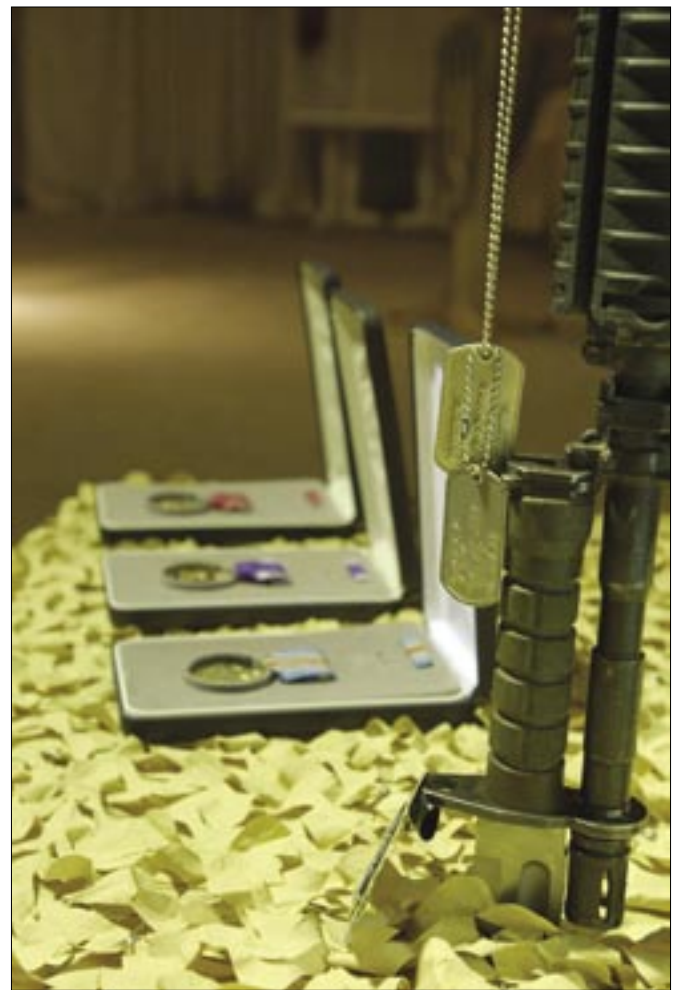
Brig. Gen Raymond C. Byrne, Jr., Acting Adjutant General of the Oregon National Guard salutes 1st Lt. Erik McCrae as the ORARNG Color Guard begins to fold the American flag. McCrae's memorial ceremony was held at Willamette National Cemetery June 18.



A Soldier's Life: A tribute to fallen heros



1. A lone bagpiper plays Amazing Grace.
2. The Portland Police Highland band escorts 1st Lt. McCrae's funeral procession.
3. Lt. Col. Simsundareth Tan, pays final tribute to Spec. McKinley.
4. Staff Sgt. John Mueller, of Alpha Co., 249th Aviation stands watch over Sgt. Eyerly at his graveside service.
5. Dogtags and medals adorn a shrine erected to honor McKinley.
6. Brig. Gen. Byrne salutes Spec. Linden as fellow guardmembers carry him into the chapel at Willamette National Cemetery.
7. ORARNG Honor Guard fire a 21-gun salute at Spec. McKinley's memorial service.
8. ORARNG's UH-60 Blackhawks fly in a "missing-man" formation over Linden's memorial service.
9. Sgt. Allen Zeller of the 234th Army Band plays taps at McKinley's memorial service.
10. Family and friends join to honor 1st Lt. McCrae at his memorial service.
11. Gov. Ted Kulongoski presents the U.S. flag to Heather, wife of 1st Lt. McCrae.



Fellow soldier celebrates the lives of his brothers-in-arms

Continued from PAGE 5

listed in the National Guard, but before we went to basic training. He wanted to know everything to expect, and was excited to go and become a soldier. After he got back from basic training we became fast friends.

Before any of us knew this deployment would happen for sure, he volunteered to go. When I later talked with him about it he said he couldn't let his friends go to war without him.

One night here, as we were eating dinner together, he told me he was in a hurry to get back and try and go on a mission that our truck wasn't assigned to go on. I asked him why go out of the way to volunteer? We had plenty of missions and there were plenty more to come. He told me that he wanted to

be there in case this mission was 'the one' where somebody needed him, one where he could make a difference.

That was the type of person he was. He was always willing to be there for someone who needed help, and he didn't like saying no. If anyone wanted or needed anything – to bum a cigarette, a couple of bucks, or just help with something – he was always there. He also loved to make people laugh. He had a secret desire to be a stand up comedian, though he didn't think he was any good. Whenever I was in a bad mood, he would always start cracking jokes and fooling around until he made me laugh. Now I wish I had told him he was the funniest guy I've ever met.

He often talked with me about how when he got back he wanted to get a tattoo of the

Combat Infantryman's Badge with his dad, who was a Vietnam Veteran. He told me he didn't think he had earned it yet though. My feeling is that he's definitely earned it now.

When we pulled up to help the MPs, I remember Lt. McCrae asking if he was going to stay with the vehicle. He replied 'I'm CLS (combat life saver) Sir.' The last time I saw Linden alive he was running towards the burning Humvee and the wounded soldiers with his CLS bag around his shoulders.

He was the most caring and generous friend I ever had and he will be missed.

“He was always willing to be there for someone who needed help.”



Photo courtesy of McCrae family

Erik McCrae (r.) and his bride, Heather (l.) shortly after their wedding at Ft. Polk, La., in March 2004.

movie industry. I have no doubt he would have achieved that goal as well.

He was a friend you could count on for anything and I trusted him unconditionally. I knew he would always watch my back and do anything to help. He was a great soldier and a very knowledgeable and capable NCO (non-commissioned officer). If you ever needed to know something about a piece of equipment, weapon, or vehicle, he could tell you.

I know he took his job as a dismounted section leader for our platoon very seriously. He had told me that he just wanted to do it right. And make sure all of his guys made it home. I saw him last with Justin Linden, both running to help their fellow soldiers. He was my brother, and I will never forget him.



Photo by Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, Commanding General, 1st Cavalry Division, lays Spec. Eric S. McKinley's dogtags on his memorial during a service held at Camp Cooke on June 17.

ORARNG's 2-162 to receive care packages from PGE employees

Story and photos by
Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy,
State Public Affairs Office

PORTLAND, ORE. – Portland General Electric (PGE) employees realized the benefits of their labor, when the Oregon National Guard and several members of the local media descended upon the downtown offices of PGE on June 18.

Employees spent several months organizing a corporate donation of care packages destined for Iraq, and the Oregon National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry, currently deployed there.

The idea for the donation effort came out of individual employees asking how they could send much-needed items to Oregon National Guard troops deployed in Iraq. After several individual contributions and shipments, a much larger 'corporate-driven' effort was spearheaded by Kathy Elliott, General Manager of PGE's Technology Support Division. Two PGE employees, Shane Carpenter and Barry Beddor, are also assigned to the E-Troop, 82nd Cavalry, Oregon Army National Guard.



Soldiers from E-troop load boxes into a 5-ton truck before heading to the downtown Post Office.

“I just said, ‘you know what, I’m going to adopt your unit,’” said Kathy Elliott, General Manager of PGE’s Technology Support Division.

PGE Employees responded with overwhelming support, offering cash donations, necessary toiletries and snacks, and items specifically requested by the deployed Oregon troops.

“This is a true grass-roots effort,” Elliot said. “I talked about it in my organization, and as people learned about it, there was a groundswell of support for it.”

“I think it’s important to support the men and women overseas,” said Mike McClain, PGE TS Project Manager. “It’s important for them to know that there’s people back here supporting them and are behind them, and who have an understanding of what they need. It brightens up their spirits.”

The boxes, weighing approximately 2,400 lbs. were packed and shipped at the PGE headquarters in downtown Portland on June 18. This most recent shipment included snacks, sunglasses, baby wipes, and four laptop computers with multi-media capability and DVD-ROMs. According to Elliot, the shipment’s value was approximately \$10,000, and it should arrive in Iraq before the July 4th weekend.

“When you’re in harms way, I can imagine what those items mean to them,” said Sgt. Shane Carpenter, of PGE’s Communications/Operations Group, and member of ORARNG’s E-Troop, 82nd Cavalry. “Some of these things are as good as gold to these guys, and we try to get them as much of those items as we can.”

Col. Cameron Crawford, Deputy Brigade Commander, agreed that the effort of PGE’s employees and other individual contributors has a huge impact on troop morale. Crawford was ‘adopted’ by his niece’s grade-school class while he was deployed to Kuwait in the early-90s during Operation Desert Storm, and the youngsters sent him letters and care packages on a regular basis.



PGE employees (l. to r.), Micah Taylor, Sgt. Shane Carpenter, Mike McClain, Kathy Elliott, Paul Kane, and Sgt. Barry Beddor helped pack some 50 care-packages sent from PGE on June 18, destined for Oregon National Guard troops deployed in Iraq.

“It did a lot to boost my morale,” Crawford said. “But at the same time, it helped the local community understand what it means to be deployed overseas. It made duty more bearable in what is otherwise a pretty miserable situation.”

Crawford noted that these kinds of donations are made possible by individuals who care about the well-being of Oregon’s soldiers and airmen, but he credited the company for providing the financial backing and resources to make it happen.

“The effect this has on the local community is that it heightens the awareness that we have Oregon troops deployed overseas and that they’re being supported,” Crawford continued.

“This particular effort is just an incredible example of what employees can do on their own,” said Elliot. “We received letters and cards from family members of deployed soldiers saying how much they appreciate what we’re doing,” she continued.

Several Oregon National Guard members

were there for the event. Sgt. 1st Class Gower D. Talley passed out ORARNG “Boonie” hats to PGE employees helping with the effort.

“This was over and beyond what casual supporters have been doing,” said Oregon ESGR Director Col. (ret.) Bob Elliott, who was also on hand for the event.

“I already have employees coming up to me and asking ‘Are you going to do this again?’ and I said absolutely yes,” Kathy Elliott said. “We’ll post lists of items that the soldiers need the most and people can bring them in. We’ll ship it over there sometime before Thanksgiving.”

“Now I’m being teased, they’re saying these are ‘Kathy’s Boys,’” Elliott continued. “I guess I do have more sons than I thought I was going to have, but it’s worth it.”

If you would like your donation to Oregon National Guard troops to be included in the next PGE shipment, please contact Kathy Elliott at (503) 464-8662, or via e-mail at kathy_elliott@pgn.com.

ORARNG prepares for training missions with big move

By Pvt. 1st Class Matthew Marcott,
115th MPAD

NEWBERG, Ore. – It's a sight that brings feelings of pride and honor to the American public, and impending doom to America's foes — convoys of military vehicles rolling down the highway, destined for transport to a foreign land — and eventual use in a military campaign.

During the week of July 12, personnel from the HAC 141 Support Battalion coordinated the loading and inventory of various Oregon National Guard vehicles that will be transported via railroad to several large-scale training missions throughout the state, and eventually the Pinion Canyon Training Site in Southern Colorado.

A large parcel of land on the north end of Newberg was designated the staging area where 50 ORARNG soldiers helped load the vehicles onto rail cars. The vehicles, which include two-and-a-half-ton trucks,

HMMWV "Humvees", conex boxes (large shipping containers), prime movers and trailers will make a stop in Portland, where they will then be arranged for their final destination at the Pinion Canyon site. Once there, the vehicles will be cataloged and assigned to Oregon National Guard units already training at the site.

Each rail car had a flagger who helped guide the vehicles into position. Another person acts as a "spotter", whose job it is to watch for potential hazards. Each vehicle is loaded separately to ensure safety and proper loading procedures. After each vehicle is loaded onto the rail car, the railroad contractor secures the vehicle to the platform of the rail car and does a final inspection to make sure the vehicle is properly secured for the long journey ahead. At this rate, the crew can load about 40 vehicles a day.

During the week, there were almost 160 vehicles loaded and ready for the trip to Colorado. In addition to vehicles, equip-



Photo by Spec. Timothy Bemrose, 115th MPAD

Rows of "Humvees", 2.5-Ton trucks, and other military vehicles wait in a staging area in North Newberg prior to being loaded onto rail cars. The shipment will be moved to the Pinion Canyon Training site in Colorado where ORARNG soldiers are training.



Photo by Spec. Timothy Bemrose, 115th MPAD

Spec Jim Russell of the 1249th Engineer Battalion guides a "Deuce and a Half" onto a rail car.

ment was also loaded onto the rail cars. A total of 400 individual pieces of equipment and vehicles were loaded prior to the July 16 operation deadline.

Every soldier who is on duty at the site has been specifically trained in rail car loading procedures, and safety issues regarding rail yard operations. A crew in Pinion Canyon has undergone similar training. All personnel involved in the move is highly motivated and well-trained, according to Chief Warrant Officer 5 Bob Morton of the 41st Brigade.

"You couldn't find a better bunch of guys", said Morton. "We have an excellent group working here. All of them are hard workers. They have made sure that all the vehicles have been through preventative

maintenance checks, and that everything is fully operational."

According to Morton, there is a 24-hour security detail to prevent tampering, but also to make sure that the load crew forgets nothing.

"The operation went well," Morton added. "We've had no safety incidents."

As for the load crew, morale is positive and attitudes are upbeat, according to Sgt. John Browning of the HAC 141 Support Battalion, who was pleased at the load crew's progress.

"Everything has been running pretty smoothly for the most part," Browning said. "We're getting all of the vehicles and equipment loaded at a good rate."

Fisher House Foundation helps 'Hero Miles', provides free tickets

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample,
Special to The Oregon Sentinel from
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Although the Defense Department provides a travel entitlement for service members and their families in serious medical emergencies, the Fisher House Foundation is hoping to help those service members and families not covered under the rule.

Through a program the foundation joined in December called Operation Hero Miles, the Fisher House hopes to give away hundreds of free airline tickets to help reunite service members hospitalized due to their service in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, and their family members.

The Fisher House Foundation is best known for its network of 32 comfort homes that provide a place to stay for families of patients receiving care at military major medical centers and Veterans Affairs medical centers. The comfort homes are located

throughout the country and overseas.

Foundation spokesman Jim Weiskopf said the tickets, donated by Anheuser-Busch, are available to service members undergoing treatment, as either an in- or outpatient at military and VA medical facilities as a result of their service in Iraq, Afghanistan and the surrounding area.

There are two categories of eligible recipients for the free airline tickets:

- Qualifying service men and women may be given a free round-trip airline ticket for a trip from the medical center to their home and return if they are not eligible for government-funded airfare.

- Qualifying service men and women may be given free round-trip tickets to enable their family or close friends to visit them while they are being treated at the medical center.

Currently, all donated tickets are for flights marketed or operated by American Airlines, American Eagle and American Connection. The flights do carry some restrictions, including 14-day advance

purchase, a Saturday night stay, a maximum stay of 30 days, and blackout dates.

Tickets are for travel in economy class, and seats may be limited. No changes can be made after the ticketing departure date, and changes made before the departure date are subject to a \$100 service charge. The foundation cannot assist with local travel, overnight accommodations, meals or other expenses.

Weiskopf emphasized that requests for tickets must originate with the service member, and must be made at the medical center. He said the requests should be sent by fax to the Fisher House Foundation (301) 294-8562. A copy of the request form can be obtained at the foundation's Web site. The Hero Miles program began in September out of concern that hundreds of service members returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan on rest and recuperation leave faced huge travel costs to get to their home destinations.

Federal law prohibited the military from paying for domestic personal travel for

service members or their families upon arrival in the United States or their home military installation. However, news of war veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan on R&R leave and not having enough money to pay for follow-on flights home, along with public response to the issue, helped persuade Congress to change the law. Beginning Jan. 1, the Pentagon began paying for domestic flights to their home destination for service members on R&R leave from overseas. Meanwhile, in an effort to continue the program, Weiskopf said the Fisher House Foundation is accepting airline tickets or vouchers from donors if the ticket can be transferred to another passenger.

At present, the foundation cannot accept frequent-flier miles. Individuals and organization wanting to donate miles should do so through the Operation Hero Miles Web site.

For more information please visit Operation Hero Miles at <http://www.heromiles.org/>

Airline passengers give up first-class seats to soldiers

By Michael E. Young, Special to The Oregon Sentinel from The Dallas Morning News

CHICAGO, Ill., July 14 – It all began with a chance encounter at an airport, a glance, an offer, a quiet chat.

"What's your seat number, soldier?"

"It's 23-B, sir," the soldier told the businessman.

"No, son, that's my seat. Yours is in first class." The man replied.

As more soldiers boarded, similar offers quickly came from the other first-class passengers.

And eight soldiers heading home from Iraq for two weeks of R&R found themselves with their officers in the big seats up front instead of the center seats in coach.

That spontaneous act of good will transformed American Airlines Flight 866, from Atlanta to Chicago, on June 29.

"The soldiers were very, very happy, and the whole aircraft had a different feeling," said Lorrie Gammon, one of the Dallas-based flight attendants working the trip.

"There were 14 seats in first class, and there were 12 soldiers there. The other two first-class passengers wanted to give up their seats, too, but they couldn't find any more soldiers."

Flight attendant Candi Spradlin of Conway, Ark., said she was impressed with how passengers treated the soldiers.

"If nothing else, those soldiers got a great homecoming," she said.

The soldiers were so surprised they barely knew what to do, said Gammon, who lives in Frisco. "They were so humble and thankful – they spent the whole flight saying thank you," she said.

"But we should have been saying thank you to them for what they're doing for us," Gammon added.

Burger King signs ESGR agreement

Col. (Ret.) Bob Elliot, Executive Director for the Oregon ESGR (Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve) Committee, attended the Northwest Burger King Owners Association conference in Sun River Idaho, July 17-19.

Elliot met with franchisees, educating them about the rights of employees who may also be members of the Oregon National Guard. Burger King is a company that provides entry-level positions for many high school graduates. As a result of the meeting, several of the owners signed statements of support for the ESGR.

The association is made up of owners of Burger King restaurants in Alaska, Wash., Ore., and Northern Calif.

News You Need to Know

Study looks at mental health of veterans returning from combat duty in Iraq, Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (July 2, 2004) – The mental health of Marines and soldiers fighting in Iraq and in Afghanistan is the topic of a report published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The study group, led by Charles W. Hoge, M.D., showed a post-deployment increase in the percentage of infantry troops suffering from a mental disorder. It also showed a higher percentage of troops unwilling to seek treatment for their mental disorders than in the general population. In response to the survey, American Legion National Commander John Brieden issued the following statement:

“It comes as no surprise that mortal combat induces post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental disorders. What might be a surprise to most Americans is that fighting for the proper government investments in those ‘who have borne the battle’ is an up-hill battle. Voters should insist that candidates for the presidency and Congress do everything in their power, if elected, to correct five fundamental inadequacies.

“First, the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system should be funded on a mandatory, rather than a discretionary basis, just like Social Security and Medicare, because a 44 percent increase in funding is overwhelmed by a 134 percent increase in VA’s patient population from 1993 to 2003, the year the war in Iraq began. America’s newest veterans will swell the demand. Thus, the VA budget should be calibrated to increase commensurately rather than subsist on increased co-payments and outright denial of treatment to veterans who make as little as \$25,000 a year.

“Second, Congress should pass provisions in the defense authorization that would improve health tracking for Guard and Reserve troops and authorize pre-separation counseling in which veterans service organizations may be involved. The American Legion supports complete pre- and post-deployment physicals instead of the current self-reported health-assessment questionnaires.

“Third, increase the active-duty force from 1.37 million to at least 1.6 million, and particularly raise the number of Army divisions from 10 to 12, which would raise Army end strength by 40,000 soldiers. These moves would reduce the deployment strain on our troops and make post-deployment treatment less of a challenge.

“Fourth, based on these findings and those of ‘Risk Factors for Course of PTSD Among Vietnam Veterans,’ a joint study co-authored by VA, Columbia University and American Legion researchers, the U.S. government should fund an even larger study - one that relies on clinical evaluations in addition to questionnaires - that will lead to improvements in PTSD early-diagnosis, prevention and treatment.

“Finally, the Defense Department must initiate policies and procedures to eliminate the stigma that discourages most sufferers of psychiatric disorders from seeking treatment. These policies are the least we can do for the men and women who sacrifice the most in the global war on terror.”

ORNG launches toll-free information line, website

Prepared by Sentinel Staff

The intensity of recent events in Iraq prompted officials at the Joint Force Headquarters to establish two new communication channels from Oregon National Guard leaders to the families.

In partnership with the Family Program Office, Public Affairs established the Family Program Hotline and the Family Program Online websites. Officials created these tools to give people the most current information on activities and events involving soldiers and airmen or their families.

“Families deserve to have an accurate and timely source of information as crises and events unfold,” said Capt Mike Braibish, a spokesperson from the public affairs office. “The hotline and website are intended to do just that.”

The Guard family will have access to the most current information on casualties, mobilizations, deployments, and other major events.

People can find the website by visiting the Oregon National Guard web page at <http://www.mil.state.or.us> then clicking on the “ORNG Family Program Hotline” link. To access the toll free information line call 1-888-688-2264.

Capt Braibish said he hopes to improve on the products, and feedback from family members is the key to making the product useful to them. People can provide feedback by calling 503-584-3886 or by sending an email to agpa@mil.state.or.us.

Feds enforce employee rights of returning, deployed Nat’l Guard, Reserve members

By Kathleen T. Rhem, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 8, 2004 – Several government agencies are working together to aggressively defend the reemployment rights of reserve-component service members.

Under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, reserve and National Guard troops cannot lose their jobs or their benefits due to military service.

In other words, reservists and Guardsmen who are deployed are guaranteed their previous civilian jobs or similar jobs with the same level of benefits when they return. Employers who fail to comply are in violation of federal law and can be sued by the U.S. government.

U.S. Special Counsel Scott J. Bloch is charged with prosecuting federal agencies that fail to comply with the tenets of USERRA. Bloch today visited the Pentagon to pledge his vigilance in these duties. He signed a statement of support for the Guard and reserves on behalf of federal employers.

Leaders of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs spoke at the ceremony.

Assistant Defense Secretary for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall compared the overwhelming support for today’s troops with his own days as a sailor during the Vietnam era. Hall said that in 21 months in his current position, he has had the opportunity to speak to at least 120,000 people around the country and abroad.

“Everywhere I go, I find a different spirit than perhaps existed in my younger years in the Navy. ... Controversy rocked the country, and many of our young men and women who came back from Vietnam ... weren’t welcomed,” Hall said.

“But what is not lacking today,” he continued, “is support from the rank and file, from the businesses and from the community.”

ESGR’s national director, Bob G. Hollingsworth, told those gathered, “America’s employers have rallied around (the troops) in an incredible way.” The employers realize “they are inextricably linked to the national defense of our nation,” he said.

Hall explained in an interview that employers of reserve-component troops are vital to the future of the National Guard and reserves, and thus America’s interests. “It’s very key to young men and women having the confidence and their families having the confidence that when they go off to answer the call to colors, when they return they will have a job waiting for them,” he said.

Bloch is especially committed to serving as an advocate for service members because his son, 19-year-old Marine Lance Cpl. Michael Bloch, is preparing to leave his home base of Twentynine Palms, Calif., for a second rotation in Iraq.

“As a member of the administration, I support USERRA,” Bloch said before signing the statement of support. “But I also support it as a citizen and as a father of an active-duty Marine.

“Our commitment... is the least that we can do to send a message to our wonderfully brave, talented and committed members of the military that we do support them and we do understand the sacrifices they’re making,” he said.

Bloch’s organization, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, recently brought a suit against a federal agency with the Merit Systems Protection Board on behalf of a reserve military member. He didn’t say which agency, but noted this is the first time a federal agency has been sued under the provisions of USERRA.

USERRA suits against civilian employers are brought by the Justice Department, but even those are rare. Bloch estimated roughly eight cases are referred to the Justice Department each year. Of those, perhaps five are litigated, he said.

With 1.2 million reserve-component service members in the U.S. military, that shows a very low percentage of cases aren’t resolved at the lowest levels, he said.

Hall explained that ESGR has 4,200 volunteers who work to educate employers throughout the country. Points of contact are posted prominently in all Guard and reserve centers, and the names and numbers of state representatives are available on the organization’s Web site.

In most cases, a phone call to an ESGR representative will solve a reserve-component service member’s problem. The ESGR representative will meet with employers to explain the requirements mandated by USERRA.

USARRA is a law many employers are unfamiliar with, Bloch said. “That’s just one they kind of overlook until it confronts them,” he said. “Then, when they learn about it, generally they say, ‘Oh, whatever we need to do, we’ll do.’”

Pritt breaks ground on new memorial



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

Brig. Gen. (then Col.) Douglas A. Pritt (center), along with Korea War Veterans and representatives from veterans agencies and state government help break ground at the site of the new Medal of Honor Memorial at the State Capitol, May 16. The memorial is scheduled to be completed by 2004.

“It is very fitting we acknowledge the sacrifice these great Americans made to defend our nation and protect our way of life,” Pritt said. “I was honored and proud to represent the Oregon National Guard at such a prestigious event,” he continued.

Also in attendance were Chaplain Richard Meyers, Col. Mike Caldwell, Deputy Director of State Affairs, and Maj. Arnold V. Strong, State Public Affairs Officer.

Soldier makes promotion to Sergeant before deployment to Afghanistan



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

Tremaine Clayton of Charlie Co., 141st Support Battalion (Med) was promoted to Sergeant in a pinning ceremony at the Military Department in Salem on July 13, 2004.

The promotion came only days before Clayton deployed to Afghanistan in support of the 41st Brigade Combat Team’s Afghan National Army mission.

Given only a few hours notice, Clayton volunteered for duty in support of Operation Enduring Freedom to conduct training for the Afghan National Army, as the embedded training teams’ Medical Health Care NCO. Final mobilization training will be completed at Camp Atturbury, Ind. The team will depart for the Middle East region in early August. Clayton is one of 16 team members from Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 41st Brigade Combat Team, being lead by Lt. Col. David Enyeart.

Lt Col. Leah Sundquist (r.) and Clayton’s wife, Carrie Leigh (l.), did the honors of pinning Tremaine with the rank of E-5.

News You Need to Know

Army overwhelmed by retiree volunteers

Due to an incredible response to the Army's recent Voluntary Recall of Retirees, the Army's Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operations Center (CMAOC) is no longer seeking the assistance of qualified retired Soldiers. The CMAOC has been overwhelmed by the response of over a thousand Retired Soldiers who were willing to return to service. This is a tribute to the retired men and women who have already served their nation and are now willing to step up and serve the Army once more. On behalf of the Army's CMAOC, Military.com would like to thank each and every one of the Men and Women who volunteered.

For more information, please visit: http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,Army_Retiree_Job_060304.html

Senate bill effecting retirees needs scrutiny

A proposed bill affecting veterans is sitting in the Veterans Benefits Subcommittee. H.R. 3492 would allow Disabled Veterans to pursue needed disability benefits by allowing them to obtain an attorney to represent them while filing claims for disability benefits. The Veterans' Right to an Attorney Act would prohibit a fee from being charged, allowed, or paid for attorneys' services with respect to veterans' benefits claims at any time before the date on which the Board of Veterans' Appeals first makes a final decision in the case.

Individuals are encouraged to express how they feel about this bill by contacting their representatives in Congress. For more information, please visit: http://vote.military.com/military/mail/oneclick_compose/?alertid=6117156

DoD eligible for health care reimbursement

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) – Department of Defense employees called to active duty can now claim retroactive reimbursement of health insurance premiums paid while on active duty supporting a contingency operation on or after Dec. 8, 1995.

To be eligible for reimbursement of Federal Employees Health Benefits premiums, the employee or former employee must meet the following requirements:

- Must have been a civilian employee of DOD at the time called to active duty.
- Must have been enrolled in FEHB and paid the employee share of the premiums, either by payroll deduction after returning from active duty or by direct payments to the payroll office during the period of active duty.
- Must have been a reserve component member.
- Must have been called or ordered to active duty to support a contingency operation as defined in section 101(a)(13) of Title 10, United States Code.
- Must have been placed on leave without pay or separated from federal civilian service to perform active duty.
- Must have served on active duty for more than 30 consecutive days for each period for which reimbursement is claimed.

For more information and procedures for filing a claim for retroactive reimbursement, visit the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team Web site at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/res-emp-info.htm.

Current employees may call (800) 616-3775, press 2 for civilian, then 2 for benefits and entitlements. People overseas can dial the commercial direct access number for that

country and then (800) 997-2378.

Hearing-impaired employees can call TDD at (800) 382-0893. (Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center News Service).

Non-profit to help with childcare for deployed Guard, Reserve

WASHINGTON, July 1, 2004 – A nonprofit organization dedicated to helping families find high-quality child care is working to provide such care free of charge to Reserve and National Guard members on rest-and-recuperation leave from Iraq.

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies launched Operation Child Care in May. To date, more than 5,000 child-care providers have signed on to provide at least four free hours of childcare to reservists and guardsmen.

"Child-care providers who meet state and local child-care regulations will provide four or more hours of free child care so that service members can attend to family business or take their spouses out for a date," according to a news release on the program.

Three major commercial chains that specialize in child care; KinderCare Learning Centers, Bright Horizons Family Solutions and LaPetite Academy centers; also have signed on to provide free care. KinderCare and LaPetite are each providing one full day of childcare free of charge to eligible service members. Bright Horizons is providing two days of free childcare.

Linda Smith, executive director of NAC-CRRA, said the idea for Operation Child Care came out of a discussion she had in October with an official who oversees child-care centers for the Army. The two were discussing circumstances facing troops in today's high-paced military.

The following week, Smith pitched the idea to a group of state child-care referral specialists meeting in Chicago and got an overwhelming response.

"They all wanted to support it," Smith said in a telephone interview with American Forces Press Service.

Titles of different sections on the site include:

- * 10 Ways to Stay Involved With Your Children During Deployment;
- * Supporting Young Children During War and Conflict;
- * Talking to Children about a War in Iraq and Terror;
- * Healthy Parenting Tool Kit;
- * Getting to Know Children Again; and
- * The Help Guide to Guard and Reserve Family Readiness.

The site also includes tips on how to choose the best childcare for your family and a list of things to consider before calling to request care.

Smith said officials decided to target the program to Guard and Reserve members because they don't generally have the strong support system available to active-duty service members on military bases.

"They really don't have access to military bases to begin with; they don't get the same level of support in other ways; and they generally are the friends, neighbors and relatives of the people who are providing child care across this country," Smith said.

Family childcare provider Chris Milton, who has volunteered to provide free hours of childcare through the program, knows first-hand the challenges facing military families. Her younger brother was deployed to the Middle East during 1991's Operation Desert Storm. He missed Milton's wedding and the birth of his own daughter during that deployment.

"Our family lost a lot (of family time) when my brother served," Milton said. She cares for children in her Connecticut home and said that she thinks it's important to be able to help these other families at this

time.

"It's so hard," she added.

Milton said her brother endorsed the idea of providing childcare free of charge to military members, thinking back to his deployment experience.

"He told me, 'Chris, that would have been the best thing. We would have loved that,'" she said.

Active duty time puts VA loans within reach

Active duty service during wartime reduces eligibility requirements for National Guard members to receive home loan benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Normally, guardsmen must serve six years before becoming eligible for a VA home loan said Keith Pedigo, director of the VA Loan Guaranty Service, but active during wartime gives them the same eligibility requirements as active duty service members.

"During wartime, you only have to serve for 90 days to become eligible for a VA home loan," he said.

He noted the best way for guardsmen to find out if they qualify for a home loan is to submit an application for a certificate of eligibility to one of the VA Eligibility Centers. The Los Angeles center handles applications for Oregon.

For more information, visit the VA website at <http://www.va.gov>, and click the home loans link.

Soldiers encouraged to apply for 4th Qtr tuition reimbursement

Soldiers are eligible to receive Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) by attending courses at an accredited educational institution. The institution must be recognized by the U.S. Education Department. Programs include; high school degree (or GED), Vocational, Technical, or Licensing Certificate, Associates Degree, Baccalaureate (Bachelor Degree), Masters Degree (or first professional degree including Doctorate of Jurisprudence or J.D.). For all other non-degree programs, secondary school accreditation or specialized accreditation is required.

The FTA program is typically an "up front" program in which Army National Guard provides institutions payment prior to or shortly after courses have begun. In instances where payments are delayed, the applicant may have to pay the school and be reimbursed later.

Students are encouraged to submit their requests as early as possible to avoid payment delays.

For more information, or to access the on-line application, please visit www.virtualarmory.com, and click on the Education link. Those who do not have Internet access are encouraged to complete a form DA 2171-E and turn it into their education office immediately.

Warrant Officers to see insignia changes

Effective July 9, 2004, there were two significant changes to the look of the Warrant Officer's uniforms.

The first change is the design of the Senior Chief Warrant Officer Five grade insignia. The insignia that has been worn thus far was originally designed for selected Chief Warrant Officer Fours that were designated "Master Warrant Officers". When the grade of Chief Warrant Officer Five (CWO-5) was approved by law in 1991, the Master Warrant Officer insignia was designated for use with the new grade. As part of the overall Warrant Officer transformation, the CW5 insignia is now changing to the original designed that was approved, but never used, for the grade of W-5 in the early 1970's. This design is a Silver Bar with a single Black stripe centered along the length of the bar. This change will align the W-5 rank insignia of the Army with the approved W-5 insignia of the other branches of the military.

The second, and more significant change, will affect all Warrant Officers. Also effective on July 9, 2004, Warrant Officers exchanged the venerable "Eagle Rising" collar insignia for the insignia of their individual Service Branches. The old insignia was emblematic of a time when Warrant Officer's technical skills and duties could be transferred between service arms easily and with little formal training. The contemporary Warrant Officer, however, has very focused, complex and specific technical skills and abilities honed through extensive technical training and applied to the mission of a single branch or functional area.

By order of the Army Chief of Staff, in recognition of the branch-focused roles as seasoned specialized technicians, Warrant Officers will wear the insignia of their individual branch upon completion of their specific branch technical qualification. In other words, Aviation Warrant Officers will wear the Aviation collar insignia, and Maintenance Warrant Officers will wear Quartermaster insignia, and so on. Warrant Officer Candidates (WOC) and junior Warrant Officers will continue to wear the "Eagle Rising" insignia until they complete their branch basic technical qualification courses.

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Members of ORANG's 101st Combat Operations Group pose for a group photo toward the end of a two-week deployment to Amedee Army Depot near Herlong, Calif. in early May. The unit, made up of the 244th and the 272nd Combat Communications Squadrons, 123rd Weather Flight, 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron, and the newly-emerging 125th Special Tactics Squadron. See related story on page 4.

Photo by TSgt. Nick Choy, State Public Affairs Office

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Virtual Armory.com: The world's largest armory at your fingertips

By Sgt. 1st Class Guy Britnell,
Marketing NCO,
State of Oregon

Are you ready and willing to show your Guard pride? Think you could give a boost to recruiting but aren't sure how? Tell people your story – why you joined the Army National Guard and why you still serve.

If you are not familiar with the web site, www.virtualarmory.com, you need to get to a computer and visit this site. The site, managed by the Advertising Branch of the Strength Maintenance Division of the Army National Guard, is packed full of information useful to all members of the Army National Guard.

Soldiers can log on and request a copy of the *2004 National Guard Almanac*, the *Citizen-Soldier's Guide to Mobilization Finance* as well as the *YOU CAN Guide to Paying for your College Education*. All of these publications are available at no cost to the soldier.

You can also put in a request for a presentation at your school, workplace or civic group, and your Recruiting and Retention office will handle all the details. Simply, contact your local Recruiting and Retention NCO and give him or her the details.

There are also sections on Leadership, Training, Retention, Physical Fitness and many others.

New to the Virtual Armory are two programs, Home Front Heroes and Recruiting Team Gear. As a soldier you may have received ribbons, medals and awards in recognition of your service to your country. The friends, family and employers who have supported you receive no such recognition. The only personal acknowledgement that they are given comes from you. **The Home Front Heroes Program** has been established so people can show your appreciation, and that of your commanders and your country, to those individuals who have been key in supporting your decision to serve. This web site will allow you to submit the names of these Home Front Heroes so

they will receive some small portion of the thanks and respect they so richly deserve. Each Hero package includes a custom-designed presentation envelope, a personalized letter from Army National Guard leadership, a Home Front Hero bumper sticker and a Home Front Hero lapel pin.

The Recruiting Team Gear section on Virtual Armory will equip you with the items to help get you started. You can order, at no cost, bumper stickers, display banners, Army National Guard posters, yard signs and t-shirts.

Other programs are planned in the coming months. Virtual Armory is constantly being updated, so visit often.

Free concert honors military

There will be a free event honoring all military members on Saturday, July 31 at the Evergreen Aviation Museum in McMinnville, Ore.

The opening ceremonies will begin at 11:00 a.m., with a free concert held shortly thereafter. Oregon's Governor, Ted Kulongoski, has proclaimed the day to be Troop & Veterans Appreciation Day in Oregon, and encourages all citizens to join in the observance.

Here is an opportunity to say "Thank You" to members of the military for their selfless service and sacrifice.

Honored speakers include Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne, Jr., Acting Adjutant General of the Oregon National Guard, and Lars Larson, KXL radio host. Various organizations will be present with information showing the many ways you can support troops & their families.

The Coalition of Troop Support will be handing out free Evergreen Aviation Museum tickets for all Active-duty servicemen and women with a valid ID card.

For more information, contact Jan Mullaney at (503) 662-3399 or Lisa Fenchel at (503) 434-5981.

ORNG, Bulgaria break ground in friendship, memoriam



Photo by Master Sgt. (Ret.) David Funk, Special to the Oregon Sentinel

Neycho Lliev Nedelchev, Mayor of Suhozem, Bulgaria, breaks ground on the Lt. David R. Kingsley memorial in Suhozem. Kingsley guided a heavily-damaged B-17 into a field on June 23, 1944 after his plane was attacked by German fighters. His efforts saved the crew and the nearby village, but Kingsley was killed in the crash, actions which earned him the Medal of Honor.

Standing to the right are Brig. Gen. Raymond C. Byrne, Jr., Acting Adjutant General of the Oregon National Guard, and Col. John Adkisson, Commander of the 173rd FW in Klamath Falls, Ore.

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