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Oregon Sentinel

VOL 6, ISSUE NO. 2

FEBRUARY 2008

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON NATIONAL GUARD

Individuals help reverse growing trend of Soldier, Airmen suicides

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

Many of us have seen the horrible images of war – U.S. service personnel killed or maimed by road-side bombs, with limbs blown to pieces in combat zones thousands of miles away.

Less visible are the wounds many of us don't see, but Soldiers must endure nonetheless, as they transition back to civilian life. Many of these mental scars, which experts say, left untreated, may lead to suicide.

"I know what it's like to wake up with cold sweats. I know what it's like to cry for no reason, and to feel lonely," said Patrick Silva, of Alpha Co. 1-186 Infantry Battalion.

According to Oregon's 2005 Violent Death Report, the suicide rate among male veterans is twice that of non-veteran males. The difference is largely driven by elevated rates of suicide in three age groups; 18-24, 35-44, and 45-54.

Silva, 25, was at risk for pushing those numbers a fraction higher.

See **More people** on PAGE 6



Above: Patrick Silva at Paul Revere's gravesite in Boston, Mass., in May, 2007. Silva had just returned home from his mission in Afghanistan, and was visiting his sister, who was graduating from Brown University. Silva is still in the ORARNG's A Co, 1-186 IN.

Right: Sgt. Patrick Silva, and members of his unit, Oregon Army National Guard's Alpha Co., 1-186 Infantry, delivering school supplies and toiletries to the locals in Gardez, Afghanistan. The 1-186 IN worked closely with the Afghan National Army during their mission there.

The long road back



Soldiers save a life using training, latest technology

Story by
Maj. Michael Braibish,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

It was a case of being in the worst of conditions, but in the right place at the right time.

A man, apparently suffering a heart attack, collapsed to the floor at the Anderson Readiness Center in Salem just before noon on Feb. 13, and soldiers of the Oregon Army National Guard saved his life.

Capt. Daryl Ottaway, the Occupational Health Nurse for the ORARNG, watched the man fall, and he immediately sprang into action. To the man's good fortune, he was outside the ORARNG Medical Command.

Suspecting a heart attack, Ottaway called out to fellow workers to bring an automated external defibrillator – or AED – as he checked for breathing and a pulse.

"The AED was on the wall outside my office," said Staff Sgt. Richard Powell, a trained and experienced Army medic. He grabbed the gear and rushed to the scene. Powell had just returned on Feb. 5 from a refresher course that made his training with the AED current.

Ottaway had already begun CPR when Powell and another soldier arrived at his side with the equipment – the AED and a medical kit with an oxygen tank. Sgt. 1st Class Bill Lowe, the health systems manager for the ORARNG ripped the man's shirt open as Powell prepared the AED.

Several other soldiers who heard the commotion called 9-1-1.

Ottaway confirmed the man had stopped breathing, so the team followed the instruc-

tions on the AED and shocked him to restart his heart. The AED analyzed the victim, and Ottaway noted the man started breathing shallowly.

Ottaway continued to monitor the patient as Lowe and Powell set up an oxygen bottle taken from the medical kit. Powell noted that preparation for a worst-case situation helped the soldiers deal with what could otherwise have been a deadly situation.

"We had the right equipment at the right time," said Powell. "There are lots of nice things to have, but for that man at that time the AED is what he needed to save his life."

Powell said Army medical technicians are required to have a high degree of training that includes use of an AED.

As the three soldiers tended to their patient, Capt. Sharel Paradis and 1st Sgt. Donna Adams turned their attention to the man's wife who had observed everything. She was distraught, and Paradis and Adams assured her the other soldiers would take care of her husband.

When firefighters arrived Ottaway, Lowe, and Powell transferred responsibility for the patient to them, but as they did so the man stopped breathing again.

Ottaway alerted the firefighters who administered another shock. The man started breathing again, and with the oxygen he began to become more coherent and responsive. Firefighters then put the man on a stretcher and transported him to Salem Hospital.

"In my 35 years of doing this I've never had anyone whose heart and breathing have stopped live," said Powell. "It was like a



Photo by Master Sgt. Tom Hovie,
Oregon Military Department Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Richard Powell, with an automated external defibrillator. Powell and two fellow Soldiers used to save a man's life.

miracle. I'd never seen it before, how he'd come back."

AEDs are typically found in public places including corporate and government offices, shopping centers, airports, restaurants, hotels, sports stadiums, schools and many other locations where people may congregate.

The Oregon National Guard has one each AED unit at the Military Department and Anderson Readiness Center.

OFFICE OF THE STATE ADJUTANT GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE
NATIONAL GUARD OF OREGON
P.O. BOX 14350
SALEM, OREGON 97309-5047
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PRRST STD
US Postage
PAID
Permit #605
Salem, OR

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State Commander in Chief
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Adjutant General
Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees

Asst. Adjutant General, Air
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State Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas R. Moe

State Command Chief
Chief Master Sgt. Rodney R. Smith

Oregon Sentinel Editorial Staff

State Public Affairs Officer
Maj. Michael S. Braibish
michael.s.braibish@mil.state.or.us

Deputy Public Affairs Officer
Kay F. Fristad
kay.f.fristad@mil.state.or.us

Editor in Chief
Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy
nick.r.choy@mil.state.or.us

Contributing Writer
Kimberly L. Lippert
kimberly.l.lippert@mil.state.or.us

Contributing Photographer/Writer
Master Sgt. Thomas L. Hovie
tom.hovie@or.ngb.army.mil

Information Manager
Staff Sgt. Daniel T. Quitugua
daniel.quitugua@us.army.mil

Contributors
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs
Unit Public Affairs Representatives

Editorial Offices
c/o Oregon Military Department
Attn: Editor, Oregon Sentinel
P.O. Box 14350
Salem, Oregon 97309
503-584-3917

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COMMENTARY

The Oregon National Guard goes to Congress



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

It's our job to remain a ready, reliable, and relevant force in service to our nation and state. To do our job, it's important that we have the right resources.

I visited our Congressional delegation in Washington D.C. earlier this month to tell them what's important to the Oregon National Guard. We've had great from our elected officials in the Capitol, and I want you to be aware of what we're telling them so you can understand our priorities.

Our top legislative priorities for 2008 are F-22 procurement for the National Guard and establishing a Stryker Brigade.

It seems that budget constraints have driven the acquisition of the F-22, not the actual need. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission validated the need for the Air Sovereignty Alert mission at Portland

Air National Guard Base, and the F-15 fleet is quickly losing the edge against developing threats while costing more and more to maintain. The prudent course of action is to fund the F-22 production line and bring the airframe into the Air National Guard.

We also need to establish another Stryker Brigade in the Army National Guard. Doing so keeps us relevant – it ensures our compatibility with the Army, increases our mobility, enhances communication capabilities, and improves our ability to support Homeland Security on the West Coast.

In addition to these top priorities, there are a number of initiatives we're working looking to Washington for support.

In Central Oregon we want the outmoded Air Force radar site at Christmas Valley to be turned over to the 173rd Fighter Wing for custodianship. This will enhance the training we can make available to F-15 pilots.

Until the F-22 is in our inventory, we need to continue upgrading our F-15s. We need to focus on specific radar upgrades, computer upgrades, helmet systems that improve situational awareness and response, as well as engine upgrades.

We also asked our delegation to be aware of Army aviation issues. We need continued funding for the Joint Cargo Aircraft, UH-60 Blackhawk modifications, and the upgrade to CH-47F aircraft.

We also want to see funding continue for

the UH-72 Lakota – the helicopter that will replace our aging OH-58 Kiowa fleet; funding for firefighting equipment for the Lakota is important too.

Equipment shortages have concerned us for some time. Though we have improved in some areas, we still have shortages from vehicles to clothing. To fix our shortfalls – those equipment items National Guard Bureau has authorized for us – we need nearly \$100 million.

In addition to the equipment issues we face, we have several personnel and family support concerns that we took to Congress: mitigating the impact of deploying full-time troops; tax breaks for employers and self-employed troops; funding for the ORNG Reintegration Team and Federal Tuition Assistance program; and improving the funding of the Youth Challenge Program.

We also have Homeland Security concerns: funding for chemical detection equipment, improving tactical command and control systems, and enhancing mobile communications systems.

Finally, we also asked for support for a wide range of military construction programs that will improve our facilities around the state.

I encourage you to know and understand our priorities are so you can help us communicate why they're important in our service to Oregon and the United States of America.

Diversity should be a 'way of life' for military members

Let's talk a little bit about diversity.

When you hear about diversity we typically think about the differences between people that are related to race, gender, religious beliefs and sexual orientation.

Our first reactions as we consider diversity is to define our differences label and categorize them. We might even interpret diversity as ignoring these differences in our efforts not to prejudge based on these differences.

I challenge all of us to see diversity not as an initiative, but to see it as "a way of life". Rather than defining our differences, we should *discover* our differences. Rather than labeling our differences, we should respect and value them. And, rather than categorizing these differences we should celebrate them.

I suggest we make diversity "a way of life" for two important reasons. First, this is a healthy human approach that will improve the quality of life for each of us and for our society. Second, we live in a diverse society and if our workplace does not represent and honor our differences, we will struggle in our efforts to attract and retain the best Airman and Soldiers.

It is comfortable to associate with those who are like us, and to respect, value and celebrate the things we hold in common. I challenge all of us to take the time and energy to make diversity a "way of life".

So how do we do this? In life – we celebrate the things we value, we value the things we respect, and we respect the things we discover. Our journey starts with discovery.

In this New Year, our organizations will embark on a new journey that begins with discovery and challenges. I invite and encourage everyone to take the opportunity to enrich and change their life. Rediscover what is going on around you, we have many challenges facing us this year so let's hit them head on as a diversified group.

Let's take a look at ourselves in the whole-person concept. This is a subject that continually comes up and thought I would address it again. For years we have told our

Airman that they should complete Professional Military Education "so they could be promoted". We told them to get a Community College of the Air Force degree "so they could be promoted". We told them that they should do community service, be a member of the different enlisted groups we have around the state such as the Junior Enlisted, Top Three, or be a member of a professional organization "so they could get promoted".

Unfortunately, many times people do these things for just that reason, "so they can get promoted". The fact is, you should always have any available PME because it gives you the tools to make you a better leader.

You should get a CCAF degree because going to school broadens your horizons, gives you more insight on the world around you.

You should do community service and be a member of the Junior Enlisted and Top-3 because you are a role model and you need to give back to your community and to your service.

You should be a member of a professional organization because they help preserve things dear to you, like benefits and compensation.

People who do these things "just to get promoted" are square-fillers. They look real good on paper, but when it comes time to lead or make decisions, the often fall short because they never really grasped the true meaning of why we do these things. The development of "the whole person" goes beyond filling the square – it's about developing the intangible qualities and characteristics that make one an outstanding leader.

Counsel your Airman on the real meaning of the whole-person concept. If they do all these things well, then promotion will happen anyway.

Be a visionary. Technology is rapidly advancing and we will have to keep pace. Today, information superiority is a core competency, and the associated technology is reinventing itself every minute. In the next century future warfare will be significantly different from what it is today, which will



Chief Master Sgt. Rodney R. Smith,
State Command Chief Master Sergeant,
Oregon Military Department

change the nature of what we in the Guard do and how we do it. We will have to be flexible in our career paths. The enlisted force must help define what those career paths will be. It will be an exciting adventure for those who have drive and determination and who want a profession that goes beyond 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. mentality.

When it is all said and done, we need to count our blessings. We live in the greatest country in the world – a country that is full of opportunity – where you can dream and be anything you want to be. We have made tremendous improvements in quality of life in the National Guard – we continue to keep focus on our Quality of Life Strategy to continue to improve the readiness of our National Guard.

One only has to watch CNN to see that there is a lot of misery in this world, and our living standard far exceeds that of other nations. We won the Cold War. Our military is intact and our people are living well.

Sometimes we need to put our challenges in perspective. The Oregon National Guard is better than it has ever been. That's because of all of you – Airmen, Soldiers, NCOs, officers and civilians – who everyday give your all and are the best at what you do. I have a deep respect for everyone who wears the uniform. You have committed yourselves to a calling that is unlike any other. To be associated with the military is to be associated with the best that America has to offer.

When all is said and done, you will have proudly served your nation – where the bottom line was not profit, but freedom.

COMMENTARY

Oregon Guardsmen strive to be 'Champions of Diversity'

By
Senior Master Sgt. Max White,
142nd Fighter Wing
Human Resources Advisor



During the second week of February, members of the Oregon National Guard became Diversity Champions during a life-changing three-day class in Portland.

This combined class of 29 Army and Air National Guard members, self-named "Code Purple", did not just learn by lecture. They participated in activities and experienced emotions which will have lasting impact on their organizations and on their family lives.

I had already gone through the Diversity Champions class in early November, 2007, in Columbus, Ohio, and yet I found the February course just as resonating even in my support and

observational role.

"Code Purple" entered the course as a room full of individuals and

emerged as a high performance team. They emerged from the course with a profound understanding that diversity is not about the organization obtaining a quota of different races, ethnicities, or genders.

They now realize diversity is about getting 100-percent out of the people 100-percent of the time. It is not about counting heads; it is about making heads count.

The interactive team-building exercises separated the Diversity

Champions curriculum from others encountered in the past. Participants are now prepared to answer questions of why diversity is more important than ever to the Oregon National Guard.

Diversity is the right thing to do. From a moral standpoint it is essential we treat everyone in our organization with total quality respect and dignity. That means not only acknowledging individuals' worth as human beings, but also actively including and engaging them in the important missions of the Oregon National Guard.

Diversity is the law of the land and organizational policy. It is not an option to be out of compliance with that policy.

The world is becoming more diverse. America's changing demographics demand we embrace the philosophy of diversity in order to keep the Oregon National Guard viable. After one

examines the changing demographics of our state and nation, it becomes evident that we need to not only recruit, but also retain a younger and more culturally-diverse workforce. One of the keys to successful retention in the National Guard is our understanding of what's important to soldiers and airmen of different age and cultural backgrounds.

Diversity is about creating a safe and productive environment. Corporations which have not had such an appropriate atmosphere have suffered financially from law suits. In this time of ever tightening budgets, the Oregon National Guard can not afford to pay out large sums of money to settle these complaints. Nor can it afford the loss of productivity resulting from losing the services of those who have been sued.

Diversity it is a business imperative. Companies where

CEOs cited diversity as a high priority experienced a 22-percent growth rate as compared to CEOs who did not. Moreover, ideas produced by diverse groups were rated 11-percent more effective. As Gil Griffin, Managing Director of Korn-Ferry's Diversity Practice said, "*Instituting diversity is not some ploy to win at public relations. It is to win a competitive bottom-line battle. Anyone who is doing diversity for do-goodism will fail.*"

Diversity helps build highly-effective performance teams. We can only accomplish our increasingly demanding missions if we form high-performance teams. That is what diversity is all about.

In future columns, I will cover different topics of diversity which are pertinent to our military, and why diversity is important to us as an organization.

Oregonians to celebrate 150 years of statehood

Event a chance for Guardsmen to shine

The conversations often go like this:

"Sasquatch denial?"
No. Sesquicentennial.
"Some squid need dental?"
NO. Sesquicentennial.
"I give up."

It's hard to pronounce, so let's just call it Oregon's 150th birthday for now.

"It's Oregon's birthday?"

Yes. Our great state will be 150 years old on Feb. 14 next year.

"Oregon 150. Why didn't you say so?"

of the Sentinel you'll see a monthly story that tells you of the rich history and heritage of this great state and

our role in it. You'll also see occasional articles and information on Oregon 150 that help us "Sustain the Spirit."

There will also be opportunities for Soldiers and Airmen to participate in a variety of state-wide programs:

Oregon Stories: No one knows Oregon better than Oregonians, so share a story about our state that you cherish—the way things used to be, or what you hope they can become. Visit www.oregon150.org/oregon-stories form more details.

Travel Oregon 150: Oregonians are encouraged to break out of their daily routine and get out and see the diverse landscapes, people, and places of their home state.

Take Care of Oregon (TCO) Day: May 16, 2009 - TCO is an opportunity for Oregonians to tend and mend the Beaver State by lending a hand in many of the service projects aimed at beautifying this already beautified land – and getting to know your community better. Armories can work with local communities on joint projects

Oregon Youth Legacy Projects: The project will bring tomorrow's leaders together today and invite them to envision the changes they wish to see in the world over the next 50 years. Then, we'll set off preserving our future by rallying youth from across the state to rehabilitate parks throughout Oregon.

For more information and updates on the projects or Oregon 150 visit: www.oregon150.org.

By the way, it's pronounced sēs'kwī-sēn-tēn'ē-əl.

I hope that clears things up.



Maj. Michael S. Braibish,
State Public Affairs Officer,
Oregon Military Department

If you hear about the seskwī...quirski...squīs- it's even hard to type - sesquicentennial, just think of it as "Oregon 150." Oregon will officially kick-off "Oregon 150" – our collective birthday celebrations – on Feb. 13, 2009.

So what does it mean to us in the Oregon National Guard? Well, a lot. Oregon's history is our history. People with pioneering and enterprising spirits, people who relied on each other for strength and security, founded this great state. The theme for the sesquicentennial is born of that reliance and their character: "Sustain the Spirit."

We sustain the spirit of Oregon in our own way as a ready, reliable, and relevant force that answers the call. We're an integral part of our communities – a familiar face, a helping hand in times of trouble, a friend who's there when needed.

To celebrate our rich heritage, the Oregon Military Department will host the Military Ball on Feb. 14, 2009 - one of the first events of the sesqui...of Oregon 150. Starting with this issue

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

Army aviation unit half way through deployment, looks forward to homecoming



All,

We are now at the midway point of this deployment and close to the midpoint for our time in Iraq. For most of us here, the time has gone by very quickly, thanks to our busy schedule.

We have begun preparations for our redeployment and anticipate that our demobilization site will be Fort Carson, CO. We have also been in regular contact with TAC-6 (Theater Aviation Company Six), a unit stood up by OSAA to provide some relief to the five C-23 companies and increase dwell time at home between future rotations. They are training up and will be arriving late April.

To date, A-641 has executed 1750 flight hours, hauled 4 million pounds of cargo and transported over 8,000 passengers throughout the Iraq AOR. Several aircrew members are approaching 300 combat flight hours.

As always, your soldiers are making you proud. After 3 months, attitudes are as positive as day 1 and work ethics are even higher. We have found a true sense of accomplishment and are very proud of the work we have done thus far and excited to continue to enhance the reputation of C-23 companies and Army Fixed-Wing in Iraq.

As ever, we look forward to reuniting with you all and are eager for that great day. Keep the lights on and the home fires burning.

I have attached some pictures. Take care and God Bless.

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



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FEATURES

Oregon looks back at 150 years of statehood with tribute to state's 'first' warriors

Story by Warren Aney,
Oregon Army National Guard
Historian

First Warriors

For thousands of years the people of what is now Oregon carried on a proud warrior tradition. This tradition was based on a desire and need to protect family, community, territory and honor (and, in some cases, to acquire the goods of richer neighbors or to capture slaves).

There were many distinct cultures in this area. They called themselves Nee-Mee-Poo, Umatilla, Wasco, Walpapi, Clackamas, Clatsop, Clatskanie, Luckiamute, Calapooia, Takelma, Tututni, Umpqua -- by some counts 70 or more native cultures based on differences in language,



Pictograph of shield bearing warriors in a combat scene. This rock painting is in the Butte Creek area near Fossil, an area of conflict between the Great Basin Paiute and people of the Columbia Plateau.

lifestyle and tradition.

These cultures can be loosely separated into five arbitrary regions based on language and lifestyle. Some of these regional cultures were primarily peaceful and stationary fishers and traders. Others were wandering hunters and gatherers. Some were more belligerent than others, engaging in periodic raids and attacks on their richer neighbors. Others settled their differences with ceremonial combat, stopping and disengaging once blood was shed.

The Lower Columbia peoples lived in permanent villages with an economy based on fishing and trade. They lived in permanent villages along the Columbia River from Celilo Falls to the Pacific Ocean. This was the most densely populated part of early Oregon -- over 200 people per square mile. All spoke some dialect of the Chinookan language. Slaves were numerous in these villages and were usually acquired through trade, not warfare. When they did go to war, it was usually in response to attacks from more warlike tribes of the north Pacific coast.

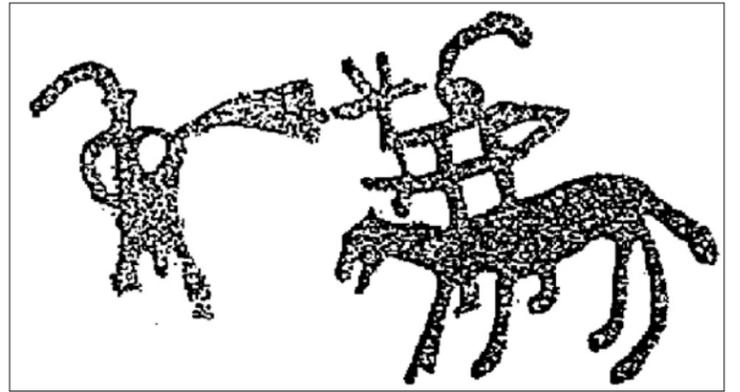
The Coastal peoples lived in large, permanent villages on coastal rivers. They spoke a variety of languages and exhibited



a variety of cultural patterns. The Clatsop were traditional enemies of the lower Columbia peoples.

The Interior Valley peoples lived in the Willamette, Umpqua, and Rogue valleys. They had a very diverse variety of languages and cultures. Some groups engaged in raids to settle feuds or obtain slaves and some settled disputes with ritualized warfare. Men from each side would face each other, shoot arrows, and then one side would retreat after a few men were wounded.

The Plateau peoples lived in the mid-Columbia area from Celilo Falls to the Snake River. These were a proud people, ready and willing to go to war. War party leaders were specially chosen for that role based on their demonstrated skill at battle. Their primary adversaries were the Paiute and Bannock peoples of the Great Basin. Around 1740 they acquired horses from the



Photos courtesy of "Columbia Plateau Rock Art" by James D. Keyser

Pictograph of coup count scene, a non-fatal contact between combatants, possibly Nee-Mee-Poo (Nez Perce) and Bannock, taking place after acquisition of horses in Hells Canyon.

Paiute -- through trade, not combat -- and soon became a horse-rich and combat ready culture. The Nee-Mee-Poo (Nez Perce) were particularly noted for their planned and intelligent battle strategies.

The Great Basin peoples were all part of the Paiute culture. They lived in small family bands scattered throughout what is now southeastern Oregon. This was the least populated part of early Oregon, with around 5 people per square mile. They were primarily gatherers and hunters, covering long distances to sustain themselves on wild plants, game and fish. They were

the first of these regional groups to acquire horses. They were regular marauders of their richer neighbors to the north and were even more effective at this after acquiring horses.

Peoples of the Klamath Lakes region were in two major tribal groupings, the Klamath and the Modoc. They spoke dialects of the same language and had much in common. They lived in the country surrounding the Klamath and Tule Lake areas of what is now south central Oregon. The Modoc have been described as fierce warriors with a reputation for never backing down.

Central Oregon veterans to benefit from new VA outpatient clinic

Story by Bill Rautenstrauch,
La Grande Observer
Reprinted with permission

Several local contracting companies have stayed busy through this winter's wind, rain, sleet, hail and snow, braving it all to build the new VA outpatient clinic on 12th Street near Gekeler Lane.

It hasn't been easy. There's been plenty of stop and go.

"Leave it to me to try and do something like this in the winter," developer Fred Bell said with a laugh.

Bell said some of the systems, including plumbing, heating, ventilation and cooling, and electrical, are complete or nearly so.

The walls are up, and there's a covering over the top. But recent, persistent stormy weather has prevented crews from building the roof. That is causing a delay in other areas.

"We can't do the sheetrock and insulation until we get the roof on," said Bell.

Earlier this year, the VA announced its plan to establish a community-based outpatient clinic to serve Northeast Oregon veterans. Currently, those enrolled in the VA system travel to the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center in Walla Walla for care.

Following a series of meetings and public forums on health care access for veterans in Northeast Oregon, the VA announced it would establish a clinic in La Grande and issued a request for proposals for a building.

Bell proposed building the clinic on land he owns on 12th Street near Gekeler Lane, adjacent to the National Guard armory in the Blue Mountain Conference Center. He would lease the building to the VA.

The agency accepted his proposal. Construction began in late October.

Initially, the clinic will serve about 1,500 vets from the region. Clinic services will include primary health care, mental health, social services, laboratory and pharmacy, but not emergency care.

Local government leaders have touted the project not only because it will provide health care for veterans, but also



Photo by Phil Bullock, The Observer

The VA outpatient clinic in La Grande, Ore. is being built mostly by Union County contractors including Summit Construction, Ken Wallace Plumbing, All-Phase Electrical and Danforth Construction.

because it will create an estimated 15 full-time, year-round jobs.

Jake Shaw, a public affairs officer at the Jonathan Wainwright VA hospital in Walla Walla, said immediate plans call for the hiring of eight people, with more to be added later.

"If we get enough patients enrolled, 15 employees is a good long-term estimate," he said.

He said the VA is already processing some applications, including those for a registered nurse, a head technician, a psychiatrist, a social worker and either a medical doctor or a physician's assistant. The new clinic likely will stimulate other improvements in the neighborhood and put more people to work.

On the drawing board is the 12th Street improvement project, a joint City of La Grande and Union County effort that would result in reconstruction of 12th Street between Gekeler Lane and G Avenue.

The entities are working out details for funding the \$700,000 project. If all goes as planned, the project will be funded by formation of a local improvement district, a grant from the Oregon Immediate Op-

portunity Fund, and material and in-kind contributions from the city and county.

Norm Paullus of La Grande Public Works said he's looking for the street improvement project to be complete this year.

"We hope to have a bid award by June. Then we'll get started," he said.

Bell said the clinic is being built mostly by Union County contractors, including Summit Construction, Ken Wallace Plumbing, All-Phase Electrical and Danforth Construction. About 40 workers have taken part in the project to date.

Outside companies were hired to do the HVAC and electrical engineering, either because of specialized federal requirements or a lack of local availability of services.

Presently, materials for the roof are on hand. All the workers need is a break in the weather.

That will come, sooner or later. Bell can't be sure of an opening date but hopes the clinic will be ready for business in April.

"I wish the weather was better, but we're progressing and we'll get the project completed," he said.

The 234th Army Band
"Oregon's Own"

has an immediate opening for:

LEAD
GUITAR
PLAYER

Successful applicant
must be able to "shred"
with the best

And play everything from
Jazz to Rock!

Instruments
and equipment
are provided
(Gibson, Martin, Guild,
Fender, etc.)

CALL NOW!!

SFC Jesse Salas, RNCO
234 Army Band
503-335-4822
jesse.a.salas@us.army.mil

RECRUITING & RETENTION

Become an Oregon Army National Guard Officer!

Story by Capt. Jessica Dunn,
Oregon Army National Guard
Officer Recruiter

If you have what it takes to meet the challenge of becoming an Oregon Army National Guard officer, now is the time to act! Every year in March all major commissioning programs kick off!

Basic Officer eighteen month to three year commissioning program options include; Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), Officer Candidate School (OCS), and Guard Officer Leadership Development (GOLD).

ROTC is taking applications for Guard Dedicated Scholarships, one to three year scholarship options, now at Oregon State University, Western University of Oregon, and Portland State University.

The traditional first drill for OCS is March 15-16, 2008 in Monmouth, Ore. Accelerated OCS is an eight week program which is conducted twice yearly; January through March or June through August.

There are three proceeding drills con-

ducted prior to the course report date to ensure the candidate is given the tools to make them successful at the eight-week program in Fort McClellan, Ala.

The first drill of the Summer Accelerated OCS is March 28-30, 2008 in Monmouth, Ore.

Following drill dates are April 25-27 and May 16-18, with a report date of June 12 for the eight week program.

For more information, visit: <http://al-guard.state.al.us/ocs.htm>.

If you are interested in becoming a commissioned officer in a traditional or accelerated commissioning program, or have any questions about enrollment, contact Capt. Jessica Dunn at 541-602-2529, or via e-mail at jessica.dunn@or.ngb.army.mil.

Interests in Specialty Branch Commissioning Options include medical, attorney/Judge Advocate General, or the chaplain's office. For more information, contact Capt. Amy Payton at 503-584-2290.

If you are interested in becoming a Warrant Officer contact Sgt. 1st Class Lenora Landwehr at 503-584 2886.



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

Newly-commissioned 1st Lt., Aimee Morath, in Camp Shelby, Miss., during the Oregon Army National Guard's 41st Brigade Combat Team's training prior to their deployment to Afghanistan in May 2006.

'The Eagle's Way'

Welcome!

In this column, we'll take a look at the role of warrant officers in today's Oregon Army National Guard.



I am proud to have been selected as the Command Chief Warrant Officer for the Army Guard in Oregon. In this job, I am tasked with warrant officer recruiting, training, career management, and serve as the Adjutant General's advisor on any and all warrant officer issues.

I take this position knowing that I have much to learn, but I had a good mentor in CW5 (Ret.) Floyd Bard, who took over the job from CW5 (Ret.) Bill Manahan. New leaders should bring the best of themselves to their next position, and I hope to do the same as I grow here.

Each month, I'll highlight one or two warrant officer occupational specialties which are open in the Oregon Army Guard job inventory. From network specialists, aviators, engineers and human resource specialists to food service officers, ammunition specialists, and a host of even more specialized jobs here in our state, these positions all have the same common denominator of technical war fighters who learn their jobs in specific areas and then move forward as the experts in their field, ready to lead, train, and manage to move their units forward.

There will be much information in coming issues of the Oregon Sentinel. Keep reading. Keep interested. Look at how becoming a warrant officer will positively impact YOUR career.

Call me at (503) 584-3579, or email me at james.w.powell1@us.army.mil. We can talk about the pre-requisites required to become a warrant officer, and apply that to your specific situation. Watch this column, and think about where you want to go!

Chief Warrant Officer 5 James W. Powell,
Command Chief Warrant Officer

Basic Officer Commissioning Program Requirements:

- Age: Commission before age 42 (completed commissioning program and Federal Recognition Board by age 41). ROTC: not older than 38 at time of graduation, prior to age 30 for GRFD Scholarship eligibility.
- U.S. citizen (clean record; no or minor convictions)
- Passed physical fitness test within 12 months, with a score of 230-250
- Passed physical exam – Chapter 2 Commissioning Physical
- ASVAB GT Score of at least 110
- Completed Basic Training and Secret security clearance initiated
- 60 semester/90 quarter hours to enroll (can enroll earlier in ROTC)
- 90 Semester /135 quarter hours (Enroll into Accelerated OCS)

GUARD RECRUITING ASSISTANT PROGRAM

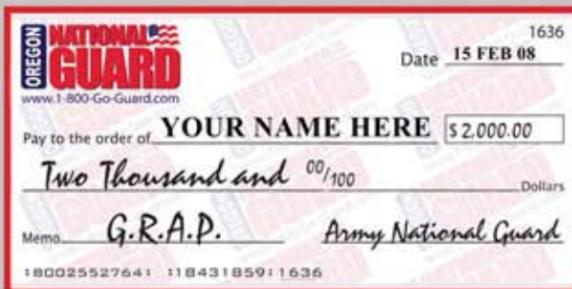
STRENGTH FROM WITHIN



To maintain today's readiness and strength requirements while preparing for tomorrow's challenges, the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (GRAP) promotes strength from within by recognizing and rewarding those who help the Army National Guard achieve its end-strength.

Guard Recruiting Assistants (RA) can earn additional income assisting ARNG recruiting efforts by identifying well-qualified men and women for service in the ARNG. Currently, GRAP is available only to traditional Guard members and retirees of the Army National Guard with 20 or more years of service. RAs may earn up to \$8,500 for each select Officer Candidate who accepts a Commission or \$2,000 for each enlistment!

Since its inception, the Guard Recruiting Assistant Program has paid out \$1.7 million dollars to Oregon Guard soldiers. The top three Recruiting Assistants have referred 69 enlistments, earning \$138,000 worth of GRAP payments.



The Guard Recruiting Assistance Program is administered by Docupak, Inc., and is not created or administered by the Air National Guard or Army National Guard.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, LOG ON TO:
www.guardrecruitingassistant.com

FEATURES

More people speaking out about suicide saves lives, experts say

Continued from FRONT PAGE

"I thought about it. I had to talk myself out of it," Silva said.

With professional help, Silva is dealing with the effects of combat stress which he developed after three tours overseas.

"When I came back from Iraq, I had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," he said.

Silva enrolled in a program through the Department of Veterans Affairs which helps him cope with symptoms of PTSD.

Without treatment, Silva's story could have had a much different outcome. Many individuals with untreated PTSD end up taking their own lives. Statistics show 30–70 percent of suicide victims suffer from major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder or bipolar depression.

"There is just a huge stigma out there that coming forward means you are not strong. And that is just not true," said Capt. Sharel Paradis, Assistant Deputy State Surgeon for the Oregon National Guard.

Silva said a lot of his problems are easier to overcome because more people are willing to talk.

"A lot of my problems coming back from Iraq have been solved because people have been speaking out," said Silva.

According to Oregon's 2005 Violent Death Report, younger military members seem to be at a greater risk for suicide. The reason remains unclear, though many researchers speculate it might be related to exposure to traumatic events in combat.

"I definitely have seen an increase over the last year. The more Soldiers you send

over there the higher the risk of suicides," Paradis said.

National Guard members are in an especially difficult spot because, unlike their active duty counterparts, when they come back from a deployment they don't return to a base near their comrades who they shared the life changing experience of war with, said Paradis.

"When a National Guard Soldier comes home the best way I can describe it is taking a handful of jacks and dropping them; they scatter," Paradis added.

Oregon is on the forefront of helping Soldiers who may be at risk of suicide. With an established Reintegration Team and a Medical Command focused on helping Soldiers with mental health issues, the Oregon National Guard is committed to doing everything it can to make sure personnel aren't overlooked said Dr. Jim Sardo of Portland VA Medical Center who works with veterans dealing with mental health issues.

"The military has been pushing really hard to destigmatize mental health," said Sardo. "The Oregon National Guard leadership from the top down believes in making sure mental health is talked about and normalized," added Sardo.

On Jan. 29 - 30, A number of Oregon National Guard Soldiers went through Applied Suicide Intervention Training (ASIST). The group of 30 Soldiers received training on suicide intervention.

"Every time you prevent an attempt you say, 'look this is what we did right and we need to continue these things,'" Paradis said.

"Only 30 percent (of people) actually

According to experts, there are certain factors which put individuals at a higher risk for suicide. Those at risk may exhibit any of the following behaviors:

- Talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Previous suicide attempts, "mini-attempts"
- Development of suicidal plan
- Reckless behavior
- Explicit statements of suicidal ideation or feelings
- Verbal behavior that is ambiguous or indirect: "I'm going away on a very long trip," "You won't have to worry about me anymore." "I'm so depressed I can't go on."
- Isolation

Source: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

leave a suicide note. The rest of them just take their life. They are that deep in the hole," said Paradis.

A common misconception about suicide is that one would "know" if a loved one was suicidal. Many signs go unrecognized, experts say.

There is help available. Members of the Oregon National Guard Reintegration Team are available 24 hours a day, and can help intervene on an attempt—something they have done more than a dozen times, according to team members. They can also refer callers to any number of information and educational sources.

Other resources include the Department of Veterans Affairs suicide line, and the National Suicide Prevention hotline, which is staffed by trained crisis workers. (Contact information for these groups is included at the end of this article).

"The suicide hotline isn't just when you have a gun in your mouth—it's when you are thinking about it or having a rough time," said Paradis.

Furthermore, according to Paradis, asking for help doesn't mean the end of someone's military career. There are a number of

completely confidential resources willing to help, she said.

Silva said he's glad he sought help before he ever got to the breaking point. Life for him is returning to normal, he said.

"I still struggle with things from time to time but being in the program has definitely given me the tools to use and get out there and be active again instead of hiding at home," he added.

Silva said he knew he was getting better when his Mom noticed positive changes in him.

"She saw me start sleeping through the night again and doing things I used to love like hanging out with my friends and shooting pool."

His message to others who may be contemplating suicide is simple.

"It (suicide) seems like the easy answer," he said. "It's not."

If you yourself needs assistance, or are aware of someone who does, contact the Oregon National Guard Reintegration Team at 1-888-688-2264, or call the VA Suicide Hotline at 1-888-273-8255.

For more information on suicide prevention, visit: www.afsp.org/index.

Oregon Engineers help Iraqi farmers



Photo by Spc. Thomas Keeler, 316th ESC

Sgt. Devin Fields (right), an engineer with the Oregon Army National Guard's 224th Engineer Company, clears an irrigation channel Jan. 9 for local Iraqis who use the channel for crop irrigation, while Sgt. Jeff Tomchak (left) acts as his spotter.

Story by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra, 302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq -- Soldiers from the Oregon National Guard's 224th Engineer Company are carrying out one of the most vital missions in northern Iraq: security and rebuilding.

The 224th specializes in construction-related jobs. Culvert denial, which involves blocking the openings of culverts to impede the enemy's ability to hide explosives within, route sanitation, which involves clearing roadways of debris and garbage, and rapid crater and culvert repair, are a few of the many tasks engineers with the 224th complete. What these skilled engineers also seek to build includes better relationships with local Iraqis while preventing Anti-Iraqi forces from using the terrain to mount attacks, create hideouts or establish weapons or explosives caches.

To this end, Soldiers from the 224th set out to clear vegetation from an irrigation channel near Balad Jan. 9. Clearing the channel of overgrown reeds will make irrigation of crops easier for farmers who

depend on water for their livelihood and survival. It also will deny concealment for Anti-Iraqi forces reported to use the dense vegetation for concealment.

Using a ground torch with a blend of gasoline, diesel fuel and other clean burning additives developed by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service to remove fire hazards, Sgt. Devin Fields, an engineer with the 224th, set flame to dense vegetation in an irrigation channel. Local farmers had tried to keep the ditch clear themselves, but with much difficulty since they did not have the proper resources or tools to eliminate the overgrowth.

According to Sgt. Jeff Tomchak, a truck commander with the 224th, enemies have used the channel for concealment in the past, including prime area for placement of improvised explosive devices since the channel runs parallel to a road frequented by coalition forces.

Despite the potential risks of coming face-to-face with IEDs, small arms fire, and other attacks, the 224th continues to go outside the wire everyday to make the surrounding area safer and more livable for servicemembers and Iraqis alike.

ATTENTION GUARD FAMILIES

Family Reintegration study

Are you a **Guard member** who has recently returned from the global war on terror?

Or are you a **family member** of a Guard member who has recently returned from the global war on terror?

Join a study on Family Reintegration

Help us improve services for families who are dealing with issues related to post deployment.

All potential participants (18 years and older) are welcome. If you choose to take part in this research, you will be asked to participate in a focus group interview with a study investigator (if you prefer, you can elect to be interviewed in private.) The interviews will last about one and one-half to two hours and you will be given a \$20 gift certificate for your time.

For more information, please contact the research team at **503 494-7721** or famguard@ohsu.edu.

Principal investigator: **Deborah Messecar, R.N., Ph.D.**

This research is sponsored by the Triservice Nursing Research Program, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. However, the information or content and conclusions do not necessarily represent the official position or policy of, nor should any official endorsement be inferred by, the Triservice Nursing Research Program, The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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NEWS BRIEFS

ODVA offering low interest home loans

SALEM, Ore. -- The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) has announced they are currently offering home loan interest rates approaching 30 year lows. Using the agency's ORVETS home loan program, qualified veterans may now get a fixed rate mortgage for as low as 4.875 percent with a 1.5 percent loan origination fee, or a 4.99 percent loan rate with a 1 percent origination fee.

The current maximum loan amount for veterans using the ORVETS home loan program is \$417,000. Federal rules prohibit ODVA from refinancing most existing mortgages.

The ORVET home loan program is a State of Oregon veteran benefit and is separate from the federal VA home loan guaranty program. Even if a veteran has purchased a home using the federal VA program they may still be eligible for an ORVET home loan. A requirement for the ORVET program is that veterans must apply before they reach the 30-year anniversary of their military discharge date.

"Our veterans have served our country with distinction and they deserve the very best we can offer them. These new reduced rates that we offer may allow some of them to take advantage of a great opportunity for home ownership," said Jim Willis, Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.

For more information about ORVET home loans, contact a local mortgage lender or ODVA at 1-888-673-8387 or 503-373-2070.

Oregon reminds Guardsmen about income deduction

Officials in the Oregon National Guard finance community are reminding citizen-Soldiers and Airmen that Oregon allows subtraction of certain pay from their taxable income, and that could keep dollars in their pockets.

"The state allows Guard members to subtract up to \$6,000 of active duty pay earned inside Oregon," said Maj. Karl Pond, Comptroller of the U.S. Property and Fiscal Office. "Guard members are also allowed to subtract all active duty pay earned outside the state."

Though pay earned on active duty has special treatment under state tax codes, noted Pond, drill pay remains taxable. He also said it's now up to the individual filing the tax paperwork to figure out what they can subtract.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service no longer separates active duty pay from drill pay on the W-2, so it's up to Guard members to determine how much they're eligible to subtract from their taxable income. Fortunately, said Pond, troops can do this easily in one of two ways.

"First, you can compare copies of your Leave and Earnings Statements to your active duty orders and calculate the amount of pay received," said Pond. "Your orders will also tell you where the duty was performed, and that helps you maximize the amount you're allowed in active duty pay subtractions."

The second way to figure your subtractions is to turn to financial management personnel. Soldiers can turn to unit pay clerks for assistance. Pay clerks can access the Master Military Pay account and subtract Inactive Duty Training from total pay to determine the allowable amount. Airmen can go to the military pay section in the finance office for assistance.

Pond noted that although military pay personnel can assist troops with obtaining the information they need, the pay personnel are not tax experts.

"For specific tax advice people need to contact a tax professional, not the military pay offices" Pond said. Information is also available on the Oregon Department of Revenue website at www.oregon.gov/DOR/PERTAX/docs/101-657.pdf

Guardsmen eligible for hunting, fishing license reimbursement

House Bill 3504, Sec. 11, passed in the 2005 Legislature, authorizes active duty, Guard and Reserve members of the military who are residents of Oregon to receive reimbursement for the cost of their Resident Hunting and Angling License.

In order to receive reimbursement, members must furnish a photocopy of the license and valid military ID to any local National Guard recruiting station, who will complete the reimbursement form and forward it to the AGC Office of the Oregon Military Department.

You may also forward your photocopies and request for reimbursement to them directly at: P.O. Box 14350, Salem, Ore. 97309-5047.

Lincoln Marathon accepting runners

If you are interested in participating in the 2008 Lincoln National Guard Marathon, the National Guard is holding a workshop, May 2-5 in Lincoln, Neb.

Finish times for the marathon must be equal to or faster than the qualifying times listed below. State coordinators may be required to furnish proof of qualification.

Open category (men under 40), mile pace: 4 hours; marathon completion time: 9:09. Masters (men over 40), mile pace: 4 hours, 15 minutes; marathon completion time: 9:43. Women (all ages), mile pace: 4 hours, 30 minutes; marathon completion time: 10:31.

Qualification times must be within 18 months prior to the 2008 Lincoln/National Guard Marathon.

Slots are limited and runners will be selected based on confirmed times. The final team roster will be submitted to the National Guard Bureau by March 10, 2008.

For more information, contact Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Vandervlugt at 541-963-4221, ext. 1531, or 541-663-6173.

MOAA offers \$1,000 scholarships

The Military Officers Association of America is pleased to offer the Base/Post Scholarships for 2008. This MOAA program provides grants of \$1,000 each to 25 dependent children of military personnel.

MOAA's immensely successful scholarship grants and zero-interest loans are currently helping over 1,600 uniformed services dependents to meet their college expenses. The Base/Post Scholarship is part of MOAA's ongoing effort to assist young people who are members of this nation's military families with the hope that military members and their dependents will take advantage of the program.

For more information and additional PDF documents about the program, visit www.moaa.org/scholarshipfund or send questions to edassist@moaa.org.

Feds release new BAH rates

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

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

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

DFAS suspends debts found in error

DFAS ensures erroneous debts for wounded Soldiers are suspended to allow for a review of the Soldiers' accounts and forgiveness of eligible debts.

Since August 2005, DFAS and the Army have forgiven \$12.93 million in debts for 13,826 Soldiers, thus preventing many of those who were wounded from incurring financial hardship.

For more information on the program, visit www.dfas.mil/mil-news/january2008/armywoundedwarrior.html.

Veterans to benefit from tax rebates

SALEM, Ore. - The Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 signed into law recently will benefit veterans and their families, say veteran's groups.

Some disabled veterans and spouses who receive at least \$3,000 from any combination of Social Security and certain veterans' benefits will receive rebates. Filing a 2007 tax return will be required to process the rebate for the 2008 tax year. Veterans with children will receive an additional amount of \$300 per child.

In most cases, single veterans will receive up to \$600 and \$1,200 for married veterans. Overall, the package will put \$168 billion into the pockets of 128 million American households.

"Once again, veterans are reminded that their honorable service to our state and nation is not forgotten," said Jim Willis, Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. "Disabled veterans and families should know that economic relief is on the way."

Special provisions of the package allow certain veterans' benefits to count toward the qualifying income requirement of \$3,000, thereby helping veterans qualify for the stimulus payment.

Additional provisions of the package secured help for struggling homeowners.

In Oregon, interest rates for the ODVA ORVET Home Loan program are nearing 30-year lows. Eligible veterans can qualify for a 30-year mortgage financed at 4.99 percent loan rate with a one-percent origination fee, or 4.875 percent with a 1.5 percent loan origination fee.

President Bush is urging Congress to pass housing legislation to modernize the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The modernization includes proposed legislation to permit state housing agencies to help troubled borrowers by issuing tax-exempt bonds for refinancing existing home loans.

The Internal Revenue Service and Treasury Department plan to work closely with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to inform veterans about how to receive the stimulus payment.

For more information on preparing tax returns, call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040, or visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov.

TSP offers financial management tools

Many service members are taking advantage of the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) as a financial management tool. It's an attractive investment option for military members.

Service members can sign up for TSP online at www.tsp.gov. Learn more about the retirement and savings benefits of TSP at <http://www.dfas.mil/mil-news/january2008/tsp participation.html/>.

'Virtual keyboard' to be used for security

In order to protect myPay.com PIN numbers, DFAS has installed a "virtual keyboard" for use in accessing myPay accounts.

This keyboard reduces threats from malicious software such as spyware and keyloggers.

To learn more about this feature, visit

www.dfas.mil/mil-news/january2008/mypayvirtualkeyboard.html.

Oregon outreach program to help Guard and their families

The Oregon National Guard's Prevention, Treatment Outreach (PTO) program is designed to provide prevention training, outreach to military families, and treatment resources and referrals to Guard members.

Partnerships have been formed with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Community Anti Drug Coalitions of America, Army Center for Substance Prevention and Air Force Medical Operations Agency in an attempt to enhance long term outcomes.

Additionally, PTO has been tasked to form outreach partnerships with the Family Readiness Program, Chaplains, Drug Demand Reduction, Reintegration Services and Alcohol and Drug Interdiction Council.

The Oregon PTO program is designed to improve retention and soldier/airman readiness while maintaining safety in the workplace and improving mental and physical health.

The program also provides an opportunity to go one step further in helping Soldiers/Airmen make informed and healthy life choices.

PTO is designed to expand prevention efforts and add outreach and treatment referrals/resources to the list of substance abuse and disorder services available to Guard members and their families.

In addition to increased readiness for deployments, the program aims at reducing the number of drug positives by providing the tools necessary for members to succeed.

The PTO program is to meet the needs of all service members, and their families, of the Oregon National Guard.

PTO will provide classroom prevention education training, literature, and access to resources.

Assistance will be provided to military families by working closely with Family Readiness and local community support groups which will foster awareness for a safe drug-free environment for Guard members statewide.

PTO administrators hope to increase Soldier/Airmen awareness through education.

The Oregon Guard's core prevention education program - ISTEP (Intensive Short Term Education Program) has proved successful and will be enhanced with the addition of the PTO program and Team Readiness.

For additional information or to schedule training, contact Sgt. 1st Class James Riverman, Prevention Coordinator, at 503-584-3831 or 503-932-4815, or via e-mail at james.riverman@or.ngb.army.mil.

Last U.S. WWI vet celebrates birthday



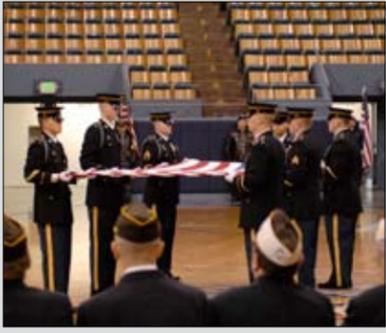
Photo courtesy of MSNBC.com

The last surviving U.S. veteran of World War I celebrated a birthday on this month. Frank Buckles turned 107 on Feb. 1.

Buckles, a native of Missouri, now lives on his family's farm in West Virginia. He served overseas in France as an ambulance driver for most of what the press called at the time "The war to end all wars".

Buckles also served in the U.S. Navy during WWII, spending 13 months as a Japanese prisoner of war. He was later awarded the Leigon of Honor, France's highest award.

Oregon Guard honors state's fallen veterans



Members of the Oregon National Guard Funeral Honors Team conduct a flag-folding ceremony during the "Mass Funeral Honors" event, while members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 3965 (foreground) observe.

**Story and photo by
Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy,
Oregon Military Department**

SALEM, Ore. -- The Oregon National Guard hosted a ceremony to pay respects to a number of veterans at the Salem Armory in Salem, Ore., on Feb. 6, 2008.

The Oregon National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team joined representatives from Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, and leaders of the Oregon National Guard for the 30-minute, indoor ceremony.

The event was the first of several "mass-honors" ceremonies planned throughout Oregon to honor veterans who may have not received a full-military honors funeral at the time of their interment. Today's ceremony in Salem honored 35 individuals, who were members of various branches of the military, including the U.S. Coast Guard, and Oregon National Guard.

The Salem event was attended by Brig. Gen. Charles Yriarte, Commander of the 82 Brigade Troop Command, Oregon Army National Guard Chaplain, John Dinsmore, 20 members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 3965 and Jim Willis, Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs.

Willis said the ceremonies are important because they not only honor the service and sacrifice of the military member, but also help bring closure to the families.

"This really says, especially to their families, that no matter how long since the member's passing, that they are not forgotten by their country and their fellow service members," Willis said.

Future events will continue throughout the state in order to honor those who, for whatever reason, did not receive military honors at the time of their funeral, he added.

Willis explained that the idea for the ceremonies came as a result of increasing conversations family members had with Soldiers in the Oregon National Guard Funeral Honors Team.

"Geographically around the state we're reaching out to people of all military branches, and letting them know how much we appreciate the service and sacrifice of their loved ones," Willis said.

The Patriot Guard Riders, an organization which provides support and funeral escort duties for service members--many of whom are military veterans themselves--ringed the auditorium, holding American flags. Member Dennis Reynolds, served three tours in Vietnam in the Marine Corps, said it's gratifying to him to support military members, and being at the event was an honor.

"A lot of us are veterans, and we feel like others who have served our country deserve our respect," Reynolds said. "This is our way of showing that respect."

Authorization bill funds DoD, improves National Guard stature

**Story compiled from
DoD and NGAUS news services**

President George W. Bush signed the National Defense Authorization Act Jan. 28, funding military activities of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2008 and improving the stature of the National Guard.

"The act authorizes funding for the defense of the United States and its interests abroad, for military construction and for national security-related energy programs," Bush stated.

Though the fiscal year began in October, delays and extensive debate in the House of Representatives and the Senate kept the bill from the President's desk. In signing the NDAA, the President ended the uncertainty of the resolution authority and made the \$696 billion budget.

Key provisions of the NDAA include a 3.5 percent pay raise for service members. There are also provisions in the act which describe the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act, which improves support for wounded troops and their families, including providing increased treatment closer to home rather than at the base from which the servicemember deployed.

The NDAA lowers the eligibility age for retirement by three months for each 90 days a Guard member serves on certain types of active duty. The active duty must be served after the NDAA was enacted, and eligibility cannot be reduced below 50 years of age.

In addition to funding the DoD, the NDAA heralded significant changes that raise the stature of the National Guard, many of which were introduced in the National Guard Empowerment Act of 2007.

Among the changes, the law increases the NGB chief to four-star general while formally making the position a principle advisor to the defense secretary. It also requires that a Guard officer be assigned

as the deputy commanding general of U.S. Northern Command.

It also raises NGB from a joint bureau within the departments of the Army and Air Force to a joint activity in the Defense Department.

"This law is historic," said Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, chairman of the board for the National Guard Association of the U.S. "It sets into motion urgently needed reforms that will bolster the Guard's ability to accomplish its mission, both here at home and abroad. Our over 455,000 soldiers and airmen--and those who will follow them--will benefit from this for years to come."

Other key provisions favoring the National Guard include:

Repeal of language in the Insurrection Act language that reduced state authority over the Guard in emergencies and disasters

A bipartisan council of governors advises the secretary of defense, the Department of Homeland Security and others on National Guard matters.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff determines the feasibility of increasing the number of U.S. Northern Command reserve component members.

It also obligates the defense secretary, in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security, to identify and fund what the Guard needs to respond to a wide range of domestic emergencies, from natural disasters to terrorism.

Though the NDAA brought dramatic changes, a Congressionally authorized Committee on the National Guard and Reserves recently released a report based on nearly two years of studying Guard and Reserve issues. The CNGR report acknowledged the role of the National Guard as an operational reserve of the active duty and calls for nearly 100 more reforms to improve how the DOD and Reserve components cooperate and support troops.

Oregon Airmen help rebuild in New Orleans



Senior Master Sgt. Norm Olson works on setting up roof trusses during a recent Habitat For Humanity project at "Musician Village" New Orleans La.

**Story and photo by
Maj. Matthew Dogget,
123rd Weather Flight,
Oregon Air National Guard**

In January, members of the Oregon Air National Guard's 123rd Weather Flight helped rebuild a city destroyed by Mother Nature.

It's been more than two years since Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Region, and yet the city of New Orleans is still recovering.

More than 75 Air Force meteorologists from all around the country descended upon Gulfport, Miss. to participate in a weather conference devoted to charting the course for weather support to the National Guard.

In a related event, more than 2,000 civilian meteorologists and weather enthusiasts converged on the city of New Orleans to attend the American Meteorological Society's Annual Meeting.

For one day during the conference, several Guardsmen including several Oregon Airmen from the 123rd Weather Flight, and dozens of other civilian weathermen, joined forces to help Habitat for Humanity build houses in one of the hardest hit areas of New Orleans.

The "Musician's Village" was started in December 2005 by New Orleans musicians Branford Marsalis and Harry Connick, Jr. The goal is to build 72 homes that will help qualified area musicians who lost their homes during the hurricane.

Teams cooperated to clean up construction debris, paint, and literally raise the roof on two of the homes that were previously begun by earlier volunteers.

Senior Master Sgt. Norm Olson took charge of his team using his extensive construction experience from previous jobs to help erect the trusses that will become the roof for one very grateful New Orleans family.

"It was very satisfying to feel like we're making a meaningful contribution to others lives," Olson said.

For more information about recovery efforts or to donate or volunteer, visit www.habitat-nola.org/.

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