

GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard



Explosive situation 8

Leadership Corner

A career structure befitting our SAD force

Major General David S. Baldwin



Throughout my years of service in the National Guard, I have seen the State Active Duty (SAD) system misinterpreted, mismanaged and on occasion abused. When I was appointed adjutant general by Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. in April 2011, I vowed to make the SAD force more professional, operationally capable and accountable.

To reform SAD we had to work with the governor and the Legislature to establish new structural guidelines that would be codified in law, not just in internal regulations that could be modified with a stroke of a pen, or even ignored. The California Military Department therefore sponsored Senate Bill 807 during the 2012 legislative session. This law, which becomes effective Jan. 1, significantly changes how the SAD system is designed and administered.

Before I talk to you about SB 807, let me first make a point about our organization. California's state militia, made up primarily of traditional members of the National Guard and the California State Military Reserve (CSMR), is an integral part of the State Emergency Management System and the National Response Framework. This vital force trains during weekend drills and annual training exercises to deploy quickly and efficiently anywhere in the state to save lives, prevent human suffering and mitigate property damage related to any emergency, regardless of cause, size, location and complexity.

The full-time service members on SAD are also a key component of our emergency-response network. This small cadre of full-time Soldiers and Airmen support the larger part-time force by planning, coordinating and conducting the day-to-day activities of the Military Department as well as greatly enhancing our capability to respond

during an actual emergency.

Though the SAD force is small, its functions require that it be managed in a similar way to traditional federal active duty forces. This type of career management system, or lack thereof, has been a key shortcoming in the past. Under SB 807 a new career system will be put in place to ensure a strong, professional and well-managed force remains available to meet the needs of our state. SAD positions will also be continually evaluated by an SAD Review Panel to determine whether any jobs could be adequately filled by our highly valued state civil service employees instead of requiring an active duty service member.

Under the new state model, service members vying for high-grade SAD positions must be chosen using a military competitive selection process similar to the Army National Guard's Executive Personnel Council or the Air Guard's Force Development Council. For lower-grade assignments, a similarly inclusive and competitive process will ensure the Military Department attracts and retains the best and brightest to serve in the career force.

Only members with existing military training, knowledge and experience are appropriate for positions in the full-time state militia. Therefore every SAD employee must be a current member of the Cal Guard; a retired member of the Guard or active duty service who now serves in the CSMR; or a CSMR member with at least two years of experience in that organization. Service members on SAD who are not affiliated with the National Guard or the CSMR will be required to join the CSMR. This ensures that all members of the full-time state military are in an operational command, trained and ready to support the state during an emergency.

When initially hired in SAD status, a service member's employment orders will expire annually until the member achieves six years of continuous service. This model is patterned after the federal structure for command and control of the reserve component known as Active Guard and Reserve, or AGR: Similar to an apprenticeship, service members must demonstrate value and competence to the organization for an extended time before earning career status.

After six years of proven performance, an SAD employee may be eligible to be placed on permanent orders, which may continue until the employee reaches 60 years of age. At age 60 the service member may again be placed on temporary, one-year orders, which may be renewed by the SAD Review Board until the service member reaches age 64. At 64, the service member must retire from SAD. If a service member's SAD position is abolished before reaching age 64, the Military Department will make a reasonable attempt to place the service member in another SAD position.

Capping the career force at age 60 enables us to better manage the force by giving younger service members room to advance while giving leaders the flexibility to retain troops with experience and institutional knowledge.

These changes, which add no cost to the state budget, mirror federal military procedures and represent best practices for administration of a military force. With these regulations in place, we can be sure every service member has a fair opportunity to obtain an SAD position, but only top-quality members who have demonstrated their value on the job will become part of the career system that is so vital to meeting our organization's mission.

Honoring our veterans' service and sacrifice

Command Sergeant Major William Clark Jr.



Nov. 11 marks a day to honor the valor of our service members and veterans, especially those who deployed to combat and demonstrated the courage necessary to defend our nation. Thinking of the service members who have fought for the ideals of this great nation, one can't help but feel awed by the enormity of what they have encountered.

The Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard have deployed in the fight against terror nearly 40,000 times since 9/11, leaving their homes, families and civilian jobs behind to deploy to combat. Some members have deployed into harm's way two or three times — or even four or five times — during that span.

The sacrifice of our brothers and sisters in the Reserve and active duty components is equally immense. Hundreds of thousands of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen have deployed to the mountains of Afghanistan and the deserts of Iraq during the past decade, and in that time, thousands of our nation's sons and daughters have died fighting our battles overseas so we could enjoy

the freedom and safety we experience at home.

The veterans we honor Nov. 11 come from all walks of life, but they share several fundamental qualities. They possess courage, pride, determination, selflessness, dedication to duty and integrity. Many who have served in our nation's history didn't ask to leave their homes to fight on distant battlefields. Many didn't even volunteer. They didn't go to war because they loved fighting their fellow man, but because they were called to be a part of something greater than themselves. They were ordinary people who responded in extraordinary ways in extreme times. They rose to their nation's call because they wanted to protect a country that had given them so much.

When service members deploy, their families live through difficult times and take on a heavy load to keep the home fires burning and provide stability during the tumultuous times of war. They are a vital component of the Armed Forces family, and any recognition of our service members should take into account the monumental contribution

made by their loved ones.

As a member of the National Guard, I feel privileged to serve a force whose roots stretch back to the Colonial militias that helped found this nation. Since the first shots were fired at Lexington and Concord, our men and women have been answering the nation's call to duty, and many have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

This nation has bestowed medals on our fallen Soldiers and it has erected monuments and named buildings for them. But nothing can ever replace the hole left behind by a family member who does not return, and no number of medals or ribbons can comfort their loved ones.

As we celebrate this Veterans Day, remember we are still a nation at war. Our forces are deployed in countries throughout the world, defending democracy and the American way of life. On Veterans Day, take the time to thank our veterans past and present — and their families — for their service and sacrifice.

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- ★ Articles range from 350 to 2,000 words. All articles must be accompanied by multiple high-resolution images.
- ★ Include first names, last names and military ranks. Always verify spelling.
- ★ Spell out acronyms, abbreviations and full unit designations on first reference.
- ★ Only submit articles that have been approved by your unit's public affairs officer.

Photographs:

- ★ Highest resolution possible: MB files, not KB.
- ★ No retouched photos, no special effects.
- ★ Include the photographer's name and rank and a caption: what is happening, who is pictured and the date and location of the photo.

E-mail submissions by the 15th of the month to:
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Cover Shot



Photo by Sgt. Angela Parady

Sgt. Joseph R. Reyes of the CNG's 217th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company runs wires from unexploded ordnance to a detonator Oct. 10 at a range on Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, where he is deployed as part of a NATO peacekeeping mission.

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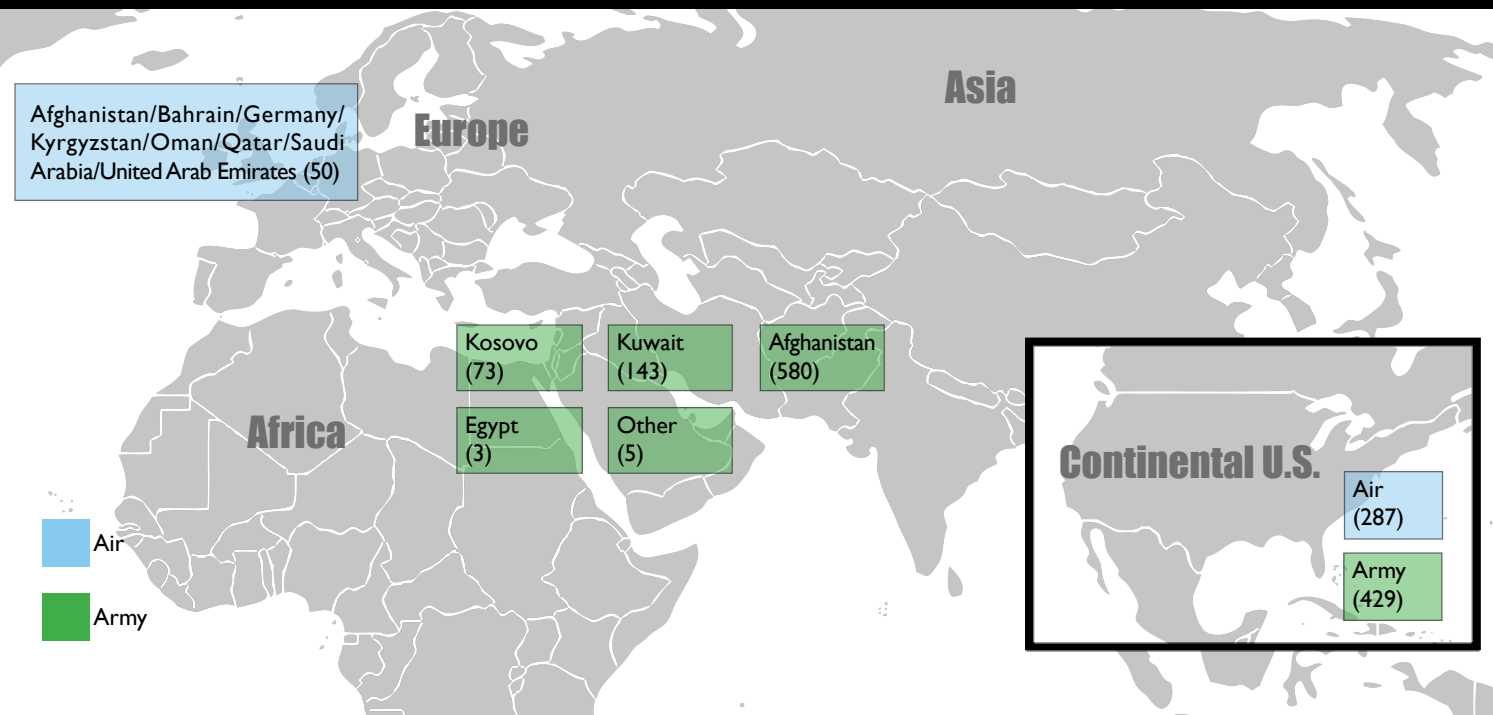
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Success at Soaring Angel



Staff Sgt. John Cummings of the active duty 571st Global Mobility Readiness Squadron and members of the California National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing provide security Oct. 11 during the Soaring Angel exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif. The exercise, hosted by the 129th, required the Wing to rapidly deploy and operate from a forward operating base with joint forces. Photo by Airman 1st Class John D. Pharr III

129th Rescue Wing hosts joint service training

By SENIOR AIRMAN ASHLEY RAMIREZ
129th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

The California National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing performed a tactical training exercise in a simulated combat environment with other CNG members and personnel from the New Mexico National Guard and the active duty Air Force in October.

The Rescue Wing's objectives for the exercise, Soaring Angel 13-1, were to rapidly deploy then build and operate from a forward operating base on Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., more than 140 miles from the Wing's home station at Moffett Federal Airfield in Silicon Valley.

"Just getting operational so you can brief and launch air crews within a short period of time is a critical skill to practice, so that's what we're doing," said Lt. Col. Andrew Ferguson, the project officer for Soaring Angel. "When we deploy, [base support and operations are] basically already set up. In this case they're not, so that's even more of a stress for us."

About 470 troops, including 320 Airmen from the 129th, worked through multiple live scenarios during the three-day exercise Oct. 11-13. The scenarios tested casualty care, emergency aircraft landing, night-vision operations and calls for live fire.

Soaring Angel also demonstrated the personnel-recovery and casualty-evacuation capabilities of the 129th and the 66th Rescue Squadron, an active duty squadron from Nevada. Both units fly HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters, and the 129th also flies MC-130P Combat Shadow cargo planes with aerial refueling capabilities.

The exercise also helped improve 129th members' exchange of information with supporting external units in vital fields such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

The Wing was supported by teams of emergency communications specialists from the California National Guard's Hayward-based 95th Civil Support Team and its Sacramento-based Directorate of Information Management, or DOIM.

The DOIM team, along with three members of the California State Military Reserve, provided an expeditionary external communication link using an Incident Commander's Command, Control and Communications Unit, or IC4U. The IC4U can link up with a satellite, which enables wireless Internet, phone connections, radio communication, air-to-ground communication and video encoding.

The emergency communications specialists provided a continuous stream of information to the CNG's Joint Operations Center in Sacramento and provided a 24-hour, 360-degree view of the area for security forces and base operation personnel.

"After getting all the different communication equipment to talk to one another, everything seemed to fall into place," said Aaron Phillip, a mission-planning contractor for Soaring Angel.

Staff Sgt. Byron Estrada, a tactical infrastructure systems support specialist for the 129th, spent Soaring Angel in the Rescue Operational Control Center as a liaison between the Wing and its external supportive tactical groups, establishing strong work-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Kim E. Ramirez

Airmen from the California National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing prepare to lift off in an HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopter to perform a personnel-recovery mission Oct. 12 during the Soaring Angel exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif. The three-day exercise brought National Guard and active duty members of the Air Force and Army together to test their rapid deployment and rescue capabilities in a joint environment.

ing connections with Airmen whom he would not normally have a chance to work with. "I am grateful to have this opportunity to work with mentors and peers that have a first-rate work ethic," Estrada said. "This experience has inspired me to carry the same values and set a good example for those I work with."

The 129th plans to host Soaring Angel every year that its deployment and inspection

schedules permit, Ferguson said, noting that twice as many service members participated this year than in 2010.

"An exercise like this is important because it takes you out of your home station environment so you have to operate in [a] new location in an austere tent city," Ferguson said. "It's a short-term exercise in that our operation scenarios are only three days, so it's a very intense period of time."

144th FW hits the target at Combat Archer

Fresno-based fighter wing earns perfect marks during air-to-air weapon system exercise

By **TECH SGT. CHARLES VAUGHN**
144th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

More than 100 members of the 144th Fighter Wing along with eight of the Wing's F-16C Fighting Falcon aircraft returned to their home station, California Air National Guard Base in Fresno, after participating in the Combat Archer exercise Oct. 5-20 at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla.

An air-to-air weapons system evaluation program conducted by the 53rd Weapons Evaluation Group, Combat Archer tested the complete air-to-air weapon system capabilities of the Wing's F-16Cs and evaluated its Airmen on everything from flight operations to maintenance.

"Combat Archer is an extremely valuable exercise that we attempt to participate in every couple of years," said Col. Reed Drake, 144th Operations Group commander. "Combat Archer tests both men and machines. The 144th FW's success during this evaluation was a direct result of everyone working together as one team. ... It takes from the youngest Airman to the most experienced pilot working in concert to ensure success in both training and combat."

Over the course of the exercise, pilots from the Wing's 194th Fighter Squadron shot eight AIM-9M Sidewinder missiles, six AIM-120 Advanced Medium-Range, Air-to-Air Missiles and more than 6,000 rounds from a 20-mm multi-barrel cannon. "Since our air crews rarely get the opportunity to engage in actual air-to-air combat, this is a truly unique opportunity for us," said Lt. Col. Dodd Wamberg, 194th Fighter Squad-

ron commander. "During our standard training flights at home station, we go through all the steps to lock on and fire a missile, except actually firing one, so there is no way to clearly validate whether the shot would have hit the target other than what qualifies as a valid simulation."

The training not only benefitted the Wing's air crews but its maintainers as well. "This exercise is a great opportunity for us as maintainers and weapons-load-crew personnel to get real world practice for eventual combat situations," said Maj. Robert Gellner, commander of the 144th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "It also allows our members who haven't loaded live munitions before the chance to get a better understanding of what loading live missiles involves."

Out of 196 individual evaluations, the evaluators found no discrepancies, Gellner said. "We scored 100 percent in live fire tests as well as performing quality and timely maintenance," he said.

Not only did Combat Archer provide air crews confidence loading and firing live missiles, it also gave Air Force weapons system managers a forum to verify system performance, capabilities and limitations.

"This was my first time loading live missiles — we would come in at 3 a.m. to accept missiles and get everything loaded and ready," said Airman 1st Class David Villarreal, a weapons-load-crew member with the 144th. "The best part is seeing the rails on the F-16 comeback empty."

"We train for combat every day, so safety



Photos by Tech Sgt. Charles Vaughn

and procedures do not change regardless of inert or live munitions," said weapons manager Chief Master Sgt. Anne Rice. "The exercise is extremely valuable because we can identify problems or deficiencies in performance and handling before we are in a serious combat situation."

"It's great for our Airmen to put their skills and training to the test," Rice added. "They have performed exceptionally well."

In addition to Combat Archer, the Wing took part in Combat Shield, which tested radar and jamming equipment on the F-16Cs to ensure they meet Air Force standards.

"Overall the exercise was a huge success," said Col. Clay Garrison, 144th Fighter Wing vice commander. "The 144th FW clearly demonstrated our readiness and capability to provide combat power to the combatant commander on demand."



TOP: F-16C Fighting Falcons from the 144th Fighter Wing wait for action Oct. 9 on the flight line at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., during the Combat Archer exercise. ABOVE: Structural technician Tech. Sgt. Tony Baezramos inspects his tools Oct. 6 during Combat Archer, a two-week program that tested the complete air-to-air weapon system capabilities of the F-16C and evaluated 144th Airmen on everything from flight operations to maintenance.

578th engineers get a warm welcome home

By **SGT. 1ST CLASS JESSICA INIGO**
Los Angeles Regional Public Affairs

The minutes seemed to pass in slow motion as 160 Soldiers of the 578th Engineer Battalion waited to be released to embrace friends and families awaiting their return from a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan on Sept. 21 at the Moreno Valley Readiness Center in Riverside, Calif.

As the Soldiers disembarked a bus and lined up for formation, eager relatives eyed the Soldiers and crept as close as possible to the service members. Prior to being called to attention, Soldiers' eyes could be seen dancing across the crowd of people holding banners, balloons and American flags. Then, once their eyes locked in on their special someone, a smile would break out across their face. Some were even able to raise their arm for a quick wave before falling in for formation.

Once formed up, like good Soldiers, all eyes remained forward as they marched in synch to stand before the Command Group to be welcomed home.

"It felt like forever," said Spc. Charles Hicks, the mailman for the Battalion, about the minutes before he was released and subsequently surrounded by generations of family members, including three of his grandchildren. "This is awesome."

The Manhattan Beach-based 578th was stationed at Forward Operating Base Sharana in Eastern Afghanistan, where it commanded Task Force Mad Dog, which included two construction companies, four route clearance companies and one forward support company. This was the first



Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

Friends and family members excitedly await the return of 160 Soldiers from the 578th Engineer Battalion, who had just completed a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan, on Sept. 21 at the Moreno Valley Readiness Center in Riverside, Calif.

time the 578th had deployed since the Korean War.

Lt. Col. Richard Rabe, 578th commander, highlighted some of the unit's achievements during a speech prior to releasing the troops. Those included the unit's involvement in Operation Devil Hammer, the largest military construction project in the Afghan campaign, which produced nine forward operating bases and six tactical operations centers. The unit also cleared 30,000 miles of routes, disarming more than 1,000 improvised explosive devices. Plus, 578th troops conducted security patrols for equipment transportation, and they trained Afghan Na-

tional Army personnel.

Leaders kept their comments brief but poignant during the ceremony, welcoming the Soldiers home and thanking them for their hard work and diligence.

"Your record in theater has been nothing short of phenomenal," California Army National Guard Commander Brig. Gen. Lawrence Haskins said during the ceremony. "We're so glad you're home and home safe."

After several more words of encouragement from other key leaders and some guidance on how best to reintegrate into regular society, the floodgates opened as the formation was released into long embraces and sweet kisses.

"You can't measure how proud we are of our son and all who serve," said Pat Shulz, mother of the 578th's Sgt. Matthew Shulz. "They're so courageous. They go out there and put their lives on the line for all of us — and the world, it seems."

The 578th scheduled a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program meeting for a month later to help troops deal with the stress of war and the challenges associated with returning home. Such sessions provide Soldiers and family members with information on services and resources to help with finances, mental health, parenting and other issues.

In the meantime, families planned to get reacquainted with each other, much like the generations of family members who greeted Sgt. 1st Class Jose Sanchez, a mechanic who said he was looking forward to a home-cooked meal including "pupusas," a traditional Salvadorian dish.

SoCal Guard Soldiers learn the ROPES

Story and photo by **SGT. GLEN BAKER**
224th Sustainment Brigade

Soldiers of the Long Beach-based 224th Sustainment Brigade learned to "Build a Bridge," navigate a "Mine Field," and conquer a "Spider's Web" during their October training weekend, when they participated in Rugged Outdoor Physical Experience System, or ROPES, team-building exercises.

ROPES is often used by the CNG's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug when working with youths. The program encourages groups to work together and use critical and creative thinking, and it develops self-esteem.

Sgt. First Class Kevin Stafford of the 224th said cohesiveness, teamwork and the ability to get along were critical to the success of the exercise. "Fortunately for us, we bonded already from being in Iraq, so we had that closeness already," Stafford said. "We kind of think like each other and we anticipate what we're going to do."

One challenging exercise Stafford's group was able to complete was called "Knit of Hands." "We had to grab the opposite person's right hand and another person's left hand and wiggle out without breaking contact," he said. "Our group did it successfully at least three times."

Sgt. Rachel Mahimer, a human resources specialist with the 224th, said the training was both fun and relevant for her unit. "My favorite part of the training was having fun and at the same time incorporating one of the Army values: integrity," she said. "[ROPES] will definitely improve communication, teamwork and thinking. We learn how each individual works and about everyone's strengths and weaknesses."

Spc. Christopher Irby, assistant supply sergeant with the 224th, said the team-building exercises were unlike any



Soldiers from the CNG's 224th Sustainment Brigade perform a "Build a Bridge" teamwork exercise as part of Rugged Outdoor Physical Experience System training Oct. 13 in Long Beach.

training he had received during eight years in the active duty Army. "You need to trust one another and try to get communication skills down," he said. "You need to have somebody leading the group. This way you're not all trying to shout out information at one [time]."

Irby said unit morale was very high after completing the ROPES training. "Doing these once or twice per year should help bring everybody together."

CNG troops train Afghan engineers

By **SGT. CHRISTOPHER MCCULLOUGH**
3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team

With the withdrawal of International Security Assistance Forces from Afghanistan looming, coalition efforts are focused on programs to ensure Afghan National Security Forces will be adequately trained when the bulk of coalition troops depart in 2014.

While often associated with combat training, the U.S. Army's Train-the-Trainer program, when applied in Afghanistan, enables knowledgeable small-unit leaders and trainers to mentor and teach their Afghan counterparts a variety of skills. One of these skills, for instance, is the proper operation and maintenance of a crane. Such capabilities would allow the Afghan National Army to move disabled vehicles in their motor pool for repair, a task which is very time consuming without such equipment.

The California Army National Guard's 132nd Multi-Role Bridge Company from Redding is nearing the end of its tour of duty in Afghanistan. Before leaving, however, 132nd Soldiers took the opportunity to train two Afghan non-commissioned officers from 5th Kandak, or 5th Battalion, on the basic skills necessary for them to teach their own Soldiers how to operate a crane in the Afghans' inventory. "We attempted to teach them the basic concepts of how a crane operates and the safety involved with it [and the] maintenance [skills] essential for it to operate," said Spc. Richard Malacky of the 132nd.

The 132nd troops learned those skills during several weeks of training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., but the expert engineers taught their Afghan counterparts the basics of crane operation in just a couple of days. "It's a pretty extensive course if you take it back in the states," Malacky said.

For that reason Malacky's training focused primarily on safe operation of the crane as well as preventive maintenance and services that will extend the life of the Afghan vehicles. He emphasized the use of outriggers to keep the crane balanced and the importance of not overloading the boom, or arm of the crane. "I'm teaching them to keep the load close to the crane and the boom fully retracted, and keep the load behind the crane as opposed to the sides where the outriggers are," Malacky said.



Sgt. Jeff Rauch of the CNG's 132nd Multi-Role Bridge Company trains an Afghan National Army Soldier to conduct preventive maintenance on a crane at Forward Operating Base Eagle, Afghanistan, on Sept. 2.

MPs drill on emergency readiness

By **IST LT. WILL MARTIN**
49th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs

Since its return from Iraq in August 2010, the 49th Military Police Brigade has emerged as the center of gravity for the National Guard's emergency-response efforts in Northern California. Situated along Highway 80 between Sacramento and San Francisco, the Brigade directs much of the CNG's Tier 1 civil-response assets and also serves as the military seat for the Homeland Response Force (HRF) for Federal Emergency Management Agency Region IX.

That responsibility carries with it a need for constant vigilance and a near-obsessive focus on the unit's emergency-response processes. Toward that end, the Brigade conducted an emergency deployment readiness exercise (EDRE) at its Fairfield headquarters on Nov. 3. In cooperation with the CNG's Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento, the Brigade

staff responded to a scenario involving a 7.8-magnitude earthquake along the northern portion of the San Andreas Fault.

As the headquarters for the HRF and Joint Task Force-49, which comprises a quick reaction force and a ready reaction force, the Brigade cannot afford wasted time or oversights. "The men and women of this Brigade understand what it takes to get it done," said Lt. Col. Steve Martinelli, executive officer for the Brigade. "Not only because the adjutant general wants it or the state [Domestic Operations Directorate] wants it, but because you understand the importance of this."

After receiving an early morning call, Soldiers began reporting to the Fairfield readiness center before 6 a.m. Unit leaders immediately directed the formation of what resembled an assembly line on the armory floor, moving Soldiers from table to table to be issued weapons and vehicles, receive briefings from the Brigade's special staff and update paperwork.

The effort proved seamless. "The in-processing went really smooth," said Col. Jeffrey Smiley, director of Domestic Operations for the Cal Guard, during a post-exercise evaluation. "This is something that they might need to take on at other units. ... [They] have a great process here."

Rather than merely resting on its strengths, the 49th worked into the evening with observer-controllers from Joint Force Headquarters to address areas that require improvement. Smiley suggested focusing future efforts on cementing command and control, improving communication and establishing a common operating picture.

In the end Smiley expressed confidence in the Brigade's potential to conduct its emergency-response mission. "You met all the validation standards for an EDRE exercise," Smiley said. "This unit is extremely solid in its attitude. ... There is a deep-rooted respect and honor that is well-embedded here."



Spc. Dominique Jackson and Sgt. Michael Hays conduct vehicle inspections Nov. 3 in Fairfield, Calif., during the 49th Military Police Brigade's Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise.

Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Brnce

Photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough

Know your rights

New state laws affect military members



In 2012 the California Military Department successfully sponsored three pieces of state legislation, which will directly aid members of the California National Guard and California State Military Reserve. The Department's Office of State Policy and Liaison also monitored, analyzed and provided recommendations to the governor on more than 100 other bills winding their way through the State Legislature.

The three bills sponsored by the Military Department are highlighted in the box at the right, and 19 other recently passed bills of note to service members are detailed below. For more on these new laws, which go into effect Jan. 1 unless otherwise noted, or for information on other bills passed during the 2011-12 legislative cycle, contact the State Policy Office at 916-854-3705. The unabridged versions of these laws can be viewed at www.leginfo.ca.gov.

SENATE BILLS

SB 921 strengthens oversight of the Military Department by codifying the inspector general position in state law and establishing requirements for the position. The law also requires the inspector general to report to the governor any allegations against the adjutant general or assistant adjutant general, and it establishes the California Military Whistleblower Protection Act, which clarifies the protections afforded members of the State Active Duty force. Due to its urgency, this law went into effect Sept. 28.

SB 1198 requires the California Department of Veterans Affairs to publicize information about benefits available for qualified homeless veterans such as pension programs administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing voucher program and the CalFresh food assistance program. The information shall be offered in printed pamphlets and on the Internet.

SB 1563 establishes that veterans who have completed acceptable training in the U.S. Armed Forces as military law enforcement officers shall be given 15 additional points on any entrance exam for a peace officer position. The bill instructs the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training to establish a regulation that defines acceptable training. SB 1563 also declares the Legislature's intent to simplify and expedite the process by which veterans who have completed acceptable training may become peace officers.

SB 289 enables the Department of Public Health to approve institutions that wish to provide clinical laboratory scientist programs to instruct students on

clinical laboratory techniques. The law includes programs such as a 52-week U.S. military medical laboratory specialist course. This will assist individuals in meeting the requirements for licensure or performance of duties under state law and regulations.

SB 1287 requires the Department of Fish and Game to offer reduced-fee sport fishing licenses to military members who have served on active duty and are recuperating from an injury or illness that resulted from their service. Information on reduced-fee licenses will be available on the Department's website, www.dfg.ca.gov, by Jan. 1.

SB 1288 requires the Fish and Game Department to offer reduced-fee hunting licenses to wounded warriors. Information will be available on the Department's website, www.dfg.ca.gov, by Jan. 1.

SB 661 makes it a misdemeanor to picket a funeral during the service or one hour before or after the service. The bill is intended to create a reasonable limitation that protects grieving families from disruptive protests, while respecting the right to free speech.

ASSEMBLY BILLS

AB 2659 authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles to waive the driving test portion of the commercial driver's license examination for service members who are currently licensed with the U.S. Armed Forces, possess the necessary driving experience and have a driving record compatible with regulations passed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Service members still must pass a written exam.

AB 2462 requires community colleges to identify courses by July 1, 2015, for which academic credit should be awarded based on prior military experience.

AB 1588 requires Department of Consumer Affairs boards to waive renewal fees and continuing education requirements for any licensee who is called to active duty as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces. The licensee may not engage in any activities that require a license while the waiver is in effect or until notification and renewal requirements have been met following discharge from active duty.

AB 1807 ensures a service member's child custody rights will not change during a deployment based on the non-deploying parent relocating to another state. The law also clarifies that a court will not order a child custody evaluation after the service member returns from deployment unless the party opposing the existing

Bills sponsored by the California Military Department

SB 1413 enhances the Military Department's ability to accept and use privately donated funds to support programs for service members, their families and cadets enrolled in Department youth programs. Passage of SB 1413 extends morale, welfare and recreation programs to all components of the Military Department and clarifies the Department's ability to raise and expend funds on such programs. (Introduced by Sen. Negrete McLeod)

SB 807 clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Military Department's State Active Duty (SAD) force and codifies it in state law as an essential component of the state's emergency response system. SB 807 models SAD after federal military personnel systems and establishes the force as a career path. It also ensures the long-term viability of the SAD system as an integral part of California's public safety capability. These changes will improve the way the state's full-time military force is managed, provide the necessary structure to improve its operational capability and provide internal controls necessary to prevent abuse. (Introduced by Sen. Lou Correa)

SB 1580 authorizes the Military Department, in coordination with the Department of General Services, to sell four armories that are no longer suitable for National Guard troops and deposit the net proceeds in the Department's Armory Fund. (Introduced by the Senate Governmental Organization Committee)

custody arrangement presents a "prima facie" case indicating the arrangement is not in the child's best interest.

AB 2475 prohibits the sale, foreclosure or seizure of real or personal property subject to a mortgage or other security for nonpayment during a period of military service and for nine months thereafter. The law previously protected property through three months after a tour of duty.

AB 2476 extends by one year the period of time during which mortgage interest rates are capped for those in military service. The cap was previously in place only during the period of service.

AB 342 requires the governor's Office of Planning and Research to serve as the state's liaison to the U.S. Department of Defense and facilitate coordination on issues of interest to the state, including any future federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission actions.

AB 1505 states that if the federal government reinstates benefits for veterans who were discharged based on their sexual orientation, California shall reinstate any state-offered veterans benefits as well.

AB 1805 expands voting rights for individuals who are deployed with the U.S. military or living overseas and ensures those voters are able to vote in state and local elections.

AB 2133 enacts the Combat to College Act of 2012, which gives former members of the U.S. Armed Forces up to 15 years to use their four years of priority registration enrollment at California State University (CSU) schools and California community colleges. Previously passed legislation requires CSU schools and community colleges to grant four years of priority registration for service members and requests the same from the University of California.

AB 2371 authorizes a court to provide restorative relief to any veteran who acquired a criminal record because of a mental disorder stemming from military service. If the defendant meets specified criteria, including that he or she does not represent a danger to the health and safety of others, the court may deem all conditions of probation to be satisfied — except victim restitution — including fines, fees, assessments and programs, and can terminate the defendant's probation, reduce a felony to a misdemeanor, set aside the conviction and dismiss the action.

AB 2490 requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to develop policies to assist veterans who are inmates in pursuing claims for federal veterans benefits and in establishing rights to any other privilege, preference, care or compensation provided under federal or state law because of honorable service in the military.

De-bombing Kosovo

Cal Guard EOD unit supports NATO peacekeeping mission

Story and photos by **SGT. ANGELA PARADY**
121st Public Affairs Detachment

Driving across the mountainous terrain of Kosovo with a trailer full of unexploded munitions would make most people a little nervous. For a driver from the 217th Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Company, though, this is just another day.

Of all the dangers Soldiers face in Kosovo, unexploded ordnance is the most hazardous. Identifying these ordnances, locating them and properly disposing of them is crucial to the safety and security of everyone in the country. Soldiers from the California Army National Guard's 217th are currently tackling that responsibility in Kosovo, one of the most heavily mined regions in the world.

"It is very important because these hazards affect not only our military but also the civilian population," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert W. Lee of the 217th. "It is very important that we keep this area safe for the civilians as well as the military operating in the area."

Lee is a team leader for the 217th, which is deployed in support of the NATO peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. The unit arrived in September and responded to more than 40 calls regarding suspected unexploded ordnance in slightly more than a month on the job.

When a report comes in, every case must be handled as a worst-case scenario, Lee said. "With [unexploded ordnance], the most dangerous aspect is always the unknown."

Sgt. Valeriy P. Didychenko of the 217th said the team deals with frequent false alarms, which can tempt a Soldier to let safety precautions slide. However, a technician never knows what he or she will find when responding to a call, so each mission must be handled with the same concern and attention to detail.

"Always be ready," he said. "We never get perfect information because people never know what they are looking at."

So we have to be prepared for anything. ... The danger is always out there."

Any time an EOD team works around explosives, whether in a controlled training environment or during a call to the field, safety is the primary concern, because you are putting lives on the line, Didychenko said.

"There are a lot of danger precautions ... above and beyond the normal Soldier safety precautions," he said. "You need to make sure there is no one else out on the range. You want to make sure you know how big the blast will be, what the radius is for shot fragmentation, the blast radius. You need to set up security for the area [and know] the damage the blast can cause. All those things need to be taken into consideration."

Lee stressed that it is not safe for Soldiers or anyone else to handle munitions unless they have been properly trained. "You don't know what state it is in, whether it was fired but then misfired, or if someone was trying to get rid of it and just placed it there," he said. "Leave it to us."

Many of the munitions found in Kosovo are near or past their expiration date. Those munitions are sometimes shipped back to the United States to be demilitarized: broken down, taken apart and recycled for future use. In Kosovo, however, it is often more cost-effective to destroy the munitions in a safe manner.

"We don't want someone just throwing it in a garbage disposal," Lee said. "It just doesn't work that way."

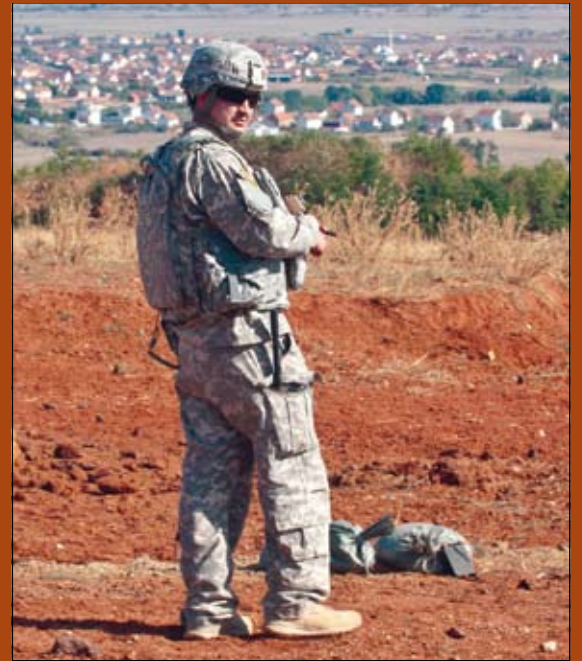
He compared expired munitions to the meals ready-to-eat, or MREs, that Soldiers carry.

"Munitions are sort of like MREs; everything has a shelf-life," he said. "They have moving parts, there are lubricants for fuses, and over time the chemical composition will break down."

"They should be inspected before use and stored properly," Lee continued. "If they fail their inspection, they are ... sent for demilitarization or destroyed by detonation."

"Always be ready. We never get perfect information because people never know what they are looking at. So we have to be prepared for anything. ... The danger is always out there."

- Sgt. Valeriy P. Didychenko
217th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company



Sgt. Joseph R. Reyes of the California National Guard's 217th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company works with his team leader, Sgt. 1st Class Robert W. Lee, to run wires from unexploded ordnances to a detonator Oct. 10 at a range on Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, where the Soldiers are deployed as part of a NATO peacekeeping mission.

NATO and the Cal Guard in Kosovo

78 days of NATO bombing forced brutal Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw his troops in 1999.

6,000 NATO troops now keep the peace, including 764 from the U.S. and 73 from the California National Guard. About 50,000 troops, including 6,000 Americans, were in Kosovo at the mission's peak.

3,000 California National Guard members have deployed to Kosovo since the war ended.

2008 marked Kosovo's declaration of independence, following a United Nations administration period.



Army aviators train with Elk Grove police dogs

By SENIOR AIRMAN JESSICA GREEN
California Military Department Public Affairs

California Army National Guardsmen teamed up with officers from the Elk Grove Police Department K-9 Unit to conduct aerial search-and-rescue training with their canine partners in early August.

The training offered hands-on instruction and helicopter familiarization for police personnel and dogs.

"The helicopters provide an ideal platform to be able to transport dogs to either a natural disaster or large-scale search operation," said Officer Greg Moore while working with his canine partner, Vasco. "The helicopter makes it extremely flexible — [it's] very easy to deploy assets just about anywhere the helicopter can fly."

The Cal Guard Soldiers conducted safety and mission-preparation briefings for the officers and their dogs at Mather Army Aviation Support Facility near Sacramento before boarding a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter for an orientation flight. K-9 teams were then flown to the Elk Grove Airport, where a training scenario required a search for personnel.

"We had six dogs, six trainers and multiple personnel involved in their scenarios," said Maj. Ben Garcia, a Black Hawk pilot and operations officer at Mather. "Anytime we

can come together with an outside organization to [train], we definitely do. It's a win-win situation."

The Elk Grove K-9 team is a specialized unit that uses dogs to assist police operations. There are six dogs that work patrol operations and one that is assigned solely to the narcotics unit. All shifts have a K-9 team on duty and available to assist in patrols 24 hours a day.

"Every day during our shifts we do basic maintenance training and obedience training. Not only do our dogs search for suspects, they search for articles and evidence including narcotics and firearms," said Officer Dan Emerson, whose partner, Bandit, is a cross-trained gun-detection dog. "Those are things that we have to constantly keep training with our dogs, because it's a perishable skill."

Elk Grove K-9 dogs are usually Dutch sport dogs from Adlerhorst International, Inc., a police dog training center in Riverside, Calif. After weeks of training, each officer selects a dog and continues personal training with the dog before beginning patrol shifts.

"[Cal Guard aviators] have conducted joint training in the past, and we will continue to do so, and we've extended that to all the counties that we work with," Garcia said. "It's vital to our mission to understand each other's missions and how we operate our aircraft around the search-and-rescue procedures."



Photo by Senior Airman Jessica Green

Officer Greg Moore of the Elk Grove Police Department K-9 Unit and his canine partner, Vasco, prepare to team up with a CNG helicopter crew to conduct flight exercises out of the Mather Army Aviation Flight Facility near Sacramento on Aug 1.

578th commander adopts canine companion

1st Lt. Meek rehabilitates, saves bomb dog Zina while deployed to Afghanistan

By SGT. GLEN BAKER
224th Sustainment Brigade

Most Army captains drink tea from an insulated mug or cup, but "Capt." Zina prefers to drink tea out of a stainless steel bowl.

Zina, a 3-year-old bomb and landmine detection dog who served in Kabul, Afghanistan, from December 2010 to November 2011, sustained a serious fracture to her right hind foot while deployed downrange. She underwent surgery, and several pieces of metal were placed in her foot to keep it in place.

However, because Zina didn't heal quickly after the surgery, veterinarian technicians considered putting her to sleep. That is when

1st Lt. Michael Meek, who was attached to the CNG's 578th Engineer Battalion out of Manhattan Beach, Calif., entered the picture and saved Zina so she could look forward to a life of running and playing catch.

Meek, who is the incoming commander of the CNG's 1114th Transportation Company, 185th Quartermaster Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, and a resident of Bakersfield, Calif., volunteered at the veterinary clinic in Kabul to help him cope with the stress of deployment, and that is where he met Zina, who was deployed with a non-CNG unit. Her condition was serious, Meek said, but he didn't want her to die just because she was not progressing as quickly as expected. He asked if he could watch her instead.

"Unlike humans, who can be told how to care for the injury or share how the recovery process is going, Zina's condition was very uncertain," Meek said. "It was determined she would not be able to work again, but the question remained whether the injury would worsen. Getting her out of Afghanistan would be an issue."

He eventually decided to adopt Zina despite her serious condition, though that was easier said than done. "From the moment I took Zina from the vet clinic, it was still a longshot on whether I could adopt her or not," he said. "In fact, that wasn't even on the table of our discussion. It was a sidebar conversation of 'hope.' Getting her better was the goal."

Meek knew he couldn't allow Zina's condition to interfere with his responsibilities as the operations officer in charge for the 578th, and in the first days after he picked her up, he was concerned it was too much.

"However, our bond began to grow more and more. She became a part of our day

in the office and at camp," he said. "As I watched her get stronger, I noticed the impact she had on so many people [in the unit] who were so far away from home too. Getting her out of [Afghanistan] became a part of our redeployment mission."

"She never set our team back or created any issue," he added. "She brought a blanket of ease for many of us."

The vet technician eventually changed his mind and allowed Zina to be adopted by Meek, who helped her recover during the six months she was in his care in Afghanistan. "Zina had a hard time walking at first," Meek said. "It was in the dead of winter; I believe it made the injury a little more painful."

"One day someone brought a tennis ball by the office. From there, she just performed," he said. "I would start by throwing it very short distances. I would also take walks with her around the perimeter of the camp. When I got to the back side, I would take her leash off. She wouldn't go far, but you could tell she was experiencing a little heaven."

All that walking worked up a sweat, and though not every dog likes caffeinated beverages, Zina learned to enjoy sweet tea in Afghanistan. "Zina was always very picky and leery about drinking. Her stainless steel bowls had to be cleaned a couple times a day to get her to drink," Meek said. "She would only drink from my hand if we weren't near a bowl. I would pour the water down my wrist real slow. However, one day I only had a cup of sweet tea, and I knew she was very thirsty. I attempted to offer her the tea, and she went nuts. From there on, I would order her her own tea."

Zina made many friends in Afghanistan, Meek said, despite her initial limitations.

"I was always amazed how so many people

continued on page 18



Photo by Amy Shezter

ABOVE: First Lieutenant Michael Meek returns to Los Alamitos, Calif., with his dog, "Capt." Zina, a retired bomb and landmine detection dog, on Aug. 8. RIGHT: Meek and Zina wait for a helicopter to transport them to the Kabul International Airport in Afghanistan on July 27.



Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Michael Meek

RIGHT: World War II Army Air Force veteran Vic Kramer is greeted at the San Diego International Airport by hundreds of supportive Southern California residents, including Staff Sgt. Daniel Stephens of the Cal Guard's 163rd Reconnaissance Wing, far right, who was part of a joint color guard that welcomed Kramer and 87 other World War II Veterans home from a trip to Washington, D.C., to visit the World War II Memorial. The free trip was given to them by the nonprofit Honor Flight Network. **Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey** **BELOW:** Airman 1st Class Juan Ortiz, a crew chief for the 129th Rescue Wing Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, services the damper on an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter during the Soaring Angel exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., on Oct. 12. **For more on Soaring Angel, see page 4. Photo by Staff Sgt. Kim E. Ramirez**



ABOVE: Staff Sgt. James Ruckdaschel, an MC-130P Combat Shadow airplane crew chief for the California National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing, conducts maintenance Oct. 31 at New Castle Air National Guard Base, Del., in anticipation of a possible rescue mission in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. **Photo by Senior Airman Jessica Green** **RIGHT:** Maj. Duc Vo, left, commander of the Cal Guard's 1977th Contracting Team, and active duty Army Maj. Stuart McMillan participate in an Army 10-mile run at Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan, on Oct. 6. **Photo courtesy of Maj. Duc Vo**



At a Glance



LEFT: Fresno County rescue personnel join members of the Cal Guard's 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, and the Cal Guard's 1106th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group in an Oct. 28 search for a missing 52-year-old hiker near Courtright Reservoir in Fresno County. The team successfully located the hiker, who had suffered no injuries, on the reservoir grounds. **Photo courtesy of I-140th Aviation Battalion**
BELOW: Airman 1st Class Allan Polzin of the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing Aircraft Maintenance Squadron conducts a pre-flight check on an MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft Nov. 3 at Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville. **Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey.**



LEFT: Spc. Jacob Penaflor, a member of the Guam Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 294th Infantry Regiment, crawls under concertina wire Nov. 8 at Camp Roberts, Calif., while training under the California Army National Guard's Task Force Warrior program. The Guam Battalion was preparing for an Afghanistan deployment early next year. **Photo by Sgt. Eddie Siguenza** ABOVE: Tech. Sgt. Erika Saunders of the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing Aircraft Maintenance Squadron touches up the paint on an MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft at Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville on Nov. 4. **Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey**

Warrior in the ring

49th MP Brigade Soldier applies Warrior Ethos to 'sweet science' of boxing

By IST LT. WILL MARTIN

49th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs



ABOVE: Spc. Neil Tremethick of the 49th Military Police Brigade, right, faces off against Brent Bugarin of the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department during an Oct. 6 welterweight bout that was part of the Sacramento Battle of the Badges event. BELOW: Tremethick adjusts his hand wraps before a sparring session at Grimz Boxing Gym in Sacramento.

Photos by 1st Lt. Will Martin

When Spc. Neil Tremethick of the 49th Military Police Brigade landed a full-time gig at the California Military Department headquarters in Sacramento, he began scouting the area for a good gym. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program staffer knew he needed to plug some fresh energy into his workout routine if he was going to stay motivated. For something new, Tremethick turned to something old, one of America's most historic sports: the "sweet science" of boxing.

"One day I drove by Grimz Gym," Tremethick said of his January 2011 visit to the Sacramento boxing club where he now regularly trains. "I was just going to try doing it for a workout, but I went in for one session and I was hooked."

Less than two years later, the aspiring pugilist has three amateur fights under his belt as well as a No. 5 United Combat Association (UCA) ranking in the welterweight class. The UCA is a California-based, amateur boxing-ranking organization that pits law enforcement, firefighting and military personnel against one another in the squared circle. Among those ranks, Tremethick is a rising star, having yielded losses to only top-ranked opponents.

"The first fight, there was a lot of nervousness and excitement," Tremethick said of his 2011 debut and narrow loss to Francisco Flores of the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department. "It seems kind of unreal that you're actually in a fight. The six minutes go by so quick."

Tremethick took his initial loss in stride, and if anything, the experience only whet his appetite. Back in Sacramento, he dove into his training at Grimz Gym, spending a couple of hours most nights sparring; working through drills to improve his footwork, speed and power; and enduring what his trainer calls "the 30-minute special."

"It's a lot like CrossFit," Tremethick said of the torturous half-hour sessions. "He mixes it up every night. It builds endurance through high-intensity workouts."

Tremethick seemed pre-

destined for the hardships — and the victories — that come from a demanding sport like boxing. Born in the Philippines, he was adopted by his aunt and her American husband when he was 11 years old. After a transitional stay in Germany, he moved near Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, Calif., where his adopted father served as a Russian linguist. The moves and the inherent trials only made him stronger.

"Being in Germany and not knowing English, the kids made a lot of fun of me for my accent," Tremethick said. "California was a lot more accepting. They had classes here where they teach English, and I made a lot of friends that way also."



to see Tremethick box, scan this QR code

Now a supply specialist with the Fairfield-based 49th MP Brigade, Tremethick has benefitted from the work ethic and discipline taught through his Army National Guard training. That Warrior Ethos, he said, translates well into the boxing ring. "The military training does help a lot as far as pushing through the pain. It takes a lot of discipline to commit to something like this," Tremethick said. "In boxing, it doesn't matter how tired you are, he's going to keep coming at you. You just gotta suck it up."

Tremethick took that determination into his second bout. "[Losing my first fight] left a bad taste in my mouth," he told reporters before his March 31 fight against Chris Martinez of the Avenal Police Department.

Sporting a compact frame that lends itself to quick punching and inside body blows, it quickly became apparent Tremethick had tapped into his strengths for his second amateur fight. Relentless and precise punching marked his style throughout the contest, and in the second round, Tremethick served Martinez a flurry of head and body shots that resulted in a standing eight count — a referee-enforced break in the action that protects a boxer who has endured punishment.

In the end, the Soldier won a decision over Martinez, who remains the No. 6-ranked welterweight UCA fighter, only one spot behind Tremethick.

Tremethick's impressive victory over Martinez earned him a UCA Northern California title shot at the Oct. 6 Battle of

the Badges in downtown Sacramento.

Located outdoors on the bustling city streets, the night carried a contagious electricity that energized the scores of spectators in attendance. Tremethick, however, cared little for the vocal crowd and devoted his energy toward preparing for the night's title fight.

Trading time between shadow boxing and watching videos of his favorite boxer and fellow Philippines native Manny Pacquiao, Tremethick looked the picture of intensity. He knew he would need that passion to defeat his opponent, top-ranked Brent Bugarin, a powerful fighter with the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department, whose hard-punching style promised to be an exciting contrast to Tremethick's speed and precision.

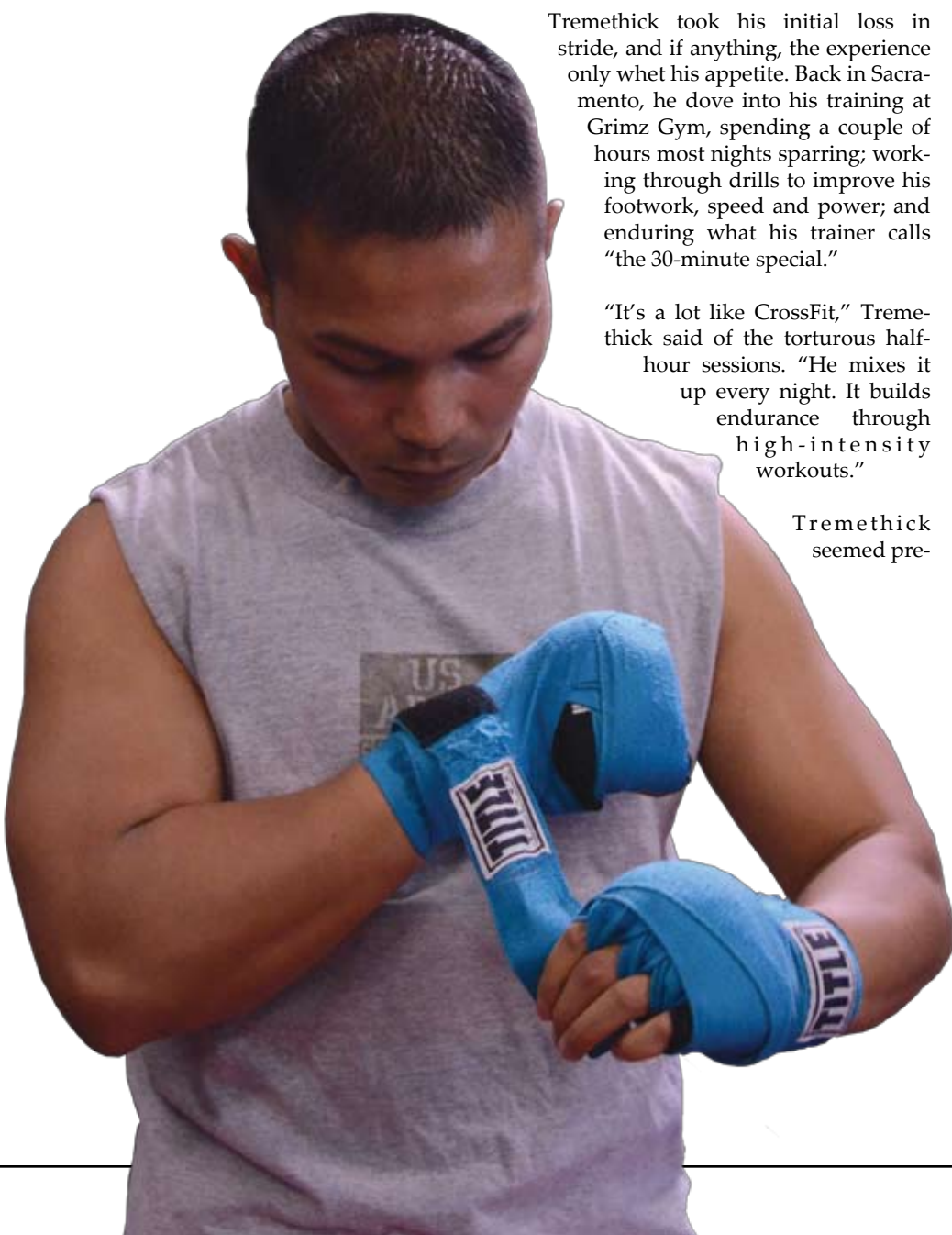
It became clear upon the first bell that Bugarin had done his homework. Knowing Tremethick relies heavily on speed and conditioning, Bugarin had spent extra hours at the gym improving his own endurance and handwork in an effort to remove that advantage. The strategy paid immediate dividends, as Bugarin emerged after the opening bell with a fury, landing Tremethick on the ring floor after a seemingly endless barrage of punches.

After surviving round 1, Tremethick quickly adjusted his game plan and became the aggressor, trading heavy blows with Bugarin throughout rounds 2 and 3. By the final bell, however, the damage had been done on the judges' score cards, and Bugarin claimed the title by unanimous decision.

"I knew he had a lot of speed and his conditioning was good," Bugarin told reporters after the fight. "I just had to work hard at the gym and keep going as much as I could every round."

Bugarin earned a forthcoming UCA state title shot with the win, and despite the loss, Tremethick maintains a top-5 spot for holding his own against the weight class' top-ranked challenger. In addition, the bad taste in his mouth grows only stronger, causing him to reflect on the words from the Warrior Ethos, and apply it to his young but promising boxing career: "I will never quit. I will never accept defeat."

For more about the Battle of the Badges, visit www.battleofthebadgessac.com.



New Family Wellness Center opens in San Diego



Story and photos by MASTER SGT. JULIE AVEY
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

The California National Guard opened a first-of-its-kind Family Wellness Center on Sept. 8 in San Diego. Located in the community, rather than on a military base like many wellness centers, the facility is open to members of all branches of the military.

The center offers assistance with everything from career counseling and financial advice to tutoring for children and help with post-traumatic-stress-related family problems.



“Our community today is once again connecting together to take care of each other.”
- 1st Lt. Joel Barret
1st Squadron, 18th Cavalry Regiment

“In the earliest days of our nation, the community would come together in times of need,” said 1st Lt. Joel Barret, executive officer for Troop B, 1st Squadron, 18th Cavalry Regiment, out of Escondido. “Men stood in front of the plow at Lexington and Concord. ... The alarm bells sounded, and throughout the community people networked together.

“Our community today is once again connecting together to take care of each other.”

On Aug. 24 nonprofit organization Big Sunday and retailer Home Depot teamed up to renovate the building at 305 E. Mission Ave. and landscape it. With more than 100 volunteers working inside and outside, in a matter of minutes the building was transforming into a quaint location with a garden and patio in the back for members to relax.

One of the biggest projects on the inside involved bringing in electricians to set up a computer station

where service members can search for and apply for jobs. Service members can also obtain help in finding day care, benefits information, local veterans programs, food assistance, job assistance and education information.

“When I was stationed in Louisiana and Hurricane Rita struck the Gulf Coast in 2005, I was thankful there was a family wellness center nearby to help military families,” Sgt. 1st Class Noah Ronquillo of Troop B, 1-18th Cavalry, said during the ribbon-cutting ceremony. “I had children, and we were able to go there and get diapers and wipes. Sometimes Soldiers need assistance, too. It really feels good to know the community came together to support us.”

The center will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and one weekend a month, with center coordinator Rebecca Lambert on staff and volunteers working as greeters and tending the garden.

“There are so many possibilities, and now we are right here in the community to help,” Lambert said. “We help people with a wide variety of needs, but sometimes people just need somebody to talk to.”

CNG Child and Youth Programs also has an office at the center, though that office’s mission is solely to serve the children of National Guard members.

“We are excited to see the pipe dream become a reality,” Barret said. “We are thankful to have Rebecca. She put a lot of heart and passions into making this place a reality for the military families in our community.”

Spc. Jaime Duarte, a mechanic in the California National Guard’s 79th Brigade Special Troops Battalion and a flooring manager at Home Depot, was one of the volunteers creating a community spirit at the new Wellness Center’s opening.

“I am able to serve in the California National Guard and have a career at Home Depot,” he said. “My managers support me, which allows for me to give back to my community.”



More than 100 volunteers from nonprofit organization Big Sunday and retailer Home Depot renovate the new California National Guard Family Wellness Center in San Diego on Aug. 24.

756th TC honors fallen, wounded



Sgt. Ivan Garcia of the CNG’s 756th Transportation Company receives a Purple Heart from Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the Cal Guard, during a Sept. 8 ceremony at the unit’s readiness center in Lancaster. The readiness center was renamed Sept. 8 in honor of Sgt. Carlo F. Eugenio, who was killed in the explosion that injured Garcia.

Story and photo by SGT. GLEN BAKER
224th Sustainment Brigade

The CNG’s 756th Transportation Company vowed to always remember its fallen brother Sgt. Carlo F. Eugenio during a Sept. 8 ceremony that renamed the unit’s readiness center in Lancaster for the 29-year-old who was killed by a suicide bomber in Afghanistan last year.

A heavy vehicle driver for the 756th and a resident of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., Eugenio was one of 17 victims killed by a vehicle-borne explosive device attack Oct. 29, 2011, near Kabul.

The Sept. 8 ceremony also served as a homecoming celebration for the unit following its yearlong deployment to Afghanistan and included a Purple Heart presentation for Sgt. Ivan Garcia, a motor vehicle operator and San Antonio resident who sustained injuries in the explosion that took Eugenio’s life.

“He was more like a brother,” said Garcia, who first met Eugenio when the two deployed to Iraq with the CNG’s 1498th Transportation Company in 2008-2009. “When I heard they needed volunteers for the 756th to go to Afghanistan, I volunteered. He and I did a lot of missions and movements together over there and we got real close.”

Garcia sustained second-degree burns to his face and third-degree burns to 45 percent of his body during the fatal explosion. “I felt the vehicle flip over — it felt like it was flying in the air. It landed on its side,” he said. “I unbuckled myself and got out, and I was looking for my driver, Sergeant Eugenio, to see where he was at — to see if he was still there — and as I was coming out of the vehicle, the gas tank behind me caught on fire.

“I caught the initial flash, which hit me in the face, and then I finally realized what happened, when I turned around and saw everybody still in the bus. They were deceased, but I was still looking for Eugenio the whole time to see if I could get him out of there.”

Eugenio, though, had been killed in the initial impact. Garcia said receiving the Purple Heart medal was very meaningful for him.

“I feel it’s more for [Eugenio] and the unit than it is for me,” he said. “They’re the ones that had to finish the mission after this happened.”

The 756th was the only transportation company in Kabul during the unit’s deployment. Its primary mission was to transport cargo and personnel throughout the area of operation. The unit is a component of the 746th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade.

First Lieutenant Dalia Sanchez, commander of the 756th, said the renaming of the readiness center is a fitting tribute to Eugenio.

“We are the first unit in this armory, and so to be able to dedicate this facility in his honor and his memory is very significant to us, because it puts some closure to that loss,” she said. “Although we’ll never forget him, this is definitely a nice touch and a good way for the Soldiers to come together [with] their families and put some closure to that loss.”

Suicide prevention is everyone's duty

Cal Guard 'stand down' helps soldiers stand up to stigma of seeking help

Story and photos by **1ST LT. WILL MARTIN**
California Military Department Public Affairs



When Capt. Nathan Chang learned his unit would be conducting an all-day suicide prevention "stand down," visceral emotions were evoked. The commander of the 49th Military Police (MP) Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) lost a friend to suicide shortly after he returned from his deployment to Iraq with the 224th Sustainment Brigade in 2010-11.

"A captain, my buddy from MP [Basic Officers Leadership Course], I saw him on Facebook shortly after he got back from a deployment overseas ... everything seemed to be on the right path for him," Chang said Oct. 14 during his unit's monthly training weekend in Fairfield, Calif. "Then I learned that he had killed himself and had no idea why. Nobody saw it coming."

Stories like Chang's permeate the Armed Forces, where suicide has grown to epidemic proportions, leaving its leaders wringing their hands in search for an explanation, let alone a solution.

"While fewer American Soldiers are in the line of fire each day, new Pentagon statistics show an

average of one military suicide occurred each day in the first six months of 2012, the fastest pace in the past 10 years," the Associated Press reported in June. "Military deaths from suicide outweighed combat deaths by a two-to-one ratio, a dramatic uptick since 2010 and 2011 when military suicides decreased from previous years."

In an effort to combat this tragic trend, the Army conducted a service-wide stand down Sept. 26, directing its Soldiers to cease non-combat operations for an entire day of suicide-prevention training. The California Army National Guard mirrored this effort during its October training weekend, calling on all units to awaken their troops to the severity of the issue, as well as the resources and treatment available.

"The seriousness of Army suicides warrants our complete attention and best efforts to increase resilience and save lives," said Brig. Gen. Lawrence Haskins, commander of the state's Army National Guard. "The suicide rate since 2010 is greater than the past nine years combined."

At the 49th MP Brigade, Soldiers experienced the usual wave of PowerPoint slides and video clips inherent to most Army training sessions. Unique, however, was

the raw honesty and personal interaction of the day's training, which centered on eliminating the stigma associated with seeking behavioral health counseling. "Ninety percent of the time when someone is suicidal, they have told someone else, they have shown signs," said Laura Davis, a marriage and family therapist who is the wife of HHC 1st Sgt. Gerald Davis. "The military is one of the hardest subgroups to treat ... you guys don't seek help."

Laura Davis broke the unit into groups of about eight Soldiers and handed them several colored pieces of paper. Each color represented a demographic — such as officer, Soldier who has deployed or female Soldier — and the participants were encouraged to discuss the suicide risk factors and remedial courses of action for each demographic. What resulted were frank discussions and broader understanding.

"The thing with being a team and a family is we should know what's going on with each other's lives," 1st Sgt. Davis said.

Across the rest of the California Army National Guard, the results were in some cases immediate, as several Soldiers inspired by the training contacted suicide prevention representatives to express

SUICIDE INTERVENTION

Consider the following steps

Ask

- Have the courage to ask questions, but stay calm
- Ask directly, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

Care

- Calmly control the situation; do not use force; be safe
- Actively listen to show understanding and produce relief
- Remove any means that could be used for self-injury

Escort

- Never leave your buddy alone
- Escort them to help (chain of command, chaplain, behavioral health specialist, hospital, etc.)
- Call the National Crisis Intervention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

concerns over their own mental health. First Lieutenant Nathan Lavy, the Cal Guard's Suicide Prevention Program manager, attributed the responsiveness in large part to the transparency shown by leaders, which helped combat the stigma associated with seeking help.

"A lot of senior leaders shared

their personal stories," Lavy said. "It really showed that we all experience tragedy and adversity, but with resilience skills and a strong connection to your battle buddies, it is all conquerable and you can still be a success. And we're all human; it's OK to expose some weakness, because even the strongest person battles with pain, challenge and thoughts of defeat."

In the near future, Lavy said, the California Army National Guard will begin training resilience training assistants (RTA) across the state. The RTAs will support intensely trained master resiliency trainers (MRT) in bolstering morale and suicide awareness at the squad and small-unit level. In addition personnel in the Joint Operations Center at Cal Guard state headquarters will receive training to ensure a 24-hour suicide prevention presence is available within the California Guard.

"We're really trying to exceed the standard for the number of MRTs in the next fiscal year," said Lavy, who expressed optimism. "The units are getting better at reporting ideations and risk factors, which means the stigma is being reduced. That's a very good sign."

For more about suicide prevention, visit the CNG's web page at www.calguard.ca.gov/mh/sp.

Learning to ASIST those in need

By **MASTER SGT. JULIE AVEY**
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

"The hardest part of the class was asking the person to first share his or her reasons for dying," 1st Sgt. Kristina Ghio of the 129th Rescue Wing said Sept. 28. "This wasn't something I was expecting."

The immediate urge when counseling a person who is considering suicide, she said, is to tell that person all the reasons they should want to live, but the Cal Guard's Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) pushes students in a different direction: "We learned not to try to immediately fix people," she said. "Our job is to listen."

Thirty-nine Soldiers and Airmen took part in the two-day course in San Diego in September. The next workshop is scheduled for February, with two more on the calendar after that. The state plans to provide ASIST training at every CNG unit, reaching more than 1,600 Guardsmen.

"When you are listening, you will often find people will give you the same reasons they gave you for dying as [they gave you] for living. This leads to helping the person," said Lt. Col. Mike Beyer, deputy chaplain for the CNG, who has led seven ASIST workshops. "Practicing listening is the heart and soul of the training."

ASIST teaches people to intervene when they identify suicidal behavior rather than just reporting the behavior. The training includes group sessions on how to communicate with someone who may be considering suicide. The program is an improvement from the Army's "Ask, Care and Escort," or ACE, model for dealing with suicidal behavior, said workshop participant 2nd Lt. Kenneth Cameron of the 870th Military Police Company.

"The ACE model focuses entirely on the short-term removal of the individual from the immediate danger of suicidal tendency," he said. "ASIST took this model a step further by providing for longer-term follow-up by the intervening Soldier. ... With the ACE model, Soldiers risked alienating one another. ASIST allows Soldiers to maintain long-term friendships while removing their battle buddy from imminent danger."

Sgt. 1st Class Frank Guizar, a platoon sergeant with the Riverside-based 315th Vertical Construction Company, said he took the course because he has known two service members who took their own lives. "I went to the workshop not knowing what to expect," he said, "and now I feel confident I can make a difference."

Cameron said the trainers did an excellent job removing the stigmas that typically surround frank discussions of



Lt. Col. Mike Beyer, CNG deputy chaplain, signs a certificate Sept. 28 signifying the completion of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training at the end of the two-day course in San Diego for 39 California National Guard members.

suicide in the military. "With these barriers out of the way, Soldiers and Airmen shared valuable experiences illustrating the tragedy of suicide and just how preventable it can be."

Soldiers and Airmen who are interested in attending a workshop, and units that are interested in hosting the training, should contact Beyer at 858-692-8009 or Capt. Renee Marie at 916-854-3813.

Gala celebrates life-changing CNG youth academies

Story and photo by **MASTER SGT. JULIE AVEY**
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

The California National Guard's Youth ChalleNGe programs for high school dropouts and at-risk students have cause for celebration.

At the completion of the five-month, live-in education program, 91 percent of participants have earned their high school diploma or GED credential, or they have committed to returning to school in their hometown. Among those with a diploma or GED credential, 34 percent continue their education, 47 percent join the workforce and 14 percent join the military.

"We see life in a different picture since arriving at the Academy," said Cadet Shane Fitzgerald, a member of the drill team at Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy on Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos. "We are inspired to achieve more now. I never saw myself being able to accomplish the challenges I am now overcoming."

Military leaders, members of Congress, heads of corporations, community dignitaries, celebrities and other well-wishers joined Youth ChalleNGe directors and cadets to celebrate the program and honor those who make it a success Sept. 29 during the inaugural California ChalleNGe Champions Gala in Los Angeles.

"Before this program we didn't feel like we were anything in life," said Sunburst cadet Michael Ragsac, who earned distinction as the Outstanding Platoon Guide at Sunburst and now is pursuing employment with Customs and Border Protection. "Now that we are in this program, we set our standards high. We believe in ourselves to accomplish the unthinkable. ... This program is teaching us how to be



Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy cadets Jason Kent, left, Michael Ragsac and Shane Fitzgerald attend the inaugural California ChalleNGe Champions Gala in Los Angeles on Sept. 29 to celebrate the CNG's Youth ChalleNGe program.

proud of ourselves and pick ourselves back up if we do not succeed the first time."

In addition to many testimonials from former ChalleNGe cadets and those who have seen their transformations, the evening included silent auctions for sports memorabilia donated by professional teams and services donated by a variety of companies. Later in the night, the winner of a live auction was awarded a three-lap trip around the Indianapolis 500 racetrack with J.R. Hildebrand, who drives the National Guard-sponsored IndyCar.

"We arrived [at the Academy] with different backgrounds," said Fitzgerald, who aspires to be in the Coast Guard or Air Force. "Now we can relate and share. We saw how we were failing and picked ourselves back up."

CNG band spices up Southwest Asia

By **TECH. SGT. DANIEL PLASTER**
Air National Guard Band of the Southwest

Airmen from the Air National Guard Band of the Southwest salsa dance band, Fuego Azul, brought Latin dance grooves and mainstream popular hits to Southwest Asia and Kyrgyzstan during July and August of this year.

Deployed from the CNG's 562nd Air Force Band in Ventura County as Air Forces Central Command (AFCENT) Band Vector, the musicians' missions included partnership-building performances for youths and the general public in Kyrgyzstan and morale-boosting shows for U.S. service members in Kyrgyzstan and other locations in Asia. The team also provided traditional brass band selections for a French Air Force contingent on Bastille Day and participated in high-level military ceremonies including changes of command and a general's promotion.

Fuego Azul, or "Blue Fire," is led by Tech. Sgt. Erick Quintanilla, a tuba specialist who has also deployed as a C-130J

airplane mechanic for the 562nd's parent wing, the 146th Airlift Wing. After that deployment, Quintanilla recruited a handful of colleagues from a Los Angeles-based professional dance orchestra he had led. That nucleus, complemented with additional band members, is capable of performing multiple sets of traditional Latin dance numbers as well as rock and pop favorites familiar to all audiences.

Working closely with the U.S. embassy in Kyrgyzstan, AFCENT Band Vector promoted cultural relations with the nation's citizens through performances for audiences of all ages, including interactive performances at summer youth camps that provide English language instruction. The Latin and pop songs were greeted with big smiles and enthusiastic dancing, and many in attendance were able to sing along to the likes of The Beatles' "Hard Day's Night," Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama," the Eagles' "Hotel California" and the Black Eyed Peas' "Pump It." Performance venues ranged from small offices to large stages at military base common areas, dining facilities and even a flight line checkpoint.

For many deployed service members, such special events provide a welcome break in the routine with an opportunity to relax and listen, sing and play along, or get a complete dance workout. For others the events become a memorable milestone marking the passing of their deployment days. One fighter pilot on a smaller base noted that the Latin arrangements provided a welcome contrast to the rock and hip-hop fare that is generally available.

Many service members even enjoyed opportunities to jam with the ensemble. Talented guitarists, drummers and vocalists from a variety of units were featured as guest artists at every base on the tour. An entomologist who serves in civil engineering taught the band some Mariachi numbers, a young explosive ordnance disposal specialist played terrific guitar and guest female vocalists enhanced the concert on numerous occasions.



Air Force Central Command Band Vector performs for students a youth camp in Kyrgyzstan this summer.

Urban corps

CSMR troops train to respond to crisis in SF Bay Area



Photo by Lt. Col. Daniel E. Kates

Sgt. 1st Class (CA) Lawrence Nevis, a medic with the California State Military Reserve, examines a member of Brazil's Special Police Operations Battalion during exercise Urban Shield on Oct. 27 in the San Francisco Bay Area.

By **LT. COL. (CA) DANIEL E. KATES**
California State Military Reserve

Soldiers from the California State Military Reserve (CSMR) Regional Support Command-North in San Rafael and the CSMR Provost Marshal's Office in Sacramento participated in exercise Urban Shield in October.

The annual four-day training event, which began in 2007 and takes place each year in the San Francisco Bay Area, is an international, multi-jurisdictional exercise with nearly 4,200 participants that provides invaluable training for CSMR Soldiers' professional development.

During the past five years, Urban Shield has grown into a comprehensive, full-scale exercise to assess regional response capabilities in a high-threat, high-density urban area. Components of the training event, Oct. 26-29, included a special weapons and tactics (SWAT) competition, 12 fire scenarios, one explosive ordnance disposal situation, a hostage crisis, mass casualty training and a hazardous materials exercise.

The CSMR served in many different capacities during Urban Shield, including working as a liaison with the Alameda County Sheriff's Office, the lead agency for Urban Shield; providing logistics support for the Emergency Operations Center and Medical Department Operations Center set up by the Sheriff's Office; and serving as providers of medical care at four field hospitals.

"For the Medical Section, this is as real as it gets," said Sgt. 1st Class (CA) Lawrence Nevis, a medic with Regional Support Command-North. "While this is an exercise, we nonetheless provided real-world medical care. Not only were we responsible for the wellness of the participants, we also provided pre-hospital medical care to injured participants, staff and role-players. This closely mimicked what CSMR Soldiers may be called to do in a real emergency."

The multi-layered exercise was designed to enhance the skills and abilities of regional first responders and those responsible for coordinating and managing large-scale events. It is also intended to identify and stretch regional resources to their limits while expanding regional collaboration and building positive relationships.

"It was an honor and pleasure to work in the medical branch with some of the finest, most dedicated public safety personnel in the Bay Area," said Maj. (CA) Seth Prosterman, a CSMR behavioral health officer. "[Defense Support of Civil Authorities] seems to be a logical direction for [the CSMR]. I strongly believe that our involvement in these real-world exercises and scenarios is an important part of the preparedness training for the CSMR to assist with any natural or manmade disaster in the state of California."

Mendelsohns lead the way in Guard, community

By **MASTER SGT. JULIE AVEY**
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

When Capt. William Mendelsohn of the CNG's 224th Sustainment Brigade deployed for the first time, to Iraq in 2005, his wife, Debra, felt a bit lost.

"I knew nothing about insurance, benefits for military families and approaches for helping the children cope with the temporary loss of their father," she said. "Other National Guard families have additional problems related to the Soldier's leaving a civilian job to deploy."

Debra said she didn't want anybody else to go through the struggles she experienced when her husband deployed, so she became heavily involved with the 224th's Family Readiness Group. Several years later, she is now a lead volunteer for the National Guard's statewide Family Readiness Program.

Also during that first deployment, Debra noticed neighboring communities had posted banners that thanked local members of the military for their service. "We were just wondering why our [community] didn't," said Debra, who lives in Claremont, Calif.

She therefore began a fundraising campaign and received \$8,000 in private donations to create lawn signs honoring Claremont's service members.

"It was surprisingly controversial," Debra said. "As a college town, Claremont included residents who did not want to indicate any approval of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. ... I used it as an opportunity to teach my children about freedom of expression and freedom of speech and attacking a problem."

About 800 signs were printed and strategically distributed by Debra and the Mendelsohns' two children, who asked residents to display them on Memorial Day. "Claremont's population is about 35,000 people," Debra said, "so when 800 signs appeared on Memorial Day, it made quite a visual impact."

For their efforts, the Mendelsohns' children, Emelie, who is now 17, and Douglas, 15, were honored by their hometown as City of Claremont Community Heroes.

"Over time the City Council came to understand the program is about people, not politics, and the entire community now supports the effort," Debra said.

This year 150 banners honoring service members as hometown heroes will be hung in Claremont for Veterans Day.

Capt. Mendelsohn, a full-time medical logistics officer for the 224th, also has a long tradition of volunteerism. One of his passions before he deployed in 2005 was mentoring Boy Scouts as an assistant scoutmaster. When he deployed, the Scouts were missing a leader, so he arranged for a meeting with the group via Skype, a Web-based video phone service.

"It was an opportunity for them to see my deployed surroundings directly," Capt. Mendelsohn said. "I think seeing and communicating with them over Skype brought the deployment of Soldiers home for them."

Learning from her parents' example, Emelie has embraced



ABOVE: Capt. William Mendelsohn, a medical logistics officer for the CNG's 224th Sustainment Brigade, and his family accept the Association of the United States Army's Volunteer Family of the Year Award at the Association's Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 22. **BELOW:** Soldiers wearing uniforms from every era of U.S. Army service participate in the opening ceremony for the Annual Meeting on Oct. 21.

volunteerism as a way of life. During her dad's deployment to Iraq, Emelie recruited friends to help set up a craft booth during a unit holiday party, where she entertained children of deployed Soldiers. "As long as I can remember, I have worked alongside my mom at various Family Readiness Group functions," she said.

Last year Emelie volunteered more than 250 hours on productions at her high school theater, earning a coveted slot in the Thespian Honor Society, and she volunteered throughout the school year as a peer mentor for physically and mentally challenged students at her high school, earning her a commendation from the California Senate.

Douglas, meanwhile, earned his Eagle Scout rank this summer after overseeing a community service project incorporating more than 291 hours of volunteer service to build a game court at Temple Beth Israel in Pomona, Calif. Douglas has also volunteered as a bugler for the past six years, playing at a variety of Scout and community events, including Veterans Day and Memorial Day events organized by the cities of Claremont and La Verne. He also previously oversaw a community service project that raised more than \$1,500 to purchase holiday care packages for deployed service members and collected donations of money and books to support the USO's United Through Reading program, which gives deployed parents the opportunity to be video-recorded reading storybooks for their children at home, to ease the stress of separation.

In recognition of the Mendelsohns' years of selfless actions, the Association of the United States Army honored

the family in October, naming them the Association's Volunteer Family of the Year for 2012. They were the first National Guard family ever to win the prestigious award, which was presented Oct. 22 in Washington, D.C., during the Association's Annual Meeting and Exposition.

The Mendelsohns met top current and retired Army leaders on their trip and dined with generals from foreign countries. "We were thrilled to meet other international representatives, including a lieutenant from the French Army who shared stories of his combat experiences in the Horn of Africa," Debra said.

The Mendelsohns' award included a \$1,500 cash prize, which the parents gave to Emelie and Douglas. "The kids didn't feel right keeping any of the money for themselves since the award was in recognition of our volunteer service as an Army family," Debra said.

Instead the youths divided the money four ways, and each family member chose a charity that serves wounded warriors or military families to receive their portion of the prize.

"I don't know if I could have been any prouder of my children," Debra said.

For more about the 2012 AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition or how to submit a family for next year's Volunteer Family of the Year award, visit <http://tinyurl.com/AUSAFamilyoftheYear>.



Photo courtesy of the Association of the U.S. Army



Photo courtesy of the Mendelsohn family

Keeping danger at bay

California Guardsmen join Fleet Week civil-response dialogue

Photo by Staff Sgt. Kim E. Ramirez

By **IST LT. WILL MARTIN**
California Military Department Public Affairs

Each autumn, Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen converge on San Francisco during Fleet Week to celebrate the naval heritage of the famed coastal city and applaud the service of the men and women who protect the open seas. This year Airmen and Soldiers from the California National Guard joined the Oct. 3-8 event, but not so much to celebrate as to advance the inter-agency emergency-response effort between Bay Area civilian and military agencies.

"We do some sort of civil response mission about every three days," Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the CNG's adjutant general, said Oct. 4 in describing the CNG's mission to an audience of senior military officers

and Bay Area civic leaders aboard the USS Makin Island. "We do more emergency missions than the [National Guards in the] other 53 states and territories combined."

Cal Guardsmen took the lead in engaging Bay Area medical emergency-response professionals Oct. 3, when they hosted a Peer-to-Peer Medical Exchange at Moffett Federal Airfield in Silicon Valley, home to the CNG's 129th Rescue Wing. About 100 health care managers and policymakers from across the region were flown aboard CH-53 helicopters to Moffett courtesy of the Marine Corps.

Once at Moffett, they toured aircraft displays and received descriptions of the CNG's diverse emergency-response capabilities, including the 95th Civil Support

Team's chemical and biological response squads, the 146th Airlift Wing's firefighting airtankers and the striking array of vehicles and gear belonging to the 129th Rescue Wing's pararescue squadron.

"This broadens our understanding on what the Guard can provide," said Ben Tanner, hospital liaison for the San Francisco Department of Emergency Management. "It gives the hospital leaders greater awareness of the resources available to them and how to actually access them."

Aboard the USS Makin Island the next day, Col. Robert Spano, director of the California Military Department's Joint Staff, detailed some of the capabilities the CNG brings to the civil-response fight. "We have a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week Joint Operations

Center with a common operating picture that is tied to all the agencies represented here today," said Spano, who also serves as the CNG's dual-status commander (DSC). As DSC, Spano would assume command of both active duty and reserve component military forces in any emergency-response effort that required both active and reserve component participation in California. The construct, he told the audience, allows for "greater unity of effort."

Though strides were made, almost all in attendance echoed the same sentiment: This dialogue was only a beginning to facilitating greater interagency cooperation.

"We're starting to come together as one joint team," Baldwin said. "We're working on being prepared for anything in the Bay Area."

Leaders' Perspectives on Humanitarian Aid, Disaster Relief and Defense Support of Civil Authorities

MEET THE PANEL



Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin
Adjutant General
California National Guard



Vice Adm. Gerald R. Beaman
Commander
Navy 3rd Fleet



Anne Kronenberg
Executive Director
S.F. Emergency Management Dept.



Maj. Gen. Melvin Spiese
Deputy Commander
1st Marine Expeditionary Force



Vice Admiral Paul F. Zukunft
Commander
Coast Guard Pacific Area

Modern warfare: CNG network is under attack

By **MASTER SGT. DAVID J. LOEFFLER**
Directorate of Information Management (J-6)

It is 3 a.m. and you are resting peacefully in the comfort of your own bed. Your military-issued Blackberry mobile phone sits idle on your nightstand. On your kitchen table sits your laptop, your Common Access Card nestled in the card reader. You have been putting in extra hours at home on a project that is near completion, and you're confident your boss will appreciate your efforts.

Outside your home are two men dressed entirely in black. As they peer through your windows, they see you, your Blackberry and your laptop. A short while later, a van pulls up to the California National Guard Joint Force Headquarters. Two men slip into the building while one remains in the van, which is equipped with devices that can easily hack records containing personally identifiable information, secret documents and confidential emails. Theft of this information could cause financial hardships, loss of privacy and potential embarrassment.

If you think this sounds like a spy novel or a situation that couldn't happen, you need to rethink your premise. With a network of more than 6,000 computers and 2,000 handheld devices, the Cal Guard is an organization under constant attack, and safeguarding government-issued devices and Common Access Cards is of vital importance.

Fortunately the California Military Department also has a dedicated team of professionals working around the clock to protect assets from the threats of cyberwarfare. The Directorate of Information Management, commonly known as the J-6, not only issues, manages, repairs and replaces computers and communications devices, it also provides thorough security protocols to protect the CNG's network, computers and information. In addition the J-6 provides

tactical communications during wildfires, search-and-rescue missions and multi-agency exercises like the San Francisco Fleet Week Communications Drill in August, when the CNG's Incident Commander's Command, Control and Communications Unit team enabled communications for 16 federal, state and local agencies.

"In the past 14 days we've monitored over 160,000 malicious acts or threats against the California National Guard network," said Ken Foster, cybersecurity manager for the Military Department. "We are currently tracking over 10,000 high-risk events that could significantly impact the network and potentially cause the network to be severely derogated or could allow an intruder to take control of a device."

As those threats are eliminated, they are categorized to indicate trends that enable the J-6 team to strengthen efforts against the malicious intent. "We have to recognize that this network is the one we use to support the Soldiers we deploy, their families, the financial operations, logistics and day-to-day operations," Foster said. "It is also the same network we use to support the governor when we respond to floods, fires and other [Defense Support of Civil Authorities] missions.

"If we don't adequately protect that network, when the citizens of California need us, we won't be able to respond," he continued. "That's why we spend so much time and effort doing the best job we can to protect the network."

If you are a Soldier or Airman wondering why it sometimes takes you a few extra minutes to log on and start your workday, be aware that 15 to 20 malicious attacks on the network occurred just while you were entering your personal identification number. "The changes that we make to the network do sometimes slow down the system. However, the defense of the network that allows every-



Photo by Emily Loeffler

The Directorate of Information Management works around the clock to protect the California National Guard's network, but it is your responsibility as well.

body to do their job is paramount," Foster said. "The Internet is a dangerous place, and if you do not protect your network, someone will be happy to take it over for you and do bad things on it, whether it's denial of service or something more malicious like changing or stealing data.

"It's like auto insurance: You can drive without it, but it's not a good idea."

Annual Sacramento Stand Down lifts up homeless vets

By **MASTER SGT. DAVID J. LOEFFLER**
CNG Directorate of Information Management

The purpose of the first "stand down" in the military was to provide a safe retreat for battle-weary Soldiers where they could rest, recover and rebuild their morale and well-being. For many of the homeless veterans who traveled to Boy Scout Camp Pollock for the annual Sacramento Stand Down in September, a hot shower, a nutritious meal, a place to stay and a fresh change of clothes was just what was called for to provide that much-needed morale boost.

The three-day event, Sept. 21-23, which is in its 21st year, provides free food and shelter, clothing, medical care and a wide variety of other services to hundreds of homeless veterans each year.

Among the services provided are job placement and unemployment insurance resources, drug and alcohol counseling, legal assistance, drivers license and identification help, information on benefits for veterans and the disabled, haircuts, housing assistance and even free entertainment.

The Sacramento-based Gold Rush Chapter of the U.S. Army Warrant Officer's Association collected donations of clothing and toiletries, then distributed those items to more than 225 homeless veterans. The warrant officers were joined by hundreds of other volunteers eager to provide assistance to the needy veterans.

"I felt honored and grateful to be a member of an orga-

nization that supports our veterans," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Blanca Gutierrez, an information systems security officer for the 115th Regional Support Group based in Roseville, Calif. "This experience was rewarding and truly touching. I was delighted that I was able to positively impact their lives and see them smile."

The homeless veterans at the Stand Down were as diverse as the stories they told of struggles on and off the battlefield. Veterans from the Korean War through Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan reached out for the much needed help.

"We had boxes and bags to go through and sort, and the Warrant Officer's Association did an excellent job," said volunteer Kim Nelms of the California Department of Veterans Affairs. "Thank goodness for them, as they also helped with heavy boxes we couldn't lift. Their help was very much appreciated, and we enjoyed working with each and every one of them."

John Buck, assistant director of the Sacramento Stand Down Association, said it took about 450 volunteers to make the Stand Down happen. "We love the Warrant Officers Association and their contributions and support to this successful Stand Down," he said.

This was the first year the Gold Rush Chapter has volunteered at the Stand Down, and the warrant officers have already pledged their support for future events. Units and organizations interested in supporting the next Stand Down should contact the Sacramento Stand Down Association at 916-646-6004.



Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Blanca Gutierrez of the CNG's 115th Regional Support Group helps distribute donated pants to homeless veterans during the Sacramento Stand Down in September.

CNG works with Korean forces

Infantrymen experience professional, personal growth in Asia

By **1ST LT. PETE FORTIER**
1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment

Fifteen CNG infantry Soldiers traveled to the Republic of Korea in August for a United Nations Command and Combined Forces Command exercise in which they actively engaged with senior-level planning and operations personnel, going far beyond their normal duties.

First Lt. Cameron Larsuel and Pfc. Jorge Tello of 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment, routinely worked with senior officers including South Korean generals. Larsuel was actively engaged in the planning and operations for both the offensive and defensive measures practiced during the exercise.

The 1-160th Soldiers served in a multitude of capacities, including acting as opposing forces: aggressors from North Korea. The CNG troops brought skills that enabled them to mimic North

Korean forces and provide realistic training.

The three-week endeavor also provided CNG Soldiers a personal growth experience. During their excursion, the troops were able to interact with their South Korean counterparts, partake in the local culture and sightseeing, indulge in local cuisine and converse with local residents. The two forces also carried out a traditional exchange of military garb that enabled both nations to learn more about one another on a military level and on a human level, as friendships were forged by members of the two armies.

The 1-160th Soldiers, who earned the Overseas Training Ribbon, bring home knowledge and skills that will enable them to become subject matter experts in their units. They also bring friendships and experiences they will remember for decades and that will help elevate the cooperation between the Guard and South Korea.



Photo courtesy of 1-160th Infantry Battalion

Soldiers from the California National Guard's 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment, pose with their South Korean comrades-in-arms after exchanging wings, badges and tabs during a United Nations Command and Combined Forces Command exercise in the Republic of Korea in August.

'Dog' from page 9

from other camps would have treats sent to them, and they would make it a point to come find us so they could see her and her progress," Meek said. "Zina gained many friends and cheerleaders who wanted to see her get home to California."

Meek even took Zina with him to the barbershop, where he said the local nationals were very scared of her. "They would ask if she would bite. I would always say, 'Only if you mess my hair up.' I really think they believed me. They took more time on me than any other person getting a haircut."

Zina has become more outgoing since their Aug. 8 return to the U.S., Meek said, adding that it has been amazing to see her transformation since coming into his care in Afghanistan. Early in their relationship, she was timid and preferred to get under his desk while he worked. Now she is confident, loves attention and is curious about sounds.

One of Zina's favorite activities is to go on 4- to 6-mile runs, which is a newfound activity, as group running was something she was not able to do as a military working dog. Now Meek and Zina meet 20 to 40 other runners at a bagel shop early each morning for a run, and many runners bring their pets.

"I will never forget watching Zina get out of the car. She was like a kid in a candy shop," he said. "As we ran with the other runners and their dogs, I could tell she was making sure she mimicked what the other dogs did. Of course all the other runners were amazed by her controlled behavior. I am definitely the

proudest runner out there."

Meek said making a routine for Zina is very important, as her personality calls for it. Putting a routine in place helped break the military dog out of her shell and pushed her to start socializing in ways she never had before. Now Zina loves being around children, for instance, Meek said.

"Zina had never been around children until coming to the States," he said. "She is amazed by them. She pulls me toward them and loves to smell them and remain close. You can sense she understands they are fragile. I can only guess it is her motherly instinct."

Even though she's losing her military edge, Zina remains very well-behaved and has only barked twice, Meek said. "Regardless of what is going on around her, she will not bark or react like the other dogs. ... The two times she barked was when someone took her toy and would not give it back."

Zina was given two coins by major generals and one by a colonel following her recovery, which Meek said was integral in helping him receive the proper documentation to remove her from Afghanistan and bring her back to the States as a civilian dog. Now Zina enjoys drinking her preferred beverage from deployment at her new home in California. "She loves going to Starbucks and getting a sweet tea," he said. "She will crawl up on the leather couches and have me position the tea so she can drink and not spill it."

Zina has achieved a full recovery, Meek said, and is now fully enjoying her retirement.



Spc. Matthew C. Harris of Company A, 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment, acts as a member of an opposing force during exercise Saber Junction, which was held at the Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels training areas in Germany from Sept. 30-Oct. 30. The training event was the largest conducted by U.S. Army Europe in more than 20 years, involving thousands of service members from 19 nations and hundreds of military aircraft and vehicles. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Castillo

Nominate your employer for an ESGR Freedom Award

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense agency, is accepting nominations for the 2013 Employer Support Freedom Award. The award is the highest honor presented by the Department of Defense to civilian employers for their support of their employees in the National Guard and Reserve. Up to 15 employers will be selected and honored during a ceremony in Washington, D.C. Nominations may be submitted by Guard members, Reservists or family members acting on their behalf at www.FreedomAward.mil through Jan. 21.

CDVA hiring in Fresno, Redding

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) is hiring hundreds of employees for the Veterans Homes of California in Fresno and Redding. Throughout 2013, CDVA will fill positions in the nursing, medicine, pharmacy, mental health, social services, speech and physical therapy, dietetics and food service, sanitation and janitorial, plant operations, groundskeeping, security, accounting, human resources, medical billing, contracts, clerical, health care analysis and information technology fields. CDVA is scheduling examinations to establish eligibility for the positions. The agency will host recruitment fairs at the Redding and Fresno homes in January. For CDVA job and examination announcements, visit www.calvet.ca.gov/AboutUs/Jobs/Default.aspx.

DID YOU KNOW...

it is your right and duty to report wrongdoing without fear of reprisal?

If you see or are aware of wrongdoing, it is your responsibility to report it so corrective action can be taken without fear of reprisal. Reprisal is defined as taking, or threatening to take, an unfavorable personnel action on a military member for making or preparing to make a protected communication. It also applies to withholding, or threatening to withhold, a favorable personnel action.

Title 10 U.S. Code 1034 provides for lawful protected communications by military personnel to members of Congress, inspectors general and members of their chain of command. It also prohibits retaliatory personnel actions in reprisal for those protected communications.

References: Air Force Instruction 90-301, Army Regulation 20-1

Tax deductions for CSMR members

Because non-paid service in the California State Military Reserve (CSMR) is regarded by the Internal Revenue Service as a form of volunteerism, some expenses associated with CSMR duties can be deducted from individual tax returns by those who itemize their deductions, "exactly as any other charitable work," says Sgt. (CA) Wahba Farag, a CSMR member who is president and CEO of TaxMaster of California in Glendale.

Volunteers for specified organizations such as the CSMR may deduct mileage expenses from their home to their base or any other place they visit on official duty. For the current rate and any other guidance beyond the broad guidelines of this article, service members should consult the IRS or a tax professional, Farag said.

The IRS also permits deductions for other expenses, Farag said. If, for example, a Soldier buys stationery for their unit or adds a research item to the library, that expense is likely deductible. Likewise one could record a deduction based on the depreciation of their property if it is often used for CSMR business, such as a laptop computer or a projector for presentations. "If it's multi-purpose ... you could allocate a certain price per hour to the [CSMR] equipment use and depreciate the scheduled duty life," Farag said.

Deducting the cost of meals on training days is "ambiguous," Farag said, even if the service member lives very far from their base. "If I have to stay away from home for a few days, certainly. But the rules for meals are way too complicated to construct a general guideline."

Sgt. 1st Class (CA) Robert Davison, a retired income tax preparation specialist, said other items that can be deducted include identification-badge holders; boot care products; field equipment such as knee and elbow pads, rucksacks, Kevlar helmets and load-bearing vests; and living expenses when staying on or near a base for extended training.

In recognition of your service

The Extend to Defend program was established to enhance the recognition of Army National Guard Soldiers who re-enlist. The program provides a formal means for units to ceremoniously show appreciation for a Soldier's commitment to continued service and to recognize the contributions of the spouses who support them.

Soldiers who extend their commitment for three or more years are now eligible to receive an Extend to Defend package. Single Soldiers will receive a sweatshirt, Soldier certificate, survival bracelet, and Extend to Defend challenge coin. Married Soldiers will receive those items plus a Soldier's spouse certificate, a long-sleeve T-shirt and a spouse's survival bracelet.



Career counselors at the battalion level will manage distribution of the packages to their companies and ensure they are presented to service members in a proper setting.



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The Grizzly Newsmagazine

Published by the Directorate of Communications, California National Guard
Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army,

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The Grizzly is an official publication authorized by Army Regulation 360-1 and Air Force Instruction 35-101.

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Senior Airman Michael Antonson of the California National Guard's 163rd Reconnaissance Wing, left, Staff Sgt. Daniel Stephens of the 163rd and Senior Airman Trevor Kihle of the Air Force Reserve's 452nd Air Mobility Wing present the colors during a Veterans Day celebration Nov. 11 at the USS Iowa in Los Angeles. The three Airmen are part of the Blue Eagles Total Force Honor Guard, which comprises National Guard, Reserve and active duty Airmen from three bases in California. Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

THE GRIZZLY NEWSMAGAZINE 2012

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