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GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard

Hanging tough

Two women and
15 men fight to be
Best Warrior

12 & 13

Leadership Corner

Our domestic mission sets us apart

Major General David S. Baldwin



The Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard are skilled, talented, courageous warriors who have proven their abilities time and again while joining their active duty counterparts in combat operations overseas. But the defining characteristic of the National Guard is our domestic-response mission.

We are always ready to mobilize at a moment's notice when disaster strikes or our fellow Californians are in need of assistance. We are the defenders of our homeland, just as the National Guard has been since 1636. That commitment to our communities is the reason many of our members joined the National Guard rather than an active duty component.

As is often the case, this summer brought an opportunity for National Guard troops to make a difference here in California by protecting the lives, homes and businesses that were threatened by wildfires raging across the state.

Already this year Army National Guard helicopters and Air National Guard helicopters and planes have flown hundreds of hours, dropping more than 2 million gallons of water and fire retardant on fires in several parts of the state while also performing medical evacuations.

Our Soldiers and Airmen who were called out to battle the blazes consider it a highly meaningful mission — one in which we can be of direct service to the people who depend on us in our home communities. Working with our partners at the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) and the Califor-

nia Emergency Management Agency to extinguish the flames, however, is just one example of the domestic missions that make the National Guard a uniquely valuable military organization.

We take tremendous pride in the contributions the California National Guard has made to overseas contingency operations since 2001, but there is something special about helping our neighbors. For us, being a good neighbor means extinguishing wildfires, rescuing ill sailors stranded at sea and protecting the Western United States' airspace with F-16C Fighting Falcon jets. It means monitoring our borders, coasts and forests for drug trafficking activity and being ready to respond to any natural or man-made disaster — including those involving chemical or biological contaminants and weapons of mass destruction.

Our multi-faceted domestic role is a challenging responsibility, but it is one our Soldiers and Airmen have never backed down from and have always filled admirably, just as they have overseas while performing their federal missions.

Our current California National Guard is the most experienced, combat-tested force we have ever fielded, and our performance during domestic missions reflects that level of expertise. CNG helicopter crews are accustomed to high-altitude missions in Afghanistan; CNG security forces have honed their skills through diverse missions in the Middle East and other parts of the globe; and nearly all of our service members who have deployed during the conflicts of the past decade have come home

better Soldiers and Airmen.

Our Guardsmen frequently team with active duty members of the U.S. Armed Forces overseas, and the same capability can be utilized during crises at home. In August, Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. took an important step to streamline joint operations between the Guard and active duty forces responding to wildfires this year, when he secured approval from U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to mobilize all military firefighting troops and aircraft in California under a single commander, Col. Robert Spano of the Cal Guard.

"When fires are burning, every second counts," Gov. Brown said. "By unifying the command, this agreement will allow us to fight fires, not bureaucracy."

So far we have not required the assistance of active duty troops or firefighting assets, but if the crisis reaches that level, we will be able to transition to joint operations immediately without concerns about troops reporting up multiple chains of command. This command structure, known as Dual-Status Command, will put the right command-and-control assets in place to most effectively and efficiently manage all military firefighting resources.

We are proud to be entrusted with ensuring the safety of our fellow Californians, and our dedication to that mission is reflected in the vigor with which we approach our training for domestic operations each year. Our enemy is any threat that confronts the people of our great state, and we will always be the first line of defense.

Photo by Kari Green, U.S. Forest Service



Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey



LEFT: A C-130J from the Cal Guard's 146th Airlift Wing drops fire retardant on the Springs Fire in Idaho in August. After fighting fires in Idaho and other states, the crew flew to California to battle fires at home. **ABOVE:** A Riverside County firefighter exits a Cal Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter Aug. 11 after the Guard's 1st Battalion (Air Assault), 140th Aviation Regiment, shuttled a hand crew to the fire line at the Chihuahua Fire near Warner Springs, Calif. For more, see page 9.

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- ★ Spell out acronyms, abbreviations and full unit designations on first reference
- ★ If there is a public affairs officer assigned to your unit, ensure he or she reviews it

Photographs:

- ★ Highest resolution possible: MB files, not KB
- ★ No retouched photos
- ★ Caption (what is happening, who is pictured and the date of the photo)
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Cover Shot



Photo by Sgt. Salli Curchin

Sgt. 1st Class Brisilia Jimenez works her way through an obstacle course Sept. 12 on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., during the California Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition.

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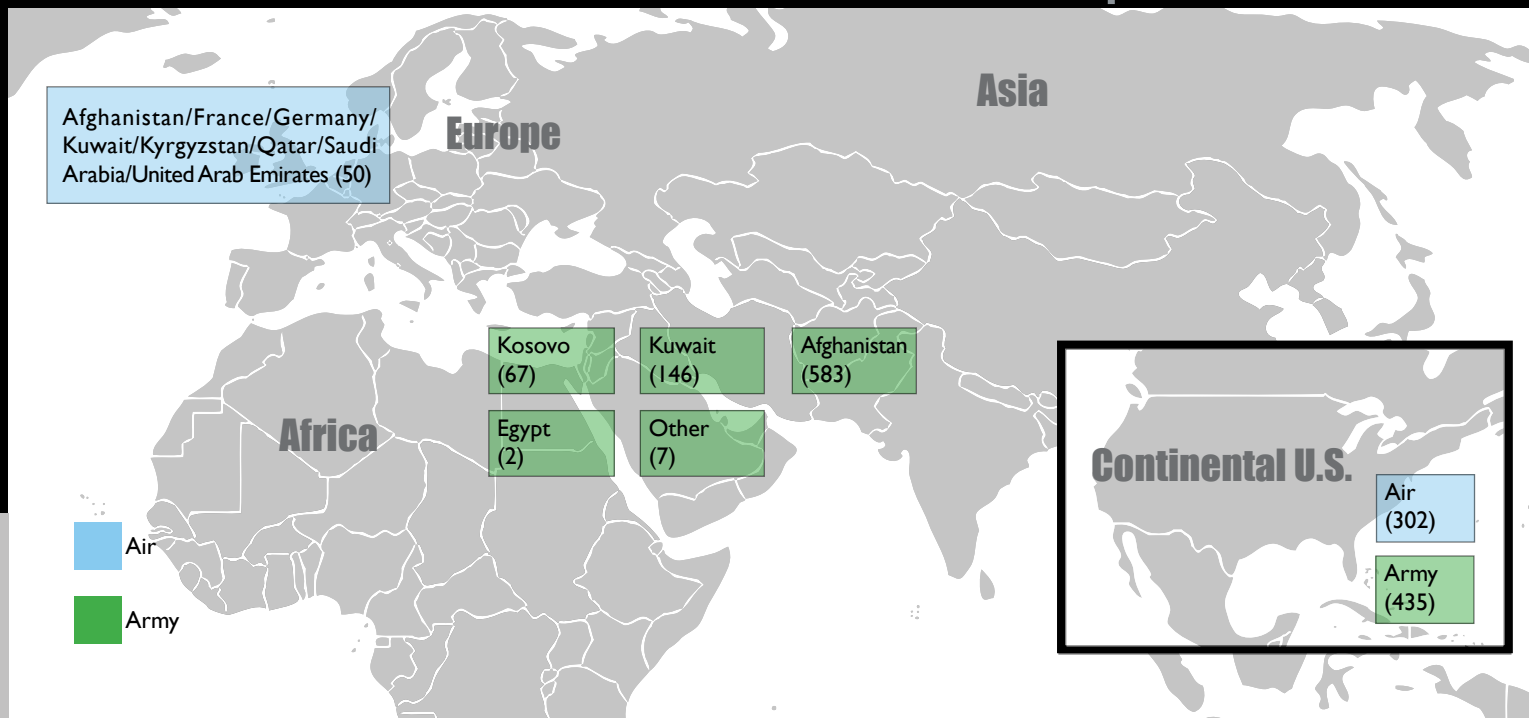
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‘King of Battle’ rains fire on Camp Bob

1-143rd Field Artillery Battalion provides maximum sustained fire during August training weekend

By **SPC. SCOTT JOHNSON**
Camp Roberts Maneuver Training Center

Daytime highs exceeded 100 degrees, and evening lows plummeted into the 50s, with blustery winds making it feel even colder. But there was nowhere else the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, wanted to be.

“We just love it,” said Sgt. Edgar U. Duenas-Flores, ammunition team chief for Gun 3, 1st Platoon, during the Battalion’s training weekend, Aug. 3-5, at Camp Roberts, Calif. “We come out here and work hard, but we have a lot of fun. It feels really good going home tired on Sunday.”

The camaraderie among the Soldiers and their passion for their jobs was evident as the power of the weapons reverberated through their bodies. The Soldiers even had to weather a brief rain shower while training and sleeping in the field, but that did not damage their morale. “If it’s not raining, it’s not training,” said Battery A 1st Sgt. John K. Lunsford.

Batteries A and B fired 1,412 rounds from their M119A2 105 mm towed howitzers during the drill weekend after journeying five hours to Camp Roberts from Lodi and Bakersfield, respectively. The crews are part of the only light artillery battalion in the California Guard.

The Battalion had fired quite a bit during the training year so far, but the output in August was larger than usual for a field drill. The intent of the training was to provide maximum sustained rates of fire, which are currently required for howitzer sections deployed to Afghanistan. Previously, the most the unit had fired at Camp Roberts in one weekend was slightly more than 800 rounds, so 1,412 is likely a record that will stand for some time.

As part of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the only infantry brigade in the California National Guard, the 1-143rd stands ready for the nation’s call. The unit, which most recently deployed to Iraq in 2007, was scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan earlier this year, but the orders were canceled. The Soldiers now eagerly await their next opportunity.

“I was really disappointed [we didn’t deploy],” said Staff Sgt. Sarath Khim, a howitzer section chief who previously deployed to Iraq with 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, from Fort Lewis, Wash. “I have a feeling we’re going to go somewhere soon. I don’t know, but I’m ready to go.”

Pfc. Nolan D. McCormack is also looking forward to a deployment, which would be his first. “You don’t go into combat arms, without wanting to go,” he said.

An advance party arrived at Camp Roberts on the night of Wednesday, Aug. 1, to draw ammunition and supplies, determine firing points and declinate aiming circles — a surveying process tackled by Staff Sgt. Jonathan A. Knea of the 1-143rd.

“There is a lot that goes into firing before a round is loaded,” Knea said while teaching Sgt. Christopher G. Demaerios the finer points of declinating an aiming circle, a tool that measures angles and elevation to ensure the howitzers’ firing accuracy.



Photos by SPC. SCOTT JOHNSON



TOP: Sgt. Steven R. Lake, left, and Spc. Bernardo Sixto of 1st Platoon, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, fire a round from an M-119 A2 105 mm towed howitzer during training Aug. 4 at Camp Roberts, Calif. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Staff Sgt. Cesar Padilla of 1st Platoon prepares to load a round in a howitzer Aug. 4 at Camp Roberts. **ABOVE LEFT:** Sgt. James M. Arocan, right, and Sgt. James Nelson of Battery A determine the maximum and minimum elevation of their section’s howitzer Aug. 3 in preparation for firing at Camp Roberts.

Camp Roberts is one of three locations in California where the 1-143rd can fire its howitzers. The others are China Lake Naval Weapons Station and the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin. The unit completed a demanding NTC rotation in May, which included firing 1,800 rounds under simulated combat conditions. However, the unit did not work on sustaining high rates of fire.

The Camp Roberts drill in August provided that piece of training and allowed the howitzer sections to have a bit of fun in the process. The almost constant sound of rounds being fired and landing in the impact zone filled the installation all day and into the night.

“It’s exciting to be one big — I almost said ‘family,’ but we probably get along better than most families,” said Staff Sgt. Ricardo Salcido, a section gun chief. “Between iterations we’re cracking jokes and having so much fun, but at the same time you’re doing your job and completing great training.”

Salcido is a 13-year member of the California Army National Guard who deployed with the 1-143rd to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in 2004-2005 and again to Iraq in 2007-2008.

He then returned to Iraq in 2010-2011 as part of a personal security detail.

Many of the Battalion’s troops bring less experience than Salcido, but they are equally excited for training weekends and look forward to testing their skills overseas.

Pvt. Ryan S. Cornacchioli and Pvt. Giancarlo G. Codogno met during their Recruitment Sustainment Program drills in 2011, then were bunk mates at basic training and roommates at advanced individual training. In August the pair completed their third drill weekend with the 1-143rd.

“I really wanted to be a part of combat arms,” Codogno said. “I wanted something that was physically demanding. I wanted field artillery because we are ‘the King of Battle.’”

The August training weekend also marked a change of command for Battery A, or Alpha Battery, as Capt. Gerald K. Kim took the reins from Capt. Jorge R. Regan. “I’m looking forward to learning a lot from the [noncommissioned officers],” Kim said. “I’m looking forward to continuing the tradition, the Alpha ‘Warlord’ tradition.”

CNG medical staff serves 228 Chumash

10-person team works with Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic to provide free health care on rural reservation

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

Emergency dental extractions, newly diagnosed diabetes patients and the initial signs of pancreatic cancer were all caught thanks to a humanitarian medical mission led by the California Army National Guard — all while serving within the state.

A 10-person Guard team coupled with the Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic to provide free medical and dental care Aug. 5-17 for anyone who was unable to access basic health care services on the rural Santa Ynez Reservation of the Band of Chumash Indians in Santa Barbara County.

The community was so much in need, according to members of the mission, that a new patient was brought through the clinic every 30 minutes during working hours, leaving the military staff with a time crunch and a workload like no other.

"It was tough on time as a lot of patients had a slew of problems [such as high blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol issues]," said Maj. Ophelia Willis, a women's health physician with Company C (Medical), 40th Brigade Support Battalion, 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, out of Montebello, Calif. "Because of this, we were able to diagnose two new patients with prostate cancer and two others were diagnosed as diabetics."

The team included a physician, physician's assistant, dentist, dental technician, behavioral health specialist, behavioral health assistant and administrative personnel.

"Some of them had never had a complete medical exam, so we gave them a complete exam from eyes all the way down," Willis said. "Almost all patients I saw had some sort of allergic rhinitis — there was something in the air that was causing throat or nose problems or strained breathing in nearly all the patients."



Photo by 1st Lt. Nicholas Wilson

Administrative specialist Cpl. Jeremy Peterson of 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, assists a patient during a 13-day medical mission on the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Reservation in Santa Barbara County in August. Ten CNG medical workers provided free care to 228 patients during the mission.

The clinic in the Santa Ynez Valley provided all the necessary equipment needed to support the large number of patients who came through the door. By the end of the 13-day period, a total of 126 medical patients and 102 dental patients were seen.

"It was a really nice clinic, and they were very helpful, those who worked there. I thought it went very well," said Maj. Shelley Miller, the physician's assistant, also out of Company C. "The patients were very appreciative. It was a lot of work, but it was well worth it. We helped give something that was needed in this area."

For the dental clinic, a flow of cleanings, fillings and dental extractions were the usual cases each day, with about two to three emergencies walking in per day as well. "We saw a lot of underserved patients," said Capt. Pablo Gonzalez, a dentist from the Medical Detachment on Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos. "We got close to 100 percent of the patients' needs met during our time there."

Despite the long hours, the staff felt the mission was very worthwhile. "I would definitely go again," Gonzalez said. "In fact I'm already signed up for another mission coming up in Round Valley."

However, that doesn't mean some serious downtime wasn't needed once the Soldiers returned home. "I was exhausted. I needed to sleep 12 hours in a row once the mission was over," said Willis, who is no stranger to grueling schedules, as she works in an emergency room in her civilian career. "I worked really, really hard. It was hard work, but for me personally, it was very fulfilling. It's great help the Army [and] the state are providing to these people in need."

The most rewarding part of the mission was feeling that she and the rest of the team made a difference, Willis said. "I think the people in the area appreciated it immensely. Even with the short time I had with the patients, I took the time to talk to them about lifestyle changes. I'm an educator, and I stress just one change to make a difference in personal health: Go around the block once, go with the dog, you just need to move a little bit," Willis explained. "They were so happy to hear the positive part of doing a little bit. They needed that encouragement."

Operation sweeps away 540,000 pot plants

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

The pungent scent of ripe marijuana mixed with the putrid odor of the remains of an illegally poached deer butchered to feed illegal marijuana growers at a site near the Ice House Reservoir in Northern California in late August. The normally pristine forest was littered with garbage, corroded lead-acid batteries, miles of plastic drip line and piles of illegal and unknown fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides and rodenticides.

"Typically you find growers that put chemicals and additives directly into the water source, and all these water sources run directly into the South Fork of the American River, the Sacramento River and the [Sacramento-San Joaquin River] Delta," said El Dorado County Sheriff John D'Agostini. "This leads to environmental and species issues in the rivers and Delta. Chemicals from these types of drug-growing organizations end up in the water table and cause great environmental and health concerns."

During Operation Mountain Sweep, throughout July and August, the California National Guard's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug joined with 14 other local, state and federal agencies to eradicate illegal marijuana grow sites and reclaim land in Northern California. "Damage from the drug-growing organiza-

tions causes an intense danger to not only the land but also to the public," said R. Gil Kerlikowske, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. "The National Guard is absolutely critical in stopping the damage done to our forests. I don't think this could be accomplished at anywhere near the scale that it has been accomplished without their expertise and their airlift capability. Their participation is critical."

The CNG has had a long-standing role in local, state and federal counterdrug missions. For decades the Guard has provided transportation, logistics, medical treatment and evacuation support; removed thousands of miles of irrigation line and tens of thousands of pounds of fertilizer; and helped return the forest to its natural state.

"In this plot alone, there are approximately 3,000 plants, and we believe there are two additional gardens with several thousand plants each [nearby]," Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general of the CNG, said Aug. 21 in the El Dorado National Forest. "These drug growers do a lot of damage environmentally and provide a threat to public safety because they are armed and will use violence to protect these marijuana gardens."

"These drug growers do not feel constrained to follow the rules of the [Environmental Protection Agency], and they

wantonly use chemicals to fertilize their gardens [and] to kill animals that threaten their gardens."

Law enforcement in California eradicated more than 130 marijuana grow sites on public lands during Operation Mountain Sweep, seizing 540,000 plants and 14 firearms and indicting 26 defendants. The Operation also included efforts in Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington. Across the seven states, 726,000 marijuana plants with a street value of \$1.45 billion were seized from public lands.



Photos by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler



The 14-agency Operation Mountain Sweep eradicated 540,000 illegally grown marijuana plants from public land in California and cleaned up large amounts of pollutants in July and August.



ChalleNGe accepted!

At-risk youths and dropouts are responding to CNG academies, becoming productive members of society

By SGT. 1ST CLASS JESSICA INIGO, Los Angeles Regional Public Affairs; and SENIOR AIRMAN JESSICA GREEN, California Military Department Public Affairs

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Inigo

California National Guard Youth ChalleNGe academies are raising the bar across the nation, posting top-notch graduation and post-graduate placement rates and coming forth with groundbreaking ideas.

"We've received national recognition in each of the eight core components at our two programs," said Brig. Gen. James L. Gabrielli, commander of the CNG's Youth and Community Programs Task Force. "Most recently [Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy] received an award as the most progressive program in the country."

Sunburst, on Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, and Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy on Camp San Luis Obispo received funding this year based on a target graduation total of 175 students from Grizzly and 165 students from Sunburst, but both have enrolled more than 200 students this year and have high expectations. "We will exceed our target graduation [at each academy] by 30 students," Gabrielli said. "At a cost of about \$17,000 per student, taxpayers will be saving \$1 million this year."

Retaining cadets through graduation from the academies is a high point for the California programs, said Gabrielli, who served as a middle school teacher and elementary school principal for 14 years before taking over the Youth Programs Task Force. The national retention average throughout the five-month residential phase of the ChalleNGe program is about 70 percent, he said, with nearly one-third of all students washing out, being dismissed or voluntarily withdrawing from the program.

"Too many times programs invite students to their program but are very quick to dismiss them at the first sign of trouble, when we know these students have issues," Gabrielli said. "If you're too quick to pull the trigger, you're not really giving them the second chance you've offered them."

California has been among the top three states in the country for Youth ChalleNGe retention the past few years, averaging about 80 percent, but leaders have recently improved their processes, and Grizzly

and Sunburst are now the only programs in the country exceeding 90 percent, with Sunburst at 96 percent. "Those statistics are phenomenal," Gabrielli said. "The National Guard Bureau, at the national level, is looking at California to benchmark best practices to share that with the nation."

The CNG academies also excel in cadet placement after graduation. Nationally about 60 percent of ChalleNGe students continue full-time education, work full-time or maintain a combination of both upon graduation, and the gold standard nationally is 75 percent. But in California, the average has been between 85 and 92 percent each of the last four years at both programs. "When you consider 100 percent of our students at day one of the program were dropouts, unemployed or underemployed, that's a pretty darn good indication of the return on investment," Gabrielli said.

The Bureau established Youth ChalleNGe academies in 10 states in 1994 in an effort

to confront the growing number of youths dropping out of school and provide the discipline, education and skills necessary for dropouts and at-risk students to become positive members of their communities. The program expanded to include Grizzly in 1998 and added Sunburst in 2007.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

Two years shy of its 20th anniversary, the Grizzly staff feels it has discovered the key to success through years of program development and continued achievement: caring for the whole student. "We use a purely holistic approach when working with our students," said retired Maj. John Oberg, Grizzly commandant. "We look at every aspect of life that influences our students' lives and care for them individually."

Staff members identify educational needs, family situational needs and lacking areas of support to better place students for long-term solutions, Oberg said, noting some Grizzly students leave homes more than

nine hours away. "Students here at Grizzly have a wide variety of home and family situations that need to be addressed," he said. "We have homeless students and those coming from foster care. It's important for us to understand the extent of the situations they are coming from and the challenges they'll face when they leave."

Grizzly's post-graduate placement rates are among the highest in the nation, ranging from 90 to 91 percent. A key factor to that success is the My Action Plan, or MAP, which students develop in conjunction with counselors. MAPs include short- and long-term post-graduation goals. "Thirty days after leaving the program, my staff follows up with students and their MAPs," Oberg said. "We make sure they are back in high school, enrolled in college, secured a job interview or have started working."

While students are working toward graduation, the Grizzly staff works to keep students on track to achieve their goals within the program. "We're not a GED or credit mill; we don't push students through the program," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CA) Georganne Weiss, a student counselor at Grizzly. "We speak to why they're in the program and discover why they've fallen so far behind."

Weiss and three other counselors administer counseling groups and individually counsel students enrolled at Grizzly to get to know each student as a whole, discover what traumas may have occurred in their lives and address any emotional stress they are dealing with. "With exceedingly needy kids and only four counselors, we don't like to pull them out of school," Weiss said. "We focus on counseling groups, including smoking cessation, sexual assault, anger management and family systems."

The Grizzly staff also has seen success in its Senior Cadet Program, which brings graduates from the previous class back to Grizzly to speak with new students. "It's extremely helpful for current candidates to talk to their peers that have been in their shoes," Weiss said. "They assimilate and adjust to this military-type lifestyle, deal



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Georganne Weiss

TOP: Jennifer Ofisa, 3rd Platoon leader for Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy's 10th class, calls out commands while saluting Brig. Gen. (CA) James Gabrielli, commander of the CNG's Youth and Community Programs Task Force, during Class 10's first Family Day event, Sept. 15 at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos. **ABOVE:** Grizzly Academy cadets Jesse Valles, standing, and Robert Hyman work on a class project in June on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.

with possible home sickness and just deal with everything they're not used to."

One of the things that makes California's academies unique is the philosophy instilled in every staff member. According to Oberg, Gabrielli has inspired in them a passion for success and a compassion for students, with a goal of graduating every single student in the program. "It always comes down to staff and their willingness to go above and beyond," Oberg added. "They work long hours, truly care about and meet the needs of these students."

IMPROVING UPON THE MODEL

Sunburst Academy generally falls under the same guidelines as Grizzly and the rest of the ChalleNGe academies across the nation. However, there are some distinct differences that separate this newcomer as a shining star in the program. Along with Sunburst's creation in 2007 came a new agenda aimed at finding the right kind of candidate to accept into the program, and also making a paradigm shift within the student's family once he or she enters Sunburst. Maj. Joel Armstrong, director of the Sunburst Academy, said those principles have moved the program above its peers, resulting in higher retention numbers and a palpable difference in both the youths and their home lives.

Under Sunburst's guidelines, candidates are required to make a commitment to themselves that they are ready for change, otherwise they are not allowed into the program. The staff communicates to candidates that they have the option of committing to turn their lives around, and if they choose to do so at this young age, they will reap the benefits the program offers. Or they can remain in the same situation that has failed them up to this point.

Obtaining a commitment can be hard, Armstrong said, as many candidates come from broken homes, have dabbled in drugs and alcohol, and have lacked structured discipline in their lives. "That's what I love about this place: the discipline," said Class 10 President David Viramontes, 17, of Wilmington, Calif., who learned of the program from a former cadet in his hometown.

Sunburst then takes the program a step further, ensuring the cadet's parent or guardian is prepared for the change the Academy sparks in its students. Parenting classes are required for all cadets' families, and a certificate of completion must be presented to the Academy before relatives can attend any Family Day events.

The benefits of the Sunburst program, though, go much further. Cadets use their time at the Academy to either gain enough credits to catch up with their high school class and graduate on time or to complete their high school education and earn their diploma at Sunburst. This is yet another aspect in which Sunburst differs from other ChalleNGe programs: In partnership with the Orange County School District, Sunburst can present a cadet a high school diploma — not just a GED credential, as most other academies offer.

"We can't fix 100 percent of the people who come through here, but we're sure going to try," Armstrong said. "We're going to give our students every opportunity we can to succeed."

Numbers don't lie, and statistics show retention is higher at Sunburst than anywhere else in the nation. "I am retaining more than I'm supposed to and feeding

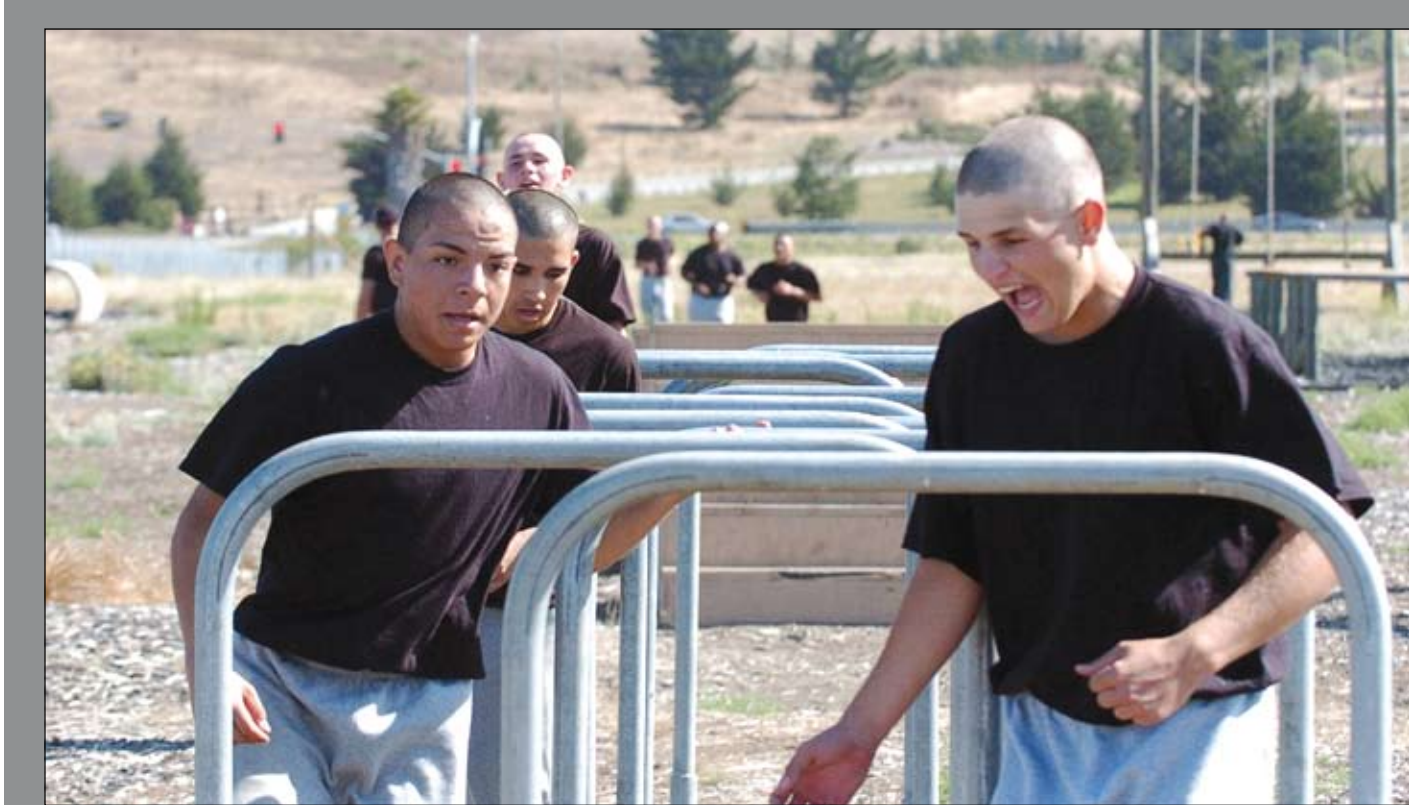


Photo by Sgt. Eddie Siguenza



Photo courtesy of Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy

TOP: Grizzly Academy "candidates," who are still completing the two-week pre-challenge phase of the program, run through an obstacle course at Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., on July 20, 2011. **ABOVE:** Grizzly cadets sing Christmas Carols at the Arroyo Grande Care Center in December. Cadets from 4th Platoon in each Grizzly class visit the assisted living center as part of the community service that every Youth ChalleNGe cadet contributes during the program.

more than I'm supposed to, but we're making it work," he said.

Class 10 also broke new ground by being one of the only academies nationwide with a 50/50 ratio of female and male cadets. Schools around the nation are typically male-heavy, but Armstrong said strong marketing has made the difference.

The measure of success, he said, is not just how many graduates an academy produces, but also how many actively engaged members of society it propels toward future success. For this reason, Sunburst goes far beyond the mandatory one-year obligation to stay in touch with and support a cadet. The school has established partnerships with local businesses such as grocery stores and retail shops, which look to Sunburst graduates to fill entry-level positions, and the school engages community members to become mentors for graduates.

"When I explain the return to society with helping these students, it really interests the local community," Armstrong said. "It's a philanthropic way for them to give back without requiring too much time."

Now it seems that finding Sunburst candidates who realize they are not on the right path and are ready to commit to change may not be too hard after all. "I'm happy I chose to come here," said Daisy Almanza, 16, of Harbor City, Calif., who signed up for the academy singlehandedly, filling out the initial paperwork alone. "Knowing people care about me, want me to succeed in life, is really nice."

Graduation
90%+
 ChalleNGe cadets complete the program

Post-graduate placement
85%+
 continue education, maintain jobs or both

Ross is nation's top Guard engineer platoon leader

By **1ST LT. WILL MARTIN**
49th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs

To enter Afghanistan's Paktika province is to cross into a land brilliant in landscape and of churlish character.

Set amid the striking Hindu-Kush Mountains, this remote, rural province — once the heart of Soviet clashes with Afghan resisters — remains a strategic objective for those seeking to influence the future of this nation. Bordering the capricious Pakistan, the region has progressed more slowly, according to U.S. timelines, than higher-profile provinces like Khowst and Zabul.

It is here, in a land plagued by an affinity for the Taliban, that the engineers of Forward Operating Base (FOB) Sharana must ply their trade. Their efforts at community development are crucial to the future of this province and nation, and never have winning hearts and minds seemed so arduous — or treacherous — a task.

"The U.S. firebase looks like a Wild West cavalry fort, ringed with coils of razor wire," reads a 2010 Time Magazine feature on FOB Sharana. "In the watchtower a guard scans the expanse of forested ridges, rising to 9,000 feet, that mark the [Pakistani] border. When there's trouble, it usually comes from that direction."

Aside from the threat posed by the Taliban and rogue Pakistanis, U.S. forces intent on rebuilding the region are faced with what can only be considered a bankruptcy of infrastructure. Deforestation and corrupt governance have robbed the province of any advantage it might have had in embracing a stable, democratic existence. It is a land that offers little hope, yet begs for that very thing.



Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Brian Ross

First Lieutenant Brian Ross, seen here in Paktika province, Afghanistan, with the CNG's 649th Engineer Company, earned national recognition as the Guard's top engineer platoon leader.

ENGINEERING HOPE

Enter 1st Lt. Brian Ross and the rest of the California Army National Guard's 649th Engineer Company, circa January 2011. Educated at Stanford's graduate school of civil engineering and compelled to military service by patriotic gratitude, Ross is what might result if one tried to engineer an Army engineer.

"In following the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, I figured they could use engineering support, as nation-building was obviously a large part of the mission," said Ross, who since 2008 has worked as project manager for Skansa, a major engineering firm in the San Francisco Bay Area. "I've had a lot of opportunities in life, been very lucky in being able to go to school ... a secure family, a

good job. I felt those things were facilitated by the freedoms of this nation, and I wanted to give back to my country."

The native of Elk Grove, Calif., joined the Army National Guard in 2007 and earned his commission through the state's Officer Candidate School the following year. In 2010, he was placed with the 649th Engineer Company as the platoon leader for 2nd Platoon. The troops, according to Company reports, were "understrength and under-trained." Ross inherited a newly assigned platoon sergeant, novice squad leaders and Soldiers gathered from across California, and also faced an imminent deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Whatever idealistic sentiments might have inspired his enlistment, he was now met by the unforgiving realities peculiar to military leadership.

"We were detached from the main body, the 649th, and operated pretty much independently from the company," Ross said of his time at FOB Sharana, a base listed as one of Afghanistan's five most dangerous sites by Maxim Magazine. "As one of the larger bases, it was a hub in the area for construction. ... We got assigned a lot of work directly from our battalion, which made us stand out quite a bit. We got a lot of work done."

Literally tons of work, actually. According to company reports, Ross' detachment was responsible for completing more than 60 engineering projects during its yearlong tour in Afghanistan. In work spanning nearly 30,000 hours of labor directed by Ross, his engineers emplaced more than 11,000 feet of life-saving barrier walls, filled 23,000 cubic yards of

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Royal Air Force benefits from U.S. Prime BEEF

By **MAJ. KIMBERLY HOLMAN**
146th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Hawaii, Cuba, Guam — it sounds like a dream vacation, but members of the 146th Airlift Wing Civil Engineering Squadron (CES) have been on the job at all those sites. This summer they were on the move again, working arduously as a prime base emergency engineering force, or Prime BEEF, in Canada.

The Air Force established the Prime BEEF program in 1964, building teams of engineers to respond to worldwide contingencies and provide runways, water supplies, electricity, housing and other facilities necessary to support deployments.

Deploying most recently on July 28, about 34 CES members arrived in the Great White North of Cold Lake, Alberta, to perform their annual training by taking part in an annual engineer exchange program between the Air National Guard and the Royal Canadian Air Force.

"This year we are partnering with the Maryland Air National Guard's 175th CES to remodel some day-care facilities on Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake and to construct a new concrete pad they will use to store their mobility equipment," said Maj.

Patrick Shanahan, 146th CES commander. "The projects provide a nice, finished product for the Canadians, and it provides our Guardsmen an opportunity to hone their engineering skills."

Last December the 146th deployed for six months in support of Joint Task Force Guantanamo on the southeast corner of Cuba, providing much-needed engineering expertise and skills. The Squadron's largest project was at Camp Justice, where military commission proceedings are to be held. The Camp provides air-conditioned buildings with beds, showers, restrooms and morale, welfare and recreation facilities.

"Camp Justice is a tent city, basically, that provides living arrangements for all who come here for the military commissions process," Shanahan said. "Media, government and [Defense Department] employees, they all stay at Camp Justice while they are here."

The BEEF team also constructed two buildings for the public affairs office at Camp Justice, which included a complete media operations center. This provided a place for media to conduct their business in a remote location with all the necessary computer and communications amenities while

observing the military commissions and hearings on monitors. "The mission at JTF Guantanamo is a unique one that we may

never see again as engineers," Shanahan said. "It [was] definitely a positive experience for everybody."



Photo by Tech Sgt. Alex Koenig

Master Sgt. Kelly Abbott of the 146th Airlift Wing Civil Engineering Squadron, right, uses a Philadelphia rod to measure elevation July 29 while Staff Sgt. Crystal Toyne marks excavation lines for a storage compound to be built at Canadian Forces Base, Cold Lake, Alberta, Canada. This was one of several projects the Squadron undertook during their annual training July 28-Aug. 11 as part of an engineer exchange program with the Royal Canadian Air Force.

CNG fire season tops 2 million gallons dropped

Army, Air response protects countless acres in several parts of California

By **IST LT. AARON GATZKE**
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard were called upon to fight this summer, but bullets wouldn't do the job; this time they had to resort to water and fire retardant. Cal Guardsmen fought wildfires across California in July, August and September, saving countless homes and acres from disaster.

Army Guard helicopter crews from Fresno, Los Alamitos, Sacramento and Stockton teamed up with Air Guard helicopter crews from the 129th Rescue Wing and C-130J airplane crews from the 146th Airlift Wing in a monumental effort to stop wildfires. Their operations were closely coordinated with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) and the California Emergency Management Agency to ensure well-placed water and fire retardant drops.

"It takes a lot of teamwork within the Guard and with Cal Fire to make these operations successful," said Lt. Col. Dave Hall of 1st Battalion (Air Assault), 140th Aviation Regiment, who served as commander of Joint Task Force Longknife, the National Guard firefighting response in California. "Constant communication is even more critical when dealing in an inter-agency and joint environment. ... Effective communication

and execution by our Soldiers and Airmen on the ground is what made the firefighting operation successful."

Most Guardsmen in the fight were California troops, but help also came from North Carolina. C-130 crews from California, North Carolina and two other states began fighting fires in Colorado in June then moved to Wyoming, Idaho and other states before shifting operations to California. Their planes are equipped with 3,000-gallon Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems, or MAFFS, which were used to make 93 fire retardant drops in California, totaling 265,000 gallons. Overall, the MAFFS fleet made more than 1,000 drops, totaling 2.5 million gallons of retardant delivered on fires across the Western U.S.

California Army and Air Guard helicopters flew about 920 hours in Northern and Southern California this summer, filling 660-gallon buckets with water from lakes and other sources. Making about 3,000 bucket drops, those units splashed approximately 1.8 million gallons of water on fires in California locations such as Colusa, Kern, Lake, Monterey, Placer, San Diego, Shasta, Siskiyou, Trinity and Yolo counties.

Fire duty includes days that are often 14 hours long, the maximum allowed to ensure crew members have 10 hours to rest before the next day. National Guardsmen may perform firefighting duties for as many as 12 consecutive days, after which



Photo by Tech Sgt. Alex Koenig

a two-day rest period is required.

If additional personnel are needed to battle fires in California, service members can be called in from the active duty Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps. Though this has not yet been required in 2012, California Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. secured approval from U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta on Aug. 12 to mobilize all firefighting military troops and aircraft in the state under a single commander, a senior officer in the California National Guard. If active duty troops are needed, the approval will allow the state to unify efforts under a new structure known as Dual Status Command, enabling a smooth integration of forces.

"We're employing our [Guard] assets to bring maximum capabilities to the fight in support of our state partners. Without those aircraft and crews, we could not sustain our current operations," said Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general of the California National Guard. "We've implemented the Dual Status Command structure to leverage additional DoD resources to combat this threat in the future, if needed."

The fire season appears to be winding down, allowing Soldiers and Airmen to focus on checking and repairing their equipment for next year. Water buckets and valves will be tested, and maintenance personnel will ensure they are in full working order when the Guard begins fire-response training again in the spring.



Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

TOP: A C-130J Hercules from the CNG's 146th Airlift Wing drops thousands of gallons of water on the Angeles National Forest in Southern California in March during training for the upcoming fire season. **ABOVE:** Sgt. Chris Boni of the CNG's 1st Battalion (Air Assault), 140th Aviation Regiment, and Bob Innes, fire manager for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), prepare a firefighting water bucket to be attached to one of the Guard's UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters before battling the Rim Fire and Jawbone Complex Fire near Tehachapi, Calif., on Aug 14.

Lakeport family gets surprise visit from Black Hawk crew

By **IST LT. JASON SWEENEY**
California Military Department Public Affairs

The precautionary landing of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in front of a Lakeport, Calif., home caused National Guard units from two states to swing into action for a multi-agency recovery operation with the Califor-



Soldiers from Forward Support Company, 579th Engineer Battalion, work Sept. 12 to remove the rotor blades from a UH-60 Black Hawk that had experienced a transmission problem while fighting fires near this clearing in Lakeport, Calif.

nia Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

On Sept. 7, two Black Hawk helicopters from the California National Guard's 1st Battalion (Air Assault), 140th Aviation Regiment, were redirected from the 16 Complex Fire in Colusa and Yolo counties to the Scotts Fire that had just broken out in rugged terrain near Clear Lake. With water buckets under their aircraft, the two crews flew toward the blaze.

"It was raging. We could see a big header and plume and flames," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Bruce Delara Pulgencio, who piloted one of the Black Hawks.

As the two Black Hawks approached the fire, a warning light, called a chip light, illuminated in Pulgencio's cockpit. The helicopter's transmission was throwing off metal chips, he explained, adding that transmission malfunctions can have catastrophic results. When it comes to serious malfunctions, he said, transmission problems come right after losing the main rotor system. "The emergency procedure is to land as soon as possible," Pulgencio said. "I broke off from the fire and started looking for a safe place to put the aircraft down."

They were flying over mountainous terrain, and Pulgencio didn't want to put down in an isolated location

where there was no vehicle access. He turned toward Clear Lake hoping to find a clearing near a main road and saw a 5-acre field in front of a rural residence. "We were still carrying the bucket," he said. "We made sure that we didn't jettison it or lose it."

Tom Inderkum and his wife, Karole Ward, watched from their front door as the helicopter landed in front of their home. "My initial reaction was, 'Wow, what's going on?'" Inderkum said. "I'm glad they got it down and nobody was hurt."

Inderkum and Ward offered the crew the use of their bathroom and telephone, and they brought out watermelon and lemonade. Then their neighbors came out by the dozens to check out the military aircraft parked in the clearing. "It was pretty hot out. It was the least we could do for those guys fighting that fire," Inderkum said of the refreshments. "It's hard work."

A maintenance crew from Mather Army Aviation Support Facility near Sacramento soon arrived and went to work on the helicopter. The crew determined the Black Hawk could not be flown out under its own power, nor could it be trucked out. They therefore removed its rotor blades and prepared it to be

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Staff Sgt. Steven Free-dell, left, and Sgt. Julian Ross of the California Army National Guard's Detachment 1, Company F, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, perform survival, evasion, resistance and escape, or SERE, training Oct. 2 with members of the active duty Air Force's 60th Operations Support Squadron. Cal Guard pilots flew a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to Lake Curry west of Vacaville, Calif., where they located "downed" Air Force pilots and hoisted them to the Black Hawk from land and water. **Photo by Master Sgt. Paul Wade**



ABOVE: Spc. Ella Demchuk of the 223rd Military Intelligence Battalion answers questions from girls in Ukraine who are fascinated by the idea of a female Soldier on July 25. Demchuk, who is of Ukrainian heritage, visited the Starichy Preschool Educational Center that day with Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general of the Cal Guard, and other troops during the annual Rapid Trident exercise in Ukraine. Guard members brought school supplies, toys and a promise to help renovate the school during the next nine months. **Photo by Staff Sgt. Tara Reppert** **CENTER LEFT:** Javier Palomarez, president and CEO of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC), signs a statement of support for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, signifying the Chamber's commitment to helping Guard and Reserve members gain employment and further their civilian careers, during the Chamber's 33rd Annual National Convention in Los Angeles. Brig. Gen. Sylvia Crockett, the CNG's first Latina general officer, far right, led the convention in the Pledge of Allegiance. **Photo by Pat Kuykendall** **CENTER RIGHT:** Spc. Jaime Duarte, right, Spc. Eric Rodriguez and Senior Master Sgt. Ernest Williams are introduced to the crowd at Petco Park during the San Diego Padres Salute to the Military before their Sept. 30 home game against the San Francisco Giants. **Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey**

At a Glance



ABOVE: Soldiers of the 578th Engineer Battalion salute during a homecoming ceremony Sept. 21 in Moreno Valley, Calif., following their yearlong tour in Afghanistan. **Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey** LEFT: Lucas Stevens, 7, awaits the return of his father, Sgt. Vern Trozzi of the 578th, on Sept. 21 in Moreno Valley. **Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey** BELOW: Nancy Wiesen of Hemet, Calif., receives an ROTC scholarship check from Col. Andrew Flynn, 40th Infantry Division chief of staff, left, and Maj. Paul Badillo, a California Army National Guard recruiting operations officer and assistant professor of military science at California State University, Long Beach, during a Sept. 22 ceremony before the Major League Soccer game between Toronto FC and the Los Angeles Galaxy. Wiesen is studying political science at Long Beach and pursuing her commission as a Cal Guard aviation officer. **Photo by Lt. Col. Rick Lalor**



ABOVE: Spc. Long K. Hoang of the 297th Area Support Medical Company and more than 100 fellow members of the Cal Guard fold a 100-yard-long U.S. flag during the service members had stretched across the field at Candlestick Park during the national anthem before the San Francisco 49ers home opener Sept. 16 against the Detroit Lions. **Photo by Brandon Honig** LEFT: A member of the 49ers Junior Gold Rush shows her appreciation for the California National Guard before the Sept. 16 home opener. **Photo by Brandon Honig**

California Soldiers battle for title of Best Warrior

Seventeen men and women represent their Army units in a grueling four-day competition, with two winners advancing to the Region VII championship

By **SGT. SALLI CURCHIN**
40th Infantry Division

Seventeen competitors gathered in the early morning light Sept. 10 with the sun breaking over the hills of Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif. While the day's beginning looked peaceful, rest and peace would not come easily the next few days for the California Army National Guard Soldiers set to compete in the 2013 Best Warrior Competition.

California Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Harold London and the staff of the 223rd Regional Training Institute organized the annual Competition, which spanned four days and unfolded at a pace structured to test both physical and mental endurance. "The contest simulates both the combat and physical stresses of duress in

Winners revealed Jan. 12 in Garden Grove
[facebook.com/CAguard](https://www.facebook.com/CAguard)

a peacetime competition," London said. "With this war going on 11 years, we have to come up with more creative ways to train both collectively and individually. What better training can we give our Soldiers than the challenge of this Competition?"

Of the 17 warriors, eight in the ranks of private first class through specialist vied for the Soldier of the Year award, while nine in the ranks of sergeant through sergeant first class competed for the title of Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year. "This event takes the very best out of each of the brigades in the California Army National Guard," London said. "It's about the warrior ethos, about Soldiers performing their combat roles in training and giving their all."

Historically the annual Competition was based solely on appearance board results, which measure communication skills, knowledge and military bear-

ing. In recent years, however, the event has evolved to keep pace with changes to regional and nationwide National Guard and Army competitions.

"To compete it takes more than physical strength: You have to be mentally tough, know your stuff, be motivated. You have to want it," said Spc. Sheridan Low of the Petaluma-based 235th Engineer Company (Sapper). "You have to be dedicated right up until the end and know that when you go home, you did your best."

DAY 1—MONDAY

The Competition began with the Army Physical Readiness Test and Combat Readiness Test — two fitness tests that have been proposed to replace the traditional Army fitness exam — and were followed by day and night land navigation tests, a media-interaction event and a written evaluation, all before their heads hit the pillow for the night. And that was just Day 1!

The Physical Readiness Test consists of short sprints, abdominal rows, a long jump, push-ups and a 1.5 mile run. The Combat Readiness Test includes of a 400-meter run, hurdles, a high crawl, a casualty drag, sprints and several other movement drills, all performed

while wearing the Army Combat Uniform (ACU), helmet and M4 carbine weapon.

While completing the land navigation courses, the warriors used a compass and list of six-digit grid coordinates to find points on a map. Once they plotted the points and determined distances, off they went to locate and write down marker numbers throughout the terrain.

In the media event, which tested composure and communication skills, each competitor was asked challenging questions by a mock reporter and was scored on their ability to think on their feet and represent the Army with dignity.

"[My strategy is to] keep my mind focused on each event as it unfolds," said Spc. Mayra Castro of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Camp Roberts Maneuver Training Center, at the end of Day 1. "It's more mental than physical. Yes it is physical — you get sore and your body tries to shut down — but it's your mental attitude that will push you to keep going."

DAY 2—TUESDAY

The second day kicked off with Soldiers and NCOs jumping into the pool at nearby Cuesta Col-

lege wearing their full uniform to tread water for 5 minutes. Next, they repeatedly swam the width of the pool to grab color-coded canteens in a sequence that had been revealed only briefly. Finally they dragged a buoyant ruck sack and dummy weapon the length of the pool, dumped it on the bulkhead and swam back.

"Land navigation was what I thought was going to be my toughest event, but the water survival ended up being tougher," Castro said. "Even though I gutted it through, it took a lot more energy than I thought it was going to take."

After donning a fresh uniform and conducting a short pre-combat inspection, competitors loaded up a 35-pound rucksack and began following signs that pointed them toward a finish line an unknown distance away. The competitors guessed the distance traveled was between 5 and 10 miles, ending at a range where they began their next competition: marksmanship with an M9 pistol and M4 carbine rifle, shooting at a variety of targets in different simulated combat situations.

The Soldiers still had several exercises to complete on Day 2, including use of a hand grenade and a grenade launcher, a first aid sce-



Photos by Master Sgt. Paul Wade



LEFT: Staff Sgt. Albert Garcia of the 1106th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group climbs a rope ladder Sept. 12 during the Obstacle Course event of the Best Warrior Competition, which brought 17 competitors to Camp San Luis Obispo for a four-day all-around soldiering contest. ABOVE: Spc. Walter Locke of Company B, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, avoids getting choked out by Spc. Brandon Oliver of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, eventually turning the tables and winning their Sept. 12 combatives match during the Competition.



Photo by Master Sgt. Paul Wade

nario and Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT). During the MOUT segment, competitors used a paintball-type weapon and were timed as they cleared the lower level of a house, rescued a simulated casualty and transported it a short distance. The first aid scenario presented an opportunity to evaluate a casualty, treat combat injuries, transport the casualty and request medical evacuation support before running back to the post for their final exercise of the day, the "Mystery Event."

The competitors were led to a darkened warehouse where close combat abilities and swift reactions would be tested. The air was filled with screams, sirens and sounds of chaos, and the lights were dimmed. With the high drama setting, each competitor took turns donning protective gear and entering the building with a loaded airsoft rifle. They moved rapidly from room to room, firing at enemy forces they encountered. The pacing was frantic and the anticipation high as they turned corner after corner. After switching to a dummy weapon, the last stop was a padded room, where an attacker armed with an electrical shocking knife and padded gear awaited them.

"When I went through the door, I thought 'Holy [moley],' especially when I saw the shock knife. I just reacted immediately; it was a natural instinct," said Sgt. 1st Class Brisilia Jiminez. "You always think about what you can do with all of the combatives training; how do you put it to use? This event tested your skills in an unexpected way."

DAY 3—WEDNESDAY

The Obstacle Course on Day 3 challenged the contestants with wall jumps, 170-pound dummy drags under a chain link fence and barbed wire, pole jumps, and two towers and rope ladders to climb.

The high ropes event then required Soldiers to defy gravity, use strict balance and, for some, overcome a fear of heights. The ropes course had them jumping, climbing, crossing rope paths, sliding, leaping and swinging before finally ziping down to the ground.

The day ended with a combatives tournament, which produced bumps, burns, dislocations and even some blood before a top Soldier and NCO were identified to compete against each other. Throughout the tournament, spectators cheered, yelled and celebrated the winners.

DAY 4—THURSDAY

On the last day of the Competition, appearance boards tested knowledge in

topics ranging from drill and ceremony to current events, weapons, urban operations and survival.

"From this [Best Warrior Competition] experience, I learned you cannot gauge a fellow competitor on any one event. A lot of people surprised me throughout this — including myself," Low said. "Everyone here is a Soldier and wants it as much as I want it."

The winners of the Soldier of the Year and NCO of the Year trophies from the CNG Best Warrior Competition will be announced Jan. 12 at a joint forces banquet in Garden Grove, Calif., that also will honor the winners of California Air National Guard and California State Military Reserve service member competitions.

"[This Competition] is eye-opening to what the Guard can do," Castro said. "It helps to overcome the sometime stigma that as part-timers we don't do anything or that we're half of what the regular Army is."

"Most of us didn't have the training to do this that the active duty Army does, but we did well and performed. It shows we're always there, always ready. That's our motto."



Photo by Master Sgt. Paul Wade

TOP: Staff Sgt. Albert Garcia of the 1106th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group drags a 170-pound mannequin under a chain link fence Sept. 12 during the Obstacle Course event of the Best Warrior Competition on Camp San Luis Obispo. **ABOVE:** Troops try to keep warm between portions of the Sept. 11 water test event of the Best Warrior Competition at Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo.



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Woman warriors show will, strength and skill

By SGT. SALLI CURCHIN
40th Infantry Division

They might have been short on stature and outweighed and out-muscled by the other warriors, but the two female competitors in the 2013 Best Warrior Competition were long on strength, endurance and pure guts.

Sgt. 1st Class Brisilia Jiminez and Spc. Mayra Castro were the first women to compete at the state level in the five years since the Competition has been revamped into the grueling event it is today.

"We had two extremely fit young female Soldiers that came and competed with rest of the males, and what impressed me most about them was that they never quit," said California Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Harold London. "If you watched them throughout the competition, they never stopped rucking, they never stopped running, they never stopped. They didn't quit when they could have quit,"

Castro, a human resources specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Camp Roberts Maneuver Training Center, has been in the Guard for four years. "She demonstrated excellence at basic soldiering skills and rose above others," said 1st Sgt. William Black, noncommissioned officer (NCO) in charge of the Range Branch at Camp Roberts. "I felt like she was the best Soldier to represent HHC, Camp Roberts MTC."

Jiminez, a supply sergeant with Company D, 223rd Regional Training Institute, out of Camp San Luis Obispo, is a full-time Active Guard Reserve Soldier with 12 years of experience in the Guard who deployed to Iraq in 2005.

"Seeing Sergeant First Class Jiminez out there, giving more than some of the guys, I know was an inspiration," said Staff Sgt. Jarrad Negherbon, who represented the Fairfield-based 49th Military Police Brigade in the Competition. "She never gave up on anything. Even in the high ropes event, she pushed herself past the limits of her fear of heights. It was an honor to compete with her."

The four-day competition required both physical and mental strength and stamina as each competitor was tested and graded in event after event with very little rest in between.

"It's sometimes hard to try and keep up with the males all the time so they don't think of you as a weak link," Jiminez said. "I think even outside of this Competition, it's important to always try and prove yourself by doing your best. I give my best to everything I do."



Photo by Sgt. Salli Curchin

Sgt. 1st Class Brisilia Jiminez, above, and Spc. Mayra Castro earned the right to represent their units at the statewide Best Warrior Competition and showed a woman may take home the title in the near future.

An obstacle course that required competitors to drag a 170-pound dummy proved the most challenging for the female competitors. "It was pretty motivating to see the females do the same things, especially around the obstacle course," said Sgt. Marco Alamillo of the Long Beach-based 224th Sustainment Brigade. "Those dummies outweighed the females, yet they were right there, trucking along. It was motivating, that's for sure."

Castro said completing the Competition was one of the toughest things she has done in her military career.

"The challenge pushes you more than you think," she said. "Even though your body is already mangled and you feel that you just want to shut your eyes and go to sleep, it doesn't happen like that. You might think you're done, but the day is not through, and you keep going."

To make it even tougher, the final competition, aside from answering questions before an appearance board, was the combatives tournament. "Just imagine, they go through a physical completion of four days of just go, go, go. There is not a tendon, or muscle or bone that doesn't hurt, and then the final competition, besides the board the following morning, is going into combatives to wrestle," London said. "To go in there, fight hard, stay in the fight and not give up fighting against males, that's tenacity. Their will to be a Soldier is amazing."

Jiminez said she hopes more women will join the competition in future years. "Don't be afraid, even though we were not able to beat these males, there is always an opportunity. I'm sure there are females out there that can come in first in these competitions if they put their mind to it."

Working against them, however, is the fact that the mere presence of women pushed the men to work even harder. "I felt I had to do better because I couldn't let them outperform me," said Spc. Brian Quinonez of the 224th. "Yes to more female competitors. It gives all competitors more of a reason to do better. When I struggled, I thought, 'If she could do that, I can do it too.'"

Fort Hood units prepare 1-126th to deploy

By **SGT. 1ST CLASS GAIL BRAYMEN**
Division West Public Affairs

In advance of its deployment to Afghanistan later this year, the California Army National Guard's Company B, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, is training with active duty Fort Hood, Texas-based 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers who are preparing to deploy, as well as with Army Reserve Soldiers who are training to deploy.

The first day that the 1-126th Soldiers worked with the Cavalry troops, members of Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, loaded onto CH-47 Chinook helicopters flown by the 1-126th, which dropped them off at a training range at night. The next day, a Chinook returned to the area three times to pick up groups of Soldiers and insert each at a new location, quickly rotating the Cavalry Soldiers through training lanes where they practiced raid, reconnaissance and ambush techniques.

The training plan called for the California Soldiers to repeat the rotations the next day then extract the Cavalry Soldiers from the range under cover of darkness that night.

"It's a great opportunity to be able to train with a unit that wants to do some tactical training," said Capt. Jacob Ring, a team chief with Fort Hood's 1st Battalion, 351st Aviation Regiment, which is responsible for training the Cal Guard unit. "It's exactly the sort of mission [the California Soldiers] will be doing down range, so the ability to do that here is going to help them get ready for that mission."



Soldiers from the Fort Hood, Texas-based Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, board a CH-47 Chinook helicopter flown by the CNG's Company B, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, during a Sept. 11 training mission at Fort Hood, where the 1-126th is training in advance of deployment to Afghanistan.

About 100 Soldiers and a dozen Chinooks from the 1-126th departed Stockton, Calif., in August for the unit's third overseas deployment since 2003. Following training on Fort Hood, the unit will transport supplies, equipment and Soldiers during its yearlong tour in Afghanistan.

"Most of the stuff in Afghanistan moves by Chinook. This [Fort Hood] mission was basically the typical mission set that we're going to be doing once we're overseas," said 1st Lt. Chase Ross of Concord, Calif., a pilot and platoon leader with the 1-126th. "We'll

pick [the Cavalry Soldiers] up and then we'll drop them on another target. We're practicing time-on-target and our navigation, and talking on the radios with those other units helps us, as well."

Having the National Guard unit train with Fort Hood units "greatly enhances not just our ability to get these units ready to go down range and their ability to support the ground troop commanders down range, but it also gives Third Corps units here at Fort Hood an opportunity to train with aviation assets that they might not ordinar-

ily have," Ring said. "Forty-nine percent of all aviation in the United States Army is reserve component, and all those reserve component aviation forces come through Fort Hood to go down range. [Training together is] a great win-win for Division West, for Third Corps and for the reserve component units getting ready to go down range."

On Fort Hood the 1-126th Soldiers have also trained with the base's 81st Civil Affairs Battalion and its Company F, 1-8th Cavalry, as well as the Army Reserve's 993rd Transportation Company, which is training for deployment on Fort Hood.

"It's a great training opportunity because you get little scenarios and coordination that wouldn't ordinarily happen with just an observer-controller giving them an [air mission request] with no passengers," Ring said. "We get to deal with real units and the coordination aspects of that and some of the little issues that arise that add really realistic training value for our air crews."

Flying with groups of Soldiers aboard their Chinooks familiarizes 1-126th troops with all the things they will be doing in Afghanistan, said Spc. Jesus Camacho of Woodland, Calif., a crew chief for the 1-126th.

"It gets me a little bit more oriented," he said. "I'm getting used to people jumping on and off the aircraft, what to be aware of, what they might do, what they might not do, how to talk to them. It's a lot different from not having any passengers on the aircraft. ... It's good training, overall. I feel like I've learned a lot."

EANGUS to members: Get involved

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

Not long ago National Guard members were required to have a card stamped on each trip to a commissary, to ensure they went there no more than 24 times in a year. Such a requirement is unheard of for many in the National Guard today, thanks in part to the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, or EANGUS, which battled for the policy revision in the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act.

That benefit is just one example of the work professional organizations perform for National Guard members. "The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill is one of the most important initiatives I have seen resolved at Capitol Hill through professional organizations," said Chief Master Sgt. Christopher E. Muncy, the command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard. "It needed reform, plus transferability to family is a critical link."

National Guard members from all 50 states converged on the Long Beach Convention Center from Aug. 26-30 to learn about EANGUS' activities, take part in professional development courses,

network with peers, discuss best practices, hear from leaders and gather information to take back to their units.

"It is always good to see the bigger picture and see how the whole system works," said Airman 1st Class Andrew Zuniga of the CNG's 146th Airlift Wing. "The Air Force and National Guard change all the time, and we need to be involved."

Getting involved was the key theme of the conference. "Read and stay updated," Muncy told attendees. "Find out how you can help local or state chapters. Pick up leadership roles and network. It helps you grow as a Soldier or Airman, and it helps all of us."

Spc. Brandon Oliver of the CNG's 640th Aviation Support Battalion said he has emailed policymakers on Capitol Hill in support of initiatives to benefit service members, but he realizes that's not enough by itself: The support of groups like EANGUS is essential. "There are people working behind the scenes, and it is unbelievable how many benefits we could lose if we did not have someone looking out for us," he said. "This [conference] put a face on the peo-

ple battling for us."

One of the battles EANGUS will take on this year relates to the defense budget. EANGUS is working closely with key members of Congress to fight cuts in the overall budget and is fighting for National Guard funding. One of the other initiatives being supported by EANGUS is the Honor America's Guard-Reserve Act, which seeks to change the fact that members of the Guard and Reserve are not considered veterans under federal law unless they have served 180 days on active duty. "It feels good to know people support us as Soldiers and Airmen with what we are going through right now with military benefits when we come home from overseas," Oliver said.

Also during the conference, Senior Airman Richard Sorondo of the CNG's 144th Fighter Wing, was awarded the EANGUS We Care for America Humanitarian Award in recognition of his service with the Fresno Police Department. While on duty, Sorondo was dispatched to respond to an unresponsive victim, whom he found was not breathing. Sorondo initiated CPR and was able to save the patient.



ABOVE: Pfc. Esther Garcia of the CNG's 40th Infantry Division learns from a vendor of a new weapon-cleaning product Aug. 27 in Long Beach during the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States' (EANGUS) annual conference. LEFT: Senior Airman Richard Sorondo of the CNG's 144th Fighter Wing Civil Engineering Squadron receives the EANGUS We Care for America Humanitarian Award from retired Chief Master Sgt. Roger A. Hagan, EANGUS president, during the organization's annual conference Aug. 29. Sorondo, who was recognized for his service with the Fresno Police Department, was accompanied at the ceremony by his wife, Christina.

Combat Match distinguishes true marksmen

By 1ST LT. WILL MARTIN
49th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs

“Unconscious competence.” That’s the standard on which Lt. Col. Louis Millikan has set his sights as the officer in charge of the California National Guard’s marksmanship program.



Photo by 1st Lt. Will Martin

“The goal of all training is mastery,” he said. “Annual individual weapons qualification alone does not create ‘unconscious competence’ or mastery among our personnel.”

Realizing there are training challenges unique to serving on reserve status in the National Guard, Millikan joined a handful of other sharpshooting Guardsmen in spearheading the state’s competitive marksmanship program, encouraging commanders to view it as an opportunity to further their troops’ skills. “Competitive marksmanship does for Soldiers and Airmen what unit training cannot,” Millikan said. “We impart real measurable skills and give the highly skilled a chance to earn recognition ... motivating others to train a little harder.”

The effort is beginning to bear significant results. During the last four years, Cal Guard Soldiers have placed among the top five teams in Army-wide competitions, which include teams from Special Operations Command. Possibly most impressive, however, is the growing number of “Distinguished Marksmen” within the Cal Guard.

To earn the extremely rare Distinguished Pistol Shot or Distinguished Rifleman badge, one must amass 30 points in Excellence in Competition (EIC) matches; points are earned by scoring in the top 10 percent of scores in a match. A typical state match yields only 4 points, and one can only earn points from a state match once. Moreover, a competitor must place among the top 10



Photo by Sgt. Ian Kummer

TOP: Soldiers and Airmen compete Aug. 16 in a California Combat Match event that requires them to repeatedly sprint to a distant station to gather ammunition then return to a firing point, where they must keep their rounds “within the black” on targets down range at Camp San Luis Obispo (SLO), Calif. ABOVE: Staff Sgt. Brian Bullock of the CNG’s 49th Military Police Brigade competes in the Reflexive Fire event of the National Guard Region VII marksmanship championship, which includes troops from eight states and territories, Aug. 21 at Camp SLO. Bullock earned first place in the Excellence in Competition pistol portion of the regional match.

percent in a national match as least once. Cal Guardsmen have earned four Distinguished Pistol Shot Badges and are on what Millikan called “the cusp of a windfall of Distinguished Rifleman Badges.”

While it is unlikely most Guardsmen will find themselves among the Distinguished

ranks, Millikan hopes to inspire more Soldiers and Airmen to strive for excellence with their weapon. To that end, he invited the best shots from across the Cal Guard to Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., for the California Combat Match, Aug. 14-17, which was followed a few days later by the National Guard Region VII championship involv-

ing the most accomplished marksmen from eight states and territories. The contests involve much more than the fundamentals of marksmanship, calling on participants to calculate wind effects, grasp round trajectory, close in on a target while firing and exercise accurate fire distribution. Above all, the contests involve a lot of sweat.

“Actually, it’s a serious reality check,” said Sgt. Nicholas Emmerling of the 49th Military Police Brigade. “Not only regarding marksmanship, but also physical conditioning. It all comes into play.”

Many of the events involve firing on targets between sprints across the range or after carrying full 5-gallon water jugs hundreds of feet. The exhaustion, Millikan said, is by design: “It’s during these competitions that I’m able to figure out who excels in both fitness and marksmanship. They’ll need both in the Army-wide competitions, so we added a physical fitness component to these competitions that is very demanding.”

During the Region VII competition, which concluded Aug. 21, four Soldiers from the Cal Guard’s 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team earned first place for amassing the highest combined team score. In addition Staff Sgt. Brian Bullock of the Cal Guard’s Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 49th Military Police Brigade, earned first place in the EIC Pistol competition.

Lt. Col. Louis Millikan contributed to this report.

Marine Corps veteran: I found myself barely keeping up

By SGT. IAN KUMMER
69th Public Affairs Detachment

Before I competed in the California Combat Match (CCM) on Aug. 14-17, I understood the basic marksmanship principles taught to me during four years in the Marine Corps before joining the California Army National Guard. I knew the weapon safety rules, basic marksmanship principles such as the remedial action drill for weapon malfunctions, and basic individual shooting techniques such as the failure drill for fire against armored targets. That is the extent of most service members’ skill with infantry small arms. The CCM introduced to me a whole new playing field.

The training received by a typical infantryman in theater teaches little more than suppression of the enemy by sustained fire. Historically, thousands or even tens

of thousands of rounds are fired for every confirmed kill. In all but the gravest circumstances, the vast majority of enemy casualties are inflicted not by small arms fire but by crew-served weapons, or even more frequently by indirect fire and close air support. U.S. ground troops rarely operate without the luxury of precise, overwhelming and virtually inexhaustible fire support. Even at the tail end of multiple combat tours, one may still be unfamiliar with advanced marksmanship skills.

The Cal Guard marksmanship program strives to improve upon this, each year bringing together more Soldiers and Airmen to compete in a grueling two-day event and demonstrate skills in every aspect of the old mantra ‘shoot, move, communicate.’ While the traditional rifle and pistol Excellence in Competition portions of the Match were not surprising, I quick-

ly found myself barely keeping up in the more combat-oriented events, which did come as a surprise to me.

With the exception of the Beast Run, during which competitors equipped with full gear and weapons run a mile uphill, none of the events were a physical challenge so much as a mental one. I had never run courses of fire requiring the levels of complexity and thinking on the fly as those at the CCM. Simply pointing and shooting is not enough — the competitor also must hit targets in the correct places, in the correct order, and perform a variety of movements such as switching arms or changing shooting stance, also in the correct sequence. The competitor must be quick while performing these tasks with accuracy and precision.

For me the CCM was not just an inval-



Photo by 1st Lt. Will Martin

Sgt. Ian Kummer prepares to compete in the California Combat Match in August.

able learning experience; it left me with a desire for more. Whatever a Soldier’s background, this Match should leave them with a desire to further increase their basic weaponry and infantry skills. Every mistake made and every deficiency identified is simply another strength gained for next year’s Match.

49th MP Brigade welcomes 1st female commander

Col. Kelly Fisher recently returned from Afghanistan tour with 82nd Airborne

By **1ST LT. WILL MARTIN**
49th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs

The California Army National Guard installed Col. Kelly Fisher as the first female commander of the 49th Military Police Brigade at a Sep. 8 change-of-command ceremony at its headquarters in Fairfield. Fisher replaced Col. William Arruda, who continues to serve as commander of the California National Guard's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug.

Fisher, a resident of Los Osos, Calif., near San Luis Obispo, recently returned from a yearlong tour in Kabul, Afghanistan, where she served with the 82nd Airborne Division as senior liaison officer and earned a Bronze Star. Fisher began her military career three decades ago as an Air Force medical technician, beginning her duty at Travis Air Force Base, directly across from the headquarters of the 49th MP Brigade she now commands.

"I actually started my career 32 years ago at Travis Air Force Base," Fisher said. "This is like coming home for me. I learned what right looks like from serving with the Military Police."

Fisher assumed command at a critical time for the Brigade, which in March was certified as the Homeland Response Force (HRF) for Federal Emergency Management Agency Region IX. As the HRF for the Western U.S. and its territories, the 49th stands ready to support civilian agencies in responding to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive incidents.

"Colonel Arruda did an outstanding job in leading this Brigade at a time in its history when it has never been busier," said Brig. Gen. Donald Currier, then-commander of the California Army National Guard, during the change of command ceremony. "Colonel Fisher, you have quite a challenge in front of you. ... the 49th MP Brigade leads the way in civil response for the state of California."

The Brigade has deployed twice to Iraq in support of the fight



Photo by 1st Lt. Will Martin

Col. Kelly Fisher accepts the 49th Military Police Brigade guidon from Brig. Gen. Donald Currier, who was then the commander of the California Army National Guard, signifying her assumption of Brigade command Sept. 8.

against global terrorism, first in 2004-05 and again in 2009-10, when Currier served as its commander. Arruda served as deputy commander for the Brigade during the same deployment before assuming command shortly after returning to California. At one point, he held command of the Brigade as well as that of the CNG's border mission and Counterdrug task forces.

"It's been one hell of a ride," Arruda told his troops during his farewell ceremony. "We've watched each other fall down, watched each other pick one another up and watched each other succeed."

Fisher has deep roots with the MPs, having served as the 49th MP Battalion's executive officer during its Operation Noble Eagle deployment to Fort Lewis, Wash., in 2001-2002. Prior to her 2011 tour in Afghanistan, Fisher served with distinction as commander of the CNG's 223rd Regional Training Institute.

"I'm thrilled to be taking this command," Fisher said. "In looking back over the past 36 months, I can't help but marvel at the exceptional job ... in preparing, validating and certifying as the Region IX Homeland Response Force. Colonel Arruda, well done."

BG Jones takes command of 40th ID

By **SGT. MATTHEW WRIGHT**
40th Infantry Division Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Keith D. Jones took the helm of the 40th Infantry Division from Maj. Gen. Scott W. Johnson during a change-



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Wright

Soldiers of the 40th Infantry Division watch as Brig. Gen. Keith Jones is installed as their new commander Sept. 16 in Los Alamitos, Calif., succeeding Maj. Gen. Scott Johnson.

of-command ceremony Sept. 16 at Joint Forces Training Base (JFTB), Los Alamitos.

Jones commands the 40th ID in his traditional, part-time National Guard role. He is also the full-time commander of the Cal Guard training base Camp Roberts. Jones is expected to be promoted to major general in the near future in accordance with his new role at the 40th ID.

Cal Guard leadership joined friends and relatives in saying farewell to one commander and welcoming another.

"Objective data proves that 40th ID is the best division in the country ... due to great leadership," said Brig. Gen. Donald Currier, then-commander of the California Army National Guard, who praised Jones and Johnson for their roles.

Johnson, who had been commander of the 40th ID for more than three and a half years, said Jones is an extraordinary leader. "We have been battle buddies and friends in uniform for years. He will lead the 40th Infantry Division to exceptional future successes in service to this state and to the nation."

Jones said that under his command the

40th ID will renew old friendships and ensure JFTB remains a viable and highly mission-capable installation as well as a valuable community partner. He added that the Division will stay ready for any mission, foreign or domestic.

"As we begin to understand fully the recent events in the Middle East and we consider the recent earthquakes in [California] and elsewhere in the Pacific Rim," Jones said, "we realize the seriousness of our tasks and our missions, the gravity of our responsibility to defend our country and protect our way of life."

Just prior to the event, Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, presented Johnson the Order of California medal on behalf of the governor and the state of California.

"General Johnson provided the leadership, direction and drive to bring this team together in order to put the Division on top at a very critical time for our county and for our Division," Baldwin said. "For that I really thank you for your service and commitment to our country and our state over all these years."

Emergency response tech showcased at Camp Bob



Photo by 1st Lt. Will Martin

Items like this mobile communications vehicle from defense contractor Joint Vulnerability Assessment Branch were showcased at the RELIEF expo on Camp Roberts in August.

By **1ST LT. WILL MARTIN**
California Military Department Public Affairs

The effort to respond to domestic and international emergencies is riddled with challenges. Good intentions are too often lost amid technological and operational complexities, encouraging civilian and military responders to seek workable solutions.

To that end, the world's leading emergency-response thinkers converged on the CNG's Camp Roberts from Aug. 13-17 for RELIEF 12-4, an interagency field-experimentation event hosted by the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS). RELIEF stands for Research and Experimentation for Local and International Emergency and First-responders, and exists to provide rigorous fields tests for the latest technologies and processes related to humanitarian response efforts.

Offering an ideal venue and military insights, Camp Roberts allowed RELIEF participants from the private and government sectors to tackle the technology gaps that too often plague humanitarian efforts, said Tristan Allen, event planner for NPS. "Camp Roberts and [the CNG's] Task Force Warrior have a lot of highly trained, experienced [noncommissioned officers] who can help us evaluate our experiments," she said. "They bring that warfighter perspective we might otherwise lack."

Technologies ranged from the invaluable — an iPhone app that walks Soldiers through the 9-line medical evacuation process on the battlefield — to the entertainingly practical — a generator that can run on "anything that burns," from grain alcohol to nail polish remover. "Soldiers are already carrying around their phones on their convoys, and we're developing a secure way to communicate one's location and gain help," said Jennifer Gold, who is a mobile health program manager for MedWeb and an intelligence officer in the North Carolina Guard.

RELIEF 12-4 provided an opportunity for futurists to troubleshoot and improve their response technologies and brainstorm alongside colleagues from other agencies.

"It's good to know outside agencies are working on products that will help us in responding to a disaster," said CNG Staff Sgt. Joel Torres of the 49th Military Police Brigade Homeland Response Force. "There is a lot here that will benefit all of us. In the future, the more officers and senior [non-commissioned officers] we can get out here the better. We're going to be working hand-in-hand during emergencies."

Addressing

Sexual Assault in the California National Guard

Sexual harassment and assault are contrary to the California National Guard's warrior ethos, which holds care for Soldiers and Airmen as paramount. Our men and women sacrifice too much to be subjected to that kind of mistreatment. One incident is too many.

The California Guard is a family as much as it is a force, and sexual harassment and assault degrade mission readiness by devastating the trust and morale of our team.

Our organization is home to a proactive, robust sexual assault prevention program that is built on the bedrock of Army and Air Force core values, with our leaders committed to the elimination of this crime within our ranks.

Our commanders have instituted unit-level

sexual assault prevention training through interactive sessions that focus on strengthening the individual knowledge and skills needed to recognize situations that could potentially lead to a sexual assault and to learn how to safely intervene.

Advocacy is also available to promote readiness and ensure support. Sexual assault response coordinators and victim advocates are available during training weekends to assist all California Guard members, whether a sexual assault occurred in a civilian status or while on duty.

It falls on us all, as warriors and members of the California National Guard team, to stand strong and protect our brothers and sisters in uniform.

REPORTING SEXUAL ASSAULT

The California National Guard offers its Soldiers and Airmen three ways to report sexual assault: Restricted Reporting, Unrestricted Reporting and Limited Reporting.

1 Unrestricted Reporting enables one who has been assaulted to seek medical treatment/sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE), counseling and an official investigation of the allegation through reporting channels (i.e., chain of command or law enforcement officials). Victims may also file an unrestricted report with the CNG's sexual assault response coordinator (SARC) or an on-call victim advocate.

2 Restricted Reporting allows a service member who is a victim of a sexual assault, on a confidential basis, to disclose the details of his or her assault to specifically identified individuals (e.g., the SARC, a victim advocate or a health care Provider) and receive medical treatment/SAFE and counseling without triggering the official investigative process.

3 Limited reporting is for service members who experience an assault outside of duty status. If a service member chooses to speak with a representative at the Guard's state headquarters, referrals will be provided on their behalf.



California National Guard
Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
(916) 869-0787
www.calguard.ca.gov/jl/pages/SAPRP



DoD Safe Helpline
Sexual Assault Support for the DoD Community
(877) 995-5247
www.safehelpline.org

Counterdrug, nonprofit team up against molestation

By **1ST LT. KARA M. SIEPMANN**
Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug

The Cal Guard's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug works with communities across the state to reduce the market for illicit drugs by teaching youths about the dangers of drug use and counseling them on lifestyle choices. To reduce demand further, Task Force members are also eagerly supporting a new Northern California nonprofit that works to prevent child molestation — a crime that often leads to drug use in its victims and their families.

"Some communities just don't think they have a problem with drugs or alcohol use, and they refuse to address the root causes," said Army Maj. Jeffrey Moore, Counterdrug operations officer. But with illicit drug use on the rise among teens and young adults nationwide, prevention is an area where ignorance is not bliss. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 21.5 percent of adults aged 18 to 25 in 2010 were using illicit drugs, up from 19.6 percent in 2008.

The Counterdrug Task Force, which is always looking for community-based organizations to support with its expertise, got lucky last year when Rebecca Lucero opened the yellow pages to find health insurance agent Laurie Moore. While purchasing insurance, Lucero shared that she was director of administration and co-founder of a new nonprofit, Mothers of Molestation Survivors (MOMS). Moore immediately recognized that MOMS was something her husband, Maj. Jeffrey Moore, would be interested in supporting. "She told me that her husband had such a heart for this sort of thing," Lucero said. "I was so eager to meet him."

MOMS' mission is to break the cycle of generational molestation by educating and empowering parents, relatives, friends and the community to work together to establish a safe and healthy environment for children, said Kim D. Johnson, MOMS co-founder and executive director.

"On the surface, MOMS is a group that simply addresses



Photo by 1st Lt. Kara Siepmann

Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Greenawalt of the CNG's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug briefs Kim Johnson, left, and Rebecca Lucero of Mothers of Molestation Survivors and Mark Freeman from the Center for Applied Research Solutions about Sacramento region demographics and law enforcement trends during a September meeting.

the emotional needs of the molestation survivor and his or her immediate family," Moore said. "But look a little deeper at the alarming data our intelligence analysts have collected, and it's clear that molestation survivors are at risk of abusing drugs and alcohol as an attempt to solace themselves from the pain they're suffering."

The child victims are not the only ones affected, Johnson added: "Mothers or fathers or siblings or grandparents carry a heavy emotional burden that is too heavy to bear alone. A mother feels an innate responsibility to protect her child, and when that child is traumatized, she then becomes traumatized. She numbs her pain by using drugs and alcohol." Furthermore, parents who abuse alcohol or other drugs are three times more likely than other parents to abuse their own children. And the cycle continues: As many as two-thirds of the people in treatment for drug use were abused or neglected as children, according to a 1998 study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

A partnership quickly emerged between MOMS and the Counterdrug program in January. Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Greenawalt, senior intelligence analyst, pulled reports that outlined demographic data by county and researched child molestation figures. "We wanted to identify what age groups are vulnerable to drug use, what the age they start is and their drugs of choice," Greenawalt said. Using his analysis, MOMS was able to determine the age range that is most vulnerable in each county and concentrate educational efforts in that area.

"In Sacramento County the highest percentage of child abuse recorded was victims between the ages of 6 and 10, and drinking started between the ages of 10 and 11, indicating that a child was attempting to numb some trauma," Lucero said. "All of this indicated that educational materials on molestation prevention needed to be tailored specifically to a target audience of children under the age of 6."

By researching 2011 census data and www.kidsdata.org, Greenawalt also helped MOMS narrow down a focus area: Placer County, where the child abuse rate is estimated at 12 incidents per 1,000 people, which is higher than the state average, and where 11th graders are twice as likely as students nationwide to abuse prescription drugs.

A Counterdrug team continues monthly meetings with MOMS, and Moore has guided the nonprofit through the creation of a strategic plan using a Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America template. "Once MOMS created their mission statement and goals, we worked to help them create step-by-step plans for their goals," Moore said.

MOMS now has a website and a social media presence, and established community-based organizations such as the Dr. Oz Foundation, the state Department of Education, local churches and anti-drug coalitions are interested in joining forces with the nonprofit. "The resources and networking provided by the California National Guard lend us a credibility that opens more doors for us, making it easier to reach the population we'd like to target," Lucero said.

147th CCS tech upgrade improves satellite feed

Eagle Vision system has provided responders images of 26 fires in the Western U.S. this year

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

The members of the 147th Combat Communications Squadron (CCS) in San Diego were tasked to support several fires this busy fire season after receiving an upgrade to their Eagle Vision satellite ground station.

The deployable Eagle Vision unit is capable of collecting and processing near-real-time imagery from commercial satellites. The imagery is unclassified, making it readily available to disaster response officials.

The Eagle Vision III upgrade was received in June and officially welcomed to the unit at a ribbon-cutting ceremony Aug. 16. The new system has been redesigned to maximize its efficiency and increase its effectiveness. It now provides faster downlink and processing speeds, reduced latency and improved sensor capability.

Squadron members have contributed to the response to 26 fires in 10 states this year.

"The work we conduct on a daily basis is



An Air National Guard honor guard presents the colors during an August ribbon-cutting ceremony in San Diego for the next generation of Eagle Vision satellite system, which enables the CNG's 147th Combat Communications Squadron, 162nd Combat Communications Group, to collect and process near-real-time imagery from commercial satellites.

very rewarding — knowing that our imagery is being used by first responders and U.S. government agencies to fight the fires,

to see the burn areas, to plan further resources, and overall to support the safety of any residents that might be affected,"

said Staff Sgt. Angelo Cave of the 147th. "This rapid speed of technology can equate to saving lives."

In addition to fires, Eagles Vision can be called upon to support personnel responding to floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and tsunamis. Eagle Vision also provides planning and mission support for combat operations and humanitarian relief.

"As disasters hit the U.S., I know there will be ... possibly requests for imagery of the area prior to the incident," said Senior Master Sgt. Clyde Harshbarger, superintendent for the 147th CCS Eagle Vision system. "As I watch the news, I pre-plan for the imagery our unit may be called upon to provide."

Eagle Vision systems are operated by four Air National Guard units and one active-duty Air Force unit based in Germany. The units have provided responders with imagery from every major natural disaster to hit the U.S. since 2002.

The 147th is a component of the CNG's 162nd Combat Communications Group.

'Ross' from page 8

earth, emplaced 2,400 tons of gravel and upgraded 48 kilometers of transportation routes across the region — all while facing the constant threat of attack.

"Several times I had to get up in front of my guys and explain that we were going to have minimal security support and we were going to get hit, but we had a mission and the project had to be completed," Ross said. "I had a really great group of Soldiers. [In their civilian lives] these guys were union operators, engineers, surveyors. We were so competent in our technical duties that the tactical component wasn't overwhelming. I was confident in our engineering ability and in our soldiering."

Ross recalled one project in particular as demonstrating his platoon's penchant for seeing a mission through. Taking five Mine-Resistant, Ambush-Protected vehicles, or MRAPs, and 30 engineers, Ross embarked on a three-day mission to Ghazni province that called for improving a route that hadn't been used by coalition forces in more than seven years. Without it, lines of communication for Polish forces would be rendered inoperable.

"We spent three days building as we went," Ross said. "We got hit multiple times each day we were out there [without incurring casualties]. The whole time we were over there [in Afghanistan], we were always able to complete the mission."

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Recognition for Ross and his platoon's efforts began coming while they were still in theater. FOB Sharana leadership issued him a letter of recognition for upgrading the threat-detection system sites, and he and his troops were featured in Defense Department media for their cooperation with Afghan Army engineers in establishing tactical routes. But the biggest recognition came early this year, when Ross learned he had been named the Army's Outstanding Engineer Platoon Leader among all National Guard forces for 2011. His company commander's endorsement for the award captures the weight of the honor.

"Ross proved himself to be a leader of the highest caliber through the crucible of combat and deployment," 1st Lt. Thomas Murphy wrote. "His efforts produced a team that became the best platoon in the 649th Engineer Company."

In the end, though, Ross seems most content being a Soldier serving alongside other engineers.

"The award just happens to have my name on it, but the credit goes to the Soldiers of the unit," said Ross, who is now commander of the CNG's 645th Engineer Detachment. "We [engineers] get to play around with the heavy equipment and we get to be on the front line. ... We're engaged in the fight."

'Black Hawk' from page 9

sling-loaded — attached by a sling to a dual-rotor, heavy-lift CH-47 Chinook helicopter — and carried out. The Black Hawk remained parked on the property until a Chinook arrived Sept. 13, though Inderkum said he didn't mind. "It's kind of cool to be the only kid on the block to have a Black Hawk in his front yard," he said.

CHP and Cal Fire provided nighttime security on the property until the Chinook, from the Reno, Nev.-based 1-189th General Support Aviation Battalion, flew in and hovered over the Black Hawk while Soldiers from the CNG's Stockton-based Company B, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, rigged the helicopter for transportation to nearby Lampson Airport.

Inderkum and a crowd of neighbors watched through the intense rotor wash as the Chinook lifted the Black Hawk from the property for

the 5-mile flight to Lampson. "That was awesome," Adaiyah Early, 18, of Kelseyville said after watching the Chinook lift the Black Hawk from the clearing. "The Soldiers were very professional. They know what they are doing."

Soldiers with the CNG's 579th Engineer Battalion from Santa Rosa traveled to Lampson and used a crane to load the aircraft onto a trailer for transportation to Fresno, where the CNG's 1106th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group will get it back in running order. "There was a lot of coordination between all the agencies and between states, and that's the way we operate," said 1st Sgt. Rick Hendricks of the 1-126th.

Meanwhile, Pulgencio and his crew went back to fighting fires in a replacement aircraft.

"It's nice to have the National Guard out there," said CalFire Air Operations Branch Director Chris Alvina. "It's been a busy year."



A CH-47 Chinook helicopter from the Nevada National Guard carries a California National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter with its rotor blades removed Sept. 13. The Black Hawk's crew had made a precautionary landing in front of a family home in Lakeport, Calif., because of transmission trouble.



Members of the Fire Department on Joint Forces Training Base (JFTB), Los Alamitos, train to fight aircraft fires and conduct rescues at the San Bernardino Regional Emergency Training Center, one of only a few training centers worldwide that is capable of meeting the comprehensive training needs of aircraft crash rescue firefighters. The center created eight-hour burns on Sept. 19 and Sept. 21 to provide the training to 16 firefighters from JFTB, who are all members of the California State Military Reserve. Photo courtesy of JFTB Los Alamitos

BG Kelk succeeds Witham as California Air Guard commander

Brig. Gen. Jon Kelk is the new commander of the California Air National Guard, taking over for Brig. Gen. James Witham, who has been named deputy director of the Air National Guard. Kelk recently moved to California from Missouri, where he served as chief of staff for that state's Air National Guard. He has served in the Air Force since 1981, including a tour in support of Operation Desert Storm in Iraq, where he achieved the first aerial victory of that conflict, defeating a MiG-29 and earning the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Earlier this year, in a memo announcing Kelk's appointment as assistant adjutant general, Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, said Kelk is a proven senior leader and fighter pilot with an impressive record of accomplishment. "We are indeed fortunate to capitalize on General Kelk's experience and will undoubtedly benefit from his proven leadership at the state and national levels," he wrote.

Witham, in his new role, will be part of the leadership team responsible for formulating, developing and coordinating all policies, plans and programs affecting more than 106,000 Air Guard members throughout the United States. Prior to joining the Cal Guard, he served as the National Guard Bureau director of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and as the Bureau's director of air, space and information operations. He has also served as director of operations and Operations Group commander for the Washington, D.C., National Guard.

CalVet contributes \$21 million to Habitat for Humanity vets project

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) has set aside more than \$21 million for Habitat for Humanity of San Fernando/Santa Clarita Valleys to build homes for California veterans and their families in the Santa Clarita and Sylmar areas of Los Angeles County. Through this collaboration, low-income veterans can qualify for four-bedroom homes to purchase using a CalVet Home Loan, a Habitat for Humanity second loan and, for Sylmar homes, a deferred silent third loan from the California Department of Housing and Community Development. For more information, visit www.humanityca.org.

Air Force celebrates 65 years of service

On Sept. 18 the Cal Guard joined the rest of the U.S. Armed Forces in celebrating the 65th anniversary of Congress establishing the Air Force as an independent service. Ceremonies were held in recognition of the momentous occasion at Guard locations across the state. "Airmen routinely conduct a myriad of air and ground operations and provide humanitarian assistance across the globe," Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the Cal Guard, wrote in a Sept. 18 memo. "Through your daily professional efforts, you honor those who served before you and sustain a proud legacy for future generations."

Library initiates vet services program

The California Department of Veterans Affairs and the California State Library initiated a yearlong pilot program to create a Veterans Resource Center staffed by volunteers in the Beale Memorial Library in Bakersfield, the Point Loma/Hervey Branch Library in San Diego and the Redding Library.

Volunteers will receive intensive training about veterans benefits and services, veteran reintegration challenges, listening and problem-solving skills, and referral techniques. They will also be able to provide a checklist of documents and information that veterans need when applying for benefits through county veterans service offices. If successful, the pilot program could be replicated in public libraries statewide.

The program is seeking volunteers who have an interest in serving veterans and their families, can work a minimum of two hours a week and will make a one-year commitment to the program. For more information, visit <http://libraries.volunteermatch.org>.

DID YOU KNOW...

Guard commanders must follow specific guidelines when handling complaints or allegations?

An Army commander who fields a complaint or allegation against military personnel is expected to inquire into the matter and seek a resolution. The commander must document the complaint in writing. All complaint files must be maintained and disposed of in accordance with regulatory guidance.

Air Force commanders possess inherent authority that allows them to investigate complaints or allegations against military personnel within their command. A commander-directed investigation serves as means to gather, analyze and document pertinent information about issues of concern to command authorities.

All commanders are advised to contact the staff judge advocate before initiating any type of inquiry or investigation.

References: Army Regulation 600-20 and Air Force Instruction 90-301.



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More than 100 Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard stretch a 100-yard-long American flag across the field at Candlestick Park during the pre-game ceremony for the San Francisco 49ers home opener Sept. 16 against the Detroit Lions. Photo by Brandon Honig

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