

# GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard

## Back from Iraq

1-140th  
Aviation  
Battalion  
completes  
yearlong  
mission

# 4

Sept. 11 united country, shaped CNG

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# Leadership Corner

## Guard will not rest until U.S. is safe

Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin



September 11, 2001, was unlike any day in our history. The shocking, tragic attacks of that day forever changed the United States, its citizens and the California National Guard.

One of the byproducts of those attacks, which our enemies did not anticipate, was increased resolve and unity among our people. After Sept. 11, American flags became commonplace on cars, lawns and lapels as a symbol of faith in our way of life and ability to prevail.

For some of us, it was more than a symbol of faith, but a testimony to our commitment. To some of us, the attacks of Sept. 11 were personal. We could not sit back and let others take up the mantle of protecting this great country from those who would see it destroyed for their own selfish reasons. We could not sit idly by and wait for another crime against humanity. The attacks demanded our action, and we responded to the call.

If you served in the California National Guard in the past 10 years, you did so with the knowledge that you were likely to be sent to a combat theater. Surely that kept some potential recruits at home, but stories of Guardsmen who signed up or re-enlisted because of the Sept. 11 attacks are much more common.

Our ranks are filled with patriotic Americans who simply could not let extremists terrorize America. These warriors made the decision to put their lives on the line so that everyday Americans wouldn't have to — so that everyday Americans could feel safe on an airplane or in an office building or in their homes. To ensure that safety, our service members volunteered to leave their families, loved ones and careers behind and put themselves in harm's way, possibly never to return.

Since Sept. 11, the California National Guard has lost 27 members in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. That terrible toll is dwarfed by the total of 567 National Guard members who have lost their lives and 6,195 U.S. service members overall. Tens of thousands more have endured injuries that will affect them for the rest of their lives.

Despite our losses, this country and its military have been strengthened by the actions of those mass murderers who declared war on America ten years ago. Our citizens are dedicated to defeating terrorism and preserving liberty in our homeland, and our military has taken that cue.

The National Guard that serves California today is vastly superior to the force in place 10 years ago. We have implemented new training, techniques and technologies to defeat our 21st century enemies on distant battlefields and on our home turf.

The Army has evolved from a division-cen-

tric force designed to fight one or two major conflicts into a modular, brigade-centric force that is expeditionary in nature and has deployed continuously for the past 10 years. Using 3,000- to 4,000-Soldier combat brigades as its primary building block, the Army is better prepared to fight a protracted campaign against terrorism while standing ready for other contingencies across the full spectrum of operations.

The Army also has shifted its focus toward counterinsurgency operations, which recognize that military success alone is not sufficient to win our current conflicts. In the war on terrorism, victory also must be measured by the support of local populations, the social order and stability in those communities, and the level of internal oppression.

Our Soldiers now learn to build personal relationships that help people trust the U.S. military and ultimately provide intelligence that will enable our forces to close in on insurgents. Just one example of our efforts to improve the quality of life in areas vulnerable to radical influence is our groundbreaking Agribusiness Development Team. The 63-member unit completed a 12-month deployment to Afghanistan last year in which they vaccinated thousands of animals and taught farmers how to increase crop yield and treat livestock.

The Air National Guard has also increased its focus on antiterrorism operations and has added the MQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial vehicle to its arsenal. In 2006, California's 163rd Air Refueling Wing became the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing, the first National Guard unit to fly the Predator. The 163rd later became the first National Guard unit to stand up a formal training unit for pilots and operators of the Predator, which has been an integral part of the Air Force's intelligence and warfighting missions during the war on terrorism.

California's 144th Fighter Wing was the first National Guard unit in the nation to put planes in the air on Sept. 11, 2001, scrambling fighter jets to defend the western United States from further attacks. The wing has kept a close watch on the skies of our West Coast since Sept. 11 and will soon upgrade its F-16C fighters to the more advanced F-15.

Also at home, Army and Air units are contributing to new domestic response capabilities such as our Civil Support Teams, Homeland Response Force, Domestic All-Hazards Response Team and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package. These units are standing by to respond quickly to any type of attack in California or elsewhere in their U.S. area of responsibility, which in some cases includes the entire western half of the country.

The most important change in the Cali-



**Soldiers render honors as firefighters and rescue workers unfurl an American flag over the side of the Pentagon on Sept. 12, 2001, a day after terrorists crashed planes into the Pentagon and World Trade Center and in a field in Pennsylvania.**

ifornia National Guard, however, has been among our Soldiers and Airmen. This is not a group of "weekend warriors" who train without the expectation of putting their skills to the test in combat. Our members are true warriors who serve because of a sense of duty and a desire to protect their fellow citizens and make the world a safer place. Their actions during the past 10 years offer a shining testament to their courage, skill, dedication and willingness to take the fight to the enemy.

Though terrified by the Sept. 11 attacks,

our Soldiers and Airmen were also inspired by them, and the 10 years that have passed have done little to quell the fire in their hearts. They continue to show the wherewithal to take anything the enemy can dish out and come back for more.

We will not be satisfied until Americans can live their lives safe in the knowledge that they are protected from all threats foreign or domestic. That is our pledge to the American people, and we will not let them down.

Photo by Navy P1 Michael Pendergrass



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### CNG content accessible on your smart phone

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### Articles:

- ★ 250-300 words for a half-page story; 600-800 words for a full-page article
- ★ Include first and last names, and verify spelling
- ★ 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)
- ★ Credit (who took the photo)

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## Cover Shot



Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

More than 300 members of 1st Battalion (Assault), 140th Aviation Regiment, arrive Aug. 1 at Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos following a yearlong deployment to Iraq. The battalion served a crucial role in support of the theater-wide troop drawdown there, performing a variety of aviation missions throughout Iraq's central region.

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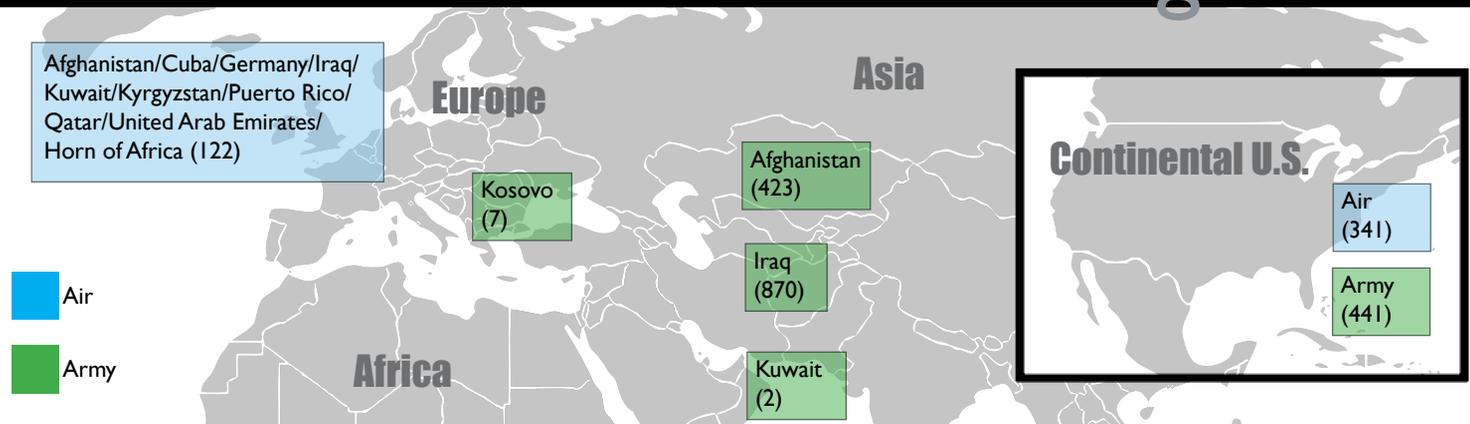
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## California National Guard mobilizations as of August 2011



# Mission, family the focus for Afghanistan-bound 756th

By **PFC. BRANDON K. BATCHELOR**  
79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

One hundred and seventy Soldiers of the 756th Transportation Company stood rigidly at attention as the unit's commander and first sergeant carefully rolled up the guidon and placed it in its cover. The colors were now cased, the symbolic act signifying the unit was going to war.

"Our Soldiers — the 'Road Dawgs' — have trained very hard for this deployment and are well-prepared to support their upcoming one-year transportation mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom," said 756th Commander 1st Lt. Dalia R. Sanchez.

## FAMILY FIRST

The company left for Afghanistan in early August, and the thing on many Soldiers' minds was their families and dealing with the stress of being away from home for so long.

Sgt. Shane J. Ely has a wife and two children he left behind. Ely, the commander's driver, said he will be "staying in constant contact with my family, building and maintaining relationships with colleagues, and taking advantage of any [rest and recuperation] opportunities." He said he plans to stay in touch via telephone, video conferencing and writing letters.

Despite being separated from his family, Ely feels he is going overseas for a good reason. "I think there's a need to establish relations with the locals in that country as well as supporting our troops that are already there in order to eradicate hostile forces that limit the ability of a people to govern their people freely," he said.

Ely's wife, Lindsey, said they are prepared for the bumpy road ahead. "We've been through it before," she said. "It takes good contact."

One thing that's different from the last deployment is the addition of their two children. The goal has changed to "keeping them focused on knowing their dad," she said.

"The biggest advice is don't watch the news a ton."

Pfc. Lenardo Becerra, a combat medic with the 670th Military Police Company, is a unique figure in this deployment. Becerra is the sole medic on the mission and has never worked with the Soldiers of the 756th. Still, he said he was excited about embracing his responsibility as the unit's primary medical resource.

"From what little I know, I'm very excited to work with them," he said. "I'm completely confident."

Like most Soldiers, Becerra's only worries centered on his loved ones back home, especially his mother.

Becerra's girlfriend, Joselin Hernandez, who promised to write him every day, assured him he'd be at the forefront of her mind. "I'm going to miss him a lot," she said, "and I'll be waiting for him when he comes back."

## READY TO ROLL

This will be 1st Sgt. Tomas A. Padron's third deployment. He said the unit's Soldiers received less than six months notice that they would be deploying.

"I'm proud of them," he said. "I see so many troops wanting to deploy."

Padron added that the Soldiers left behind on standby may yet be called up. If they are, they'll join a well-prepared, motivated team, said Brig. Gen. Keith D. Jones, deputy commander (maneuver) for the 40th Infantry Division.

"I was at Camp Roberts when 756 went through some of its training. I was impressed with their performance and equally impressed with their leadership," Jones said. "I can't stress enough the importance of the command team, and I sense the commander and first sergeant has formed into a solid command team with the experience and maturity and leadership skills to perform an outstanding job."

But in the end, thoughts returned to family.

"To the families, they have my deepest respect and appreciation for their sacrifice," Jones said, "for they serve also."



Pfc. Christopher Hutto stands at attention with his unit's encased colors Aug. 6 at the 756th Transportation Company's deployment ceremony in Lancaster, Calif. The colors were unfurled after the 756th reached Afghanistan for its yearlong tour.

Photo by Pvt. Kinsey Leedler

## I-144th FA brings out the big guns

Field artillery battalion fires its cannons for the second time since 2008 deployment to Kosovo

By **SPC. ZACHARY GARDNER**  
11th Armored Cavalry Regiment

Three years is a long time. That's 1,095 days, 26,280 hours or 1.57 million minutes long. It's an especially long time for an artilleryman to go without firing his cannon.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery Regiment, conducted a live-fire exercise Aug. 6 and 7 on Fort Irwin, Calif., their second live-fire exercise since returning from a yearlong deployment to Kosovo in 2008. The unit conducted its first live-fire exercise since the deployment during its annual training on Fort Irwin in June and July.

"Field artillery is a very dangerous job," said Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Torres, a platoon sergeant for the 1-144th. "Not only can a mistake get you killed, but using the wrong data will get the troops in front of you killed. It's not just point and pull the trigger. You have to know what you're doing."

In recent years, the military's artillery has not been utilized to the same extent as it was in previous conflicts. But with the Army's training focus changing to hybrid-threat operations, artillery is be-



Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery Regiment, execute a live-fire exercise at the National Training Center on Fort Irwin, Calif., on Aug. 6.

Photo by Spc. Zachary Gardner

ing reasserted as a major player on the battlefield.

"We have the most underused equipment in the military," said Sgt. 1st Class

Christopher Cordero, a platoon sergeant with the 1-144th. "Put us to use and you'll see how combat-effective we are. We can shoot anywhere within 25 miles. For not having fired in the past three years be-

cause of our deployment, we are still very accurate. We've had to chip off some of the rust, but our training is still there. Any of the problems we've had has been because the equipment hasn't been used in so long."

The value of artillery on the modern battlefield is often understated. Artillery often has the ability to support troops on the ground where air support is not available or safe. The 1-144th is attached to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

"It's a thrill. You feel a lot of power, especially the first time you fire," Torres said. "If you fire a big charge, like a 7 or 8, you will get the full effect for sure."

"When you fire a round downrange and land steel on steel from 20 miles away, and you're dead on, it's a good feeling," he added.

Even though the 1-144th will not fire again for another five to six months, the lessons learned from their live-fire exercises will provide them with the tools needed to regain their title as "King of Battle."

"We can go toe-to-toe with any artillery unit ... any military out there, even though we do it one weekend a month," Torres said.

# I-140th greeted by friends, family after year in Iraq

Helicopter assault battalion deployed more than 300 Soldiers in support of Operation New Dawn

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

Cheers rang out as soon as the aircraft came into sight Aug. 1 over Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos near Los Angeles, where more than 1,000 family members and friends waved American flags and proudly awaited the arrival of their loved ones in 1st Battalion (Assault), 140th Aviation Regiment. Welcome home signs were thrust upward and screams of joy went into the sky when the plane's doors opened and more than 300 Soldiers emerged after a yearlong deployment to Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

"I am proud of my brother, Sgt. Luis Raya, and I am so happy he is returning safely," said Adriana Raya of Los Alamitos.

Relatives, friends, co-workers and community members were lined up on the flight line, eagerly waiting to welcome the Soldiers back. Some loved ones in the crowd ran onto the tarmac and jumped into their loved ones arms — even as the Soldiers stood in formation.

"I couldn't wait," said Linda Diaz, fiancée of Spc. Ramiri Valdovinos. "It had been too long already, and I wanted to be in his arms."

Marilyn Talbot of Dana Point, Calif., was the first family member at the airfield, having arrived early to greet her daughter, 1st Lt. Rachel Edens. Talbot stood with a bouquet of yellow roses and waited three hours to see her daughter walk off the plane.

"I was worried about traffic, and I didn't want to take the chance of being late," she said. "Having daughters, I thought I wouldn't have to go through this. But my daughter is a strong, capable woman, and I

prayed a lot and had faith she would return."

The 1-140th, a helicopter assault battalion, served a crucial role in supporting the troop drawdown taking place theater-wide in Iraq, providing a variety of aviation support to military personnel throughout the country, primarily in Iraq's central region.

The unit conducted air assault missions to detain high-value targets, was responsible for air transportation for U.S. Forces-Iraq command staff and flew distinguished visitors around Iraq. The 1-140th also operated two forward arming and refueling points to supply fuel for Army aviation assets.

The 1-140th returned home with no casualties and with more than 15,000 hours of flight time logged on the deployment.

The Orange County Fire Authority Pipes and Drums Band welcomed home one of their own, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kevin Keim, as they played "Amazing Cajun Grace" for Keim and his family.

"It was a wonderful surprise to not only have my family here to welcome me home but also my extended family from the Orange County Fire Department" Keim said.

Members of the Patriot Guard Riders motorcycle club also attended. "It is important to roll out the red carpet for the troops," said Cordell Wiser, a Patriot Guard Rider from Long Beach.

The 40th Infantry Division Band sounded its welcome as well.

"This is how it should be done — with families and music and everything," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Eric Sukanuma, commander of the 40th ID Band.



Isaiah Medrano, 2, anticipates the arrival of his mother, Spc. Lashawn Thompson, at Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos on Aug. 1 after her yearlong deployment to Iraq with 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment.

## 3-140th Chinook crews, CalFire fight Eagle Fire

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

For a CH-47 Chinook helicopter crew from 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, a day of annual training changed in a moment's notice from supporting a Marine Corps training mission in Bridgeport, Calif., to joining the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) to fight flames moving northeast through Los Coyotes Indian Reservation in northeast San Diego County.

The California National Guard's 3-140th helped put out the blaze and shuttle firefighters to and from the fire. The Guard deployed 14 Soldiers and two CH-47 Chinooks out of Stockton, Calif., from July 24 through July 30 in response to wildfires in San Diego County.

"Our unit received notification while supporting an annual training mission for the Marines, and we were quickly diverted to San Diego in support of CalFire," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Joe Rosamond, a Chinook

pilot for the 3-140th. "Our air crew arrived Sunday night and started flying early Monday Morning, July 25th."

The 3-140th crews dropped 62,400 gallons of water from "Bambi Buckets" on their first day at the fire. Over the seven days deployed to the fire, they dropped 91,200 gallons of water while supporting CalFire.

The Eagle Fire, which charred 14,100 acres, was 100 percent contained on July 30th.

"Our mission is to add moisture to fuels to take the heat element out of the fire and slow it down to support the hand crews and bulldozers on the ground," Rosamond said. "They are the ones able to get ahead of the fire and extinguish the fire."

The two Chinooks shuttled a total of 915 hand crews to remote fire sites throughout the Warner and Borrego Springs Mountain Range.

"We worked closely with the CalFire air managers to transport the crews safely into the heli-spots and to ensure communication between our agencies," said Sgt. Jonathan O'Gaffney, a Chinook crew chief

Each military aircraft had a CalFire aircraft manager on board while supporting the fire missions. "This is to ensure safety and

communication between the two agencies," said Tom Swanson, who has been a CalFire aircraft manager for eight years.

"It is exciting once the mission number comes in over the radio and we begin pre-flight checks," said Spc. Nicholas Anderson, a Chinook crew chief. "The CalFire aircraft manager helps locate the drop zone and we begin the countdown to the drop zone, continuing the process until we are called off onto another drop zone. We are the eyes on the sides of the aircraft for the pilots as they dip the 2,000-pound Bambi Bucket for water."

This was the first fire mission for Anderson and for Chief Warrant Officer 2 Daniel Reyna, who has flown CH-47s for more than five years.

"I was deployed to Afghanistan during the 2008 [California] fires, Operation Lightning Strike, so I am honored to be able to accomplish some flight time hours for the first time with CalFire this fire season," Reyna said.

Two Soldiers from the 3-140th fuel shop were also part of the CNG contingent deployed to fight the fire. "It was great to get out and do the mission and support our state," said Sgt. Miguel Ramirez, who noted they dispensed 13,630 gallons of fuel during the seven-day mission.



A CH-47 Chinook with 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, transports personnel to fight the Eagle Fire on the Los Coyotes Indian Reservation in San Diego County on July 27.

Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

# STARBASE: Launching rockets, careers

By SENIOR AIRMAN JESSICA GREEN  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Navigator Elementary School in Rancho Cordova, Calif., transformed into an active multi-rocket launch site July 22 when students from the California National Guard's STARBASE 2011 Summer Camp lined up their rockets for

Photo by Senior Airman Jessica Green



Sgt. Maj. (CA) John Lamb inspects one of about 50 rockets built by students at Navigator Elementary School in Rancho Cordova, Calif., just minutes before firing them into the sky July 22 as part of the CNG's STARBASE program. Founded in 1993, STARBASE challenges 5th grade students with lessons in science, technology, engineering and math.

flight into Sacramento's troposphere.

Science and Technology Academics Reinforcing Basic Aviation and Space Exploration (STARBASE) is a Department of Defense youth educational program, sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, that enhances the educational experiences offered at schools across the country.

"From day one, every student is engaged," said Sgt. Maj. (CA) John Lamb, director of the California National Guard STARBASE Academy. "Rocket planning and building starts on the first day and is put to the test on graduation day after all components have been budgeted, weighed in, calculated and reviewed by one of the STARBASE mentors and supervisors."

With the help of National Guard, Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy personnel, students are provided with 20 to 25 hours of mind-engaging experiences with Sir Isaac Newton's laws of motion and Daniel Bernoulli's fluid dynamics principle, and they are put to the test designing satellite stations, unmanned aerial vehicles and submersibles on STARBASE computers.

STARBASE focuses on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) lessons and activities. Teachers are provided with all the educational opportunities needed to improve their classroom instruction. In a budget-challenged educational environment, STARBASE enables school districts to provide access to an exceptional educational experience for their students.

The California STARBASE program was initiated in September 1993 at the North Highlands Air National Guard Station, challenging 5th grade students from the greater Sacramento area to participate in "hands-on, minds-on" projects, focusing on reaching at-risk, underrepresented students in the area. The STARBASE vision is to teach students strategies that are needed to achieve their dreams and become responsible members of society.

"We work with a lot of Title 1 schools to reach at-risk students often in lower economic living situations, those with single parents or those living in free housing forced to move schools," Lamb said. "We are often the first exposure

these students have to this type of education."

The California STARBASE program is now headquartered at the STARBASE Academy building on Okinawa Street in Sacramento, which enables nearly 5,000 students in the Cordova, Elk Grove, Elverta, Folsom, Robla and Sacramento City Joint Unified School Districts to attend STARBASE's five-day program each academic year.

The STARBASE team also operates classrooms at Navigator Elementary School, Loomis Grammar School in Loomis and the Aerospace Museum of California at McClellan Park in North Highlands, emphasizing the importance of STEM subjects, personal development and drug awareness and prevention.

California's STARBASE led the nation in 2010 by serving more than 4,500 students from nine school districts in Sacramento and Placer counties.

"I've spoken with more parents, teachers, superintendents and mayors while at STARBASE than I have in any other career and have gotten nothing but positive feedback," Lamb said. "We've heard back from students that have gone on to [the Massachusetts Institute of Technology], Northwestern University and military academies, all with roots in STARBASE or appointments from our programs."

The program falls directly in line with the California Content Standards for 5th grade math and science requirements. STARBASE lesson plans also include some additional principles required of 6th, 7th and 8th grade Content Standards.

"The DoD STARBASE Program is truly a worthwhile endeavor," Dennis M. McCarthy, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, said in a statement on the STARBASE website. "In addition to its challenging STEM curriculum, the program is exposing students to positive role models within the military services. This facet of DoD STARBASE, and the support it receives from senior military leadership, are key to student success."

For more information, visit the STARBASE program website, [www.starbasedod.com](http://www.starbasedod.com). To contact the California STARBASE program, call 916-387-7405 or email [castarbase@sbcglobal.net](mailto:castarbase@sbcglobal.net).

## 23 Soldiers step up as new Army leaders

Officer candidates earn their lieutenant's bars on Camp San Luis Obispo

By SPC. AARON RICCA  
Task Force Warrior Public Affairs

The California Army National Guard commissioned 23 new second lieutenants Aug. 13, following their completion of a grueling Officer Candidate School (OCS).

"You're doused in so much information that you just try to make sense of it all," said newly commissioned 2nd Lt. Kyle Woodhouse, noting that officer candidates often refer to the process as "feeding from a firehose."

Four of the new officers attended an eight-week accelerated OCS program at Fort Meade, S.D., while the other 19 attended the traditional 17-month program on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., where the CNG's 223rd Infantry Regiment (Regional Training Institute) is located.

Twelve of the lieutenants previously served as enlisted members in the Army, four in the Navy, one in the Marine Corps and one in the Coast Guard.



Twenty-three officer candidates march on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., on Aug. 12, one day before earning their gold bars as second lieutenants in the California Army National Guard.

While enrolled in the OCS program, not only were the candidates trained to be responsible, reliable and accountable, but they also learned to gain trust and confi-

dence from their fellow Soldiers.

Formerly an enlisted paralegal with 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Lt. Heath Chim said one of many hurdles at OCS was "knowing when to be a follower and knowing when to be a leader."

Woodhouse added that as an officer, he looks forward to watching younger Soldiers develop over time.

Second Lieutenant Hayley Fleury of the 49th Military Police Brigade said she hopes to sincerely motivate and inspire Soldiers, "especially young female Soldiers such as myself."

Command Sgt. Maj. Rob Whittle of the 223rd was impressed with the group's willingness to step up, take charge and show off their leadership skills.

"These are leaders that are going to better the California Army National Guard and the Army as a whole," he said.

# Full Court Press puts criminals on defense

## Interagency effort targets marijuana growers, environmental contaminants in national forest

By **MASTER SGT. DAVID J. LOEFFLER**  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

As hikers, campers and nature enthusiasts enter the Golden State's forests, too few realize the dangers lurking deep within the canopy. The perils they face are not limited to terrain and wildlife; they now face a large number of criminal organizations growing marijuana in California's parks, reserves and public lands. The growers, who are often armed and dangerous, continue to damage the environment, poison the watershed and escalate their violence.

The "Emerald Triangle," known for decades for its cultivation of high-grade marijuana, was the target for a multi-agency marijuana eradication effort known as Operation Full Court Press in July. The operation targeted large-scale, illegal grow sites in and around the Mendocino National Forest, with participation from 25 local, state and federal agencies. California National Guard Soldiers and Airmen supported Full Court Press with aviation assets, criminal analysis, logistics, IT networks and reclamation efforts.

"One of the California National Guard's most important roles is the planning from the beginning. Bringing all of the agencies and resources together is 90 percent of the mission," said Air Force Maj. Sean Bothelio, intelligence officer for the CNG's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug. "We assist law enforcement agencies by gathering information from traffic stops, suspected grow areas and suspected drop points and generate intelligence reports that can be used to piece it all together."

CNG troops also provided ground tactical support, and CNG aviation assets used multi-spectral imagery to detect water usage and ground disturbances in potential grow sites. Guardsmen on the ground removed miles of plastic irrigation line and tons of pesticides, fertilizer and garbage from the forest. The trash generated by the growers, much of it hazardous material, was airlifted from the grow sites and transported for further processing.

"It's a lot like 'Groundhog Day,'" a reclamation team member said after his fourth day removing waste, referring to the 1993 movie in which Bill Murray's character relives the

same day again and again. "But we know we are making progress and doing this for the right reason."

The reclamation teams consisted of a full spectrum of law enforcement agents, with California National Guard members integrated into the teams. The teams were lowered from helicopters, or hoisted, into the remote grow sites and spent long days cleaning up trash and "chasing line." The intricate web of black irrigation tubing often led members through treacherous terrain to additional grow sites and further scarred forest.

"[Criminal organizations] are clear-cutting trees, poaching animals, damaging water sources and poisoning the forest," said Lt. Sam Castillo of the California Department of Fish and Game. "It is common for the growers to use rodenticides, pesticides and fertilizers, many of which are illegally brought into this country. ... That eventually gets into water that is consumed by plants, animals and people."

Full Court Press resulted in seizure or eradication of 632,000 marijuana plants and 2,000 pounds of processed marijuana, according to the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office. Agents also seized \$30,000 in U.S. currency, 38 weapons and 20 vehicles, and they arrested 159 individuals. More than 51,000 pounds of garbage, 40 miles of irrigation line and 5,500 pounds of fertilizer and pesticides were removed from the forest.

"The growers do tremendous damage to California's land and they pose serious risks to the citizens of California," said Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general of the California National Guard. "I am very proud of the efforts of the Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard and their involvement in Full Court Press. They are highly trained professionals who provide unique abilities to law enforcement agents who take on this very difficult, demanding and important mission."



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Two members of the California National Guard's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug speak with a U.S. Forest Service agent (center) while bundling irrigation line to be removed from Mendocino National Forest. The 25-agency effort Operation Full Court Press removed 40 miles of irrigation line from California forests this summer in addition to 25 tons of other garbage, 38 weapons, 20 vehicles, \$30,000 in cash, 632,000 marijuana plants and a ton of processed marijuana.

## Army medics join marijuana suppression operations

By **SENIOR AIRMAN JESSICA GREEN**  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

California Army National Guard medics worked with flight crews from the Califor-

nia National Guard's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug during Operation Full Court Press, a 25-agency mission targeting illegal marijuana grow sites in Mendocino National Forest in July.

Counterdrug planners identified the need for a medical team with the ability to swiftly reach restricted and potentially hazardous environments to provide emergency medical care to injured personnel. The medics were prepared to extract, treat, stabilize and evacuate the injured, while acting in a threat-evading recovery role.

The three medics who participated in Full Court Press received enhanced medical training through the Flight Medical Aidman's course at the U.S. Army School of Aviation Medicine on Fort Rucker, Ala. The course consists of 86 academic hours of medical subjects, 19 hours of aeromedical subjects and 44 hours of aviation subjects.

The medics embedded with Counterdrug teams on California Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and California Air National Guard HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters.

"To my knowledge, this is the first time Army medics have functioned as a part of an Air Force flight crew — at least in California," said Air Force Maj. Brian Finnerty, a Counterdrug HH-60G helicopter pilot. "They were able to log flight and training

time on Air National Guard helicopters after [the National Guard Bureau] approved the interfly mission."

Army Sgt. Andrew Neil, who was recently hired to the Task Force, has already proven to be an asset to the Counterdrug mission with his 11 years of combat medic experience.

"Having medics on the flight with us, not only for their expertise in the case of emergency, but as another set of eyes and hands in the back [of the helicopter], is extremely reassuring during missions like these," Finnerty said.

He also emphasized the importance of building rapport between Army and Air Guard personnel, because while deployed overseas they are often integrated into a single crew.

"Working with Counterdrug is a great opportunity to become proficient working in the aircraft," Neil said. "Any additional time performing my job, outside of a traditional Guardsman status, is a great chance to improve my skills and more adequately support the mission."



Photo by Senior Airman Jessica Green

Army Sgt. Andrew Neil, a flight medic with the CNG's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug, looks out of an Air Guard HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter from the 129th Rescue Wing during Operation Full Court Press this summer in northern California. Neil and other medics provide valuable medical support for Counterdrug missions and also serve as helicopter operations and management specialists.

# CNG, Marines team up for Javelin Thrust

By **SKIP ROBINSON**  
Vertical/Vertical911 Magazine

In late July, more than 5,000 Marines participated in Javelin Thrust 2011, the largest Marine Corps Reserve exercise of the year. Marines traversed through extreme terrain at several locations in the California and Nevada mountains. Much of the exercise took place at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center located 7,000 feet above sea level in Bridgeport, Calif. The high altitude and hot conditions were challenging for aviation assets and similar to Afghanistan.

With thousands of troops operating in the mountains near Bridgeport, there was significant potential for actual injuries in addition to simulated injury scenarios for training purposes. For these reasons, the California National Guard provided support in the form of Sikorsky HH-60L and UH-60A Black Hawk helicopters and medical crews from Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion (Air Ambulance). Since the medical evacuation unit needed annual training, it arranged to spend six days with the Marines. During Javelin Thrust, Company C performed hot and high-altitude training and tested the performance of its helicopters in the eastern Sierra Mountains. During the exercise, Company C personnel were available to brief Marines about Army medevac procedures and were available for medevac, or dustoff, missions.

In addition to one HH-60L medevac helicopter and one "slick" UH-60A equipped with an internal hoist, Company C's 2nd platoon sent four pilots, six flight crew members and four maintainers to Bridgeport for the exercise. A normal HH-60L crew comprises a command pilot, a co-pilot, a helicopter crew chief and a flight medic (an extra medic can be added for flights with multiple patients). Since the HH-60L is a dedicated medevac version of the Black Hawk, the helicopter is equipped with a custom-designed air medical interior. The aircraft has a six-litter support system, medical cabinet, interior lighting, and suction and oxygen systems. Additional equipment includes a monitor/defibrillator, ventilator, intravenous pump and intubation equipment. Also on board are spine boards, a jungle/forest penetrator for hoisting rescues and a rescue stretcher that enables patients to be secured and hoisted into the helicopter. It is also equipped with an external hoist and a nose-mounted forward-looking infrared turret.

In addition to Company C's Black Hawks, the CNG sent two CH-47D Chinook helicopters from Company B, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, out of Stockton, Calif. The Chinooks provided troop and heavy lift transport for the exercise.

The CNG and the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center maintain a close working relationship. Each benefits by supporting the other: The California National Guard enjoys the use of the Marine barracks and airfield facilities, while the Marines gain valuable aviation support.

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**TOP:** An HH-60L Black Hawk from the California National Guard's Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion (Air Ambulance), approaches a Marine Corps forward operating base during the Javelin Thrust exercise in July near Bridgeport, Calif. **LEFT:** During a simulated raid on a town, three Marines are evacuated by the 1-168th after enduring mock injuries. **RIGHT:** A CH-47D Chinook from the CNG's Company B, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, moves a Marine Corps water trailer at an altitude above 8,500 feet.

Once the 1-168th arrived in Bridgeport, 2nd Platoon started operations. The first few days saw the flight crews flying to mountain bivouacs where Marines were encamped. The crews discussed operational concerns such as calling in a medevac, setting up a helicopter landing zone, helicopter safety and patient-litter loading and unloading with the helicopter shut down or with the rotors turning.

"We easily briefed 1,200 Marines, squad leaders and litter teams," Capt. Todd Bonner of the 1-168th said. "Many ground Marines aren't around medevac helicopters often, so the briefings were very productive." After the briefings, Company C crews performed hoisting demonstrations to show how the Army conducts these operations.

The final three days put Company C on alert for both simulated and actual medevac mission requests from infantry squads or other ground units. When a request came through, the flight crew members were briefed and checked weather and flight conditions. Once the helicopter was launched, crew members were given continual up-

dates as they approached the pickup site. Enemy threats and landing zone conditions were forwarded to the flight crew and any additional patient information was forwarded to the flight medic.

In Afghanistan, quite often an armed escort such as an OH-58D Kiowa or AH-64D Apache helicopter accompanies a medevac helicopter. Obviously the crew wants to be at the scene for the shortest amount of time possible, so once the helicopter lands, the medic "packages" the patient quickly and gets him or her aboard the aircraft. Once out of the zone, the patient is assessed and treatment is started. The decision is then made on which hospital to take the patient to, and the crew flies to that location.

During Javelin Thrust, the 1-168th was tasked with simulated medevac flights to Marine forward operating bases in the training area. These went well, as the Marines were able to become comfortable with Army medevac procedures.

During the exercise the 1-168th was also requested to perform two actual medevacs.

Both involved high-altitude hoist rescues at more than 9,000 feet using the unit's UH-60A Black Hawk. One was a head injury requiring a hoist rescue and then a transport to a hospital in Reno, Nev.; the other was less serious, involving an ankle injury. Because of the altitude, winds and hot temperatures, both hoists were challenging but provided excellent training.

On the final day, an early morning raid was planned in which the Chinooks and Marine Corps CH-53Es would transport and insert Marines into a simulated town for a ground assault. The Marine AH-1Ws provided reconnaissance and attack helicopter support. The 1-168th provided its UH-60A for command and control, and its HH-60L stood by as a dustoff bird. During the assault, dustoff was called in twice to transport simulated wounded, and on one flight carried three stretcher-borne soldiers.

During the six days operating together, both the Marine Corps and Company C received beneficial joint training.

**continued on page 19**

# 40th Infantry Division plans land war Down Under

Talisman Sabre exercise brought 14,000 U.S. service members to Australia to improve joint capabilities

By STAFF SGT. EMILY SUHR  
224th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Nearly 120 Soldiers from the California National Guard, mostly with the Los Alamitos-based 40th Infantry Division, led the charge in the Talisman Sabre exercise in Queensland, Australia, in July.

The massive joint exercise, which included the U.S. and Australian Army, Navy and Air Force, the U.S. Marine Corps and several civilian agencies from both countries, was designed to improve combat readiness and interoperability between the allies and enhance regional security in the Pacific Ocean region. More than 22,000 troops participated in the exercise, which took place across Australia, out at sea and in California, Florida, Hawaii and Virginia. This was the fourth Talisman Sabre, which is held every other year.

"From the United States' perspective, there is no larger exercise," said U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Scott Van Buskirk, commander of the 7th Fleet and combined joint task force commander for Talisman Sabre 2011. "In terms of scope, complexity and what we're operating, this is the equivalent of operating in the entire United States. It's like operating the exercise out of Miami and conducting it out of Seattle. It just doesn't happen."

The exercise, which took two years to plan, utilized a scenario that required strategic planning and action from land, air and sea components. As members of the Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC), Soldiers from the 40th ID and the Australian 1st Division were assigned the daunting task of planning and executing the land war portion of the exercise.

"The 40th Infantry Division Soldiers are getting really great joint and multinational training," said Maj. Gen. Scott Johnson, commander of the 40th ID. He also served as deputy commander of the CFLCC and commander of the 1,500 U.S. Soldiers in

Talisman Sabre. "What we're being asked to do is above division-level work. A division would be in command and control of less brigades in an actual war than we have here as part of a CFLCC headquarters. So our 40th Division people are getting a joint task force experience on the land component level that's more on an operational and strategic level."

While thousands of troops "fought" the fictitious war along the east coast and Northern Territory of Australia, the California Soldiers spent the three-week exercise at Kokoda Barracks, ensuring every aspect of the ground war was taken care of, from tactical troop movement and battle strategy to the tracking and resupply of fuel, food and ammunition.

"We wargame with all the other sections and we come up with all of the commander's decision points — the decisive points of the battle," said Sgt. Charles Remley, a 40th ID Soldier from Newport Beach, Calif. "We then come up with courses of action with the other section heads ... for the commander to decide how he wants the battle to run."

Taking on such important roles in such a short timeframe required the Americans and Australians to quickly adapt to each other's military cultures. "We always try and have an open policy with the Americans," said Australian Army Warrant Officer 1 Robert Sumpton. "We're very receptive to their ideas and we hope that they're receptive to ours."

The United States and Australia have shared a close alliance and military history for nearly 100 years, fighting side-by-side in every major conflict since World War I and regularly conducting joint disaster relief and humanitarian missions across the globe.

"It is a chance of a lifetime, being here and meeting some people we share a special



Lt. Col. Gilbert Roldan of Fontana, Calif., equal opportunity adviser for the CNG's 40th Infantry Division, briefs Australian and U.S. general officers July 16 at Kokoda Barracks in Queensland, Australia. The 40th ID and Australia's 1st Division were responsible for planning and tracking all elements of the mock land war executed during the Talisman Sabre exercise July 11-29.

kinship with," said Van Buskirk, whose father served in Australia during World War II. "The foundation of how we operate together is born here in this exercise."

Remley, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, said international exercises such as Talisman Sabre have great importance in the current operations climate.

"Especially during this decade, when we're conducting actual, real-world battle operations with so many different countries both in Iraq and Afghanistan, this is an opportunity for us to get to know each other, learn about each other's military culture [and] the other country's system," he said, "so that if we are tasked in the real world to conduct operations jointly, it will

flow that much smoother."

Despite little time off, Soldiers from both sides of the Pacific, many of whom were on their first multinational exercise and learn about their culture over meals, movies in the recreation tent or on early morning runs.

"They're one of our allies, someone that we fight with and we're on the field with," said Spc. Ashleigh Aplin, a 224th Sustainment Brigade supply specialist from Santa Fe Springs, Calif. "Now we can put a face on who our allies are. ... Even though we [may not be] actually standing next to the person or able to see them out there, we know that they're over there fighting with us."

## 40th ID, Australia's 3rd Battalion share ties to Korean town

By STAFF SGT. EMILY SUHR  
224th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

The United States and Australia have been close allies with strong military ties for decades. Rooted in shared values and common goals, the nations have fought side-by-side since World War I. This past July, nearly 14,000 American troops descended onto Australia's shores for a massive joint training exercise to ensure those ties stay intact.

While overseeing the 1,500 U.S. Army soldiers and commanding the land war portion of the Talisman Sabre exercise, Maj. Gen. Scott Johnson, commander of the 40th Infantry Division, got a chance to celebrate some of that history firsthand. "I think military heritage and history is ... very meaningful to Soldiers who are in the organization," he said. "For instance, the fact that the 40th Division has very strong ties with the Republic of Korea and the Korean War, it means something to our current Soldiers."

During his first trip to Australia, last year to plan for Talisman Sabre, Johnson discovered that the Australian military shares ties to Korea that are similar to the 40th ID's. He first noticed the connection when he learned that a key drop zone for the exercise was named after Kapyong, the site of one of Australia's most famous battles in the Korean War,

for which the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, was awarded the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation. Johnson, who has traveled to Korea several times, recognized the name of the city.

A year after the hard-fought Battle of Kapyong, the 40th ID arrived there from the front lines to regroup, finding the city in ruins and the children with no school. The Soldiers dug into their own pockets for donations and, during their three-month stay, with the help of an engineer battalion, built the children of Kapyong a 10-room schoolhouse. The school, which was named after Sgt. Kenneth Kaiser, the first 40th ID Soldier killed in Korea, is still there today.

Between missions, Johnson made his way to the 3rd Battalion National Memorial Walk at Gallipoli Barracks in Enoggera, Queensland. The tree-lined tribute honors the 695 Soldiers of 3rd Battalion who lost their lives in conflicts over the years. While there, he was privileged to meet current members of the regiment and two men, Mick Servos and Ron Perkins, who fought in Kapyong and helped create the memorial walk. Johnson presented the men a 40th ID coin and a piece of ceramic pottery given to Johnson by the mayor of Kapyong during his last trip to Korea.

"I just think heritage and history are very much a part of

why we are here today," Johnson said. "There's an obligation both ways to take advantage of opportunities to connect the present with the past, and it's very rewarding."



Maj. Gen. Scott Johnson, commander of the 40th Infantry Division, visits the National Memorial Walk at Gallipoli Barracks in Enoggera, Queensland, Australia, on July 24 with Ron Perkins, far right, and Mick Servos, who are Korean War veterans of Austria's 3rd Battalion, as well as Ken Ryan, president of the Royal Australia Regiment Association.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr

Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr



Lt. Col. Anthony Noll, commander of 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, attaches Iraqi Governance and National Resolution streamers to the I-184th guidon during a July 21 ceremony on Camp Roberts, Calif.  
 Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Murotake



Capt. Jorge Regan, commander of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, takes cover July 26 while maneuvering through individual movement technique lanes during the unit's annual training with Task Force Warrior on Camp Roberts, Calif.  
 Photo by Spc. Aaron Ricca



Six Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, train at the Gunsite Academy near Paulden, Ariz., in offers two free pistol courses and one free carbine course for Soldiers who have deployed to a combat theater. The Academy, who volunteer their time for the Soldiers, provided intensive individual attention, ensuring all Soldiers were able to move on to each next step. In addition to weapons training, the five-day course covered low-light and night vision training, movement and room-clearing, and lectures on the combat mindset.  
 Photo courtesy of I-184th Infantry Battalion



**LEFT:** Sgt. Jesus Rojas, far left, Cpl. Shawn Crook, Spc. Donovan Greer and Sgt. Paul Yoon of the California National Guard Veterans Honors Program present the colors before the San Diego Padres' California National Guard Appreciation Day game July 31 at Petco Park. **ABOVE:** Senior Airman Yvonne Taylor of the 147th Combat Communications Squadron, left, and Staff Sgt. Adan Mancilla of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team participate in the Steal a Base game July 31.

**Photos by Master Sgt. Julie Avey**

**Sgt. Nathan Bourdlaies** of the 132nd Multi-Role Bridge Company detains role-player Spc. Richard Ray of the 132nd as the unit performs entry control point exercises June 24 at Camp Roberts, Calif.

**Photo by Spc. Aaron Ricca**



**An Airman with the 144th Fighter Wing Security Forces Squadron scans the Mojave Desert during a field training exercise at Camp Corum, a specialized training site at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., on Aug. 4. Forty-eight members of the Security Forces Squadron traveled to Edwards in August for five days of training focused on night security operations. For more on the 144th Security Forces Squadron, see page 18.**

**Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler**

**July. The privately run academy**  
**ater since 2001. The instructors,**  
**the proficient before being allowed**  
**-light shooting, live-fire move-**



A platoon of the 270th Military Police Company attempts to control a simulated civil disturbance during law enforcement training at Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., in July.

# Familiar tasks, new mission

With Homeland Response Force mission on the horizon, the 270th MP Company hones its skills

**By 1ST LT. WILL MARTIN**  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Addressing the troops in late July during morning formation, 1st Sgt. Clinton Lockhard of the 270th Military Police Company sought to explain the Sacramento-based unit's imminent Homeland Response Force mission. In the fashion of a seasoned noncommissioned officer (NCO), he settled on a colorful and straightforward approach.

Rattling off a list of familiar MP tasks – cordon and search, detaining an individual, establishing a

traffic control point – Lockhard ended each sentence by striking a pose and stating the MPs would conduct the task “in a cool suit.”

“You already know this stuff,” he said. “Nothing is really changing except the environment.”

Along with their peers in the southern California-based 40th MP Company, the Department of Defense has tasked the 270th with helping to ensure security during any domestic incident that would require the federal government to mobilize the Homeland Response Force, or HRF. Should that occur,

the MPs very well might find themselves in “cool suits” that protect them from any number of chemical or biological hazards.

This year's annual training at Camp San Luis Obispo and Camp Roberts, Calif., provided the ideal opportunity to adapt the MPs' familiar skills to the new particulars of the HRF mission. Staying several days past the usual two weeks of annual training, the 270th Soldiers conducted full-scale HRF scenarios, erecting decontamination tents, establishing “cold” and “hot” zones, and donning the “cool” garb described by their first sergeant. Company leadership expects the training to prove invaluable.

“We're being introduced to brand new equipment, a brand new mission,” said 2nd Lt. Brennan Sack, platoon leader and lead HRF planner for the 270th. “It's important to emphasize the MP tasks, knowing the conditions will change with the mission.”

**COVERING SOME GROUND**

The 270th and 40th MPs serve one of 10 regional forces in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) HRF infrastructure. The network is part of FEMA's effort to restructure the nation's capacity for responding to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive (CBRNE) incidents.

Composed of National Guardsmen from a number of occupational specialties, the units will respond to CBRNE incidents with medical, search-and-extraction, decontamination and security support. The units, which work in conjunction with other military and civil agencies, are geographically situated so as to effectively respond to an incident within several hours, according to the National Guard Bureau.

As part of FEMA Region IX, the two MP companies are responsible for supporting security efforts in California, Arizona, Hawaii and Nevada as well as the territories of American Samoa and Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. In all, close to 400,000 square miles and 36 million residents fall under their potential care.

“It's impressive for our two MP companies to cover all that territory,” said Spc. Jennifer Swangnete, a 270th MP from San Jose. “This training was really good. I feel like after this training we're definitely better prepared.”

**WORKING OUT THE KINKS**

In addition to focusing on all things HRF, the 270th and the 40th joined the rest of the 185th Military Police Battalion units in re-establishing their traditional MP skills throughout their an-

nual training. Each of the core MP competencies received attention, as did a number of basic soldiering proficiencies, not the least of which was marksmanship.

“This was my first [annual training] with this unit, and it was pretty solid,” said Spc. Koi Pham of the 670th MP Company, who is an active duty veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. “I appreciated the time spent on the firing ranges, especially the [Engagement Skills Trainer 2000].”

A myriad of civilian law enforcement officers serving with the California State Military Reserve served as instructors during much of the training, providing their domestic expertise as a complement to the military experience of the battalion's NCO corps.

“The team-building these two weeks provided was really helpful,” said Cpl. Richard Mair, a 270th Soldier from Granite Bay, Calif., whose father served as a platoon leader with the unit during Operation Desert Storm. “We did a really good job of filling up any free time with basic soldiering skills. This training really helped to bring us together and pick this stuff up.”



A member of the 330th Military Police Company apprehends a role-player from his unit during law enforcement training July 18 on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.



# 185th MP obstacle course builds morale

By **SPC. EDDIE SIGUENZA**  
69th Public Affairs Detachment

The winners of the 185th Military Police Battalion's Obstacle Course Challenge on July 21 weren't necessarily the strongest or the fastest. But they were the gutsiest and had lots of support.

The "Fearless Foursome" of the 270th Military Police Company earned the overall title in a morale-charged competition backed by hundreds of 185th Soldiers. Cpl. Richard Mair, Pvt. Aaron Carruth, Pvt. Connie Moore and Pvt. Kathy Phan combined to post the fastest time, laying claim (for now) to the title of the most physically fit unit among the 185th's six companies and its Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment.

Mair, Carruth, Moore and Phan completed the challenge in 12 minutes, just five seconds ahead of a team from the 670th MP Company.

The 40th MP Company finished in third place, and the

185th Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment came in fourth.

"I think the sprint back at the end, that was the toughest," Mair said. "You've got to do a lot of different obstacles. Those get you tired, and you've still got to run back to the finish line."

Each competitor drew rounds of applause and support from company members on the sideline.

Command Sgt. Maj. James Coltrell and Sgt. Maj. Abraham Hinojosa, the 185th command sergeant major and operations sergeant major, respectively, organized the challenge to unite about 500 Soldiers who were performing their annual training.

"It's team-building, morale. It's a way of getting the battalion together," Coltrell said. "The main thing is to have fun. It's the end of annual training after lots of hard work."

Competitors were required to complete 12 obstacles, in-

cluding log climbs, rope climbs, log balance, wall climb, low crawl and a house frame climb. Twenty seconds were added to the official time if a competitor failed to complete an obstacle.

After the obstacle course, Soldiers continued the day of competition with a sport that combines football and ultimate Frisbee. The objective was to get a football into an end zone without running or tackling.

Coltrell and Hinojosa added a twist, however. They created a "penalty box," where Soldiers were sent for various reasons. For example referees whistled fouls for missing catches, lousy throws, standing still and other irregularities.

In the penalty area, Soldiers did push-ups, sit-ups, lunges and other exercises. Once they completed the calisthenics, they were sent back to the game.

"I saw a lot of motivation out here," Coltrell said. "It's just a good way to end several days of hard annual training."



Photo by SPC Eddie Siguenza

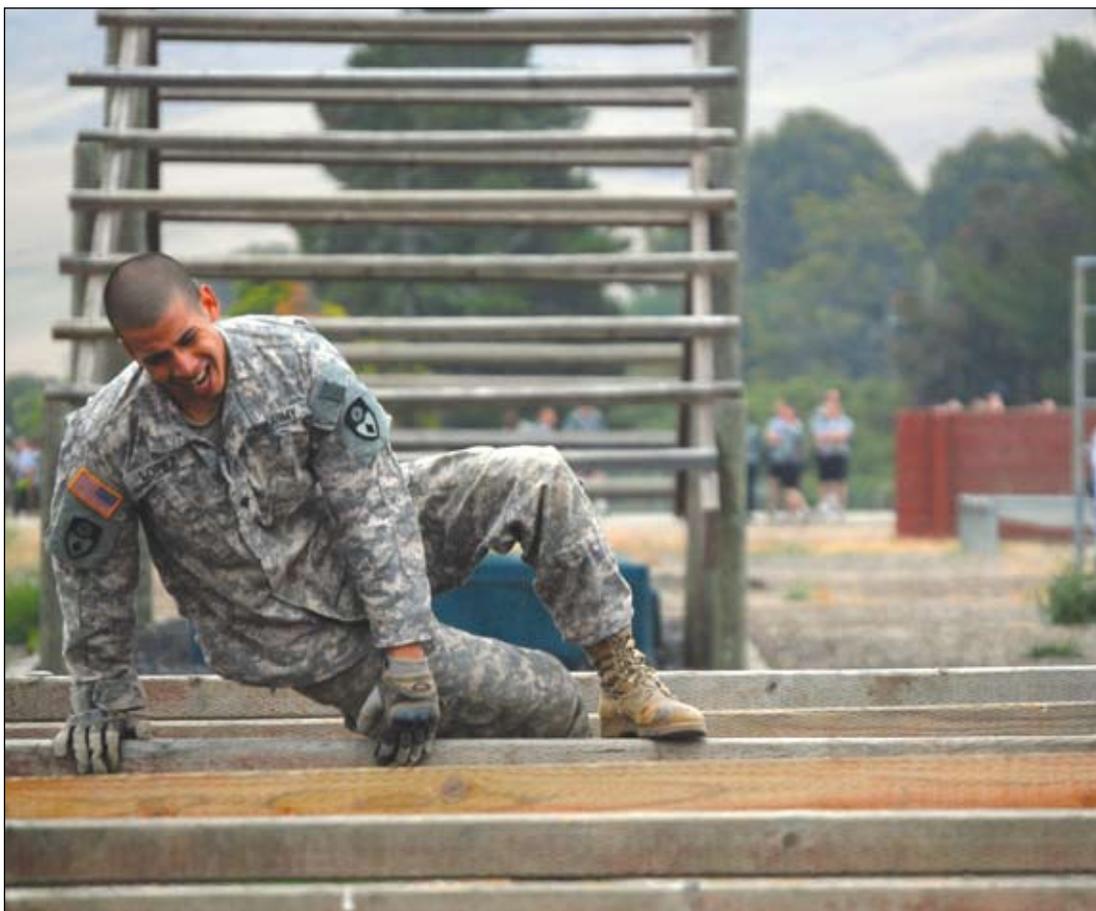


Photo by SPC Marilyn Lowry

**LEFT:** Members of the 670th Military Police Company, 185th Military Police Battalion, struggle to complete the Leadership Reaction Course on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., on July 17. **ABOVE:** Spc. Lopez of the 185th Military Police Battalion works his way through an obstacle course on Camp San Luis Obispo.

## Young gun wins MP pistol competition

By **1ST LT. WILL MARTIN**  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

When Pvt. Cody Payne of the 330th Military Police (MP) Company arrived on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., in July, he'd fired a pistol only a few times in his life. By the time he left two weeks later, he held bragging rights as the surest shot among his fellow MPs.

The 270th Military Police Company hosted an M9 pistol competition during the 185th Military Police Battalion's annual training in July, calling for the most capable shooters among the Cal Guard's MP ranks. The 270th and 330th are both components of the 185th MP Battalion.

Having scored a flawless 30 out of 30

during a qualification range test earlier in the week, Payne stepped up to the challenge.

"It's my first time doing anything like this," the 19-year-old from Murietta, Calif., said right before the challenge. "I'm just going to come out and have fun."

To keep the competition interesting and the Soldiers' heart rates elevated, the challenge incorporated a series of exercises prior to each firing sequence.

When not firing down range, competitors were expected to knock out push-ups, flutter kicks or any of a series of classic Army exercises.

The innovative competition has become

something of an MP tradition, said Lt. Col. William Carter, commander of the 185th MP Battalion.

"This is the crowning achievement of why we do weapons qualification," Carter said. "We change it up every year. It's something to look forward to each [annual training]."

In addition to the aerobic challenge, competitors were directed to don a gas mask or assume a number of innovative firing positions.

In the end, the event was about camaraderie as much as competition.

"This unit is like a family to me," Payne said. "I love it."



Photo by 1st Lt Will Martin

**Select Soldiers from across the 185th Military Police Battalion participate in the unit's annual shooting competition on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., in July.**

# I-143rd NCO leads by example at annual training

The NCOIC of Task Force Warrior, which trains deploying Soldiers, showed his unit's troops how it's done

By **SPC. AARON RICCA**  
Task Force Warrior Public Affairs

First Sergeant Donald Fisher, the operations noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) for Task Force Warrior, wanted

to show his fellow Soldiers that he does more than sit at a desk all day. So he spent a day in the miserable heat of Camp Roberts, Calif., charging through individual movement technique lanes with a squad of training Soldiers from his unit, the Battery

A "Warlords" of 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment.

Task Force Warrior is part of the California National Guard's pre-mobilization training assistance element.

The Battery A Soldiers spent the coolest part of the day absorbing a two-hour presentation on the basics of what Task Force Warrior's Team Bayonet was about to put them through.

That presentation was the only taste of air conditioning the Warlords would get that day. From then on out, they were running through individual movement technique lanes in 90-degree heat wearing full "battle rattle."

Company Commander Capt. Jorge Regan also completed the individual movement technique training along with every other Battery A Soldier.

The most grueling part of the training involved squad-sized elements going through the lanes. The squads maneuvered through an obstacle course designed for the practice of urban movement, crossing a linear danger zone and negotiating buildings, dirt mounds, walls and rolls of

concertina barbed wire.

Later in the day, the Warlords charged through another course, performing three-to five-second rushes through dirt and weeds. The lane included bursts from an oxygen/acetylene-powered pneumatic gun that simulates the sound of fire from a .50-caliber, M-240 or M-249 machine gun.

After nearly seven hours of running and crawling through thorn-infested lanes, the Warlords had completed their day of training.

"I wasn't going to let the obstacle beat me, and I wasn't going to let the Soldiers see the obstacle beat me. ... No matter how bad you hurt, you've still got to go over that wall," Fisher said afterward. He added, however, "I feel like I should be in my office taking a nap on my couch."

Second Lieutenant Terrance Matlack of Battery A said he appreciated that Fisher was willing to go through the individual movement technique lanes, which Fisher had last completed in 2007 before a deployment to Iraq.

"It's good seeing the leadership get out with the young guys," Matlack said.



First Sergeant Donald Fisher of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Battalion, tosses an inert grenade on the grenade recognition and application course July 26 alongside troops from his battery who were participating in annual training on Camp Roberts, Calif.

Photo by SPC. Aaron Ricca

## Joint Task Force Sierra troops monitor the border

By **MAJ. KIMBERLY HOLMAN**  
Joint Task Force Sierra Public Affairs

Guardsmen with Joint Task Force Sierra, the California National Guard's Southwest border mission, began a new method of supporting Border Patrol in July.

In a small, dark room located at the Chula Vista Station near San Diego, Guardsmen are currently viewing about 30 TV monitors that display activity being recorded by cameras along the westernmost seven miles of the U.S.-Mexico border. The images are supplied by the remote video surveillance system, or RVSS, a vital force-multiplying asset Border Patrol depends upon to observe activity along the border fence.

The RVSS is one of many tools used to fight illegal border crossings and allows Border Patrol to strategically place its

manpower. Using the National Guard to monitor the RVSS cameras enables more Border Patrol agents to perform their primary law enforcement duties.

The RVSS is strategically placed along the Southwest border and consists of two camera systems affixed to a platform atop a 60- to 80-foot pole. One camera system is thermal night imaging; the other, a color daytime system.

The cameras' pan-tilt ability enables them to move in different directions to ensure comprehensive surveillance. For example, while one set of cameras looks east, the other looks west, overlapping each other to cover all areas. San Diego sector has 14 camera towers from Border Field State Park in Imperial Beach to the Otay Mesa Port of Entry.

Strategically placed sensors relay information to the RVSS as well. Unattended ground sensors detect several types of information, including seismic, magnetic and infrared. The seismic sensors detect ground movement; the magnetic ones recognize metal in passing vehicles; and the infrared sensors respond to the breakage of spatial planes.

Three-man teams are on duty 24 hours a day. The teams began training July 23, and Border Patrol Agent Andrew Kim said the training has been going quite well and the service members are "picking it up really quickly."

"It would have been more difficult for me to get a hang of the equipment if I didn't already spend time getting used to using the equipment and know what I'm looking for," said Spc. Hector Ruiz, one of the first RVSS Soldiers to start training. "That prior knowledge definitely helped."

"The difference between having a daytime scope as opposed to just night scope cameras is a lot better than what we're used to out in the field," Ruiz added. "But instead of having just one scope screen, we have to keep our eye on about 10 different camera screens."

Ruiz and his three-man team had only been on the job for a day when they witnessed illegal crossers making their way over the primary and secondary fences. RVSS personnel radioed to agents in the area, who responded to make

the apprehension.

"We've been doing a lot of training and learning what to do when we spot illegal entries and how to quickly identify which camera goes to which sensor," said Staff Sgt. Julio Barthson, the RVSS noncommissioned officer in charge. "If we see something that needs more clarification, we note the time and which camera the event took place on, and then later an agent can go review the tape and offer further explanation."

The RVSS is familiar to many on this mission who were part of the CNG's border mission from 2006 to 2008, Operation Jump Start. That mission was highly successful and was notably recognized for saving the lives of agents patrolling on all-terrain vehicles (ATV) along the fence. Acting Field Operations Supervisor Jason Pontes of Border Patrol said he shares that story every time visitors tour the RVSS.

"A thin steel wire had been strung from behind the primary fence in Mexico across the road the ATVs drive on to patrol; it was placed intentionally at the neck level of an average ATV rider," he explained. "ATV patrols driving at 35 miles per hour down that road hitting that wire would have surely been killed had the National Guardsmen working in RVSS not seen and reported it to us."

The RVSS Soldiers assisted with more than 10 preventions of illegal entries during their first two weeks on the job, which began July 23. Team leader 1st Lt. Dax Brecher said he expects great things from the RVSS team.

"The level of diligence and fresh perspective that our service members have brought to this mission has proven an invaluable asset to the Border Patrol agents," he said.

Barthson agreed, adding that the caliber of work coming from service members on the mission is top-notch.

"We recruited some of the hardest working and dedicated troops ... and they are very motivated to do well in the mission set," he said. "The RVSS is a tasking perfectly suited for the National Guard and what we do to support [the Department of Homeland Security]."



Sgt. George Novela watches one of more than 30 monitors at Border Patrol's Chula Vista Station near San Diego that display remote video surveillance of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Inigo

# 640th ASB ensures tactical communications in Iraq

By **SPC. MATTHEW A. WRIGHT**  
40th Combat Aviation Brigade

In preparation for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq at the conclusion of Operation New Dawn, Company C, 640th Aviation Support Battalion, will provide tactical signal support for the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), which now controls about half of the U.S. Army's aviation assets in Iraq. Company C's primary role is to ensure tactical communications — whether Internet, radio or telephone — are constantly up and running.

"They are the backbone of the tactical communications network for the combat aviation brigade," said Capt. David Rosales, Company C commander.

Tactical communications requires line-of-sight dishes and mobile relay systems that occupy a small footprint. Company C maintains and operates the tactical systems for the brigade and its subordinate units.

Company C has detachments in Iraq at Contingency Operating Base (COB) Warrior in Kirkuk and COB Speicher in Tikrit. Soldiers in Kirkuk provide backup tactical communications for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 6-17th Cavalry Squadron. They transmit to and from a joint network node at COB Speicher, which relays



**Spc. Luthor Alton, left, and Spc. Mario Perez of the 640th Aviation Support Battalion, pressure wash a satellite transportable terminal July 10 at Contingency Operating Base Warrior, Iraq.**

data throughout the joint operations area.

The tactical network system runs through a command post node, a mobile unit that connects to a satellite transportable terminal to uplink data to communication satellites. Communications specialists are re-

sponsible for monitoring the feed to make sure there are no disruptions.

40th CAB units rely on a combination of strategic and tactical communications systems. Strategic communications, including contractor-provided Internet, cables and

telephones, is permanently built into operating base infrastructure. Strategic systems are maintained by contractors, and tactical communications augment and serve as a backup to the strategic network.

At some point, the bases' strategic networks will be withdrawn, leaving tactical networks as the primary means of communication. Discontinuing the strategic network would have a large impact on the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop.

"Now the bandwidth we have could be compared to the size of a one-inch wire rope," Sgt. Ruben Cruz of Company C said. "If we were to go down to full tactical, it will be less than a shoestring. So I will be supporting around a maximum of 10 phone systems and 10 computer systems. ... When the civilian contractor-provided Internet goes down, we put our equipment into play."

Cruz and his team have been in Kirkuk since February and will remain there throughout the summer.

Company C continues to back up strategic communications throughout central and northern Iraq and is ready for the tactical network to become the primary means of communication. The unit has been anticipating the troop drawdown all year and is ready to put its tactical network in motion.

# U.S.-Mexico border mission gains sisterly support

By **STAFF SGT. JESSICA INIGO**  
Joint Task Force Sierra Public Affairs

"Cuyan country" seems to be the catchiest of all the phrases tossed around since the two younger Cuyan sisters joined Air Force Staff Sgt. Arelis Cuyan on the California National Guard's Southwest border mission in San Diego in August. That, and the constant question, "Are you guys sisters?" has nearly become a constant in the

support trailer of the National City Armory where the siblings work.

Staff Sgt. Cuyan, who soon will change the nametape on her uniform to read "Cuyan-Villanueva" since marrying while on the mission last September, seems to be the trailblazer in the family. Not only did she first join the ranks of Joint Task Force Sierra in San Diego as a personnel specialist back at the start of the mission in July 2010, but

she was also the first to join the California Air National Guard, which is what opened the door for the sisters to all work together in the first place. All three sisters fall under the 146th Airlift Wing out of Channel Islands Air National Guard Station, Calif.

In order to support the task force while several key individuals from the finance and personnel sections attended to other matters, the sisters were recruited on temporary orders at the recommendation of their older sister.

"First I was asked if I knew anyone who could cover down in the finance section," the oldest Cuyan sister said of recruiting her youngest sister, Airman 1st Class Viana Cuyan, who had just graduated from boot camp and technical school.

"I literally got off the plane and came here," Airman 1st Class Cuyan, 19, said of her short military career. She serves the 146th Airlift Wing Force Support Squadron as a personnel specialist.

Military schooling then took a couple of more people away from the task force, so Senior Airman Crystal Cuyan, 22, was put on orders to supplement the personnel section, working directly with her older sister. Senior Airman Cuyan serves the 146th Air Evacuation Squadron as a medical logistician.

"It's been good, it's great," all three sisters said in unison in strikingly similar voices when asked how they've enjoyed working together on the border mission.

However, though the family resemblance is strong, each of the Cuyan sisters is her own person. Though she serves in the medical

field for the 146th, Crystal is going to California State University at San Bernardino to learn photography and graphic design. Viana is at the same school, studying to be a nurse. Both younger sisters also work as tutors in the Pomona Unified School District near their home in Moreno Valley, Calif.

The original Cuyan of the task force, Arelis, has been using her off time while on the mission to improve herself both mentally and physically. She has been training to run half-marathons and pursuing a master's degree in education through an online program at the University of Southern California.

And though all three eventually joined the California Air National Guard, they each got there a little differently. Arelis, 24, joined because it was always a dream of her mother's that caught on with her. Crystal tried to be more adventurous by joining the Marines or the Navy, but eventually turned back toward the Air Force, as well. Then the youngest, Viana, wanted to be in the service so she could use her upcoming nursing degree to support service members as a flight nurse.

"Everybody on the task force loves coming in and seeing them; they're always multiplying," said Staff Sgt. Laurel Benghauser, who works in the trailer with the sisters. "It's a great morale booster to have them here because they're all hard workers."

However, the siblings are not complete. One is missing from the task force: Viana has a twin sister, Vianey, who cannot join the task force because she has yet to sign up for the California National Guard. Her sisters will just have to wait for her to come around. ... No pressure, Vianey.



**Airman 1st Class Viana Cuyan, left, Staff Sgt. Arelis Cuyan and Senior Airman Crystal Cuyan lend a Cuyan flavor to the California National Guard's mission on the U.S.-Mexico border, Joint Task Force Sierra. All three sisters are members of the 146th Airlift Wing based at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station, but they are currently deployed to San Diego.**

# 49th MPs on their way to HRF certification

By **SPC. EDDIE SIGUENZA**  
69th Public Affairs Detachment

The scenario: A 10-kiloton nuclear bomb explodes in Cincinnati. Although not as powerful as the atomic explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, during World War II, the blast turns Cincinnati into a wasteland, prompting a nationwide reaction.

"First there's blinding light, then scorching heat, then the powerful blast. Then that's followed by an electromagnetic pulse," says Master Sgt. Manuel Villa, intelligence noncommissioned officer for the 49th Military Police Brigade. "Those who don't die at first will get worse later on. They'll die over a period of time."

The 49th MP Brigade, operating under the name Task Force Eureka, responds to provide assistance to federal and local first responders. The 49th commands several units, including two Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Emergency Response Force Packages (CERFP) and three Civil Support Teams.

This is Vibrant Response 12, an exercise conducted by U.S. Army North from Aug. 16-28 that involved about 8,000 Soldiers, role-players and facilitators. Indiana's 1,800-acre Muscatatuck Urban Training Complex mimicked a disaster area with scattered debris, overturned vehicles, smoking buildings and houses submerged in water.

"This was critical training to see how we'll react to a major catastrophe in our own region," said Lt. Col. Robert Paoletti, the 49th MP Brigade's operations officer and the Task Force Eureka commander. "A tremendous amount of preparation and co-



Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Bince

**First Sgt. Gerald Davis, first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 49th Military Police Brigade, directs victim role-players seeking food, water and shelter following a simulated nuclear detonation Aug. 16 at Muscatatuck Urban Training Complex, Ind., during this year's Vibrant Response exercise.**

ordination are needed should such a tragedy occur. This is where we can test our systems and processes and improve our capabilities."

The 49th Soldiers occupied the basement of a two-story building where old desks, tables and chairs were the only things available. Once on site, quick coordination was essential.

"It normally takes days to get a [tactical operations center] running proficiently," an

Army North evaluator said. "The 49th did it in less than two hours."

Each of the 49th's command sections tested its limits: personnel accountability of all units; intelligence operations; logistical support; and communications launch to military and civilian authorities.

"[The 49th] stepped right up to the mission. They were able to make all coordination required with civilian authorities," said Lt. Col. Randall Isom, commander of the Joint

Interagency Training and Education Center. "They did command and control in a very good way."

The Joint Interagency Training and Education Center is responsible for evaluating and certifying the 49th as a Homeland Response Force. The 49th received the Homeland Response Force mission in August 2010, designating it as the key military operations element of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region IX in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear catastrophe.

Vibrant Response 12 was the first of three steps to gaining certification as a Homeland Response Force. The next step is in November, with the Vigilant Guard exercise in Arizona, followed by an external evaluation in March 2012.

"They're going to find themselves, as a military entity, working with civilian authorities," Isom said. "To be able to handle that different type of information coming in, and being able to process it and get it out to the troops and everyone else who needs it, is a very difficult process."

Maj. Gen. Perry Wiggins, deputy commanding general of Army North and the Vibrant Response deputy exercise director, said the 49th put forth an "exceptional" effort, according to the exercise evaluators.

"The nation depends on you for this mission," he said. "This is a zero-tolerance mission. The expectation was you're going to do it right the first time."

"You really set an impression on the folks who have been here."

## CNG wings used as model for WV training

By **TECH. SGT. PHYLLIS E. KEITH**  
130th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Capt. Bryan Williams, Student Flight Program coordinator for the California National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing (RQW), recently helped establish a new Student Flight Program for West Virginia's 130th Airlift Wing (AW).

The program was spearheaded by Staff Sgt. Paul D. Roach, the noncommissioned officer in charge of Student Flight for the 130th Force Support Squadron, and 1st Lt. Carl B. Benson, a pilot candidate and interim officer in charge.

Benson researched the Internet and found the 129th Rescue Wing has a high rate of Basic Military Training graduates as well as a high rate of BMT honor graduates.

"Instead of reinventing the wheel, Staff Sgt. Roach and I took the 129th RQW's program and tailored it to fit the 130th AW," Benson said.

The 129th RQW Student Flight Program was modeled from the California National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing and tailored to its own needs. Williams' training schedule uses a four-month cycle with an annual rotation of unit briefings and activities designed to prepare recruits for BMT at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

"It's a program that will help any Guard unit who needs it; that's how the program is designed," Williams said. "We prepare them so they can go to BMT and shine."

Williams teaches recruits to take the basic tasks of BMT and master them in a controlled environment at the unit.

Both Benson and Williams said that once they teach the recruits a skill, they are required to use it.

The Student Flight Program covers topics such as reporting procedures, drill and ceremony, physical training, the Air Force song and the Air Force mission, vision and values.

The program includes monthly unit briefings to foster a sense of esprit de corps and educate recruits about the different shops on base and how they fit into the wing, state and federal missions.

"If we can instill core values at this early stage, it will contribute internally to reinforcing esprit de corps when they get to their units, and then eventually they'll step into our shoes and be leaders," Roach said.

The recruits also receive guidance to help in their personal lives, with briefings covering finance, legal issues, mental health, equal opportunity and family readiness.

"Not only are we getting the recruits ready for BMT and technical training school, we're also building better citizens for America by teaching them teamwork, financial basics, goal-setting skills and physical conditioning," Benson said.

Williams also created a program matrix that tracks the recruits' progress in physical fitness, BMT school dates and unit of assignment information. Benson is using a similar matrix.

Members of the 129th Student Flight Program conduct a graduation ceremony every Unit Training Assembly, in

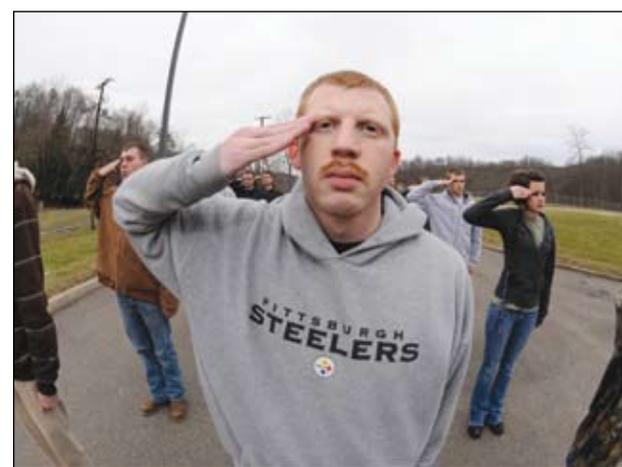


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Bryan G. Stevens

**Roger A. Pettit, a recruit with the 130th Airlift Wing, West Virginia National Guard, renders a salute in June during drill and ceremony practice in Charleston, W.Va. The wing's Student Flight Program, which is based on a similar program at the California National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing, provides recruits bound for Basic Military Training (BMT) an opportunity to learn Air Force traditions and practices before arriving at BMT.**

which each Student Flight member receives a Certificate of Completion before leaving for BMT.

"It gives them a sense of accomplishment, a sense of pride, and lets them know we do care about them," Williams said. "We want to assure each Student Flight member that we have prepared them adequately for their military career, and that the member's wing is here to support them."

# Thanks for a fitting tribute

General Currier,

Please pass my thanks, and the appreciation of my family, to the members of the California Guard who organized and participated in the military honors for 2nd Lt. Janet Lankenau Skinner, U.S. Army Air Corps.

Mom was known by most as "Grandma Janet," the kind and gentle lady who spent most of her time nurturing her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

At her memorial service June 3, three California Guardsmen conducted military honors for Janet: Specialists Chris Nava, Daniel Hermosillo and Ulysses Hermosillo. They told all present "the rest of the story":

Although these fellow soldiers never knew Janet, their professionalism and respect really goes beyond description — you had to be there. For a few precious moments, we all witnessed very clearly that "Grandma" was a full partner in "The Greatest Generation," with the courage to wear our Nation's uniform and stand in the face of a terrible foe.

Over 65 years after the fact, our Army — her Army — was there to remember and honor that military service.

Please pass my heartfelt thanks to our three Guardsmen and those supporting them (SSG Priscilla Sepulveda; and forgive me if I missed anyone). Janet would be elated to know they all wear the same uniform she did.

With Greatest Appreciation,

Mike Skinner  
Major General, U.S. Air Force Reserve



## CNG Education Assistance Award Program enters 3rd school year

Participants can receive up to \$12,192 per academic year

By **KATRINA BECK**  
CNG Manpower and Personnel Directorate

The California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program (EAAP) has reached its third academic year. The program has helped many California National Guard members and California State Military Reserve members with money for college.

For the 2011-12 academic year, eligible participants can receive up to \$12,192 for use at a University of California school or an approved non-public institution, up to \$5,472 for use at a California State University, or up to \$1,551 for use at a community college. This can be combined with Federal Tuition Assistance or G.I. Bill benefits the student currently receives.

### UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX STUDENTS ARE NOW ELIGIBLE FOR EAAP

The University of Phoenix has signed an agreement with the California Student Aid Commission that enables students attending the school's online-only programs to receive EAAP funding. Though this change is not retroactive, it opens the program up to many students who were previously ineligible.



### COMPLETE YOUR RENEWAL OR LEAVE-OF-ABSENCE FORMS

At the start of each academic year, all EAAP participants must submit renewal paperwork to continue participation in the program.

Students who are taking a term off from school for a deployment or other reason must submit a Leave of Absence Request Form. That informs the California Military Department that the student intends to continue with EAAP later and explains the lapse.

Students who do not fill out renewal or leave of absence paperwork will be withdrawn from the program.

To review the EAAP requirements or to apply, visit [www.calguard.ca.gov/education](http://www.calguard.ca.gov/education).

To obtain renewal or leave of absence paperwork, email Katrina Beck at [katrina.beck2@us.army.mil](mailto:katrina.beck2@us.army.mil).

## Boating MP, teens assist in water rescue

By **1ST LT. WILL MARTIN**  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

When Staff Sgt. Timothy Ramirez turns off the lights at his 49th Military Police Brigade office, he typically grabs his kids and heads for the Lake. Recently, however, his family's passion for boating helped save a life.

On Aug. 2, the brigade training NCO departed a marina near Rio Vista with his teenage son and daughter and the hope of doing some wakeboarding. But as they passed Sandy Beach State Park, they noticed a commotion on shore.

"There were about 20 people jumping up and down and waving us toward them," Ramirez said. "A lot of them were pointing toward the water, which is when I noticed the fireman, Danny Schindler."



Staff Sgt. Timothy Ramirez

Schindler, who serves as assistant chief for the Montezuma Fire Protection District, was performing rescue swimming with a distressed adolescent male in his grip. But according to Ramirez, "he had a long way to go" before he would reach shore.

As Ramirez directed the boat toward Schindler and the teen, his 15-year-old daughter Gabrielle moved to pull the boy to safety. Unfortunately he was nearly twice her size.

"She's a volunteer with a youth fire department near Rio Vista," Ramirez said. "She was going to try and pull him in, but he looked to be about 250 lbs. But she was right there. She was very professional the whole time."

After Ramirez hoisted the teen into his boat, Gabrielle and her 15-year-old brother Kellen kept the boy calm, talking him through the situation until the Coast Guard was able to take him in.

"They did an awesome job," Ramirez said of his kids. "We go out in the boat just about every day. I'm just glad we were where we were when we were."

## BG Witham named new Air Guard commander

Brig. Gen. James C. Witham, a seasoned fighter pilot and combat veteran, has been named the new commander of the California Air National Guard.

"General Witham is an extraordinary leader and proven combat fighter pilot with an impressive record of accomplishments," said Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general of the California National Guard. "J.C. is the right leader to implement dynamic change in the California Air National Guard."

In his career as an Air National Guard officer, Witham has served in several command and staff positions including director of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance and director of Air, Space and Cyberspace Operations for the National Guard Bureau. He most recently served as chief of staff for the New Jersey Air National Guard.

As commander, Brig. Gen. Witham will ensure that the California Air National Guard's four flying wings and one combat communications group are mission-capable and able to fulfill their state and federal missions.

"We are indeed fortunate to capitalize on General Witham's experience and will undoubtedly benefit from his proven leadership at the state and national levels," Baldwin said.

Witham was commissioned in 1980 through the Air Force Academy, where he was a distinguished graduate and earned a bachelor's degree in engineering sciences. Following undergraduate pilot training, where he was a distinguished graduate in 1981, Witham served on active duty for nine years, flying and teaching pilots to fly the F-15 Eagle fighter jet.

He was the outstanding graduate of his F-15 Fighter Weapons Instructor Course and was honored as Tactical Air Command Instructor of the Year in 1987. He joined the Washington, D.C., Air National Guard in 1990 and flew the F-16 Fighting Falcon with the 121st Fighter Squadron out of Andrews Air Force Base, Md. He also has experience flying T-37, T-38 and AT-38 aircraft.

Witham is a command pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours. His combat flying experience includes operations Iraqi Freedom, Noble Eagle and Northern Watch.

His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (with two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Air Medal (with two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Air Force Commendation Medal (with four Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters) and Air Force Achievement Medal (with Silver Oak Leaf Cluster).



## I 44th Fighter Wing Security Forces train for a night fight

By **MASTER SGT. DAVID J. LOEFFLER**  
144th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

A hot desert wind rips across the valley floor as Airmen of the 144th Fighter Wing Security Forces Squadron peer through night vision goggles into the quiet night. Practicing strict noise discipline, they wait for a probe and attack from opposing forces.

Music foreign to the Airmen is blasted from a distant loud speaker and soon followed by random gunfire and mortar attacks. The Airmen bolt into action, reporting their observations to the Base Defense Operation Center as they make final preparations to fulfill their mission: defend the base.

This annual field training exercise took place at Camp Corum, a specialized training site at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., which close-

ly mirrors conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Forty-eight members of the squadron convoyed to the training site deep in the Mojave Desert for the five-day exercise focused on night operations.

"We have a lot of training requirements levied upon us. One of the most important is the Air Base Ground Defense training," said 2nd Lt. Michael Laplaca, squadron commander. "To do that properly, we really need to go to an environment where we can run-and-gun, utilize blanks, ground burst simulators, CS gas and other things of that nature. [This] is a perfect environment for our training."

Security Forces followed the crawl, walk and run technique by practicing their tactical operations during the daylight hours prior to performing them at night. Operations included combat patrols outside of the wire, static defense inside the

base, communications, cultural observations and tactical maneuvers.

"The security forces career field is unique. A lot of people see us at the front gate and think that is all we do, but when we go down range we are truly the infantry of the Air Force," said Master Sgt. Jimmy Schiotis, squadron training manager. "This training, a culmination of all of our Air Base Ground Defense training, has given us a unique perspective on what happens down range, whether it is convoy security, tactical security patrols, tactical security escorts or Raven [special security forces] missions. A member of the 144th Security Forces could easily find themselves in any one of these down range scenarios, and this training prepares our personnel for success and builds team cohesiveness."

The field training exercise gave many of the new Security Forces Squadron personnel a chance to gain valuable insight from the senior members of the team and offered an opportunity to train in an environment that challenged them with every step.

"I am learning a lot," Airman 1st Class Christine Maybe said. "As an A1C, a squad leader and a fire team leader, I am being challenged by being put in a leadership position over staff sergeants, technical sergeants and even lieutenants. We are a nine-man team that goes out on combat missions, contacts the enemy, gets intelligence, rescues hostages and gets the bad guys. We put in a lot of hard work, it's very demanding, but to come out a success is the biggest reward."



An Airman with the 144th Fighter Wing Security Forces Squadron scans the Mojave Desert during a field training exercise Aug. 4 at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. The five-day engagement focused on night security operations.

## I-168th rescues Inyo County hiker

By **2ND LT. JEFFERY NELSON JR.**  
I-168th General Support Aviation Battalion

It was a normal training day in Mather, Calif. Most of Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion (Air Ambulance) was conducting section training. From his office, Platoon Leader 1st Lt. Christopher Sandin could see capable noncommissioned officers developing new leadership within the ranks. The armory had the hum of business as usual.

That all changed with a call from the Inyo County Sheriff's Department. Suddenly the hum grew to a buzz as Soldiers transitioned from academics to search-and-rescue mission preparations.

Company C launched a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter less than 20 minutes after receiving mission authorization. The search-and-rescue team's next stop was an airport in Lone Pine, Calif., to begin a search for a lost hiker with the sheriff's office.

Upon arrival a representative from Inyo County informed the crew that the hiker had been found and a California Highway Patrol helicopter had attempted an extraction that was unsuccessful because of the altitude and heat.

With daylight fading, the 1-168th crew discussed the conditions and risks to determine if they should attempt a rescue or wait for more favorable conditions in the morning. They decided to go assess the conditions and then determine if they should attempt the extraction. "We didn't come all the way up here to sit on our hands," said Crew Chief Staff Sgt. Brian Chrisman.

The crew made a rapid ascent 5,000 feet to a nearby mountain. While en route to the peak, the crew tried to make radio contact with the ground rescue team, without success. Within minutes of reaching the summit, however, the aircrew located the ground crew and the lost climber. The flight crew found a suitable place to land on the summit and helped the happy ground crew and relieved climber into the Black Hawk. "They were all happy to see us," flight medic 1st Sgt. Alva Smoot said, noting the ground crew did not have sleeping bags or cold weather clothing.

With their charges securely in the aircraft, the pilots lifted off the mountain and headed back to Lone Pine to reunite the lost climber with her friends and family.



Soldiers of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, charge through an individual movement technique lane, an obstacle course designed for the practice of urban movement that included simulated live fire from a machine gun, at Camp Roberts, Calif., on July 26.  
Photo by Spc. Aaron Ricca

## Guard Soldiers using GoArmyEd

Army National Guard Soldiers began setting up accounts in GoArmyEd, the Army's enterprise education system, in June.

The website, [www.goarmyed.com](http://www.goarmyed.com), provides the capability to register for classes, identify courses that will advance you toward a degree, view your Federal Tuition Assistance balance and contact your school and Army Education counselor. Soldiers also are able to withdraw from classes, request military withdrawals, resolve recoupments and holds, and request tuition assistance, as well as review their degree plan, student record, course history and grades.

Members can now request tuition assistance through GoArmyEd for courses that begin on or after Oct. 1. For classes that start in September, use [www.education.ng.mil](http://www.education.ng.mil). Soldiers can register through GoArmyEd up to two months prior to their class start date.

## Our Military Kids offers activity grants

Our Military Kids wants to help Guard families that are shorthanded because of a deployment. Guard families with a child aged 3 to 18 whose parent is overseas with the National Guard or Reserve are eligible for a grant up to \$500, which can be used to pay for up to six months of an extracurricular activity of your choice.

To apply, visit [www.ourmilitarykids.org](http://www.ourmilitarykids.org), download the form and send it in with copies of the Title 10 deployment orders, contact and fee information for the extracurricular activity of your choice (a flyer or brochure is sufficient) and an ID for the child that proves dependency to the service member (military ID, birth certificate or 1172 DEERS form is accepted).

Once the application and documents are received, a check will be sent within 10 days directly to the service provider of the activity.

For more information about Our Military Kids grants, contact CNG Child and Youth Program coordinator Jerica Lovett at 916-369-4326.

**CORRECTION:** An article on page 4 of the August issue incorrectly stated that fallen Soldier Daniel Unger was posthumously promoted to specialist. He was a specialist at the time of his death in May 2004.

## DID YOU KNOW...

**failing to pay your travel card balance in a timely manner can adversely impact unit-readiness and your military career?**

The suspension of travel card privileges due to a delinquent balance can hinder a service member's ability to travel to schools and mission-critical events, which hinders unit-readiness. Allowing a travel card to become delinquent to the point at which collection activities are initiated can result in security clearance suspension and possible Uniform Code of Military Justice action for failure to pay debts.

Department of Defense Financial Management Regulations (FMR) require cardholders to submit travel vouchers within five days of completing travel and use split disbursement to pay the outstanding balance. Cardholders are also responsible for full payment of all undisputed amounts due on the billing statement by the due date, regardless of the status of their travel reimbursement. Regulations also require accurate and complete travel vouchers be processed and forwarded to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service for reimbursement within 30 days of receipt from cardholders.

Cardholders and commanders can facilitate timely reimbursement by ensuring accurate, complete travel vouchers are submitted within five days, and by closely monitoring voucher approval status in the Defense Travel System (DTS). If travel vouchers are delayed within the approval process, cardholders and commanders should review the voucher in DTS to identify any errors that could cause a processing delay. If no errors are discovered, cardholders and commanders can contact their unit DTS manager for assistance in determining the cause of the delay or the most appropriate point of contact to help resolve the problem.

For more information see FMR 7000.14-R, Volume 9, Chapter 3.

## Javelin Thrust, continued from page 8

"Flying in hot and high conditions is always useful, and operating with the Marines only enhanced our training," Bonner said. He added that Company C recently returned from a tour in Afghanistan, where conditions were also challenging. "This part of the Sierras, although a little lower in altitude than parts of Afghanistan, closely represents the terrain and weather conditions that we experienced. Having the ability to bring our pilots and crews on a 45-minute flight and train up here is immeasurable, and having

7,000- to 10,000-foot mountains so close is a great advantage to us."

Flight medic Sgt. Ruben Higgins said the setting was beneficial for the medical crews as well as flight crews. "It combined the challenges of mountain flying operations with medical scenarios to simulate the conditions we experienced in Afghanistan," he said. "We were also able to teach our newer crew members how to configure the aircraft's medical gear so it could be accessed quickly and also covered the smaller details of rear cabin management."



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### The Grizzly Newsmagazine

Published by the Directorate of Communications, California National Guard  
Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army, the Department of the Air Force or the California State Military Department.  
Grizzly is an official publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1 and AFI 35-101.

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Soldiers of the California National Guard's 185th Military Police Battalion practice riot control July 16 during the battalion's annual training on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif. Photo by Spc. Marilyn Lowry  
For more on the 185th MP Battalion, see page 12.