Women Warriors

Female Soldiers are a force multiplier on 40th CAB’s deployment to the Middle East

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Cal Guard’s Sgt. Demetri ‘Hank’ Iannios wins ‘Top Shot’ at All Army

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Our nation was founded on the idea that all men are created equal. When the Minutemen — the precursors to the National Guard — charged into battle to fight for that principle, they sometimes found themselves side-by-side with women, who had disguised themselves as men so they too could fight for the United States.

Those women stood in combat with their countrymen, fully committed to safeguarding our fledgling democracy. Their actions were invaluable to the war effort, but our nation was not yet ready to accept their service.

Though women supported the military in a variety of official roles, the U.S. Army would not enlist its first female Soldier for more than 150 years, and several more decades would pass before women could compete for every military job.

2016 marks the long overdue conclusion of that evolution of female military service. Finally the last 10 percent of military jobs — about 220,000 slots nationwide — have been opened to female candidates.

Since 9/11, women serving in combat theaters have proven indispensable to our nation’s military strength. More than 280,000 times, female service members have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, showing people in that part of the world how strong, courageous and talented American women are.

With the full integration of women into our military, we can travel to those nations as a shining example of the equality to which all countries should aspire. When we march into battle, we know we have “right” on our side — and that our missions are staffed with the best, most-qualified people in the country.

Empowerment leads to better NCOs

We are at a crossroads. As Soldiers and Airmen return from deployments, they return better trained and prepared to function in their daily duty, and in leadership positions as team leaders, squad leaders and platoon sergeants.

With the drawdown in the Army National Guard, it is more important than ever to support and enable our NCO’s to mentor and lead Soldiers, as well as execute the missions they are assigned. We must allow them to make mistakes, and as good Senior NCO’s, pick them up, mentor them and guide them. Let them know that making mistakes at times becomes an opportunity that allows them to continue growing, enabling them to lead our forces into the future.

We as a force are always striving to grow and develop. With that, the U.S. Armed Forces are developed from within. Senior Leaders are not hired from outside the organization; they rise from within their services over their entire careers. Therefore, it is incumbent upon leaders to develop subordinates who will one day be the successors to the very leaders who trained them.

To this end, NCOs develop their subordinates through teaching, coaching, mentoring and empowering them with the authority and ability to train and lead. Soldiers and Airmen are empowered when they are encouraged to think, behave, decide and act on their own. This empowerment does not spring up spontaneously. Rather, it must be fostered and instilled by leaders. Only when that is done do individuals come to feel genuinely empowered. This sense allows them to grow in self-confidence through a process of continuous self-development to remain relevant and sharp.

In the profession of arms, power and accountability are inextricably linked; the more power and responsibility individuals have, the more they are held accountable. NCOs are the champions for empowerment within their commands. They ensure that subordinates not only understand and fully trust in this empowerment, but that they also put it to good use for the benefit of the entire organization and unit.

Be the leader that you would like to follow. Know and be proficient in your tasks and drills. Do right by your Soldiers and do what is expected of a professional leader.

Today’s NCO is like no other before. In today’s current operating environment, even the most junior sergeant is placed in positions of senior leadership. Our sergeants have been the primary charge for training entire battalions of Iraqi and Afghan police and armed forces. Today’s squad leader operates at echelons of leadership that can be directly responsible for the success of entire operations.

In order to establish the specific level of performance that will better our force, we must empower our NCOs, ourselves and our leadership to excel and grow in all aspects of our professional and personal lives. Every Soldier and Airmen is entitled to outstanding leadership. You, as an NCO will provide that leadership and you will expect that leadership in turn. Only then can we change the culture and foster the environment of professional excellence that our service members deserve.

Soldiers and Airmen are empowered when they are encouraged to think, behave, decide and act on their own.”

Women warriors
Female Soldiers are a big part of the force on the 40th Combat Aviation Brigades current deployment to the Middle East. They occupy every role, from pilot to mechanic to medic.

Soldier/LAPD cop runs for others
First Lt. Kristina Tudor serves with the Cal Guard’s 140th Chemical Company. For her day job, she is a police officer with the Los Angeles Police Department. She is also an endurance athlete who raises money for victims of crime.

9/11 authors speak at JFHQ
Two authors who wrote about female first responders on 9/11 speak at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento as part of a Women’s History Month event.

A dog of war and peace
Jax is a German Shepherd therapy dog who keeps morale high at the 163rd Attack Wing.

40th ID trains in Germany
Thirty-five Soldiers from the Cal Guard’s 40th Infantry Division head to Hohenfels, Germany, to train troops for an upcoming mission to Kosovo.

Red Flag over Nevada
F-15 Eagle fighter planes and the 144th Fighter Wing head to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada for a combat training exercise.

Legendary fighter pilot visits Fresno
Brig. Gen. (ret.) Robert “Earthquake” Titus visited the 144th Fighter Wing to share his experience and knowledge with the 144th Fighter Wing.

Team California heads to All Army
Guard’s Sgt. Demetri “Hank” Iannios named the 2016 All Army Champion “Top Shot” at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Cal Guard top performers honored
Eight of the Cal Guard’s most outstanding Soldiers, Airmen and Military Reservists for 2016 were honored at the Soldier and Airmen of the Year Banquet in Long Beach.

New Discovery Academy launches
Cal Guard leadership join educators and elected officials for the launch of the Cal Guard’s newest youth academy in Stockton, California.

Old warhorse Chinook retires
A storied Cal Guard CH-47D Chinook retires to a place of honor at the Castle Air Museum in Atwater, California.

Go take a hop
Capt. Christian Wellisch explains the ins and outs of free Space-A flights for National Guard members.

Counterdrug Task Force hits the field
Counterdrug Task Force members head to Camp Roberts for tactical training.

Counterdrug supports tribal nations
Cal Guardsmen from the Counterdrug Task Force team up with Tule River Tribe to tackle tough problems.

IG talks FLAGs
Suspension of Favorable Personnel Action (FLAG) is explained by the Office of the Inspector General.

Articles:
★ Articles range from 350 to 2000 words. All articles should be accompanied by multiple high-resolution images.
★ Include first names, last names and military ranks. Always verify spelling.
★ Spell out acronyms, abbreviations and full unit designations on first reference.
★ Only submit articles that have been approved by your unit’s public affairs officer.

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

E-mail submissions and feedback to: jason.b.sweeney2.mil@mail.mil

Cover photo by 1st Lt. Gregory Allen Montanio
Chief Warrant Officer 2 McKayla Dembowski, a pilot with Company B, 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, deployed with the 40th CAB to Kuwait last December.
By STAFF SGT. IAN KUMMER

Three months ago the Army National Guard’s 40th Combat Aviation Brigade deployed more than 1,700 Soldiers to the Middle East. Though the 40th CAB is headquartered in California, it includes National Guard Soldiers from nine different states as well as active-duty attachments from around the country.

This aviation task force boasts another layer of diversity. Female Soldiers are integrated into almost every major job field throughout the brigade, from helicopter cockpit to maintenance bays. Male or female, every Soldier in the 40th CAB plays a role in the mission.

Fresno, California resident Chief Warrant Officer 2 McKayla Dembowski, a pilot and the aviation life support equipment officer for 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, wanted to join the military as far back as she can remember.

“I have always been interested in the military; even as a kid I was a part of the Naval Sea Cadet Corps,” Dembowski said.

After graduating high school, Dembowski certified as an emergency medical technician and attended a fire academy. In 2011, she joined the California Guard as a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter repairer.

When Dembowski completed her job training as a mechanic, she returned to her unit and applied to be a warrant officer and attend flight school at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

“I had a friend show me around the hangar one day, and I thought ‘Hey this looks fun,’” Dembowski said. “I know it sounds funny, but that’s pretty much what made up my mind. I wanted to try something new. I saw an opportunity and I took it.

Since then, Dembowski has had no regrets about her decision.

“Since becoming a pilot, it’s only pushed me to be a better person, harder worker and I’ve had a blast,” Dembowski said.

Capt. Celma Gonzalez is the commander of Company D, 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, in Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The Fresno, California-resident credits the support of her husband and family for her continuing career in the California National Guard. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Kummer

Female pilots and mechanics are on the job with 40th CAB

Cal Guard female Soldiers are an important part of the force on the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade’s current deployment to Kuwait

By STAFF SGT. IAN KUMMER

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Megan Yanacek, a medevac pilot for Company C, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment, shared Dembowski’s lifelong dream of joining the military. Throughout Yanacek’s childhood, her grandfather flew helicopters and airplanes as a civilian pilot. He frequently took Yanacek and other family members along with him on flights.

“It all started with me wanting to fly,” Yanacek said.

The future pilot didn’t take flight right away. Yanacek joined the Pennsylvania National Guard as a medic in 2003. In September of 2008 she reenlisted while at Camp Buehring with the 328th Brigade Support Battalion, 56th Stryker Brigade, in preparation for a mission in Iraq.

“I didn’t really know what I was going to do yet, just that I wanted to do it in the Army,” Yanacek said.

While serving as a medic in Iraq, Yanacek rubbed shoulders with flight medics, and was entranced by the experience.

“I thought it was the coolest thing ever,” Yanacek said. “We looked up to them. Helicopters were something new to us too.”

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Pendleton, Oregon resident Spc. Samantha Pacheco, an aircraft powertrain repairer in Company D, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, keeps her feet firmly planted on the ground for the most part, but that makes her no less important to the mission. Pacheco is able to inspect and repair powertrain systems on any of the 40th CAB’s aircraft.

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After graduating high school in 2012, Pacheco began work as a direct support professional in group homes for the developmentally disabled.

“My mom did it, and I knew I could handle the job too,” Pacheco said. “It was stressful, but rewarding.”

Pacheco enlisted in the Oregon National Guard in 2014. With a grandpa in the Coast Guard, great-uncle in the Air Force and cousins in the Army, Pacheco is only the most recent addition to her family’s military tradition.

“I’ve always wanted to be in the military, and I always wanted to be a mechanic,” Pacheco said.

When she arrived at her first drill weekend in January 2015, Pacheco learned she would be deploying with the unit to Kuwait later that year.

“[Deploying] was rough at first; I had to get adjusted to everyone,” Pacheco said. “But now we have a pretty cool team.”

Pacheco started taking opportunities to go on maintenance flights aboard helicopters. It didn’t take long for her to decide she wants to apply to be a warrant officer and attend flight school when she returns from the deployment.

“It’s hard to describe,” Pacheco said. “I just love flying.”

Pacheco said she looks up to her company commander, Capt. Celma Gonzalez, as a positive role model for herself and other Soldiers.

“I love being a company commander, especially while deployed,” Gonzalez said. “I try to set the example for my Soldiers by doing the right thing and conducting myself in a professional manner. My Soldiers have made me and the company successful. As long as I do everything I can to enable them to professionally grow and take care of them, they will continue to make the company successful.”

Gonzalez, a Fresno resident, is no stranger to the challenges of military service. She first enlisted in the Army in 1999 and is on her third deployment.

“My family is the greatest support I have and the reason I have been able to deploy three times,” Gonzalez said. “My husband was in the Army for 10 years, so it’s great knowing that he understands what I’m going through. It does not matter how many times I deploy, it is always hard for my family, but they are very proud of all my accomplishments and support everything I do.”

After graduating from Fresno State University with a degree in psychology, Gonzalez commissioned in the California National Guard as a medical service officer. Gonzalez plans to finish her Master of Social Work degree at the University of Southern California when she returns home. She encourages her Soldiers to maximize the benefits the National Guard has to offer for their own personal growth.

“Take advantage of the opportunities the military gives you and learn as much as you can,” Gonzalez said. “Excel at your job and make the most of every situation.”

While Gonzalez has served in the military since high school, Capt. Elizabeth Mondo, an en route critical care nurse attached to 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment, joined the Army later in life.

Mondo, a Chicago native, studied to become an attorney and in 2002 graduated from Marquette University in Wisconsin with a degree in Criminal Law Studies. However, Mondo wasn’t satisfied.

“I felt like I wasn’t doing anything to help people,” Mondo said. “I wanted to make an impact.”

Mondo returned to school, graduating from Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia, with a nursing degree in 2007. A career as a civilian nurse still left Mondo unfulfilled.

“I wanted to do something a little different, I wanted to work with Soldiers and wounded warriors,” Mondo said.

In 2009 Mondo commissioned and embarked in her new Army medical career at Evans Hospital in Fort Carson, Colorado. Since then, Mondo has actively pursued opportunities to deploy overseas, eventually finding a home with the 40th CAB on its mobilization to the Middle East last December. She is proud of the opportunity women have to serve their country.

“It is an honor to be a female in the Army; it’s a unique experience,” Mondo said. “I think we’re treated equally, and we’re a part of the evolution in our role in the military.”
By BRANDON HONIG
California Military Department
Public Affairs

Los Angeles criminals take note: Save your breath. Don’t try to outrun this cop.

When Officer Kristina Tudor puts on her full tactical uniform, including body armor, helmet and boots, she carries at least 35 extra pounds – about 1/3 her body weight – but that doesn’t mean she can’t chase you over that hill. And the next hill. And the hill after that.

An endurance athlete since high school, Tudor has at least a dozen ultra-marathons under her belt – that’s anything over 26.2 miles – including a 120-mile effort that took 27 hours of continuous effort.

But at the LA Marathon in February, Tudor sought out and conquered a new challenge: 26.2 miles in full tactical gear. For a good cause.

“Badge of Heart is a nonprofit that helps families who have been victims of crime – good, hardworking folks who police officers come in contact with every day,” Tudor said. “It’s something that has to be tackled head-on and awareness has to be brought to the issue.”

Tudor established a web page where people could support her marathon efforts by donating to Badge of Heart, and more than $5,000 rolled in before race day. That paled in comparison, though, to the $20,000 she raised last year for families of fallen police officers, when she ran in her Class A uniform (boots and utility belt, but no body armor or helmet) to support the LA Memorial Police Foundation.

“Around that time, there was a string of officers who passed away in the line of duty, so being able to wear the uniform and represent fallen officers … there’s no words to even describe it,” Tudor said. “It had a lot of meaning for me to wear the uniform my brothers and sisters have paid the ultimate price in, and mirror that through a marathon, with all the ups and downs and challenges a marathon poses.”

When she’s not cracking down on crime or pushing the limits of endurance, 1st Lt. Tudor is often learning about deadly nerve agents or other dangerous materials in her role as a reconnaissance platoon leader for the California Army National Guard’s 140th Chemical Company. A soldier for the past seven years, Tudor said her Guard role is similar to her full-time job in that it requires physical and mental endurance.

“You’re tackling stuff you can’t see, and you have to be able to adapt and fall back on your training,” she said. “Being able to operate in the field in a stressful condition is something I enjoy doing.”

Working with hazardous materials is fascinating to Tudor, and even further. “Having a thin piece of plastic separating you from anthrax is a bit of an adrenaline rush,” she said. “For me, it’s perfect.”

Tudor has received excellent training in the Guard, she said, and her Guard leaders have instilled characteristics in her that helped make her a successful officer in the LAPD as well as in the Army. Serving in the Guard is perfect for Tudor’s lifestyle, she said, because she has opportunities for military training and camaraderie, while also having the freedom to pursue her full-time career.

One reason she chose the Guard over the Army Reserve is because there’s a wider range of occupational specialties available to Guard soldiers. One of the specialties that recently opened up to female Guard soldiers is Army Ranger, and Tudor said she might go that direction. After all, nobody can doubt her endurance, dedication or willingness to work through pain.

In 2015, the temperature reached 92 degrees on the day of the LA Marathon, when Tudor was decked out in her dark, full-length uniform and boots, which lacked flexibility and provided minimal support. By the end of the race, Tudor’s back and shoulders were tender, and her feet and ankles were extremely sore. But that didn’t stop her from adding body armor to the challenge in 2016.

This time around, the mercury only went up to 79 on race day, and Tudor was pleasantly surprised that carrying her Kevlar helmet 26.2 miles did not hurt her neck and spine. The worst part about wearing the tactical gear was the friction burns it caused on her stomach and arms. The gear also absorbed sweat, making it heavier and heavier as the race wore on.

“We were making really good time, but in the last six miles, the weight became a little crushing, I don’t think I said a single word [to my support team, which ran with me] from mile 20 through 24,” said Tudor, who had added five pounds of muscle to her frame in preparation for the race.

“With the ballistic plate in the front of the vest, it was hard to breathe, let alone talk. I just decided to stay quiet and focus and try to get to the finish.”

Tudor is going to keep pushing herself – “Maybe I’ll pull a police car with my teeth next time,” she joked – and keep supporting worthy causes in her community while wearing the LAPD uniform. We also may see her cover vast distances in her Army uniform and gear.

“I think doing a 100-mile ruck march/run would be right up my alley … to raise awareness and funds for epidemics that plague the military, specifically home- less veterans,” Tudor said. “Every little bit helps. You just have to keep chipping away, one issue at a time.”

Serving in the Army and in the LAPD were not just career choices for Tudor. When she devoted herself to serving her community and her country, it changed her in a way she didn’t expect, bringing out aspects of her personality she didn’t even know she had.

“Once you put on that uniform … and you’re a part of that department or family for so long, you get morphed into a person you didn’t know was there and accomplish things you didn’t think you could,” she said. “It gets you wondering about other things you can do, and how you can make a difference in other people’s lives.”

Los Angeles Police Officer Kristina Tudor, far right, who is also a lieutenant in the California National Guard’s 140th Chemical Company, nears the finish of the LA Marathon in more than 35 pounds of police gear Feb. 14 alongside LAPD officer Joe Cirrito and Sgt. Patrick Donovan of the Cook County, Ill., Sheriff’s Office. Photo courtesy of LAPD
Jax, the therapy dog, keeps morale up

David Cunningham’s German shepherd makes the rounds at the 163rd Attack Wing as a certified therapy dog

By MASTER SGT. JULIE AVEY
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

A therapy dog touches the hearts of Airmen as he makes his rounds through the squadron work centers. It is not the typical scene you find at work on military bases although it is a welcomed change at the 163rd Attack Wing. Jax is a German Shepherd who is completing training as a certified therapy dog and belongs to the Wing’s Director of Psychological Health (DPH).

“After a veterinarian visit, I happened to bring him out to the unit and the response was incredible just in the short time he was here,” said David Cunningham, DPH for the 163rd Attack Wing. “We talked about it and spoke to the command about his coming to the wing as a therapy dog. He has two observations left to complete his certification.”

Cunningham states “As far as we know, the 163rd is the first unit to have a full-time therapy dog.”

Jax has been visiting the unit since October 2015. His visits are limited to two buildings at a time due to the time it takes for interaction.

“One, it allows me to engage with them on a one on one level but it also opens that door for their willingness to approach me,” said Cunningham. “If they have something going on, it increases their awareness of who I am. Jax is the middle man and a bridge.”

Once they interact with him they start talking about what is going on with their family playing ball this weekend and other times there may be something more serious going on. It allows me the inside road to let me know there is something we can address and help keep them operational.

Cunningham finds Jax brings out people from their work centers. He often finds people who may not necessarily like dogs but they respect Jax and open up to him.

“My favorite day was when the chaplain and I went over to the 452nd Air Mobility Wing pilots to pick up a donation left there for the chaplains,” Cunningham shared.

“Jax is a German Shepherd who is completing training as a certified therapy dog for the 163rd Attack Wing at March Air Reserve Base. Jax poses for his official photo in the studio at March Air Reserve Base. Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

Jax has been requested by commanders to come out to their units. He is making his rounds at the wing’s geographically separated unit (GSU) locations such as the 147th Combat Communications Squadron in San Diego and Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville.

“I’m very fortunate as some places you may be able to bring therapy dogs on occasion but here Col. Hessheimer and Col. Ward have been totally on board with him,” said Cunningham. “They both understand the response you can get from animals and how people interact with Jax. They understand the impact they can have on people and the social well-being.”

There is a difference between therapy dog and service dog. The service dog provides services to an individual depending on their need such as PTSD, seizures, balancing, retrieval of items etc. A therapy dog serves others and is an outreach in taking care of everyone.

Jax is nine years old and was a military service dog. His story is unique as he was found at a shelter by Cunningham by mistake. He was retired and his handler had left him with a family member while deployed and they put him up for adoption.

“It was petting him and rolled him over to find a tattoo on his stomach,” said Cunningham. “I then looked up his handler on the national registry and found his owner to learn the story. Jax had once been in training to be a military working dog although did not pass due to a huge fear of thunder. His previous owner was close to Jax although he knew he had a good home.”

Jax is a hometown hero back in Oklahoma where Cunningham is from. One night while relaxing in his backyard, an intruder hopped the wrong fence and Jax cornered him.

“Turns out Jax had cornered a fugitive for the police and still had it in him to be a working dog,” said Cunningham. “His story can be found online by the local news at KFOR, just type in Jax, police dog. Norman and the video will come up.”
Through gray German skies, 40th Infantry Division shines

By SGT. 1ST CLASS BENJAMIN COSSEL
40th Infantry Division Public Affairs

Somewhere on a cold field at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania National Guard along with their counterparts from the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division are deep in the final stages of their Kosovo pre-deployment training. Helping them ramp up is a complex organization of observers, planners and role-players guiding the scenarios. An integral component of the training team are 35 Soldiers from the California National Guard’s 40th Infantry Division.

Their task less glamorous, their job more tedious, running 24-7 operations, the Cal Guard Soldiers man the Division Tactical Operation Center (DTOC). From this vantage point, they portray the role of Headquarters, Kosovo Forces (KFOR) directing the 2-28 Soldiers through what trainers here call “the worst possible days in Kosovo.”

“We’re here to help prepare the 2-28 Infantry as they assume their area of responsibility in Kosovo as the incoming Multinational Battle Group-East,” said DTOC operations officer, Lt. Col. Christopher Walter. “By replicating the higher command, we provide a realistic integration with KFOR headquarters.”

Adding an extra dimension to the training, Brig. Gen. Mark Malanka, Assistant Division Commander, Maneuver, 40th ID, is role playing as the Commander, KFOR. Having previously deployed as the brigade operations officer during KFOR11 as well as a deployment to the Bosnia-Herzegovina region adds to the toolkit Malanka is able to bring to the scenario.

“(Malanka’s) ability to accurately portray COMKFOR has given the brigade an in-depth understanding of working with a NATO headquarters,” said Walter. “His deep operational experience in the Balkans and his keen understanding of how to run a command post has been a huge plus for the exercise and will pay dividends to the Multinational Battle Group-East as they go forward.”

Walter was also quick to point out the exceptional integration from the active duty Soldiers who helped raise the bar on the training experience for everyone.

“This is some of the best partnership with the active duty component Soldiers I’ve ever seen. The trust they’ve given us has been incredible.” said Walter. “The staff here has clearly embraced the total Army concept our leaders have adopted.”

While the focus of the Division TOC in Germany is preparing Soldiers to deploy to Kosovo, residents of California also benefit from this overseas training. A key component of the National Guard’s mission is to assist civil authorities in the event of a natural disaster or civil disturbances. As San Dimas, Calif., resident Sgt. 1st Class Michael Cort explains, exercising the operations center is much like going to the gym.

“If you don’t use these systems over and over again, you will quickly lose those skills,” Cort said. “The same sort of command and control we establish here in Germany is what we would stand up if we were activated for a state emergency.”

Echoing Cort’s statement, Walter noted running the operation center here prepares members of the Division staff to rapidly respond in the event of a state emergency.

“The building blocks we’re working are clearly transferrable to the task in which we could be called upon,” Walter said. “Exercising those skills here better prepares the division to play whatever role the state would need in a civil emergency.”

And while the Division sent its A-team to Hohenfels, there are plenty of opportunities for younger Soldiers to learn new skills and broaden their horizons. Such is the case with 20-year old, Pfc. Steven Borrayo of Huntington Park, Calif. An Air Defense Battle Management Systems Operator, Borrayo typically plies his trade watching computer screens, looking for threats from the sky. In Hohenfels, Borrayo finds himself in an utterly new role, that of the RTO, radio telephone operator.

“I’ve learned to have a bigger view of the operation and how to more effectively get information to the people that need it,” Borrayo said.

In his typical air defense role, Borrayo said his focus is on his singular system and he didn’t understand the complex relationships between the different information sources. Under the tutelage of Cort, a seasoned command post operator, Borrayo said he now has a better understanding of how to process mission command and maintain information.

“A lot of the standard forms, how to fill them out, and how to keep it all organized… I didn’t understand that before we got here and Sgt. 1st Class Cort taught me,” Borrayo said as he displayed an immaculately organized binder full of reports.

“Our battle rhythm here helps our younger troops see how a TOC operates at a higher level,” said Cort. “They get to practice on the different mission systems and form a better view of the common operating picture.”

Whether new to their job or seasoned veterans, Walter was duly impressed with the level of expertise demonstrated by his Soldiers.

“I think the performance of the team we’ve brought here has been incredible,” he said.

“They came ready to work, ready to learn and have risen to every challenge thrown at them. We have lived up to and enhanced the 40th ID’s great reputation with U.S. Army in Europe.”
**F-15 Eagles soar over Nevada during Red Flag 16-1**

The 144th Fighter Wing participates in multinational exercise at Nellis Air Force Base

**By SENIOR AIRMAN KLYNNE PEARL SERRANO**

144th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The ground shakes while the distinct sound of each aircraft taking off fills the air with loud roars. The atmosphere seems to vibrate—you can feel it all the way down to your toes. The sounds of freedom, they call it. But it’s more than a sound... it’s a feeling of safety and pride.

Airmen assigned to the 144th Fighter Wing out of Fresno Air National Guard Base, Calif., participated in Red Flag 16-1 Jan. 25 to Feb. 12 along with approximately 30 other units from the U.S. and allied nations.

Red Flag is an advanced multinational combat training exercise that provides realistic training in a peacetime environment.

"Red Flag provides a unique training opportunity," said U.S. Air Force Col. Derek France, 325th Fighter Wing, commander, and Red Flag 16-1 Air Expeditionary commander. "It develops threats and scenarios like none other and is the highest level of warfare training available."

With two scheduled launches daily, the Nellis AFB runway is busy.

"We’re flying both day and night sorties to practice for any real combat environment and scenario that might creep up—it’s a real deal for combat," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Ben Leestma, 144th Fighter Wing pilot and Red Flag 16-1 project officer.

During the Red Flag exercise, the 144th FW pilots had the opportunity to play different roles: Red Air and Blue Air.

"Red Air replicates a bad guy aircraft," Leestma said. "Blue Air replicates us, the good aircraft. The blue air side allows us to go out and employ the Eagle to its full capability as far as sensors and missiles go. Typically in an ordinary sortie, the Blue and Red start at opposite ends of the runway, take off and we see who wins."

Though Leestma explained that Blue Air training is the better training out of the two, there is still a lot of planning and instructions that are required to be followed in both Red and Blue Air scenarios.

"The best training is in Blue air, which is what we’re focused on here, but airman-ship, flight discipline and safety are all key things that we practice each and every time we fly—Blue Air or not," Leestma said.

This exercise has given the 144th Airmen the opportunity to step up as a unit and learn to work better as a team. The relationship between the pilot and the crew chiefs has also grown from this experience.

"Developing that relationship with our crew chiefs is super cool," Leestma said. "Every time we step out to the jets, our crew chiefs greet us with a smile and he or she is so proud to give us their plane. It’s a nice feeling. We’re a big family working towards the same goal."

The 144th Airmen not only developed better relationships amongst each other, but also with the allied Air Forces who participated in Red Flag 16-1.

"For Red Flag 16-1, we have with our partners from the United Kingdom and Australia," Leestma said. "The Royal Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force have invested into this exercise just as much as every other unit has. They travelled across the pond to train here with us. They’re here to learn from us just as much as we’re here to learn from them."

"The crosstalk from all the mission planning, either inside or outside of the vault, to even having a beer at the end of the day—we’ve shared a lot of lessons learned specific to each sortie, but also just in general, on capabilities that they can bring to the fight and how we can mix together to have synergistic tactics," Leestma said.

With more than 3,000 individuals who participated in the Red Flag 16-1 exercise, there are more than 3,000 better trained individuals ready to survive, fight, and win together.

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**Flying legend Brig. Gen. ‘Earthquake’ Titus visits 144th**

**By SENIOR AIRMAN KLYNNE PEARL SERRANO**

144th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. (ret.) Robert “Earthquake” Titus visited the 144th Fighter Wing to share his experience and knowledge with 144th Airmen as part of the Third Annual Wing Heritage Week at the Fresno Air National Guard Base, March 30 through April 2.

During Titus’ time in the Air Force, he served as the program manager in the concept development of the F-15, which makes for a special connection between him and the 144th FW.

"The F-15 is and remains the finest fighter in the military today because of its performance, capabilities, and the people who make that happen," Titus said. "When I was sitting in the cockpit on Friday and I heard the engines start up, I felt at home. I was in a place that was familiar to me and I felt a sense of belonging."

To honor Titus, the 144th FW hosted several events on base and in the local community to include: a drill competition put on by Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps students from local high schools; a symposium at the Fresno Veterans Memorial Museum, where local community members had the opportunity to ask Titus and a panel of veterans questions; and a heritage presentation held at the Fresno ANGB, where 144th FW Airmen had the opportunity to learn more about their Air Force heritage and listen to Titus' and his fellow veterans' personal experiences.

Titus also had the opportunity to meet Airmen from various units on base, as well as sit inside one of 144th FW’s F-15C Eagles, which is what Titus was looking forward to the most.

"Just talking with the Airmen and pilots, refreshing my association with the Air Force is what’s great," Titus said. "I spent a major portion of my life in the Air Force, so I enjoy communicating with the Airmen and finding out what they do and also what they like and don’t like about it."

With more than 32 years of service, Titus flew approximately 100 combat missions in the F-51D Mustang during the Korean War, was shot down in an F-86, destroyed in the Korean War, and then flew an F-86 and the F-105 in Vietnam. During his career, Titus flew approximately 100 combat missions and earned multiple decorations including the Air Force Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, and the Air Force Commendation Medal, just to name a few.

"The Mustang was my favorite aircraft to fly," Titus said. "Mostly because it’s a magnificent machine, but also because I became one with the machine. The smell of the glycol and the power and sound of the engine made it an exciting airplane to fly. I think most pilots would agree that the Mustang would be a great airplane to fly."

Titus, flying legend, simply wanted to make happy memories with the 144th FW and share a little of his love for the Air Force and aviation with the Wing.

"It was great to be surrounded by a group of professionals," Titus said. "It’s a fulfilling feeling for me to be in this environment. Again, I was totally at home."

When asked what his advice is for Airmen, Titus said:

"Be proud of being a part of an astounding service. Enjoy the opportunity to experience the best and drive what you can from it to your own benefit and satisfaction."

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Photos by Senior Airman Klynne Pearl Serrano
TOP: Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, load a simulated patient onto an ambulance at a tactical combat casualty care lane at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Feb. 23. The 40th Combat Aviation Brigade ran a two-day TCCC course for medics stationed at the camp. MIDDLE RIGHT: Paramedics and firefighters carry a simulated patient to an Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter belonging to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, during a pre-accident plan exercise at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Feb. 24. BOTTOM RIGHT: Cal Guard Spc. Wenpei Liang, a radio operator with the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, fires her M-16A2 at a rifle qualification range near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, April 5. LOWER LEFT: Capt. Celma Gonzalez, commander of Company D, 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, poses in a UH-60 Black Hawk in February while deployed to Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Photos by Staff Sgt. Ian Kummer
LEFT: Attendees at the annual Soldier and Airmen of the Year Banquet at the Garden Grove Hyatt Regency on Feb. 20 stand for the arrival of the colors. A crowd of service members, family, and community leaders honored eight Cal Guard awardees at the banquet. RIGHT: A Cal Guard Color Guard arrives at the annual Soldier and Airmen of the Year Banquet at the Garden Grove Hyatt Regency on Feb. 20. Read the story about this year’s banquet on page 13. Photos by Capt. William Martin

FAR LEFT: Sgt. Barbara Kizer, a fueler with 1st Battalion, 168th Task Force Medvac out of Mather, California, prepares to fuel a UH-72 Lakota helicopter during training near Sutter Creek, April 16 during Wild Land Fire Fighting training. LEFT: A CH-47 Chinook helicopter from 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment hoists a 2,000-gallon bucket during training near Sutter Creek, California, April 16. The annual Wild Land Fire Fighting training prepares the California National Guard and CAL FIRE to work together during the upcoming wildfire season. Photos by Sgt. Brianne Roudebush

Another great showing for Team California at the All Army Team California breaks three-year winning streak at 2016 All Army Team Championship competition at Fort Benning, Georgia; Cal Guard's Sgt. Demetri ‘Hank’ Iannios wins title of the Army’s ‘Top Shot,’ matching Sgt. 1st Class Geoff Applegate’s 2014 feat

By SGT 1ST CLASS JOSE GARCIA (RET.) California Military Department External Affairs

Team California’s winning streak of three consecutive All Army Team Championship titles came to an end this year. However, the loss was overshadowed by the accomplishment of the Cal Guard’s Sgt. Demetri “Hank” Iannios, from the small town of Callahan in the most remote northern end of California, shot better than all other competitors to become the 2016 All Army Champion, the Army’s “Top Shot.”

This year, the active-duty Army came well-prepared to dominate the All Army competition and nearly did. One team and one NCO from the active component were a force throughout the match. The team, from the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division “Arctic Wolves,” competed with great intensity. In particular Staff Sgt. Jean-Noel Howell, was a breath away from the Cal Guard’s star performer, Iannios, throughout the match. In the end, Iannios’s action shooting skills proved to be an awesome display of mastery that launched him ahead of his competitors.

The All Army is a three discipline contest, with team and individual competitions in each of the three disciplines. The disciplines are: Service Rifle, Service Pistol and Multigun.

There are three events each in both Service Rifle and Service Pistol. The three combined event scores in the Service Rifle and Service Pistol determine the All Army Service Rifle Championship and the All Army Service Pistol Championship.

Several teams compete in the All Army for All Army Service Pistol Team Championship, All Army Service Rifle Team Championship, All Army Multigun Team Championship and All Army Overall Team Champion.

The team competition is scored by adding up the combined scores of the four individuals on each team, for each discipline, and then finding the best three to determine the Overall Team Championship rankings.

An overall All Army Individual Match Champion or “Top Shot” is determined by adding a competitor’s combined scores from Service Rifle, Service Pistol and Multigun. In the same manner, the combined scores from the four individuals on each team are added to determine the U.S. Army Small Arms Overall Team Champion.


The events throughout the Army challenge each competitor’s combat shooting skills and physical fitness.

The 2016 U.S. Army Small Arms Championships, better known simply as “The All Army,” was conducted at Fort Benning, Georgia, hosted by the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit.

Iannios, from the small town of Callahan in the most remote northern end of California, shot better than all other competitors to become the 2016 All Army Champion, the Army’s “Top Shot.”

Team California won this year’s All Army Multigun Team Championship for the fourth consecutive time and placed third in All Army Service Pistol Team Championship and finished 18th in All Army Service Rifle Team Championship. Team California finished 7th in the All Army Overall Team Championship.

The All Army begins with the Service Pistol events. The Cal Guard team consisted of Major Richard Hersam of the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing; Sergeant First Class Geoff Applegate of D Company, 1st Battalion 184th Infantry Regiment, 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), Iannios of HHCC, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, 79th IBCT; Staff Sgt. Kevin Ontai of the 185th Military Police Battalion, 49th Military Police Brigade; and alternate, Sgt. Andrew Coffman of A Company, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, 79th IBCT.

Team California got off to a bumpy start in the Service Pistol event, with Iannios finishing 11th, 18th, and 39th in the three Service Pistol events, finishing 15th overall. But with similar solid scores from his teammates, it was good enough for the team to finish 3rd place in the All Army Service Pistol Team Championship.

In the All Army Service Rifle Team Championship competition things got worse for the team, finishing 18th. But behind that tough performance, Iannios was rising. In the All Army Individual Service Rifle Championship, Iannios finished 3rd overall with a score of 1,161 points and 14 bullseyes, but the Arctic Wolves’ anchorman, Howell, was right on his heels in 4th place with 534 points and eight bullseyes.

Iannios had an all-time best performance in the Audie Murphy Service Rifle event, which features a 1.5-mile run with rifle and equipment, immediately followed by a 100-yard sprint to a firing position to fire 10 shots in 60 seconds from 400 yards. Iannios finished 2nd in the Audie Murphy. His individual performance rallied his teammates for the upcoming Multigun events.

With only the Multigun individual and team championships left to shoot, Team California was in 14th place in All Army Overall Team Champion standings.

Multigun or action shooting is the most realistic, mission-focused shooting discipline with many small targets to rapidly and accurately engage on the move. Many targets are reactive steel targets – they move or fall when shot. In the Multigun, shooters must think, shoot, and move at the same time – sometimes transitioning from a pistol to shotgun, or knocking out a reload in a second or two.

This year, the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit had set a par time of 60 seconds on each of the four Multigun events. That meant that any shooting after 60 seconds was penalized. He earned 386 points of a maximum possible score of 400, placing 2nd in All Army Individual Multigun Champion. Applegate delivered a solid performance finishing with a hard hitting 300 points and 9th place overall. Teammates Hersam and Ontai finished in 24th place with 242 points and 36th place with 253 points respectively for a team total of 1,161 points, besting 2nd place Multigun Team Champion finisher Illinois by 148 points.

With solid performances in both Service Rifle and Service Pistol, Team Illinois won the 2016 All Army Team Championship.

“Nice to know we beat ‘em at Multigun and held on to our All Army Multigun Team Champion title for the fourth consecutive year!” Applegate said. “Our emphasis on action shooting is huge for overall skill. Having two new shooters on the team was a challenge but in the long run it gives our new guys the opportunity to experience the highest level of competition.”

Howell and his Arctic Wolves from the 1-5 Infantry “Bobcats” finished 2nd place in the All Army Overall Team Championship.

Team California jumped up seven places by virtue of a winning Multigun performance to finish 7th place in the All Army Overall Team Championship. That 7th place finish is witnessed by Hank’s 2016 All Army Individual Champion win – the Army’s “Top Shot.”

Who was right behind him? Staff Sgt. Howell, finishing 2nd. Iannios finished with 1,430 points and 34 bullseyes; Howell finished with 1,359 points and 37 bullseyes, just 71 points behind Iannios – most of Iannios’s 71 point lead came in the Multigun.

Other individual scores on Team California:

• Applegate delivered 25th All Army Overall Individual with 1,179 points and 23 bullseyes.
• Hersam finished 38th All Army Overall Individual with 1,115 points and 26 bullseyes.
• Ontai finished 51st All Army Overall Individual with 1,081 points and 20 bullseyes.

Bullseyes are recorded in the event a tie breaker is needed.

Alternate shooter Coffman, whose scores weren’t part of the total team score, finished in 40th place with 1,093 points and 27 bullseyes. The alternate shooter fires in all the events, and in the event of an injury to a team member, the team member and his scores would be removed and replaced by the alternate’s.

For Hersam, Ontai, and alternate Coffman, this was their first All Army Championship. Normally, a team consists of four “old” shooters – a shooter who has shot in the All Army before – and one new shooter. However, their real-world mission kept top performing old shooters Staff Sgt. Jeff Devemark of HHCC/1st Battalion, 184th Infantry, and Staff Sgt. Oscar Moreno of HHCC/97th IBCT sidelined this year.

The team will have to do very well at the National Guard Winston P. Wilson match and the MAC VII regional match if it hopes to compete in the 2017 All Army. Space is limited to the top teams in the National Guard. A 7th place finish isn’t enough to get an invitation.

For Coffman and Ontai, both were able to earn points towards their U.S. Army Distinguished Pistol Badge, with Coffman earning 100% in both the Combat Pistol Excellence in Competition (EIC) and the National Match Pistol EIC event – that’s at least 12 points of the 30 required towards his Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge. The team’s next competition is at this year’s National Guard Winston P. Wilson match at Camp Robinson, Arkansas. Sgt. Coffman could earn his Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge there.

In the past five years California has won nine U.S. Army Distinguished Badges in either Rifle or Pistol.

The team frequently offers performance developing tips and other media on its Facebook page. To have a chance at making the team, register with your unit to compete in the 2016 California Combat Match.
By CAPT. WILLIAM MARTIN
California Military Department Public Affairs

A full military career typically brings plenty of honors. But in the end, a warrior’s pride starts and ends with the basics; that is, how well can one shoot, move and communicate. Each year, the leadership of the California National Guard gathers to honor its top Soldiers, Airmen and state reservists, those enlisted guardsmen who excelled at demonstrating those and other essential skills throughout the year.

This year, the 2016 Soldier and Airmen of the Year Banquet attracted a boisterous crowd of service members, family, and community leaders who donned their finest attire and filled the Hyatt Regency auditorium on Feb. 20 in Garden Grove.

“Tonight we honor an elite group of Soldiers and Airmen,” stated Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, California’s adjutant general, in a letter to the attendees. “Through rigorous competition (they) have demonstrated superior technical and tactical abilities … that all should strive to emulate.”

The route to earning the award differed for the Cal Guard’s three components. The Army’s Soldier of the Year and NCO of the Year earned their awards through victory at the Army Guard’s Best Warrior Competition. Each year, units from across the Cal Guard deployed their top members to the Central Coast for a series of contests that tested their core soldiering skills. Spc. Nicholas Maness, of the 1-18th Infantry Battalion, and Sgt. Paul South, of the 1-144th Field Artillery Battalion, bested their competitors in contests that included an unknown-distance ruck march, a battery of marksmanship events, emergency medical stations and military knowledge boards.

Senior Airman Tiffany Gill, the Cal Guard’s Airman of the Year, traveled her own difficult path to claim her honor. A Network Intelligence Analysis Journeyman and Afghanistan campaign veteran, Gill represented the 195th Wing in several panels of senior NCOs throughout the year. Finally, she competed against the other wings’ best Airmen and emerged as the state’s selection as the top junior enlisted Air Guardsman.

Representing the California State Military Reserve was Spc. (CA) Kenneth Bertram, CSMR Soldier of the Year, and Sgt. (CA) Thomas Fitzgibbon, CSMR NCO of the Year. Attached to the 40th Infantry Division, Bertram has been active in training both Army Guard and Army Reserve forces preparing for mobilization at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos. Fitzgibbon, who deployed to Iraq as an Army Reservist, has served as a cadre member at the Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy for the past few years.

Serving as keynote speaker at the banquet was Chief Master Sgt. Mitchell Brush, senior enlisted advisor to the Gen. Frank Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau. When Brush addressed the competitors, he was speaking from familiarity, having twice been named Outstanding Airman of the Year (as NCO and senior NCO) while with the Montana National Guard.

“Your represent the best the National Guard has to offer,” said Brush. “I congratulate all of you for your commitment to such high standards of excellence.”


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Discovery Academy to offer youth of San Joaquin Valley a second chance

By CAPT. WILLIAM MARTIN  
California Military Department Public Affairs

Those who know the Cal Guard know it for two things: wildfires and wars. And rightfully so. With millions of gallons and tens of thousands of deployments to its credit, the Cal Guard is at the forefront of the fight against terrorism abroad and fire at home.

But the Cal Guard is also knee-deep in another fight: the effort to transform young lives.

On March 11, Cal Guard leadership joined local educators and elected officials at the Sharpe Army Depot in Stockton, California, to celebrate the launch of its third National Guard ChalleNGe Academy. Like its counterparts in Los Alamitos (Sunburst Youth Academy) and San Luis Obispo (Grizzly Youth Academy), the Discovery ChalleNGe Academy program will offer at-risk youth a second chance at academic success when it opens its doors in early 2017.

“Engaging our youth has a dramatic effect on lowering school drop out rates,” said state Assemblymember Susan Talamantes Eggman, a Navy veteran who wrote the bill that authorized Discovery ChalleNGe Academy. “[It’s] a great opportunity to show young adults the importance of dedication and team work, traits that being in the Armed Forces instilled in me.”

Bringing the vision of a third ChalleNGe academy to reality involved an aggressive, combined effort involving between local, state and federal leaders. Personnel from the Military Department, San Joaquin County Office of Education, and state and federal legislators banded together to gain authorization and funding to bring the academy to Stockton.

“The National Guard’s ChalleNGe programs have a real record of success when it comes to helping at-risk youth turn their lives around,” said Rep. Jerry McNerney, who helped secure critical funding for the academy. “It took tireless advocacy and teamwork to deliver this ChalleNGe site for the young people in our region looking to earn a second chance.”

There are currently 38 National Guard ChalleNGe programs across the nation, and California’s programs are consistently among those with the highest retention rates. The Discovery Academy will serve 150 cadets in its inaugural class, adding to the 400 cadets served at California’s two other ChalleNGe academies. Since their inception, California’s ChalleNGe programs have served more than 6,000 cadets.

“What the Cal Guard accomplishes with its ChalleNGe academies is as important as anything we do during wildfire season or on the battlefield overseas,” said Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general for the California National Guard. “We are a community-based force, and offering these youths a chance to redirect their lives is critical not only to their futures, but to the future of California’s communities.”

Grizzly graduate testifies to positive impact of ChalleNGe programs

Andres Delgado was an at-risk youth who became a star student after attending the Grizzly Youth Academy at San Luis Obispo.

By CAPT. WILLIAM MARTIN  
California Military Department Public Affairs

Andres Delgado was looking to score some drugs.

A regular on the streets of Salinas, California, the ragamuffin adolescent had come to personify “at-risk” youth. Consistently ditching school to drink and smoke with a pretty rough crowd, he was unmotivated and struggling at school and home.

“I wouldn’t listen to them [parents] and would disrespect them. It got so bad that just about half of our conversations were arguments,” Delgado said of his tumultuous household. “I tried to avoid talking to them to let things calm down, but it never worked.”

His bad marks in school only made family matters worse, but his dad offered a possible fix: what about attending Grizzly Youth Academy? Located in San Luis Obispo, the military-style academy was run by the National Guard and had a history of turning around the lives of troubled teens.

Delgado agreed to check the place out, probably as much to pacify his father as improve his life. In the short term, however, he wanted to score those drugs. No need to make a drastic U-turn in his habits quite yet, he figured.

But when he looked up his favorite dealer to ask what he had to offer, he pitched Delgado a curve.

“I was surprised when he turned me down and told me he didn’t do that stuff anymore,” said Delgado. “I told him I just graduated from an academy called Grizzly and that I should check it out.”

The coincidence was a tipping point for Delgado: “I told my parents I would attend Grizzly.”

The street-tough youth confessed fear in turning his life over to the control of a bunch of combat-tested instructors, but “knew it was something that I had to do.” After “pushing through” the grieving shakedown in the first couple weeks, Delgado started to come into his own. He began to excel.

“I worked extremely hard and earned the position of being a platoon guide,” said Delgado. “Throughout the program I maintained a 3.9 GPA.”

His success at Grizzly translated into success at home, as well. After graduating, he returned to a dramatically improved home life and today he carries a 4.0 at Salinas High. Rather than scoring drugs, his goals now involve scoring well on college entrance exams. Ultimately, he plans to make a career in the military.

“After getting my degree, I want to join the military and become a warrant officer in the field artillery branch of the United States Army,” he said. “If it wasn’t for the Grizzly Youth Academy, I would have never thought about doing all this for myself. Attending this program is definitely the best decision that I have made in my life.”
Still serving: Cal Guard Chinook finds home at Castle Air Museum

By CAPT. WILLIAM MARTIN
California Military Department Public Affairs

When Chief Warrant Officer Doug Jones began his military flying career in 1989, he took the helm of a CH-47 Chinook, the heavy-lifting workhorse of the Army’s aviation fleet. It seemed fitting, then, that he end his time as a rotary-wing pilot by retiring the last of the Cal Guard’s model D Chinooks.

On April 7, Jones and his three-member crew delivered the last CH-47D (the Cal Guard transitioned to the model F in 2015) to the Castle Air Museum in Atwater, just outside Merced. The helicopter was the second Cal Guard contribution in the past few months to what is one of the West Coast’s largest air museums. In February, the Cal Guard delivered an F-16 fighter jet that was once active in the 144th Fighter Wing in Fresno.

“The aircraft will become a museum piece now, so this is its last flight,” Jones said after landing the Chinook. “I’m going back to flying airplanes, so this will be my last Chinook flight... It’s pretty surreal, actually, to shut it down and climb out of the cockpit for the last time.”

Jones deployed to Iraq as a C-12 pilot, and he’ll return to that airframe moving forward. As he greeted the dozens of veterans and museum volunteers surrounding the Chinook, however, it was apparent he holds a deep affection to the aircraft. “It looks like a big flying motorhome, but it’s actually very maneuverable,” he said. Grabbing his 9-month-old grandson who joined his family in welcoming Jones after his last Chinook flight, he added, “When he gets a little older, I’ll get to show it to him here on display. It’s pretty special.”

A photograph of the final flight.

Defending those who defend America

The Army National Guard Trial Defense Service gives Soldiers free legal advice and counsel outside their chain of command

By BRANDON HONIG
California Military Department Public Affairs

The law is a “contact sport,” according to Maj. David Lusk, and you need competent, dedicated legal representation to ensure you’re treated fairly in criminal and administrative matters.

That’s why soldiers facing any type of adverse action can receive free advice and counsel — from outside their chain of command — through the Army National Guard Trial Defense Service (TDS).

“We’re going to be there to help them confront the evidence, figure out what’s going on and defend it properly, [or] work out whatever deals we can to help fix the problem,” said Lusk, who is based in San Diego as the senior defense counsel for TDS’ 10-state Pacific region. “A lot of times, it’s not about punishing the Soldier; it’s about rehabilitating them, especially with something like AWOL, where if you just start coming to drill, maybe we don’t have to do anything bad to you.”

Lusk said young Soldiers sometimes don’t know how to help themselves through fixable situations, like the loss of their job resulting in a lack of transportation to drill. But when TDS gets involved, the Soldier and their command often find another solution besides separation or reduction in rank.

“We represent the Soldier’s interest, and the Soldier’s interest alone... not the command’s,” said Lt. Col. Nelson Van Eck, the chief of TDS, who is based at National Guard Bureau (NGB) headquarters in Virginia. “Soldiers should know they always have a TDS attorney a phone call or an email away.”

Van Eck visited the California National Guard’s Joint Forces Training Base Los Alamitos in February for an annual training event that brought together 44 legal professionals from the 13 states of TDS’ Pacific and West regions. The presentation and exercise topics ranged from the Army’s Special Victim Counsel program to research tools and the art of cross-examination.

“We share our experiences and knowledge, pool our questions, get some feedback and answers, and get to know each other,” Lusk said.

That last bit, about getting to know your colleagues, is the best part of the regional training meeting, said Sgt. Kristin Marie Anderson Gates, who works for TDS full-time at the Cal Guard’s Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento. Each state does things a little differently, she said, and it helps to learn things other states have tried, what worked and what didn’t.

Gates said her office will sometimes reach out to NGB when facing a complicated or weird legal issue, and NGB will send out a mass email to all the states.

“Then you start getting pins from all over, like, ‘Yeah, I’ve had something similar, here’s one thing you can do,’” she said. “[Virtually every] issue has happened somewhere before, and someone does know what’s going on... So it’s nice to network and get to know these people.”

Every state’s TDS needs a little help every now and then, but California is fortunate to have one of the largest, with four full-time personnel and 10 M-day, or part-time, Soldiers. And according to Van Eck, the Golden State’s staff is also one of the best.

“California is one of the most experienced, professional and highly trained offices in the country, and they have great leadership, so we rely on them heavily,” the TDS chief said. “They not only host this annual training event, but they’re available to help all the other states in the Pacific region and the West region.”

Though TDS handles both criminal and administrative military proceedings for Soldiers, it can’t represent a Soldier during criminal proceedings in a civilian court, but it can help. TDS experts can provide free legal advice to the Soldier and can work with the Soldier’s civilian lawyer. Covering such a wide range of adverse actions means working for TDS requires a great deal of dedication, and some unpaid hours, Van Eck said.

“Clients’ problems don’t only arise on drill. They arise seven days a week, and we need to be there for them,” he said. “We take our responsibilities seriously and have great passion for our task, because the Soldiers who defend America deserve to be defended.”
Do you want to take a hop to Hawaii?

Free ‘Space Available’ air travel is one of the great benefits of military service. But Space-A can be confusing for National Guard members. JAG officer Capt. Christian Wellisch helps clear things up.

By CAPT. CHRISTIAN WELLISCH
California National Guard Judge Advocate

Free Space Available air travel is one of the great benefits of military service. But Space-A can be confusing for National Guard members. JAG officer Capt. Christian Wellisch helps clear things up.

Are you short on funds, but you have plenty of time on your hands? Or perhaps you are looking for an impromptu vacation, or just have a need to get away? Are you flexible on dates or even destinations? Grab your copy of “Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy,” jump aboard, and remember: Don’t Panic! Space Available travel just might be the right option for you, if you know how to navigate the ins and outs of the system.

Contrary to what some think, members of the guard can take advantage of this free benefit; however, the paperwork differs depending on duty status (M-Day or active duty). Although the process can seem somewhat daunting to the uninstructed, rest assured, with a little perseverance and guidance you, too, can join the club of Space-A hitchhikers. Read on to find out how.

First, you should do a little research. This article can get you on your way, but you may want to look up more specific information pertaining to your Space-A travel goals. You will want to know the flight schedules, terminal locations, required documents, and so on, and thankfully all this information is available at your fingertips if you know where to look. Luckily, there are plenty of online resources available at your disposal.

Required Documents

Start by looking up the Air Mobility Command’s (AMC) Space Available Travel site at http://www.amc.af.mil/amctravel/. On the right, there is a list of links to individual AMC passenger terminal pages, grouped as CONUS or OCONUS locations. Scroll down to ‘Travel Information and Documents’ where you will find links to a ‘Reserve and Guard Travel’ (http://www.amc.af.mil/amctravel/reserveandguardtravel.asp) pdf page explaining that members of the reserve components who are not on active duty may travel within CONUS and Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa. However, dependents may not accompany them. All you need is your Military ID card and DD Form 1853. "Authentication of Reserve Status for Travel Eligibility.” You can download a fillable-PDF DD Form 1853 from the DoD Forms Management website, at: http://www.dtic.mil/wsh/directives/forms/eforms/dd1853.pdf. This form will need to be completed, then verified by official with access to the Personnel Data System (commander, First Sergeant, etc.) and printed out. Note that this form states “not to exceed six months,” thus meeting the documentation requirements for reservists not on active duty orders eligible for Space-A travel for up to six months at a time. On the other hand, reservists on active duty (30 days +) will need to provide valid leave authorization.

Registration

On the same webpage, you can also download a copy of AMC’s Space-A Handbook, a link to which is conveniently located right below the ‘Reserve and Guard Travel’ link. Space-A travel works much like standby flights on commercial aircraft: prospective passengers must first register and wait to see if there are enough available seats on the aircraft to get a flight. Passengers ‘compete’ for available seats based on their time of registration and travel category. More on that later, but this is what Space-A travel is all about: the chance for a free flight on a standby basis.

In order to be eligible to ‘compete’ for a seat, you must first register, which brings us back to the handy-dandy Space-A Handbook. Paragraph 2 explains that you must first register, and may select up to five destinations. Note that as a reservist, you are limited to CONUS travel (including Alaska and Hawaii, etc.) as stated above. After registering, if selected, you will need to present valid travel documents at the terminal prior to boarding. This includes DD Form 1853 or valid leave authorization if an active duty orders in excess of 30 days, as stated above. You can register in person at the terminal, or remotely by fax, email, or mail. For all practical purposes, the only effective method of remote registration among the three is via email. If you choose to register remotely, it is recommended that you bring a copy of your email to the terminal and keep it with you throughout your travels, as proof of registration, with date and time.

Flight Information

So now that you have completed and verified your DD Form 1853, you want a bit more specific information about available flights. The easiest place to look is Facebook. Luckily you can update your newsletter with some essential information, such as flight schedules. Click on your ‘Interests’ page on the left sidebar, then click the ‘Add Interests’ button in the top center of the screen. This will bring up an input box that allows you to

Another helpful link when planning for the somewhat unpredictable world of Space-A travel is AMC’s common destinations page, showing to which destinations each passenger terminal commonly has flights. (http://www.amc.af.mil/amctravel/spacealists.asp)

Travel Categories

To make better use of the above information, you should have some understanding of travel categories. The various Categories are defined in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 4515.13. The current version was just issued on 22 January 2016, replacing the older DoDI 4515.13-R dated November 1, 1994 (with revisions). At paragraph 4.1 (b), DoDI 4515.13 states that “transportation opportunities will be provided on an equitable basis without regard to rank or grade, military or civilian, or branch of uniformed service.” 4.1 (e) provides that travelers fall into one of six categories “based on the travel status and circumstance.” Paragraph 4.7 (e) states that registration information, including “the original date and time of sign-up will be documented and remain with the traveler until movement to their declared final destination is complete, their leaves terminates, or a maximum of 60 days has passed, whichever occurs first.” C6.1.7.2 explains that for Category VI, “will not exceed six months,” thus meeting the documentation requirements for reservists not on active duty orders eligible for Space-A travel for up to six months at a time. Within each category, priority is based on the travel status and circumstance, which is what Space-A travel is all about: the chance for a free flight on a standby basis. The current version was just issued on 22 January 2016, replacing the older DoDI 4515.13-R dated November 1, 1994 (with revisions). At paragraph 4.1 (b), DoDI 4515.13 states that “transportation opportunities will be provided on an equitable basis without regard to rank or grade, military or civilian, or branch of uniformed service.” 4.1 (e) provides that travelers fall into one of six categories “based on the travel status and circumstance.” Paragraph 4.7 (e) states that registration information, including “the original date and time of sign-up will be documented and remain with the traveler until movement to their declared final destination is complete, their leaves terminates, or a maximum of 60 days has passed, whichever occurs first.” C6.1.7.2 explains that for Category VI, “will not exceed six months,” thus meeting the documentation requirements for reservists not on active duty orders eligible for Space-A travel for up to six months at a time. Within each category, priority is based on the travel status and circumstance, which is what Space-A travel is all about: the chance for a free flight on a standby basis.

Category I: Emergency Leave Funded Travel
Category II: Accompanied EML
Category III: Ordinary Leave, Relatives, House Hunting Permissive TDY, Medal of Honor Holders, and Foreign Military
Category IV: Unaccompanied EML
Category V: Permissive TDY (Non-House Hunting), Students, Dependents, Post Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence, and Others
Category VI: Retired, Dependents, Reserve, ROTC, NUPOC and Civil Engineer Corps (CEC) Members

Your Space-A Strategy

So if you have done everything right and followed the above guidelines, completing your DD Form 1853 and registering (via email, printing a copy for your records) and remote registering (email to the terminal) you are ready to compete for a flight. Will you get to your dream Space-A vacation destination? That depends on a variety of factors. As explained above, available any seats will be opened to any category 1, then category 2, 3, 4, 5, and finally category 6 passengers in order of registration. If there are more passengers in higher categories or higher priority (based on signup date and time) within category 6 waiting to get on the same flight than there are seats available, you are not going to get on your chosen flight. However, you will retain your priority and are free to try again for any other upcoming flights on the same destination. Prospective passengers who register after your signup date will be in line behind you, but those in higher categories will always be ahead of you regardless of their signup time.

It stands to reason that during times when higher category passengers are likely to be competing for the same seats (i.e., PCS season or around the holidays) you are not likely to land a seat. On the other hand, if you are traveling at a less busy time from a location that, based on the published 24-hour roll call reports on Facebook, shows plenty of leftover seats on flights to your chosen destination, your odds are quite good. As a side note, in less popularly passenger terminals, the staff may never have encountered a reservist flying Space-A and may be unfamiliar with applicable regulations. Such a lack of acquaintance with requirements may present certain obstacles to the crafty Space-A hitchhiker.

Space-A travel can range from the fantastically convenient free ride to where you need to, to the soul-crushing frustration of successive disappointments just when you thought you had seen it all. I can attest to both through my own experiences at either end of the Space-A spectrum. Do not be surprised to fail to get a seat time and again on successive flights with over 60 open seats to Hawai‘i in December. Then again, if you are traveling off-season, from a less popular location, you might just make it to your destination, even Hawai‘i. All in all, Space-A travel can be fun and extremely cost effective if you have the luxury of sacrificing the certainty of travel dates to and from your desired destination. If you have done your research and know the odds, you can take advantage of this valuable privilege.

As a final note, now that you have read through this article, Military One Source has a great summary of Space-A travel here: http://www.militaryonesource.mil/mwr?content_id=268596

Good luck, and remember: Don’t Panic!
Response Force, Auza said she is able to take many of the since the 49th MP Brigade is currently the Homeland tribal law enforcement agencies. incorporates many law enforcement-specific tactics since covers more infantry skills like small unit tactics and training she receives with her unit. The CDTF training Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 49th Military Auza, also an operations noncommissioned officer with best practices for the field.”

“Having this training helps the administrative team understand how their job feeds into the overall mission of the task force,” Sergeant Major Clinton Lockard, the CDTF senior enlisted advisor, said. “My goal is that they are able to conduct ground tactical missions throughout the year so their training comes full circle.”

Staff Sgt. Cyndi Pearl Auza, the CDTF safety program manager, was excited to be able to attend the training.

“As a safety program manager, I can’t just plan in a vacuum of my own thoughts on how the program should run without actually going out to the field and seeing how the missions are conducted.” Auza said. “My goal is to mitigate risk and being at headquarters, we’re far from the ground, far from the field, but now that I’m certified, I can actually go out and do the missions and help figure out best practices for the field.”

Auza, also an operations noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 49th Military Police Brigade, said the training was different from the training she receives with her unit. The CDTF training covers more infantry skills like small unit tactics and incorporates many law enforcement-specific tactics since the task force works so closely with federal, state local and tribal law enforcement agencies.

Since the 49th MP Brigade is currently the Homeland Response Force, Auza said she is able to take many of the things she learned at this training back to her unit.

“I have a better understanding from working at Counterdrug how our law enforcement agencies operate,”

Staff Sgt. Cyndi Pearl Auza, the safety program manager for CDTF, practices applying a tourniquet during tactical combat casualty
care training Mar. 15. Photo by Sgt. Brianne Roudebush

Most of the time, the illicit marijuana grow sites the teams eradicate are located in rural or mountainous areas. In order to prepare for those missions, the training included shooting drills to increase speed and accuracy, first aid application in the dark, and a land navigation course that lasted from 6 a.m. to nearly midnight.

“There’s real danger involved in these missions,” Auza explained. “The teams hike into illicit grow sites where there might be armed growers trying to defend their gardens in remote locations with no easy access to roads.”

Auza added that she expected the training to be exhausting, but was not entirely prepared for how physical it would be.

“Sitting in headquarters reading through their reports doesn’t portray the intensity of their missions at all,” Auza said. “Reports just show numbers and stats, but there’s so much more they go through before even getting to that point. I know now how far these teams are pushed.”

CDTF admin and headquarters personnel join the ground tactical team for training

Outfitted in tactical armored vests with M9 handguns secured at their hips, members of the California National Guard Counterdrug Task Force conducted a two-week ground tactical certification course at Camp Roberts, March 14-25.

The training, which is an annual requirement for CDTF, focused on small unit tactics, land navigation, weapons qualification, combat shooting drills, combat casualty care, reconnaissance, sling load and short haul operations. This year the training was expanded to include not only members of the ground tactical team, but also case support analysts, administrative specialists and headquarters personnel.

“Having this training helps the administrative team understand how their job feeds into the overall mission of the task force,” Sergeant Major Clinton Lockard, the CDTF senior enlisted advisor, said. “My goal is that they are able to conduct ground tactical missions throughout the year so their training comes full circle.”

CDTF supports California’s tribal nations

California is home to the nation’s largest Native American population, with over 100 federally recognized tribes. For the past two years, Capt. Sabino Martinez and Master Sgt. Diana Garcia, Counterdrug Task Force prevention specialists in the Central Valley, have made it a priority to support the Tulare River Tribe in their anti-drug efforts. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the current rate of use among Native Americans (12.6 percent) is higher than that of any other race or ethnicity. Alcohol abuse is the most common, followed by methamphetamine and marijuana. Statistics show that one in 10 Native American deaths are alcohol-related-more than three times the general population. Martinez and Garcia attend monthly meetings, provide guidance on creating a strategic prevention plan and garner outside support for the tribe. In March, they began working on meeting the requirements to apply for a federal Drug Free Community grant, which would provide additional funding and support for the tribe.

“I’m really appreciative of the efforts and positiveness that has come forth with this partnership,” Lisa Davis, the Tulare River Prevention Coalition chairperson, said. “I look forward to continuing and seeing the positive outcomes we will reach together.”
California National Guard
Office of the Inspector General

Suspension of Favorable Personnel Action (FLAG):
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This month’s IG Basics is focused on proper Command actions to initiate, transfer and remove FLAGS (Army). Improperly administered FLAGS can lower both trust and morale within a command. Typically, improperly administered FLAGS result in a Soldier not being aware that a FLAG was imposed on them or not being removed in a timely manner, thus preventing them from promotion or attending a school. In addition, Soldiers will not be retained beyond their Expiration Term of Service (ETS) dates or Mandatory Removal Dates (MRD) solely because favorable personnel actions have been suspended (10 USC 1407). Finally, remember that a FLAG itself is not a form of punishment, but serves as an administrative tool during some forms of administrative, investigative or disciplinary action until the action is concluded.

Key References:
- AR 600-8-2, Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (23 October 12)
- 2013-25 CAARNG Commander’s Policy on Non-Transferable FLAGS (29 March 2013)

When initiating a FLAG, unit commanders will:
- Impose a FLAG immediately when a Soldier’s status changes from favorable to unfavorable.
- Counsel Soldiers, in writing, when a FLAG is imposed within two (2) working days (AGR) or prior to the conclusion of the next training period (M-Day). Include a reason for the FLAG, requirement for the FLAG to be removed, and any prohibitions for the Soldier while the FLAG is in effect (AR 600-8-2, para 2-6).
- When dealing with more than one reason to impose a FLAG (i.e. APFT and ABCP failures), ensure each reason is annotated on a separate FLAG to facilitate each DA Form 268 (FLAG) received.
- Provide the Soldier a copy of each DA Form 268 (FLAG) received.

When transferring a Soldier with a FLAG, commands must:
- Provide the gaining command with the Soldier’s FLAG documents.
- Ensure all FLAG administrative actions are accomplished.
- Ensure Soldier does not have ongoing legal issues. One exception is during a transferrable “Punishment Phase.”

Soldiers with transferable FLAGS may be reassigned on a case to case basis under the following conditions:
- Losing command is willing to let the Soldier depart.
- Gaining command is willing to accept the flagged individual.
- All pending administrative actions have been accomplished.

Note: Commanders may transfer a Soldier to another unit if the FLAG is “transferrable.”
Transferrable Reason Codes are:
- H — Punishment phase
- J — APFT
- K — AWCP
- KZ — Pregnant prior to being entered into ABCP. See AR 600-8-2, Table 2-1 for a list of all transferrable and non-transferrable codes and reasons.

Upon completion of any required punishment or other administrative action(s), commanders will:
- Remove a Soldier’s FLAG after proper disposition or final action.
- Remove Soldier’s FLAG within three (3) working days after Soldier’s status changes from unfavorable to favorable.
- BN Commander’s must review & validate all active FLAGS over 6 months-old monthly per AR 600-8-2, para 1-9.b.
- CAARNG Commander retains authority to lift, remove, or convert a FLAG for Adverse Actions, Security Violations, Commander’s Investigations, and Law Enforcement Investigations

Bottom Line: Army Commanders should review and verify their unit’s FLAG report monthly for accuracy and to ensure that FLAGS are being initiated, transferred and removed in a proper and timely manner. A FLAG is not a form of punishment or restriction and Soldiers will not be retained beyond their ETS dates or MRD solely because favorable personnel actions have been suspended. For more information regarding FLAGS, review the referenced regulations or see your servicing Personnel, Legal Assistance or IG Office.
Cal Guard celebrates Women’s History

The California National Guard observed Women’s History Month in March. The theme this year was “Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government.” Cal Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David Baldwin thanked female service members and civilian employees for their dedicated service and support to the state and nation in a memo that went out to all Cal Guard members on March 1. The Cal Guard is actively seeking female Soldiers to fill leadership roles in combat arms specialties, which are now open to women.

Tricare allows urgent care without referral

The Army Times reported that Tricare beneficiaries enrolled in Tricare Prime will be able to go to an urgent care clinic without a referral under a new program that starts May 23, according to the Defense Health Agency.

An Urgent Care Pilot Program will allow military health beneficiaries in Tricare Prime, Tricare Prime Remote or Tricare Young Adult-Prime to receive care at an urgent care center without a referral up to two times a fiscal year, with Tricare picking up most of the bill.

Currently, beneficiaries can be seen for acute conditions only by their primary care manager or by referral to an urgent care center or other physician.

National Guard members are eligible for low-cost Tricare healthcare coverage.

Cal Guard pilot awarded for heroic action

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nathan Champion, a state aviation maintenance officer with the Cal Guard’s Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, was awarded the California Military Cross at the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services in Sacramento, California, on April 15.

The award is California’s second-highest honor and is the state’s equivalent of the state equivalent to the federal Distinguished Service Cross.

Champion was awarded for assisting in rescuing eight firefighters who were overrun by a wildfire. Flying a single-pilot UH-72A Lakota helicopter through smoke and low visibility, Champion used his aviator skills and experience to find the firefighters and help coordinate the rescue.

Read the full story in the next issue of the Grizzly Magazine.

OMI cadet wins big in triathlon

Cadet 1st Lieutenant Dylan Gong, a member of the California Cadet Corps at the Oakland Military Institute (OMI), finished 1st place in the 19U category at the Xterra MTB Triathlon in Folsom on April 2. The race started with a half-mile swim in Folsom Lake. Competitors then raced on a 16-mile bike course of single track trails around the lake with mixed terrain of single track, downhills, climbs, sand, and packed decomposed granite. The race finished with a 4-mile run on a mix of trails and roads.

Gong is in the 9th grade at OMI, but has already made his mark on the campus. Gong has risen quickly through the cadet ranks and is a straight-A student. He is under consideration for a cadet company command next school year.

All students at OMI are members of the California Cadet Corps. The California Cadet Corps was founded on April 5, 1911 by then Adjutant General of the State of California, Brigadier General Edwin Alexander Forbes. The California High School Cadet Act created a statewide organization for all secondary schools enrolling 40 or more boys in grades 9-12. The program has existed in nearly every California high school -- public, private, parochial, military -- at some time since 1911.

The Oakland Military Institute was founded in 2001 by then-Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown, who had a vision for a school with high expectations for cadet achievement, conduct, character, patriotism, and leadership. In June 2016, OMI will graduate its tenth class of seniors who are college and career ready.

DoD Fy17 budget takes the long view

According to an article from DoD News, Defense Secretary Ash Carter requested a defense budget for 2016 that focuses on five threats: Russia, China, Iran, North Korea and violent extremism.

A total of 215 more advisors will be based in Iraq to work with Iraqi security forces. The counter-ISIL effort in Syria will see an additional 250 American personnel working with vetted Syrian groups inside Syria, Carter told the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee on April 27.

“Now, addressing all of these five challenges requires new investments on our part, new posture in some regions, and also new and enhanced capabilities,” he said.

He said cyber, electronic warfare and space are increasingly important to national defense.
U.S. Air Force Capt. Kirk Adams, an F-15C Eagle pilot assigned to the 194th Fighter Squadron, 144th Fighter Wing, Fresno Air National Guard Base, Calif., makes final preparations prior to a night sortie at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, Feb. 5, as part of Red Flag 16-1. Red Flag is a realistic combat training exercise which involves air, space and cyber forces from the U.S. and its allies. Read the story about Red Flag on page 9 of this issue. Photo by Master Sgt. David Loeffler