

GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard



Dust off the mantel

Three Company C, 1-168th, crews
take home medevac awards

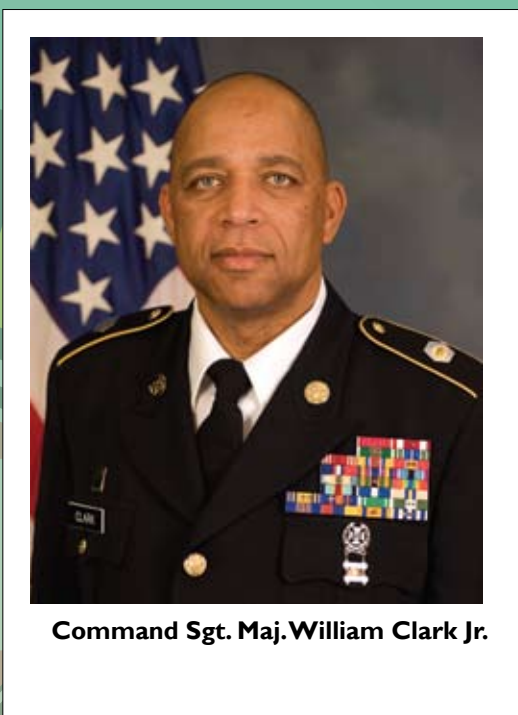
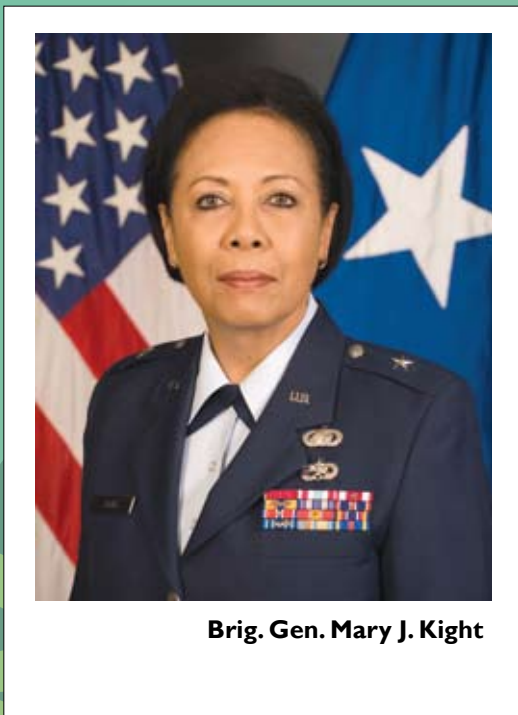
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CNG honors Airmen of the Year

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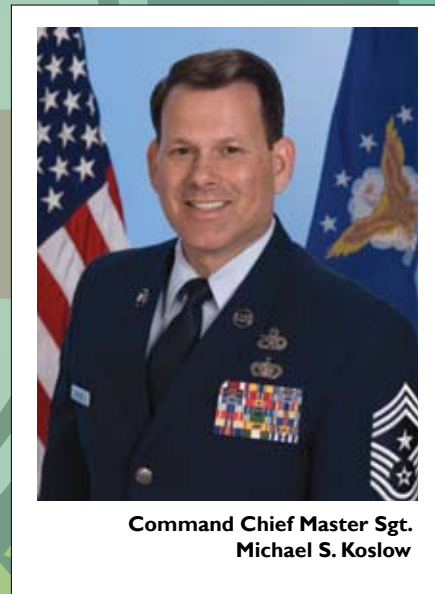
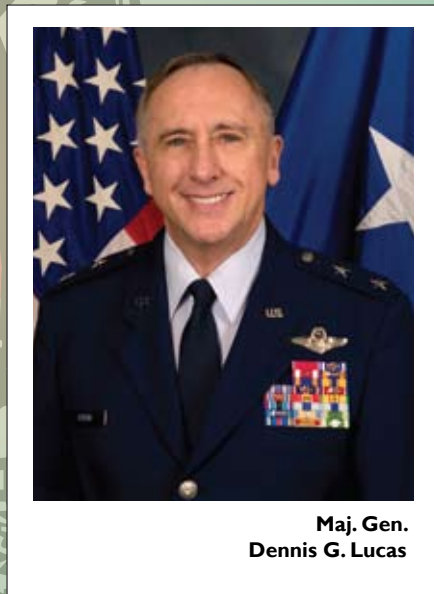
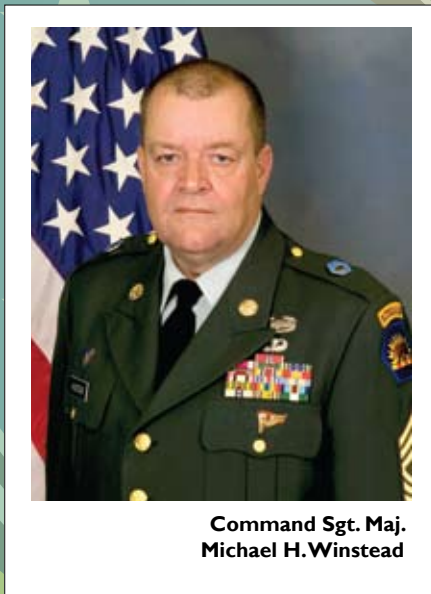
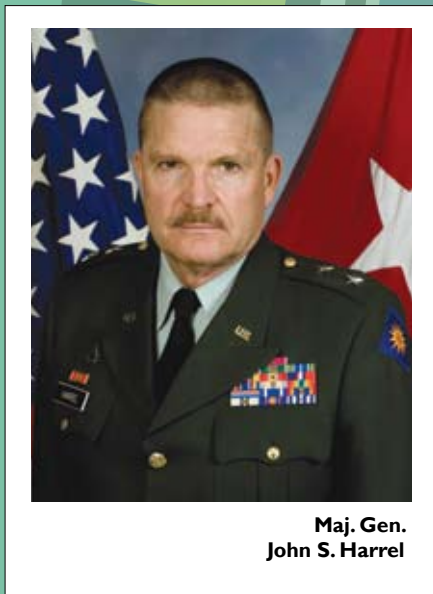
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California National Guard Leadership



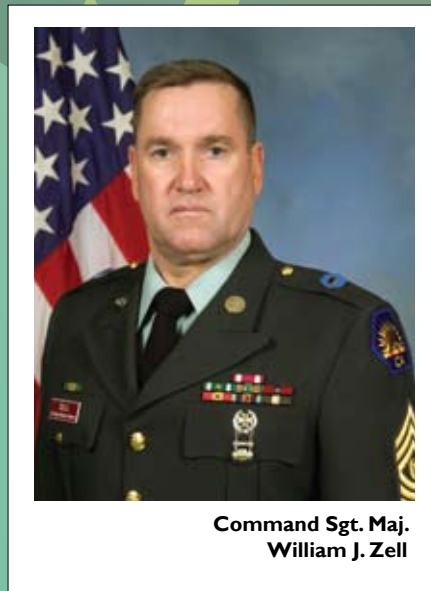
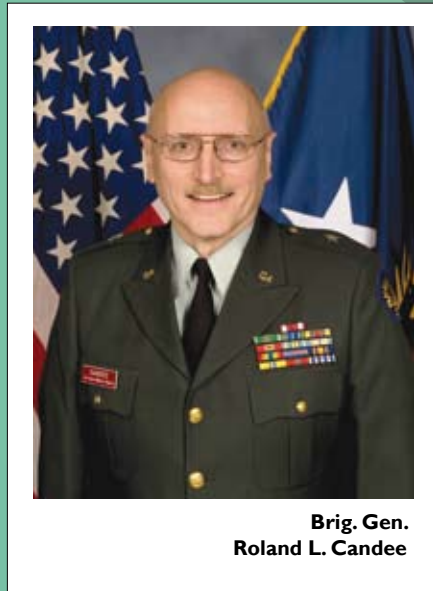
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Articles:

- ★ 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
- ★ 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 Toru Yokota

Staff Sgt. Emmett Spraktes of Company C, I-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, performs a practice insertion near Jalalabad Training Area-I in Afghanistan. Spraktes was recognized by the Army Aviation Association of America as the Medic of the Year for 2009, and his four-man crew took home the AAAA's Air/Sea Rescue Award.



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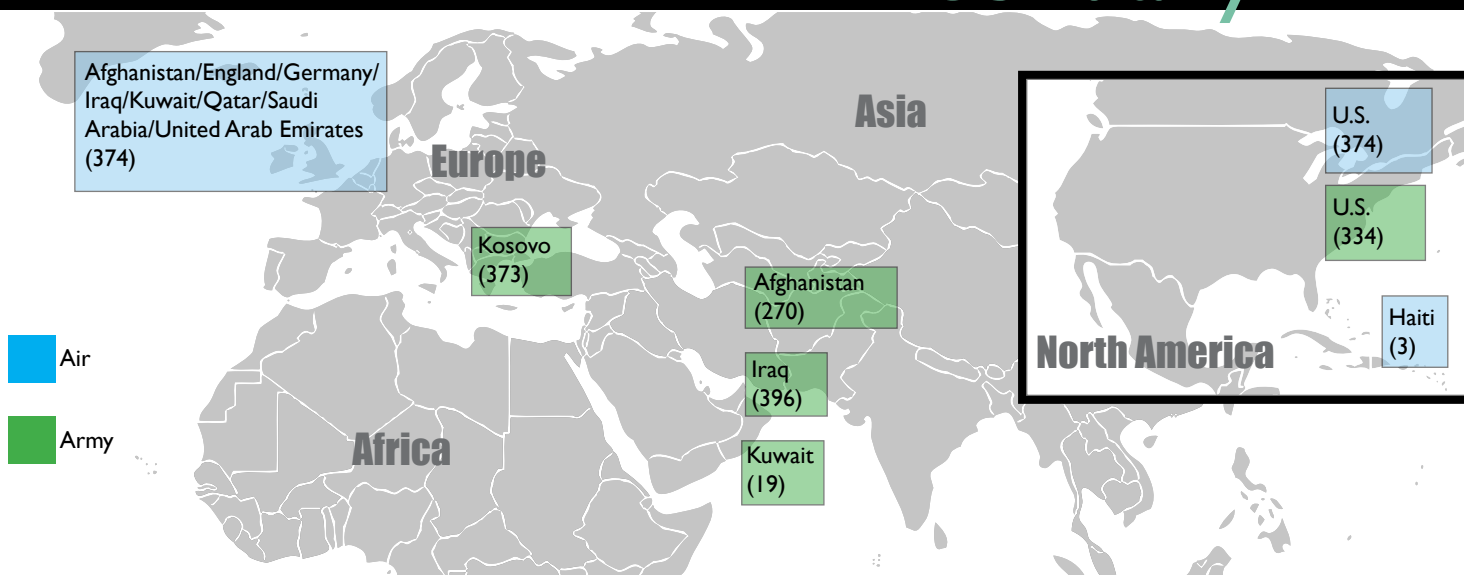
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The California National Guard as of February 2010



Iraq race will benefit Haiti earthquake victims

Story and photo by Spc. Eddie Siguenza
49th Military Police Brigade

At first Sgt. Jefferson Austrie opened his wallet to see what he could give to a Haitian friend. Then he opened his heart.

Austrie, an automation specialist with the 49th Military Police Brigade, who is currently deployed to Camp Liberty, Iraq, came up with a plan to do something more. He united brigade Soldiers and organized a fundraising effort to draw attention to the devastation in Haiti following the Jan. 12 earthquake there.

With Austrie taking lead, a Haiti Relief 10-Kilometer Fun Run will be held April 24 along Camp Liberty's lakes and rivers.

"I just want to show that I care," the Tracy, Calif., resident said. "A friend contacted me and said that he needed help. I've been watching the news and I know how bad it is over there. So I just wanted to do something to help."

Austrie's friend, Sgt. Rico Boliva, is an

Army noncommissioned officer stationed in Germany who was born in Haiti. The pair met when Austrie deployed to Iraq with the 49th in 2005. Boliva contacted Austrie shortly after the Haiti earthquake.

A 7.0-magnitude earthquake rocked Haiti on Jan. 12, devastating the capital city, Port au-Prince, and killing more than 150,000 people. Hundreds of thousands remain homeless today.

Proceeds from the Fun Run will go directly to the American Red Cross. Volunteers from the Red Cross will be at the event accepting entry fees and donations.

Austrie is searching for sponsors in Iraq and at home in California. Runners will receive t-shirts for their participation, and the base's Army and Air Force Exchange Service will provide prizes for a raffle. Austrie, who was born and raised in Dominica, an island southeast of Haiti, has been a California National



A jar for donations to aid Haitian earthquake victims sits on Sgt. Jefferson Austrie's desk on Camp Liberty, Iraq. On April 24, he will need many more of them. To help the people of Haiti, Austrie, a member of the 49th Military Police Brigade, is organizing a 10-kilometer fun run fundraiser for service members and civilians at Camp Liberty. All proceeds will go to the American Red Cross.

Guardsmen for 10 years.

"Every cent we raise will go directly to Haiti," Austrie said. "It's important. There

are people over there who need our help. There are families that need a home. There are children who need proper care. We just got to do something to help them."

CNG Soldiers provide riot-control 'opposition'

By Sgt. 1st Class David Dodds
116th Public Affairs Detachment

California National Guard Soldiers from the 1-144th Maneuver Task Force played the role of opposition forces recently to provide a realistic training experience for two teams of riot-control forces in Kosovo.

The California Soldiers, who are based at Camp Bondsteel as part of Kosovo Force (KFOR) Multinational Battle Group-East, were on hand to start a simulated riot to test the crowd- and riot-control response of the KFOR Tactical Maneuver Battalion (KTM) and the European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). The training, held Feb. 18, was designed so the KTM and EULEX teams could practice together, become more familiar with each other and build cooperation.

"I was extremely impressed with the professionalism and discipline the KTM and EULEX teams exerted onto the opposing forces," said Capt. Raymond F. Allard, commander of Company A, 1-144th Maneuver Task Force. "I also walked away with the satisfaction that the men of Alpha Company truly tested the abilities of the KTM."

Air support for the exercise was provided by the Croatian aviation contingent out of Camp Bondsteel. Riot-control vehicles also were used to help suppress the oppositional forces.

"It was a challenging situation," said KTM Commander Lt. Col. Lino Goncalves of the Portuguese Army. "We had more rioters than we had expected and we had to work together with EULEX. The oppositional forces forced us to make decisions, which are very important for our training."

The day of exercises started with the opposition forces becoming agitated by a group of EULEX riot-control officers. Two groups of KTM riot-control forces were called in to provide support for EULEX. The KTM personnel were inserted at the scene by the Croatian aviation contingent.

"(My Soldiers) were met with resistance and determina-



Members of the Kosovo Force Tactical Maneuver Battalion riot squad prepare to take on an unruly crowd of California National Guard Soldiers during a riot- and crowd-control exercise Feb. 18 on Camp Montieth, Kosovo.

tion from the KTM in order to keep us from gaining any ground," Allard said.

Various scenarios played out, such as rioters breaking through lines of riot-control forces. Some California rioters even threw Molotov cocktails and water bottles toward the riot-control forces.

"I think the skills of the riot-control forces were sharpened by defending against such an aggressive opposing force," said 1st Sgt. Steven W. Overton of the 1-1144th. "I know that, by watching and observing another country's [crowd- and riot-control] tactics, our Soldiers from Alpha Company also learned some new skills that they will be able to employ in their own future crowd- and riot-control exercises."

"By day's end, we were sore, bruised and tired, but better for the experience."

Capt. Carlos Narciso of the Portuguese Army, KTM deputy operations officer, said the training wouldn't have been nearly as beneficial without the realistic opposition provided by the California KFOR Soldiers.

"This training was good because we worked on the ability to quickly intervene on hot spots, and we showed the cooperation between KTM, EULEX and the Croatian contingent," he said. "The oppositional forces give us a picture of how it will be in a real situation. In training, oppositional forces are always valuable."

PHOTO BY SPC. DREW BALSTAD

CNG missile defense unit watches our skies

By Airman 1st Class Steve Bauer
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

The Missile Defense Agency conducted a flight test of the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense System on Jan. 31, with the Cal Guard's Detachment 1, 100th Missile Defense Brigade, playing a major role.

A target missile was successfully launched at approximately 3:40 p.m. PST from the Army's Reagan Test Site at Kwajalein Atoll in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Approximately six minutes later, Detachment 1 successfully launched a Ground-Based Interceptor from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. Both the target missile and the Ground-Based Interceptor performed nominally after launch. However, the Sea-Based X-Band Radar did not perform as expected. Program officials will conduct an extensive investigation to determine the cause of the failure to intercept.

In 2002, as more countries began to house intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), U.S. officials recognized the importance of a homeland missile defense system.

"These capabilities will serve as a starting point for fielding improved and expanded missile defense capabilities later," said then-President George W. Bush. "Missile defense cooperation will be a feature of U.S. relations with close, long-standing allies to protect not only the U.S. and our deployed forces, but also friends and allies."

In April 2004, the 100th Missile Defense Brigade was stood up in Colorado, and shortly thereafter, Soldiers were sent to Vandenberg in support of the brigade's mission.

Because of its location on California's central coast and its topography, Vandenberg became a prime spot for Detachment 1, 100th Missile Defense Brigade, to defend the United States and its allies against foreign attacks.

Now as one of Vandenberg's tenant units, Detachment 1 is composed of a seven-man team of Guardsmen who conduct operations 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Although we may only be a small piece of the pie, we are a critical piece," said Capt. Orlando Cobos, Detachment 1 commander. "We provide the missile defense community with support and situational awareness about the current state of its assets. Our mission and assets here are essential for protecting the U.S. from ICBM launches."

Detachment 1 is the only Army unit stationed at Vandenberg, and it also has a one-of-a-kind mission.

"The brigade is the first and only line of defense against a launch from an enemy ICBM coming to the United States," said Sgt. 1st Class Charles Rice, Detachment 1 noncommissioned officer (NCO) in charge. "This puts us in a very unique position in the entire national defense system."

The detachment's responsibilities may change from day to day, but the unit remains focused on missile defense readiness.

"Our unit basically coordinates everything between all of the base contractors and Department of Defense employees who do all of the physical work on the equipment," Rice said. "We are the liaisons, who are also here to keep a close eye on the missiles and other assets here."

Although small in numbers, Detachment 1 Soldiers rely on sound teamwork to handle the immense responsibility the nation has entrusted them with.

"Our teamwork here is a little different than anywhere else," Rice said. "It is not so much that we are working together side-by-side, but we are coordinating our shifts. We have to be able to count on the person who you cannot see doing his job when you're not around. Quite often we only have one person on duty, and I have to have full trust in that individual as an NCO — that he is doing his job and [I do] not have to be looking over his shoulder all of the time."

In an ever-changing world, where threats of mass destruction are not too far from the imagination, units like Detachment 1 are here to deter threats directed toward the U.S. and bring peace to the minds of the American public.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY



PHOTO COURTESY OF 100TH MISSILE DEFENSE BRIGADE

ABOVE: A Ground-Based Interceptor is launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., by the Cal Guard's Detachment 1, 100th Missile Defense Brigade, during an exercise Jan. 31. The interceptor targeted a missile that had been launched from a U.S. Army site in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

RIGHT: The Soldiers of Detachment 1, 100th Missile Defense Brigade, stand ready to defend the nation against a ballistic missile attack. The unit, which is the only one of its kind in the nation, stood up at Vandenberg in 2008.

CAL GUARD AVIATION COMPANY EA



Crew performs combat hoist, rescues five from enemy fire

By Sgt. Jonathan Guibord
I-168th General Support Aviation Battalion

Last July, in the northern mountains of Afghanistan, the four-man flight crew of Dustoff 24 was flying to their home base after a grueling 48-hour medical support mission when they received an emergency call.

The medical evacuation (medevac) request came from a U.S. Army infantry squad-sized element that was ambushed by anti-American forces while on foot patrol in the hard-to-reach Pech River Valley. The Dustoff 24 Black Hawk helicopter and crew, all assigned to the California National Guard's Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, were called in to land and pick up a Soldier with a life-threatening gunshot wound to the abdomen.

A deadly combination of hazardous terrain and heavy incoming fire from elevated positions meant any rescue attempt would be dangerous for both the rescuers and the patient.

"We knew pretty much immediately when we got to the Pech how hot this [landing zone] was, because of the OH-58 [helicopters] and the radio traffic," said Staff Sgt. Thomas A. Gifford of Sacramento, who served as crew chief during the unit's 10-month Afghanistan deployment.

Aware of the hostile environment, the medical crew had to make a quick decision between following standard operating procedure and following their gut.

"Our doctrine is: If there is an ongoing battle, aircraft and other Soldiers on the ground pacify the area, and then we come in, grab the Soldier and then we go," said Staff Sgt. Emmett Spraktes, a combat medic with the unit. "But we decided as a crew, well before this incident, that if a Soldier was going to die if we did not respond, then we go in anyway."

That is exactly what the crew did. As the crew situated themselves to enter the combat zone, they assessed that there was no available location to land the aircraft. This meant the crew was going to need to attempt a maneuver rarely performed by Army aviators: a combat hoist.

As the two pilots, Chief Warrant Officer Brandon Erdmann and Chief Warrant Officer Scott St. Aubin, precisely piloted the aircraft toward the battered platoon, Spraktes began his hoist to the ground equipped with his M-4 rifle, M-9 pistol and medical gear, which includes a combat stretcher referred to as a sked. During his descent, the enemy forces were consistently firing near the aircraft, which caused the crew



ABOVE: Staff Sgt. Emmett Spraktes of Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, is hoisted to the ground to assist Soldiers whose vehicle had been hit by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan. During its 10-month tour in Afghanistan, Company C transported and treated 3,400 patients, flew 2,200 missions and performed 51 combat hoists. **TOP:** Spraktes (left) and Staff Sgt. Brian Chrisman perform practice insertions near Jalalabad Training Area-1, Afghanistan. Spraktes was recognized by the Army Aviation Association of America as the Medic of the Year for 2009.

to readjust and temporarily stop the hoist, according to the medic.

"I got about three-quarters of the way down and the hoisting stopped, and I was hanging there," Spraktes said. "I had totally professional communication with the

guys above," he joked. "I said, 'Get me on the ground now. I am like a [freaking] piñata down here.'"

Once the medic was on the ground, the aircraft was cleared to leave its vulnerable hover and immediately began loitering a

URNS ARMY MEDEVAC AWARDS

safe distance from the firefight.

While on the ground Spraktes, who acquired much of his paramedic skills serving as a paramedic with the California Highway Patrol, found the severely injured Soldier and started to work.

"He was in his early 20s, pale, and he was sick," Spraktes said. "You could tell he was in shock. He was communicating, but he was having some airway issues. It was an abdominal wound.

"I just made the determination right then and there that the best thing for this guy is to get him to definitive care, to get him to surgery now, because I have done this enough to know, and you could see, that he was dying."

To ensure the patient received immediate care, Spraktes loaded the young Soldier in the sked and called for the Black Hawk to hoist him up. The medic then opted to stay on the ground with the infantry squad while the patient was flown to Honiker Miracle, a nearby forward operating base staffed with a field surgical team.

When the aircraft and crew returned, instead of picking up their medic, they hoisted two additional injured Soldiers, one with an ankle injury and another with a gunshot wound to the leg. While Gifford hoisted and began treating the patients, the co-pilot, St. Aubin, noticed enemy movement on a ridge in the mountain valley and accurately called for air support from two OH-58 Kiowa Warrior helicopters.

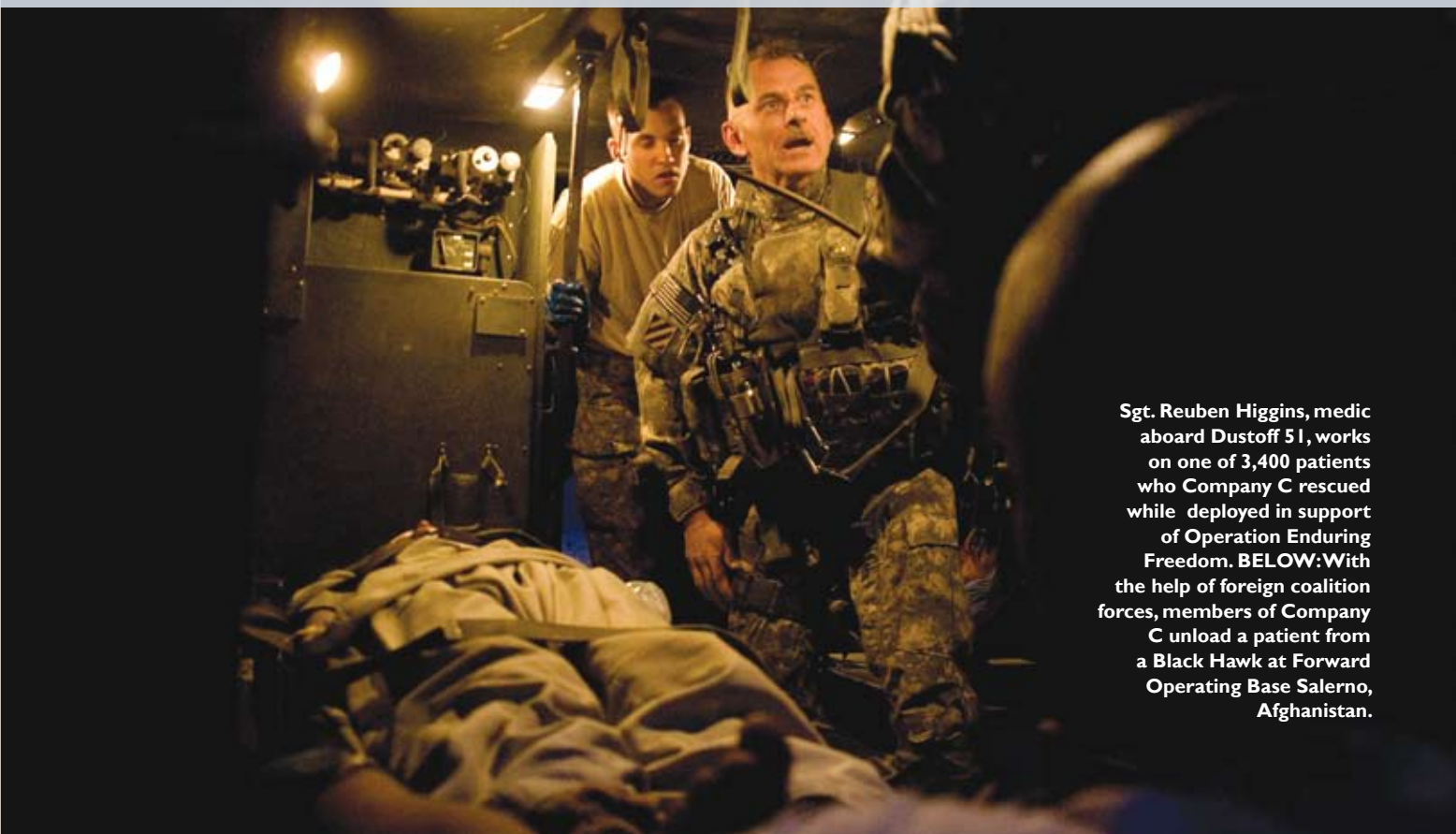
In the aircraft en route to Honiker Miracle, the battle-torn Soldiers informed the crew that not only was their squad pinned down by enemy forces, they were also critically low on water and ammunition.

When the crew returned again to pick up their medic, they hovered as low as 30 feet before kicking out water and ammunition near the pinned-down American unit. Spraktes then called again for the hoist to extract two heat-injured Soldiers after he determined they could not make it off the battlefield under their own power.

All told, five patients were rescued that day from a firefight that would have been considered unreachable by a ground medical unit. The crew's elevated position and quick thinking also allowed it to call in several bombing and gun runs by rotary and fixed-winged aircraft.

For their bravery, all four members of the crew were awarded the Army Aviation Association of America's Air/Sea Rescue Award in a ceremony at Fort Rucker, Ala., on Jan. 28. Spraktes was individually recognized as the Medic of the Year. The AAAA is a nonprofit dedicated to supporting U.S. Army Aviation Soldiers.

All 150 Soldiers who deployed with Company C returned safely to the United States Oct. 15.



Sgt. Reuben Higgins, medic aboard Dustoff 51, works on one of 3,400 patients who Company C rescued while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. **BELOW:** With the help of foreign coalition forces, members of Company C unload a patient from a Black Hawk at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

Dustoff crews assist French armed forces

By Sgt. Jonathan Guibord
I-168th General Support Aviation Battalion

Eight members of the California National Guard's Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, were presented the Rescue of the Year award by the Dustoff Association during a ceremony in Panama City Beach, Fla., on Feb. 20. The association is a nonprofit dedicated to Army Medical Department personnel and veterans.

The eight aviators received this recognition for events that took place Sept. 4, 2009, in Kapisa province, Afghanistan, 10 miles northeast of Bagram Airfield. Company C received an emergency call to respond to a downed French armed forces convoy that had been hit by multiple improvised explosive devices. The air medical company answered the call with three fully equipped air ambulance UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, two to perform the rescue and a third for backup in case of emergency.

"We had been launched on numerous mass casualty rescues during our deployment, but this was our first for foreign coalition forces," said Chief Warrant Officer Brandon Lynch, a pilot on one of the Black Hawks. "The different command structure and language barrier posed challenges, but in spite of these obstacles, it was the epitome of joint operation rescue."

Company C headquarters also called for support from the 101st Airborne's aviation element, which responded with two OH-58 Kiowa Warrior helicopters to provide aerial fire support in an area known to be teeming with enemy activity.

Six minutes after the call was received, the first rescue helicopter to be launched, Dustoff 46, was in the sky. When the short flight to the pickup zone was complete, the co-pilot, 1st Lt. Todd Bonner, saw what he described from the sky as "mass carnage." There were eight patients on the ground, sprawled throughout the road with varying levels of burns, blast wounds and trauma. That is when the pilot in command, Capt. Thomas Lemmons, confirmed that the support of the second aircraft, Dustoff 51, would be needed.

To get their medic to the patients, Dustoff 46 planted its 17,000-pound UH-60 into a muddy area downhill from the road. Medic Sgt. Stephen Park sprinted up the hill to the road and began performing triage on the French Soldiers.

Park didn't need to speak French to understand the gravity of the situation. He immediately took control of the chaos and began giving orders using the universal communication tool, sign language. Two of the injured French Soldiers were in critical condition, and Park quickly assisted in carrying them to the waiting helicopter. Within minutes, Dustoff 46 departed the pickup zone en route to



PHOTOS COURTESY OF COMPANY C, 1-168TH GSAB

Bagram with two urgent patients who had burns over 70 percent of their bodies, external bleeding and smoke inhalation.

While the first two patients were en route to the Bagram Heaethe Craig Joint Theatre Hospital aboard Dustoff 46, they passed Dustoff 51, which was on its way to the scene. When Dustoff 51 arrived, the crew quickly loaded three patients, including two who were loaded on stretchers. All three had suffered significant upper torso and facial burns.

Back at the hospital, Park and Crew Chief Sgt. Aaron DeCanio quickly handed off their patients to the waiting hospital team and headed back out to the landing zone, arriving on scene just as Higgins finished loading the third patient onto Dustoff 51.

"The crews lived up to the Dustoff legacy that day," Bonner said. "A six-minute launch time and paramedics onboard to provide the best medical care out there shows why the Army is the go-to medevac outfit. And I know these French Soldiers would definitely agree."

All told, the two flight crews rescued eight French Soldiers that day while flying five missions and logging 6.5 flight hours. French President Nicolas Sarkozy personally called the chief of staff of the area of operations to thank the crew members for their efforts during the rescue.

The crew of Dustoff 46 comprised Pilot Capt. Thomas Lemmons, Co-pilot 1st Lt. Todd Bonner, Medic Sgt. Stephen Park and Crew Chief Sgt. Aaron DeCanio. The flight crew of Dustoff 51 was Pilot Chief Warrant Officer Brandon Lynch, Co-pilot Capt. Tyler Smentek, Medic Sgt. Reuben Higgins and Crew Chief Sgt. William Dahl.

Quick Reaction Force tests skills in Kosovo

Story and photo by Spc. Drew Balstad
I 16th Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers from the Kosovo Force Multi-National Task Force-East (MNTF-E) Quick Reaction Force (QRF) tested their skills in a day of exercises near Biti e Poshteme and Crep, Kosovo, on Jan. 13.

The exercises were designed to ensure the Soldiers stay ready to face the unexpected incidents they could encounter as part of their QRF duties to respond quickly and decisively anywhere in Kosovo.

The QRF plays a key role as MNTF-E transitions into a Multinational Battle Group. The MNTF-E officially became a battle group Feb. 1. Because of the adjusted troop levels, the QRF must have the flexibility to move out and react to incidents in the Multinational Battle Group-East area of operations at a moment's notice.

Beginning their test, QRF Soldiers reacted to a simulated vehicle rollover near Biti e Poshteme on the morning of Jan. 13. Multiple vehicles were involved in the incident, and several Soldiers required medical attention. The QRF Soldiers were required to locate the scene of the incident and react to the simulated injuries and damage at the scene.

"Everyone performed their duties in a professional and efficient manner, from the Soldiers providing security and medical treatment on the ground to the aviation Soldiers in the air," said Capt. Bill Nels of Surrey, N.D., one of the exercise planners for MNTF-E. "It was a coordinated display of exactly how a quick reaction force is supposed to respond."

In the afternoon, the QRF confronted a simulated helicopter incident near Crep. A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter reported that it was making a precautionary landing; then communications were lost with the aircraft. Testing its ability to move quickly to address the incident, the QRF launched from Camp Bondsteel in two UH-60 helicopters, located the downed helicopter and treated injured Soldiers at the scene.

The QRF Soldiers said the exercise was a valuable way to polish their skills.

"It just keeps us on top of everything. If you don't use it, you lose it, so you have to be constantly remembering," said Pfc. Sean E. Holley of Inglewood, Calif., a member of Company C, 1-144th Maneuver Task Force. "It's an exercise and I learned from it, so when it comes to the



Sgt. 1st Class Steven B. Ybarra and Sgt. Arthur J. Lynch, members of the Cal Guard's Company C, 1-144th Maneuver Task Force, aid a Soldier with simulated injuries during a Quick Reaction Force validation exercise on Jan. 13 in Kosovo.

live event, hopefully I'll be ready."

Because both the scenarios involved injured Soldiers, the training tested not only the QRF team's ability to quickly react to an incident and provide first aid but also its skills at calling in additional medical assistance, evacuating casualties from the scene and coordinating with local institutions in Kosovo such as the police.

The scenarios were wide in scope, so the training benefited the QRF Soldiers and also Camp Bondsteel's military police, aviation crews, medics and coordination with Kosovo police. The military police secured the incident scenes while awaiting assistance from the QRF; the air crews flew

helicopters to transport the QRF Soldiers and to recover simulated injured Soldiers; and the medics gained experience treating accident victims at the scene and moving them back to Camp Bondsteel.

"As Multi-National Task Force-East adjusts troop levels through [KFOR's Deterrent Presence plan], it is vital we exercise our ability to react quickly and decisively anywhere in Kosovo as a third responder behind Kosovo police and [the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo]," said Brig. Gen. Al Dohrmann, MNTF-E commander. "Today's exercises tested those actions and our coordination with Kosovo police. As we continue through changing times, these exercises validate the progress in Kosovo."

MNTF-E becomes Multinational Battle Group-East

By Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hagburg
I 16th Public Affairs Detachment

Kosovo Force (KFOR) Multi-National Task Force-East officially changed its name to Multinational Battle Group-East (MNBG-E) on Feb. 1, signifying the task force's transformation to a more responsive and flexible force structure. The change is in response to the ever-improving security situation throughout Kosovo.

According to Brig. Gen. Al Dohrmann, commander of the battle group, recent elections were successfully run in Kosovo and post-election issues were handled in a democratic manner. He said these are signs that the citizens of Kosovo are embracing change.

Positive changes across Kosovo have allowed KFOR to reshape and adapt to the improving security situation under KFOR's Deterrent Presence plan.

"This is not only a change in name; it's a

change in the way we will conduct operations," Dohrmann said. "The intent is that it will be more of a tactical reserve force, so that, if needed as a third responder behind the Kosovo police and [the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo], we can respond quickly and decisively anytime and anywhere called."

The change also means that KFOR, in the MNBG-E sector, will adjust the number of patrols it conducts in urban areas, where the institutions in Kosovo have proven their ability to provide security.

"This is a positive change that reflects the natural evolution of a successful mission," Dohrmann said. "In 1999, there were more than 50,000 Soldiers in the region along with many capabilities no longer needed. This is just another step along that path to a brighter future in Kosovo."



California National Guard Soldiers of Company C, 1-144th Maneuver Task Force, depart a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter near Crep, Kosovo.

PHOTO BY SPC. DREW BALSTAD

KFOR Soldiers earn Schützenschnur shooting badge

Story and photos by Spc. Drew Balstad
I 16th Public Affairs Detachment

American and German troops came together in Kosovo in January to participate in a challenging joint program of marksmanship training.

Soldiers of Company A, 1-144th Maneuver Task Force, traveled to Field Camp Prizren to earn the "Schützenschnur," or shooter's badge, from German troops stationed there. The Soldiers earned a badge by qualifying on two of three German weapons: the P8 pistol, MG3 machine gun and G36 rifle.

The badge is a medal and cord that U.S. Army Soldiers are authorized to wear on their Class A uniform. Earlier, on Jan. 13, Company A played host to 24 German Soldiers on Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, giving the German Soldiers a chance to qualify on American weapons including the M9 pistol, M249 Squad Automatic Weapon and M4 rifle.

The event was largely about weapons familiarization and marksmanship, but it involved much more than that.

"I think it's a two-fold story," said German Lt. Col. Torsten Alme, commander of Maneuver Battalion Prizren. "The first

one is that it's always good to learn about the weaponry of comrades, to know how other weapons work and how other procedures work. The other thing is to develop teamwork with comrades in the same mission, to get to know other opinions, understand their procedures and develop lasting friendships with allied nations."

The German Soldiers who participated in the event will soon leave Kosovo to return home, having come to the end of their tour.

"This event will be the last thing that the German Soldiers of our rotation participate in here," Alme said. "I am deeply honored and proud to have shared this experience with you all."

First Lieutenant Enrique Montreal of Montebello, Calif., the executive officer for Company A, hopes the event will continue with the new German Soldiers who arrive in Kosovo.

"I want to afford this opportunity to as many Soldiers as possible," Montreal said. "I think everybody would benefit, and it would only build strength and camaraderie between the two armies."



LEFT: A member of Company A, 1-144th Maneuver Task Force, fires a German MG3 machine gun during weapons qualification on Field Camp Prizren, Kosovo, while a German Soldier watches.

RIGHT: A bullet casing flies as 1st Lt. Enrique Montreal, executive officer for Company A, fires a German P8 pistol on Field Camp Prizren.

40th ID donations reach Kosovars in need

Story and photo by Sgt. Jesica Geffre
I 16th Public Affairs Detachment

Members of Kosovo Force (KFOR) 12 Multi-National Task Force-East assisted organizations such as the Albanian Red Cross in distributing donated linens to underprivileged families in December. The linens were donated by Soldiers of KFOR 11, which was led by the Cal Guard's 40th Infantry Division and departed Kosovo in November.

The KFOR 11 Soldiers were the most recent of many rotations to donate blankets, pillows and linens before returning to the United States.

Sgt. 1st Class Claire Lum Lee, a member of the Civil Affairs Liaison Team of the Hawaii-based 322nd Civil Affairs Brigade, helped coordinate the effort to get the donated items to the local groups that organized and distributed them.

"This type of event is important for giving people confidence that the nongovern-

mental organizations are capable of this distribution process," Lum Lee said. "It shows [that] the organizations and their government can take care of them."

Lum Lee said the Albanian Red Cross packaged the linens based on the needs of the families. She said her team simply ensures that donations are getting to the people most in need.

Local groups really drive the effort, according to Sgt. Heather Barta, part of the team that helped bring the nongovernmental organizations together.

"There is a pretty big need in this area," Barta said. "This worked well since we had a lot of blankets ready for donation and it's really starting to get cold."

Barta said assistance was provided by more than one group but that the Red Cross led the event.



Sgt. 1st Class Claire Lum Lee of the 322nd Civil Affairs Brigade, left, Selyete Zymeri of the Albanian Red Cross, Sgt. Heather Barta and Spc. Jennifer Kanahale display a donated blanket ready for distribution to disadvantaged residents near Novo Brdo, Kosovo. The blanket and other linens were donated by members of Kosovo Force (KFOR) 11 Multi-National Task Force-East, which was led by the Cal Guard's 40th Infantry Division. KFOR 11 left Kosovo in November.



AIRMEN OF

Annual

Senior NCO of the Year

Senior Master Sgt. Jason E. Red is an HH-60 aerial gunner assigned to the 129th Rescue Squadron, Moffett Federal Airfield, Calif. Red was born in Alameda, Calif., and graduated from Fremont Christian High School. He started his Air Force career as a munitions systems specialist in November 1989. He then completed back-to-back overseas tours at Aviano Air Base, Italy, and Kadena Air Base, Japan. In February 1999, after almost 10 years on active duty, Red joined the Air Force Reserve. He was selected to become an aerial gunner with the 305th Rescue Squadron in November of that year. He served for six years in the Air Force Reserve as both a traditional reservist as well as an Air Reserve technician. In January 2005, Red transitioned to the California Air National Guard, joining the 129th Rescue Wing as a traditional Guardsman. Red has deployed numerous times throughout his career in support of operations Desert Storm, Deny Flight, Provide Promise, Allied Force, Enduring Freedom, Southern Watch and Northern Watch. He is currently assigned as an aerial gunner section leader, supervising 10 air crew members. In his civilian occupation, Red is a senior special agent with the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He is recognized throughout the nation by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies as a subject matter expert on criminal street gangs and their methods of operations. Red is currently pursuing a degree in criminal justice through American University and a degree in aviation operations through the Community College of the Air Force. He and his wife, Jamie, have been married since 1990, and they have a daughter, Ava, born in 1994. Red's military awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Achievement Medal with five oak leaf clusters, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal with one Bronze Star, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and Kuwait Liberation Medal.

NCO of the Year



Master Sgt. Sara J. van Dalen is a knowledge operations management Group, Fresno Air National Guard Base, Calif. for her service as a technical sergeant in 2009. Van Dalen graduated from Coos Bay High School in Coos Bay, Ore. Upon graduation, she served at the 144th Operations Support Squadron, Fresno Air National Guard Base, Calif., where she served from 1992 until 1998. In February 1998, she was assigned to the 144th Operations Support Squadron on Sept. 11, 2001, for six months. In October 2005 she was assigned to the 144th Maintenance Group in May 2008. Van Dalen is currently assigned to the 144th Maintenance Group in May 2008. Van Dalen is currently assigned to the 144th Maintenance Group in May 2008.

Master Sgt. Sara J. van Dalen
 Knowledge Operations Management Craftsman
 144th Fighter Wing

Maj. Gen. Wade: Airmen a 'company of heroes'

By Senior Airman Nichole Ramirez
 146th Airlift Wing

Four California National Guard enlisted Airmen were honored Jan. 16 during a banquet in Sacramento as the "best of the best."

Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II, who has since stepped down as adjutant general of the Cal Guard, spoke to the character of the Air National Guard, referring to Airmen as a "company of heroes."

"My heroes are the Airmen who wear Air Force uniforms."

Maj. Gen. Dennis Wade, adjutant general of the California National Guard, represented justice for the Air National Guard.

"It's our enlisted Airmen who are the heroes of the Air National Guard."

THE YEAR

awards honor top enlisted members

First Sergeant of the Year

Master Sgt. Robert L. Taylor Jr. was born in Wilmington, Del. He is married to Michelle M. Coleman. He has two children, Leesha and Anthony. He graduated from Indian River High School in Frankford, Del., and later joined the Air Force in 1988. After completing basic training, he attended the Nuclear Weapons Specialist Course at Lowry Air Force Base, Colo., where he served as a student leader. Upon graduation, Taylor was assigned to the 394th Test Maintenance Squadron at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. There he became a Peacekeeper Reentry System Team member, assembling nuclear research and development components for Department of Energy weapon systems. In 1996, Taylor was named Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, Air Force Space Command. He later deployed to Araxos Air Base, Greece, supporting NATO missions during the Kosovo crisis. He returned to Vandenberg in 1999. Soon afterward he joined the California Air National Guard as a member of the 146 Airlift Wing and was assigned to the 146th Civil Engineer Squadron. In 2000, Taylor deployed to the United Arab Emirates as a heating and air conditioning journeyman in support of Operation Southern Watch. In 2001, Taylor volunteered for a tour with Operation Joint Aerospace, providing security at Los Angeles International Airport after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Taylor graduated from the Community College of the Air Force in 2006 with an associate of science degree in mechanical and electrical technology. In 2007, Taylor volunteered for a tour with Joint Task Force Vista, working in support of Operation Jump Start, defending this country's border as an engineer assigned to the Steel Castle Battalion, San Diego. In 2008, Taylor graduated from the First Sergeant Academy and became the first sergeant for the 146th Civil Engineer Squadron. Taylor spends many off-duty hours volunteering with the Knights of Columbus and other charities. Taylor is also attending Allan Hancock College, pursuing a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. Taylor is a recipient of the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal with one bronze star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Air Force Overseas Short Tour Ribbon, Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon with four oak leaf clusters, Air Force Professional Military Education Graduate Ribbon with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Training Ribbon, NATO Medal, California Good Conduct Medal with two devices, California State Service Ribbon and California Drill Attendance Ribbon with eight devices.



Master Sgt. Robert L. Taylor Jr.
First Sergeant
146th Airlift Wing



Senior Master Sgt. Jason E. Red
Aerial Gunner
129th Rescue Wing

itions management craftsman assigned to the 144th Maintenance Squadron. Recently promoted, she won the NCO of the Year award. Van Dalen was born in Salem, Ore., and graduated from Marshfield High School. She entered the Air Force and was stationed at Castle Air Force Base. Van Dalen entered the Air Force Reserve at Travis Air Force Base. Van Dalen enlisted with the California Air National Guard as a drill-status Guard member until being activated. She became an Active Guard Reserve member, transferring to the 129th Rescue Wing. Van Dalen has three children, Danielle, Adrienne and Stephen.

Airman of the Year



Senior Airman Joseph D. Rafferty
Cyber Transport Systems Technician
163rd Reconnaissance Wing

Senior Airman Joseph D. Rafferty was born in Sunnymead, Calif., which is now called Moreno Valley, and graduated from Moreno Valley High School. He enlisted in the Navy, active duty, in February 1997. He became an aviation ordnance technician, graduating from technical training in the top 10 percent of his class. With this accomplishment, he was able to select his next duty station. He selected the newly built amphibious carrier USS Bataan, attached to the same battle group as the USS Cole. Rafferty and his crew mates received many individual and team awards, including the Battle Sea Service Award, for the valiant efforts they demonstrated in providing medical aid, emergency transport and critical logistical support directly following a terrorist attack on the USS Cole while docked in port in Yemen. Rafferty received an honorable discharge from the Navy in January 2001. He joined the Air National Guard in July 2006 as a network systems specialist, following in his family's footsteps: Rafferty's father was a member of the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing for 22 years, and Rafferty has a brother and a sister who are current members of the wing. His experience and technical skills were instrumental in installing Predator communications infrastructure ahead of schedule, allowing the wing to meet aggressive timelines. His skills and capabilities continue to provide superb support for the communications infrastructure required for the Predator and other missions. Rafferty is a dedicated family man who is active in his church and provides numerous volunteer hours for after-school programs.

any of heroes'

the people sitting in this audience and overseas Air Force blue," Wade said.

is G. Lucas, commander of the California Air National Guard, said the 20 nominees for the 2009 awards are just the tip of the iceberg of the talent in the Air Force.

ed core that makes this train run," Lucas said.



TOP: Maj. Gen. John S. Harrel, far right, Lt. Col. Seth M. Goldberg, Lt. Col. John M. Murphy and Command Sgt. Maj. Charles A. Jolicouer review the companies of 1st Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment, during a change of command ceremony Jan. 30 at Fort Irwin National Training Center. ABOVE: Harrel, left, presents the colors of the 1-185th Armor to Murphy, the new commander, signifying the transfer of authority. Goldberg, the outgoing commander, was presented the Meritorious Service Medal for his leadership as battalion commander.

Photos by Staff Sgt. (CA) Robert Davison

A C-130 Hercules aircraft from the 145th Airlift Wing of the North Carolina Air National Guard drops flame-retardant on a burning southern California forest in October 2007. The fires, stoked by 100 mph Santa Ana winds, drove more than 300,000 people from their homes and charred nearly 500,000 acres. The North Carolina National Guard and the Wyoming National Guard each contributed two C-130 aircraft equipped with the Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS) to the fight. The California National Guard's 146th Airlift Wing equipped two of its C-130J planes with MAFFS II technology last year.

"Quenching the Flames" by Gil Cohen



An HH-60 Black Hawk helicopter assigned to Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, launches missile-avoidance decoy "flares" near Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Three Company C crews were recently recognized with awards by medevac associations for their brave and daring rescues in 2009 (see page 6).

Photo courtesy of I-168th GSAB





Gen. David Petraeus, chief of U.S. Central Command, presents an impact coin to Spc. Wesley Woodward for his exceptional work at the Bagram Theater Internment Facility in Afghanistan. Woodward, a member of the 670th Military Police Company, has maintained a truly professional demeanor despite detainees' repeated efforts to provoke an inappropriate response, said his commander, Capt. Leo Nolasco.

Photo by Capt. Leo Nolasco



Doris Lockness and 1st Lt. Brian D. Hirschorn, assistant operations officer at Mather Air Field, Calif., lean on a California National Guard Black Hawk helicopter Feb. 2 shortly after Lockness received the Bronze Medal of the Order of Saint Michael for her longtime efforts to promote and expand opportunities for women in military and civilian aviation. Lockness began flying in the 1930s then served one year in the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) during World War II, flying PT-19 and BT-13 aircraft. After WWII, Lockness became a flight instructor and performed at many air shows to bring attention to female pilots. Lockness, who has received numerous honors from aviation societies over the years, has amassed more than 10,000 hours of flight time and is rated for single- and multi-engine land/sea airplanes, rotorcraft helicopters, gyrocopters, free hot air balloons and gliders.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Flagg



Maj. Gen. Dennis G. Lucas, right, presents a certificate of appreciation to Master Sgt. Krista Hudson during a ceremony celebrating African-American/Black History Month at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento. Hudson, who serves Air Division as a resource management technician at JFHQ, said she has not had to deal with oppression or institutional discrimination, and she thanked all minority members who came before her for making that possible. "Thank you for not tolerating discrimination," she said.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. David J. Loeffler

Gen. John Bidwell embodied Californian spirit

By 1st Lt. Michael Anthony Rodriguez
Command Historian, California National Guard

California's military history is as vast as the Pacific Ocean whose coastline it shares. The fame that California holds is not only from military units that have fought major battles, but also from men who were larger than life. Some of the early figures of California military history were household names and could be recognized on any street corner long before the age of the Internet and the 24-hour news cycle. Trying to rank these titans of California history only leads to frustration. Gen. John Bidwell (1819-1900) is one of the men who fits this description, yet over time he has lost his place in the memories of California citizens.

Bidwell was born in New York in 1819. Making his way to Missouri and becoming a schoolteacher was not enough for the ambitious young man. In 1840 he joined an expedition to California, which he led as the first group of emigrants to travel the California Trail by wagon. It was known as the Bartleson-Bidwell Party.

Upon reaching California, Bidwell met John Sutter, who gave him a job running a mill near present-day Sacramento. When gold was discovered near Sutter's Fort, Bidwell took the gold to San Francisco to certify it was indeed gold. Upon his return Bidwell discovered gold on the Feather River and made a fortune.

His military career began with revolution. In 1846, Bidwell was one of the settlers who began the Bear Flag Revolt and established the California Republic. The republic lasted only 26 days, as the U.S. annexed California when the Mexican War broke out. Bidwell later joined the U.S. Army and moved up to the rank of major. In 1863 during the Civil War, Gov. Leland Stanford appointed him brigadier general of the California Militia's 5th Brigade.

Bidwell's political career was just as distinguished. In 1850 he was chosen by the first California governor to carry gold quartz to Washington, D.C., as the state's contribution to the Washington Monument; in 1849 he was elected state senator; and in 1864 he was elected to U.S. Congress. His wedding guests included U.S. President Andrew Johnson, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman. Bidwell unsuccessfully ran for governor of California in 1867 and 1875, and ran for the U.S. presidency in 1892.

His legacy was not only military, business and political success, but also his philanthropy. He founded the city of Chico and donated eight acres for the founding of Chico State University. In 1905 his widow, Annie Bidwell, gave 2,500 acres to Chico to create Bidwell Park, a fitting memorial to a man who dedicated his life to California and its citizens.



Gen. John Bidwell



"Tell him to go to Hell."
— Gen. Zachary Taylor
in response to Mexican
Gen. Antonio Santa Ana's
demand for the U.S. to
surrender during the
Mexican War.

BY THE NUMBERS

The number of months Zachary Taylor served as U.S. president before dying of stomach flu. He had previously served 40 years in the military, enlisting in 1808 and seeing his first action in the War of 1812.

16

FUN FACT

In 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican War. Mexico gave up much of its territory, including present-day Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah. It also relinquished any claim to Texas, which declared its independence from Mexico in 1836 and was annexed by the United States in 1845. Mexico received \$15 million for the land.

Soldier of the Year cites sister as inspiration

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Inigo
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

In a unique part of southern San Diego County, where the hustle and bustle of city life and the trappings of tourism are but a rustle in the cool breeze, is a city called Chula Vista. It is a place where children play freely outside, local schools have good old-fashioned rivalries, and family and country remain top priorities. It is also the place that bred up-and-coming California National Guard Soldier Pfc. Joaquin Brambila Montero.



Pfc. Joaquin
Brambila Montero

While getting ready to enter his senior year at Chula Vista High School, Joaquin looked toward his sister, Staff Sgt. Diana Montero, for inspiration. She was a Soldier in the National Guard, working as a recruiter and making a good life for herself. To young Joaquin, his staff sergeant sister was someone he wanted to emulate. He explained his feelings, and she got the ball rolling, helping her brother get in the military while still in high school.

First they addressed education, so Joaquin would place well on the military's entrance exam, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. Then they moved on to physical fitness. As a result, before Joaquin was 18 years old, he had already learned the ropes to succeeding in the Army because of his older sister, and he became a citizen-Soldier before he graduated high school. Now at 19, the younger Soldier has become someone for

the staff sergeant to look up to.

"That's my little brother," Diana said with pride in December after Joaquin was chosen as the 2009 California National Guard Soldier of the Year.

As a recruiter, Diana had seen many young people join the military, so by the time her little brother joined, it wasn't anything too new.

"Then he became a super Soldier and said I was his inspiration," she recalled. "I didn't know that I affected him in such a positive way.

"He has won the Soldier of the Year and is going on now to compete in the Western Regional (Soldier of the Year competition). Plus, he has so many goals. I'm just so proud of him."

Among other things keeping Joaquin busy, he is filling up his free time by honing his land navigation and live-fire skills, as well as practicing his push-ups, sit-ups and running. Plus, when he's not in the classroom learning criminal justice at South-



Soldiers participate in a five-mile ruck march during the Soldier of the Year and NCO of the Year competition last year on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.

western Community College, the military intelligence analyst focuses on learning general Soldier skills, military customs, and drill and ceremony.

Though the Soldier competitions are keeping Joaquin busy, he said he still has time to think about his personal goals. "I always wanted to go into law enforcement, and I thought the military would be a good stepping stone," he said.

He recently applied to become part of the Cal Guard's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug and applied to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol in the hopes of

one day becoming a federal agent.

While waiting to hear back about career opportunities, Joaquin said he would continue working on his fitness goals by training in mixed martial arts. He previously trained at the Alliance Training Center in Chula Vista, working on Muay Thai, Jui Jitsu and wrestling. He recently rededicated himself to mixed martial arts and said he hopes to get a couple of fights under his belt very soon.

"Being the Soldier of the Year makes me train harder in everything — go that extra step," he said.

PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS STEPHEN PAYER

ADT seeks shoes for needy Afghan children

The 40th Infantry Division Agribusiness Development Team works closely with Afghan villagers on a regular basis, allowing Soldiers to witness firsthand the needs of the people. Like so many Cal Guard units around the world, the ADT felt compelled to go above the call of duty to help the people it meets.

One of the most pressing needs is for Afghan children – particularly girls – to acquire shoes.

Soldiers of the 40th ID regularly hold veterinary civic action programs (VETCAP) to vaccinate and treat farmers' livestock. At those events, the sight of young girls walking barefoot over rocky terrain in cold, damp weather is all too common.

"When we do our VETCAPs and work in a given village area all day, it is very rewarding as it affords us the right conditions to mix with people, especially people in need," said Lt. Col. K. Max Velte, deputy commander of the ADT. "The mission is VETCAP, but in doing so, we come face to face with need. And the one need that has hit home with me is shoes for kids, especially little girls; they are so overlooked in this society. ... While boys do come shoeless sometime, the majority of shoeless kids are girls."

Velte and the ADT are spearheading an effort to provide at least 500 pairs of shoes for children in Kunar province.

To make a financial donation to the drive, please visit www.spiritofamerica.net.

Shoes can also be mailed to:
Lt. Col. Kurt Max Velte
40th ID ADT/Kunar
Camp Wright, Asadabad
APO AE 09354



Needy children, particularly girls, often go without shoes in Afghanistan, as seen during a recent veterinary civic action program conducted by the 40th Infantry Division Agribusiness Development Team. The team and its deputy commander, Lt. Col. K. Max Velte, are spearheading an effort to provide at least 500 pairs of shoes to children in Kunar province.

PHOTOS BY LT. COL. K. MAX VELTE

Vet clinics help Afghan livestock

By Capt. Tony Wickman
Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team

The California National Guard's 40th Infantry Division Agribusiness Development Team conducted a veterinary civic action program (VETCAP) Jan. 15 in Asadabad, Kunar province, Afghanistan, to help area residents with their livestock.

The ADT partnered with local leaders and veterinarians to administer vaccinations and vitamin treatments to 567 animals belonging to more than 100 villagers from the Gujjer and Pashtun tribes in the Kunar province villages of Woch Now, Argadel Kalay and Yargul Kalay.

This was one of 11 VETCAPs completed by the ADT between mid-November and mid-February. During those events, Soldiers and Afghan veterinarians treated more than 4,750 animals.

Local residents bring their livestock to the events to get treatment and information, but most importantly, the events help foster a positive relationship between coalition forces, government leaders and the Afghan people.

According to Fazlullah Wahidi, Kunar provincial governor, the VETCAP was necessary because of the importance of livestock in Afghanistan.

"Kunar is a province of agriculture and animals. We are in a mountain area, and the

biggest economy for people is their cows, sheep and goats," Wahidi said. "This is very good for our farmers today [because of] the medicines. Livestock for these people are cash money because they don't have businesses, they are farmers."

The governor said the people he talked to were happy to have the ADT's help.

"We are thankful to the people and government of America. They [provide] support across the province and work with us as a team," Wahidi said. "This is the first [VETCAP] here, and the people are very happy [the ADT is] here for them to benefit from this knowledge and experience."

The mobile clinic paired Afghan veterinarians with ADT members and allowed the veterinarians to work with villagers on how to properly administer future vaccinations.

Spc. Gerardo Robledo Jr., an ADT security forces member, said the VETCAP was important because it put Afghan veterinarians out in front of villagers.

"It's important because it gives the local people confidence in the workers from their communities. That way if something is wrong with their animals they can go to them and not come to us or wait for these VETCAPS," Robledo said. "They can go



Staff Sgt. John Carter of the California National Guard's 40th Infantry Division Agribusiness Development Team assists a veterinarian during a veterinary civic action program Jan. 15 in Asadabad, Kunar province, Afghanistan.

and find a local veterinarian to tell them what is wrong with their animals."

Lt. Col. K. Max Velte, ADT deputy commander, said the ADT also handed out other forms of humanitarian assistance to the villagers.

"The items included solar-powered radios,

water and small food items and livestock vitamin booster supplements," Velte said. "We needed to get the solar-powered radios out to them because of the three villages that came today, two are without power. Now with solar radios, the Gujjer villages are much more connected to information from the government center of Asadabad and the surrounding areas."

PHOTO BY LT. COL. K. MAX VELTE



SPECIAL FORCES: Do You Have What It Takes?

**Q&A with Sgt. 1st Class James Pera
Senior Weapons Sergeant
Company A, 5th Battalion,
19th Special Forces Group**



Sgt. 1st Class James Pera serves as lead mini-gunner for Special Forces operations in Baghdad, in support of Iraqi Special Operations Forces, during 2008.

How has Special Forces evolved during recent years?

The Special Forces community has changed tremendously since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The Special Forces Regiment has not only evolved out of the Cold War way of conducting business, but it has adapted to the battle spaces of various war fronts. A new type of counterinsurgency strategy, coupled with a Foreign Internal Defense mission, aims to not only meet and destroy the enemies of the United States, but also win the hearts and minds of countries and their people. This is done by our humane contributions to their societies. In other words, we have the powerful hand of force, with the equally powerful and merciful hand of peace.

What makes Special Forces different from any other Army unit?

The main differences are our organizational structure and our missions. We are small, elite units designed to accomplish more with less. A Special Forces company is commanded by a major, and the company's intent is carried out by the company's sergeants major. The company has six A-Teams and one B-Team, which handles logistical and support needs. Each A-Team is composed of a captain, a warrant officer, a master sergeant, an intelligence noncommissioned officer (NCO), four E-7 seniors and four E-6 juniors. A Special Forces company runs at the same operational tempo as a regular Army battalion. Our specialized military occupational specialty training and physical standards qualify us for many unique missions. Considered a tier-one combat effective unit, Special Forces teams are used in direct action missions in combat zones to go after high-value targets, such as Al-Qaeda operatives and other wanted war criminals. We're also commonly used abroad to train and bolster the efforts of allied foreign military elements. Many times we're called in after natural disasters to employ medical and communication resources the rest of the military isn't able to get its hands on. Our standard operating procedures are shaped from team cohesion and common sense that fits the battle space. In other words, we think outside the box to get the job done.

Why is the Special Forces mission so important?

Special Forces is the eyes and ears of the battlefield. They are also America's unofficial, lowest-paid diplomats. In a Special Forces company, for example, an E-6 can be the liaison to a foreign or allied general. This same young NCO can also be tasked to lead a company of foreign troops in training or combat. The Special Forces mission of Foreign Internal Defense can make or break a mission or major campaign. One example was the early hours of the war on terrorism in Afghanistan. Special Forces teams met up with the Northern Alliance and set the battle space for the invasion. A-Team members infiltrated and made key link-ups that allowed the coordination of ground-to-air communications for airstrikes and airborne operations to occur. Without this battlefield force multiplier, our goals would be much more difficult to achieve.

What type of Soldier are you looking for in Special Forces?

Special Forces is looking for self-motivated service members who want to be the best at what they do. We want good team players who are mentally and physically fit. A 300 Army Physical Fitness Test score isn't good enough. The Soldier should be able to have a bad day and score a 300. We want the Soldier to be disciplined



Special Forces soldiers participate in Operation Cobra Gold in 2006 alongside Thai Special Forces troops in Thailand. Soldiers frequently engage in friendship building while partaking in Foreign Internal Defense mission activities.

in and out of uniform. We want him to train on his own, to push himself to the edge and back. We don't want the loud, look-at-me type that thinks his evaluation reports are what make a Soldier. We will find out by his execution under strenuous conditions if the ink matches the man.

What's the greatest challenge in becoming a member of Special Forces?

Each Soldier must prepare himself mentally for the strain and pain of becoming part of the elite. Special Forces needs men who can adapt to any situation and overcome any obstacle.

How long does it take to earn your Special Forces Tab?

There are various phases to the Special Forces Course. On average, for someone who's already an officer or enlisted member, it will take up to a year to a year and a half to earn their tab and be ready to operate.

What's the most important element of successfully joining Special Forces?

The most important element is to have the willingness to be put into difficult situations, where an Army manual can't give you the answer, and to have the ability to figure out those situations on your own. We need men with common sense. With that, they have to be able to complete the mission and not bring shame upon their team, group and country.

UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

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March 27 at 6 a.m.**

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Educational opportunities for Air Guard members

By **Capt. Bevin Stokesberry**
HHD, Joint Force Headquarters

The Community College of the Air Force is available to all Air National Guard members. The Community College of the Air Force offers applied science degrees and other credentialing programs that enhance mission readiness, recruiting, retention and support of career transitions of Airmen.

Credit for Air Force Safety Center training is combined with civilian education at the Community College of the Air Force and can result in the awarding of a two-year degree. The associate's degrees can then be transferred to accepting four-year institutions to count toward a bachelor's degree. All recipients of Community College of the Air Force two-year degrees need to research and verify which institutions will accept their degree and which ones may require further coursework to complete initial two-year requirements.

The Community College of the Air Force is accredited by the Commission of College of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and has awarded more than 335,000 Associate in Applied Science degrees since 1977.

For further information visit the college's Web site, www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf, call 334-953-2014 or contact your local base education and training manager.

KFOR Soldiers grow physically, mentally through MMA

Story and photo by **Spc. Drew Balstad**
I 16th Public Affairs Detachment

The fighter stood in the corner of the ring, looking at her opponent on the other side.

"Stay focused," she told herself. "This is serious. This is what you want. This is what you've been fighting for."

She thought about the 4,000 people watching her: "There are people here that want to see me fail. These people hate me, and they want to watch me fail. They want to laugh at me failing.

"Watch. I'll prove you wrong."

The fighter is Sgt. Autumn Richardson of Company C, 1-144th Maneuver Task Force, Multinational Battle Group-East (MNBG-E) in Kosovo. Richardson, 26, from Vista, Calif., is a competitor in the ever-growing sport of mixed martial arts (MMA). She has been actively sparring and training since high school and currently trains with Team Quest, a prominent MMA gym. She was the gym's featured fighter in August 2009.

"I guess I'm kind of an adrenaline junkie. I've always liked things that are hardcore and have that adrenaline rush. And [MMA is] something I'm good at and passionate about," she said.

Richardson has watched MMA and trained in the sport since her father introduced her to it as a small child. As she grew older, she found the lessons she learned in MMA translated to her military career as well.

"Mixed martial arts teaches you mind over matter, and the military teaches you that as well. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter," Richardson said. "Your mind is so powerful and strong, and mixed martial arts teaches you to focus and take your time and train hard."

Richardson has used this mantra to further her career. She is the only female rifleman in her task force, and she has the best Army Physical Fitness Test score, with 342 points on the test's extended scale.

Training in Modern Army Combatives, which incorporates fighting techniques popularized by MMA, has led other MNBG-E members to get into the sport.

Staff Sgt. Michael Rider of Paso Robles, Calif., also with the 1-144th, started training actively in MMA after taking an Army combatives class almost three years ago. Rider said the training has improved him as a Soldier through increased conditioning, and it has helped him overall as a person as well.

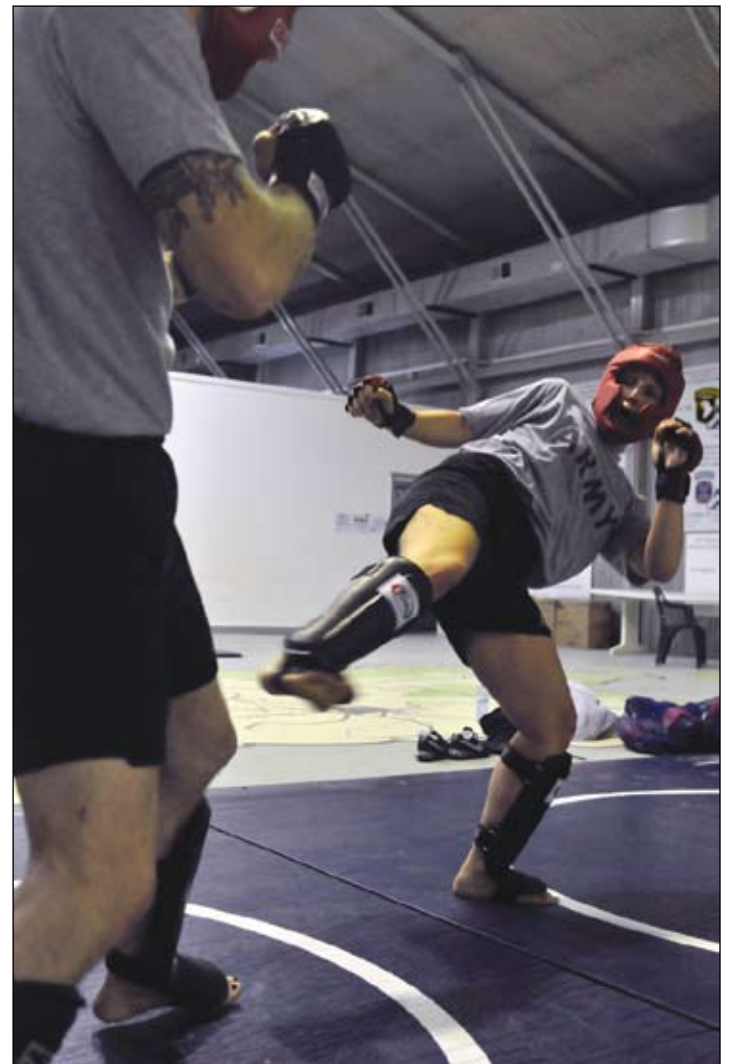
"I have a lot more confidence in what I do, even when I talk to people. I used to be kind of a quiet person," Rider said. "You learn this style, and as you start to grow and grow, your confidence level starts to rise. ... It's kind of like a promotion in the Army."

Richardson and another Soldier in the 1-144th have harnessed their love for MMA and the military to form a business that helps Soldiers who want to get into the fight game.

"To find fights and help them find sponsors is a big thing that we want to do, because it's hard while you're in the military to be able to get fights," Richardson said. "I mean, a lot of people are there to support the military, but going about doing it with our time restrictions and stuff like that is harder."

Richardson and Rider are now teaching classes for MNBG-E Soldiers looking to improve their fight skills or conditioning.

"It will start off slow until people get their basic stances, and then it will get very progressive," Richardson said. "It's going to be a great workout whether people want to go just to work out, or if people want to learn mixed martial arts."



Sgt. Autumn Richardson, a Soldier with the Cal Guard's I-144th Maneuver Task Force in Kosovo, throws a kick toward Staff Sgt. Michael Rider, a fellow member of the I-144th. Both Soldiers said mixed martial arts has helped them physically and mentally.

A new career path: Turning job loss into opportunity

By Col. David B. Nickels
CNG Manpower and Personnel Directorate (J1)



California has been one of the hardest-hit states during our nation's recent economic downturn. The domino effect created by the real estate crash a few years ago has reached small and large cities throughout California. City, county and state budgets have felt the pinch of shrinking tax revenues as some cash-strapped citizens have fled the state in search of employment or after the loss of their home.

But as is the case in many periods of economic and social change, there is also opportunity. California Guard members and their families who find themselves searching for employment could view this involuntary change in their status as a chance to do a comprehensive re-assessment of the direction they would like to go in their next phase of employment.

Is this a time to start completely anew?

An unexpected change in employment status can be used as motivation for a Guard member to finally go back to college to finish a degree or pursue a new profession. Programs such as the recently created California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program (EAAP) may help newly unemployed Guard members change the direction of their careers. The EAAP pays for up to 100 percent of fees at most University of California or California State University institutions and most California community colleges. Likewise the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill may provide an underemployed or recently laid-off Guard member a path to a new career. Going back to school and leveraging the veterans assistance and educational programs at junior colleges and universities could be another way to use this transition period to finally leap into a career field you may have been considering for years.

Looking for a job?

For Guard members or their family members who find themselves unemployed, there are many job-searching resources available online, some of which are listed below. A few of those listed may be a bit unconventional, but it could be worth your time to at least click on a site and consider its benefits.

California National Guard jobs — These links will provide information on jobs within the CNG's Counterdrug Task Force as well Active Guard and Reserve positions, federal technician postings, state personnel listings, veteran programs, tour announcements and volunteering for deployments:

www.calguard.ca.gov/Pages/Jobs.aspx
www.calguard.ca.gov/cdtf/Pages/Jobs.aspx
www.calguard.ca.gov/cahr/Pages/jobmain.aspx
www.calguard.ca.gov/casp/Pages/default.aspx
www.calguard.ca.gov/Pages/adsw.aspx
www.calguard.ca.gov/g3/Pages/Volunteer.aspx

Employment services for veterans provided by the California Economic Development Department:
www.edd.ca.gov/Jobs_and_Training/Services_for_Veterans.htm

Construction jobs for vets: www.helmetstohardhats.org

Free employment services: <http://hireahero.org>

Resources for employers and employees:
<http://hirevetsfirst.dol.gov>



Office of Veterans Business Development:
www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/ovbd/index.html

Troops to Teachers: www.mwttt.com

Jobs for the federal government: www.usajobs.com

Veterans job board:
www.military.com/Careers/Home/0,13373,,00.htm

One-stop employment site: www.militaryhire.com

National Veterans Foundation job listing:
<http://nvf.org/resources/job/index.php>

Additional job search sites

caljobs.ca.gov: If you are granted unemployment insurance refund checks in California, you will be required to register with this job board. It is also good for searching jobs by region.

linkedin.com: This popular professional networking site enables users to post their professional profile, connect with professional contacts from their past and have those contacts post recommendations.

craigslist.org: An informal but useful site for finding local jobs in a variety of disciplines. There is no listing fee for employers, so there is a large variety of opportunities. Jobs are organized by discipline and region.

indeed.com: This job search Web site will search online job boards and company Web sites for you and collect results. Search by job title or other keywords like skills or company names.

simplyhired: A job search engine similar to **indeed.com**.

jobfox.com: This Web site requires users to create a profile and answer a series of questions to determine the type of position an applicant is best-suited for. As jobs come up that match your information, you will be "introduced" to the prospective employer.

Other online resources

There are discipline-specific job boards for groups such as engineers, members of creative industries, information technology professionals, medical societies, alumni organizations and others. If there is a professional organization for your discipline, it may have its own job board.

Professional staffing and employment/recruiting agencies often have their own job boards with postings from their clients.

Large firms also often have job listings on their Web sites and sometimes accept online applications through their sites.

Finally, job conferences that are hosted periodically by municipalities are a great way to meet face-to-face with a multitude of employers at one location at one time.

Two upcoming job fairs are listed below. Most of these types of job fairs do not charge a fee from the job-seeker, but they may require the job-seeker to register on the conference Web site.

Orange County Career Expo
 March 16, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Holiday Inn & Conference Center
 7000 Beach Blvd, Buena Park, CA 90620

Sacramento Career Expo
 April 7, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Holiday Inn Sacramento I-80
 5321 Date Avenue
 Sacramento, CA 95841

Additional job workshops and fairs can be found on the Employment Development Department Web site:
www.edd.ca.gov/jobs_and_training/Job_Fairs_and_Events.htm

Visit www.goldenfuturecareerfairs.com/JobSeekers.html before attending a career fair to read useful tips on preparation, attire, interviewing and follow-up.



A 129th Rescue Wing air crew flies an HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopter over Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, on June 6.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GUILLERMO RIVERA

News & Benefits

BG Ellsworth named acting AAG

Brig. Gen. Mary J. Kight, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, named Brig. Gen. Kevin G. Ellsworth to serve as acting assistant adjutant general until a final selection is made for that position.

Kight served as assistant adjutant general until last month, when she succeeded Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II as adjutant general.

Ellsworth is director of the Joint Staff of the California National Guard.

AF Web site gets families fit

In conjunction with the start of the FitFamily initiative, the Air Force Services Agency has launched a family fitness Web site as part of the Year of the Air Force Family.

FitFamily is a goal-incentive program and is open to all active duty, Reserve and Guard members, Department of Defense and civilian families, retired military members, honorably discharged veterans with 100 percent service-connected disability, and former or surviving military spouses and their family members. To enroll, log onto www.usaffitfamily.com and click on "Register My Family." The system will email a password to each family member.

New policy authorizes social media access with caveats

Attention all Facebookers, Twitter tweeters and YouTubers: A new Department of Defense policy authorizes Guard members and employees to access those and other Web sites from nonclassified government computers, as long as it doesn't compromise operational security or involve prohibited activities.

Defense Department officials issued the policy Feb. 26, establishing consistent rules for all military members and employers.

Marriage enrichment, Family Readiness courses in Petaluma, San Diego

The Cal Guard's Operation Ready Families Program will host a Marriage Enrichment Seminar on May 22-23 in San Diego and a Family Readiness Course on March 20-21 in Petaluma, Calif.

For more information on either event, contact June Sato at 916-361-4957. For registration information, visit www.calguard.ca.gov/ReadyFamilies.

129th saves snowshoer

Air National Guardsmen from the 129th Rescue Wing (RQW), recently back from a deployment to Afghanistan, conducted a successful search and rescue mission of a missing snowshoer in Calaveras County on Feb. 7.

Responding to a call from the Calaveras County Sheriff's office, pararescue teams and two HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters made contact with a ground search party that had found the snowshoer's tracks. The 29-year-old man went missing near Camp Connell after departing on a snowshoe trip.

A ground search party representative flew with 129th crews while another followed the snowshoer's path. The ground party eventually found the snowshoer and led him to a location where the helicopters could safely pick him up. While helicopters hovered overhead, pararescuemen hoisted from the helicopters to the ground to pick up the snowshoer and the ground search party representative. The helicopters flew to Columbia Airport, Calif., where they landed and transferred the patient to an ambulance.

This rescue brings the total number of people saved by the 129th RQW to 908.

DID YOU KNOW...

... some physical fitness standards are changing this summer?

The standard for the Air Force fitness test will be revised effective July 1. In the new program, there will be no differences between traditional Guard members and Active Guard Reserve (AGR) members. Age groupings will change to 10-year groups (younger than 30 years, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 and 60 or older). Airmen will be required to meet minimum component requirements and still be required to have a composite score of 75 to pass the test. Further information on the fitness test can be found in Air Force Instruction 36-2905.

The standard for the Army requires that AGR Soldiers take a record fitness test at least twice per calendar year. The minimum separation between each test is four months if only two tests are administered per year, but the intent is to test every six months. M-Day Soldiers are required to take a record Army Physical Fitness Test once per calendar year, and it must be at least eight months from the previous test, assuming only one test is given each year. Commanders may administer an APFT as often as they wish, but they must specify beforehand if it is for record. Further information on the APFT can be found in Army Regulation 350-1, paragraph 1-24.



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PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. (CA) ROBERT DAVISON

The Color Guard comes to attention at the beginning of a change of command ceremony for 1st Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment, at Fort Irwin on Jan. 30. Lt. Col. Seth M. Goldberg passed authority for the battalion to Lt. Col. John M. Murphy. Goldberg was honored with the Meritorious Service Medal for his achievements as battalion commander.

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