

GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard

Guard kids:
Design April's cover!
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Warm welcome

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Leadership Corner

Make the most of annual training

Major General David S. Baldwin



This summer marks a significant milestone in the recent history of the California National Guard, as our units will conduct their first consolidated annual training (AT) since the beginning of the global war on terrorism more than a decade ago. During those recent years, duty continuously called our Soldiers and Airmen overseas, necessitating a shift in our training plans and objectives. With the end of the war in Iraq and the drawdown of forces in Afghanistan, we can now return to our pre-war cycle of events that incorporate all of our lessons learned during the last decade, culminating in a massive joint exercise in June.

Since 2001, the California National Guard has deployed Soldiers and Airmen more than 40,000 times, but we have never mobilized a force as large as the one that will descend on Camp Roberts, Camp San Luis Obispo, Fort Hunter-Liggett and Fort Irwin in June. Our recent mobilizations have sent hundreds of troops at a time to places like Iraq and Afghanistan, where they typically fell in on previously established bases that were well-equipped to sustain them.

More than 14,000 Soldiers will participate in the upcoming consolidated AT, requiring a different level of planning and a massive support effort involving Army, Air Force and California State Military Reserve personnel. Designed specifically to handle such a task, the Cal Guard's new Joint Task Force JRSOI — Joint Reception, Staging, Onward movement and Integration — will establish three locations throughout the state to process participating Soldiers.

The task force's headquarters is composed of 115th Regional Support Group Soldiers, 162nd Combat Communications Group (CCG) Airmen and California State Military Reserve members from both branches. It is capable of

quickly standing up six additional joint reception centers around the state to coordinate the movement of CNG and other military troops, delivering ready responders to incident sites anywhere in California.

In June the forces will be delivered to four installations around the state to respond to a three-day, multi-echelon scenario requiring Guard support of domestic civil authorities. That will be followed by a three-day warfighting scenario and a further week of training at the brigade, battalion or company level.

Our Air wings will conduct separate AT events at locations throughout the state and nation.

The 129th Rescue Wing will participate in two large personnel-recovery exercises — Sentry Aloha in Hawaii and Soaring Angel at Fort Hunter-Liggett, Calif. The 162nd CCG also will travel to Hawaii for hurricane-response exercise Makani Pahili.

The 144th Fighter Wing in Fresno, which recently converted to the F-15 Eagle jet, will involve its entire wing in an exercise of its ability to perform wartime missions from a deployed location. The 146th Airlift Wing and 163rd Reconnaissance Wing will send civil engineering contingents to Wisconsin and Massachusetts, respectively, while the remainder of the 146th will focus on preparing for an upcoming deployment to Kuwait and the 163rd will work to finalize its upgrade to the MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft.

It is incumbent upon every Soldier and Airman, regardless of rank, to do their part to maximize their training time for themselves, their unit and the Guard as a whole. Every troop is crucial to their unit, and every unit plays a

vital role in the Cal Guard's response to domestic emergencies and foreign contingencies.

Your readiness starts with you, and it is essential to the security of this state and nation, as well as to the safety of yourself and your fellow Guard members. That means preparing today to make sure your requisite training, qualifications and paperwork are completed well in advance of your unit's AT. If you are unable to participate in AT because of a failure to complete your schooling, licensing or physical training, your unit will suffer.

When you show up at AT, leave your civilian mindset at home and come prepared with a warrior attitude that will enable you to exceed your leaders' expectations and readily absorb information. Immerse yourself in the training, but keep a critical eye, taking note of bumps in the road and identifying processes for improvement. That information will be compiled in after-action reports and analyzed extensively to capitalize on your unit's experiences.

Each training weekend or AT period is a chance to improve our skills and prepare for the next state emergency or federal conflict. As a reserve force, we must take full advantage of every opportunity and ensure we are cost-effective, time-effective and rigorous in our pursuit of excellence.

The civil-response and warfighting drills scheduled for AT will demonstrate how each CNG unit works as a vital piece of a larger whole in executing our responsibilities; as a member of one of those units, your contributions are a necessary part of that larger operation. Don't underestimate the importance of your upcoming training event or your role in making it a success. Only by preparing today can we live up to our own expectations and those of California's citizens.

Spc. Robert DeCosta of the CNG's 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, provides security for the landing zone of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from the CNG's 1st Battalion (Air Assault), 140th Aviation Regiment, during the units' annual training (AT) at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., on July 22. More than 14,000 Soldiers from every CNG brigade will gather at Fort Hunter-Liggett and three other sites across California in June for the Cal Guard's first consolidated AT in more than a decade. Photo by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer



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Articles:

- ★ Articles range from 350 to 2,000 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.

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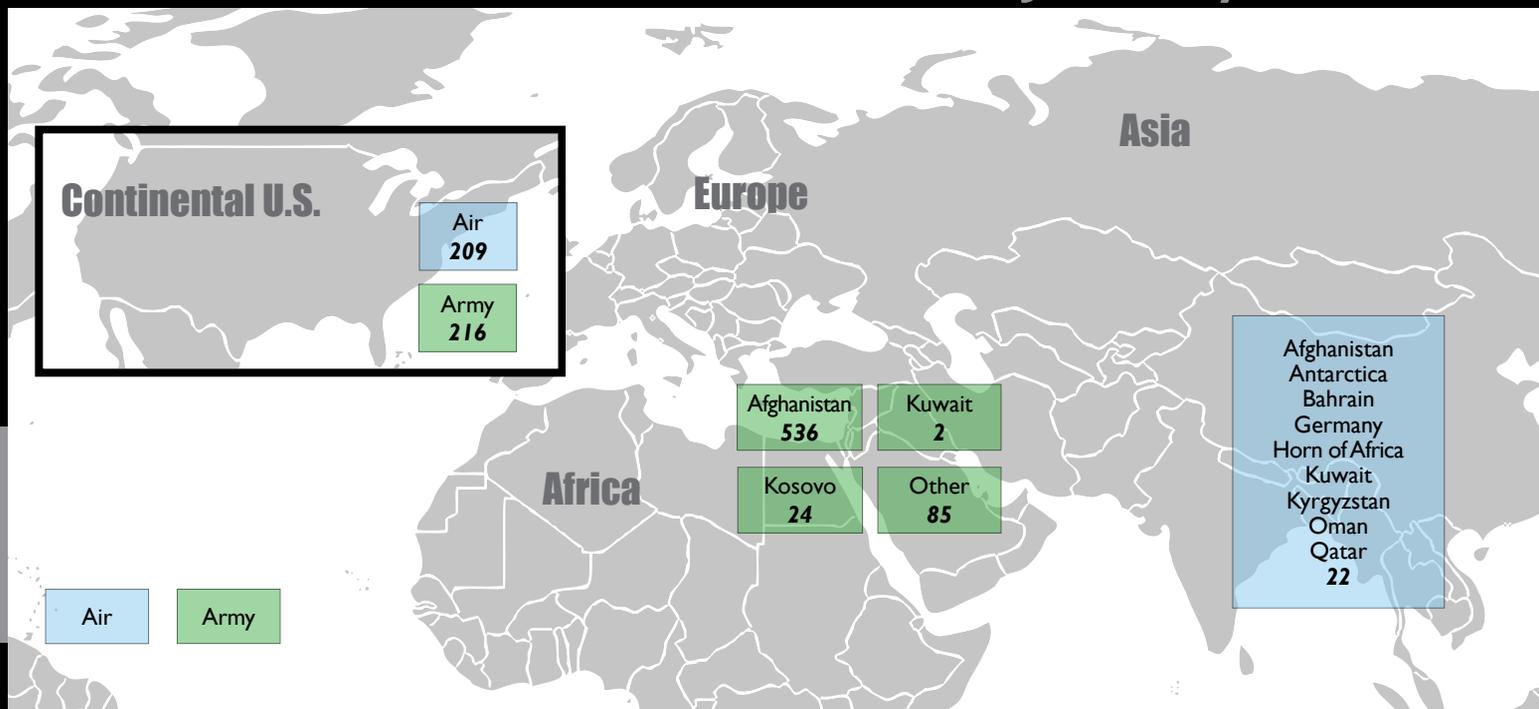
Cover Shot



Photo by
Master Sgt. Julie Avey

Lyonel Mancilla, 4, leaps into the arms of his father, Staff Sgt. Adan Mancilla of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, after the Soldier surprised his children Dec. 11 at the San Diego Zoo following a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan.

California National Guard mobilizations as of January 2014



163rd brings RPA to variety of joint missions

The MQ-1 remotely piloted aircraft boasts a wide range of capabilities for foreign and domestic ops

By SENIOR AIRMAN MICHAEL QUIBOLOY
163rd Reconnaissance Wing

One asset. Infinite possibilities.

From civil support to joint forces warfighting, much of the future of the Air National Guard's dual mission lies squarely on the wings of the increasingly useful remotely piloted aircraft (RPA).

The 163rd Reconnaissance Wing's MQ-1 Predator RPA has been utilized in a growing range of operations, most recently in training with the crew of the Navy's USS Ronald Reagan off the California coast Nov. 6-13.

The sister services united in an effort to test the ship's radar-tracking systems and provide the crews a chance to acquaint themselves with joint operations, said Lt. Col. Andre Boyd, chief of wing plans for the 163rd. In addition to standard intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support, the wing showed the USS Ronald Reagan the video capabilities the Predator can offer and tested the ship's ability to receive the RPA's video feed.

The exercise with the Navy came just weeks after collaborative training efforts between the 163rd and several Army units, which also made use of the MQ-1's unique capabilities.

Coordinating through the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing Formal Training Unit cooperated with Army troops in a live-fire "buddy-lase" exercise in October. The buddy-lase tactic uses the Predator's laser targeting system to enable an Army missile fired from an AH-64 Apache helicopter to strike a target with extreme precision. Employed at war, this tactic would be safer than a manned aircraft providing the buddy-lase, said Maj. Jeffrey Shaw, a pilot with the 163rd.

MQ-1 pilot and sensor operator trainees saw their training come to fruition with real artillery during the exercise,



Senior Airman Thomas Thornburg of the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing directs an MQ-1 remotely piloted aircraft after a training flight in 2012 at the Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville.

and they "[learned] to speak each other's language," Shaw said, as each branch uses different terms on the radio.

The 163rd worked in a different type of joint environment in August, when it teamed with the U.S. Forest Service and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) to battle the Rim Fire, which scorched more than 220,000 acres in and around Yosemite National Park. History was made during that mission, as it was the first time a National Guard RPA was used to aid a domestic firefighting effort.

The MQ-1 flew over the massive blaze for upwards of 20

hours a day, relaying real-time infrared and electro-optic video to incident commanders on the ground. This enabled them to more effectively combat the fire and ensure the safety of hand crews on the ground.

"In the first 30 to 45 minutes [of viewing the Predator video feed], I saw more of the fire than I had in four days of hiking it," said Cal Fire Capt. Jeremy Salizzoni. "We were able to isolate, identify and act upon spot fires that would have become extensions of the fire in minutes, not hours.

"I don't think we've even scratched the surface of its capabilities for public safety," he added.

Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

146th SecFor qualify on M-240B

Security Forces Airmen test out machine gun equipment upgrade

By SENIOR AIRMAN NICHOLAS CARZIS
146th Airlift Wing

Members of the 146th Airlift Wing Security Forces Squadron spent a week training and qualifying to operate heavy weapon machinery at Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., in December.

The base's remote firing range is hidden in the hills of Central California, with targets up to 500 yards away scattered across the shooter's line of sight. The weather was cold and unpleasant in December, but the 146th Airmen didn't appear to mind: This is the type of training they look forward to.



"Being afforded the training opportunity at Camp San Luis Obispo is great for us proximity-wise, but Camp San Luis Obispo really differentiates itself because of the inclination and declination the shooting range offers," Master Sgt. Michael Stevens said.

The Airmen paired up in groups of two and took turns firing the M-240B, a belt-fed, two-man-operated machine gun. Working together, the Airmen relied upon each other to effectively operate the weapon. The Airman who was not firing the weapon would suggest adjustments when the shooter was off target, and the pair would work together to change the gun's red hot barrels and replace ammunition.

"This was a new training scenario for the Airmen here, as they were able to utilize the new M-192 tripods," Stevens said. "The tripods are a great upgrade compared to the earlier, phased-out M-220 version. Qualifying on the new equipment is important, and we are happy that the 146th Airlift Wing was one of the first Air National Guard units authorized to get them."

With the training opportunity provided by Camp San Luis Obispo, the members of the 146th Security Forces Squadron will be ready and confident to jump into the fight when needed.

"The support staff at Camp San Luis Obispo is of the highest quality and caliber," Stevens said. "The professionalism that was extended to us was excellent."



ABOVE: Staff Sgt. Steven Goss of the 146th Airlift Wing observes as Airmen operate an M-240B machine gun Dec. 10 during a heavy weapons certification course at Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif. LEFT: Tech. Sgt. Aaron Burgess fires an M-240B at Camp San Luis Obispo.

Photos by Senior Airman Nicholas Carzis

Afghan forces take the lead in Uruzgan

79th IBCT mentorship aids transfer of security responsibility to local police in Afghan province

By MAJ. HAYDN BARLOW
Australian Army

Law enforcement in Afghanistan's Uruzgan province has reached a state of independence, according to a senior coalition police adviser and CNG officer.

Lt. Col. Jon R. Siepmann of the 184th Security Force Assistance Team says the Southern Afghan province is now controlled by local Afghan security forces.

"They are the clear center of gravity for providing security," he said. "The police are on the front lines of this fight, manning the checkpoints and interacting with the population on a daily basis."

Siepmann is one of about 70 members of the CNG's 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team who deployed in April to support Operation Enduring Freedom. A portion of those Soldiers made up the 184th SFAT, with the remainder serving as part of Combined Team Uruzgan, an Australian-led force that mentors Afghan National Security Forces.

The 79th IBCT Troops returned to California in December, having successfully overseen the transition to full police independence in Uruzgan.

"It is certainly a big achievement, and the progress in this province in recent years has been particularly impressive," Siepmann said. "The security forces are denying the enemy access to the district centers and the ability to move freely in the province."

"This is police ground now."

Siepmann said there are still valleys and remote areas with Taliban influence, but

those are not a major concern.

"At the end of the day, they don't matter," he said, "because they are not where the resources are, not on lines of communication and not where the people live."

Partnering in recent years with a mix of U.S., Australian, Dutch, French and Slovakian troops, Afghan security forces in Uruzgan have steadily increased their reach and taken on more responsibility. They have graduated from the days of living and fighting side-by-side with a coalition unit and now execute independent operations.

Combined Team Uruzgan will soon leave the province altogether.

Siepmann attributed Uruzgan's success, in part, to local leader Matiullah Khan, who has grown to be one of the country's most effective provincial chiefs of police.

"In a place like this, you need strong leadership," Siepmann said. "Without it you lose direction and consistency, and consistent behavior from the police is vitally important in a counterinsurgency fight. The most important thing they have done is gain the support and trust of the population."

"Brigadier General Khan is from this province; this is his home," he added. "He is responsible not just to the Ministry of Interior, but also to the community, and that makes a difference."

Siepmann said the 184th SFAT includes three Cal Guardsmen who work in law enforcement in their civilian lives, which lent his team credibility.

"Things like evidence-based operations



Photo by Sgt. Jessi Ann McCormick.

would be difficult to teach if we did not have those skills already in the team," he said. "But more than that, the Afghan police feel more comfortable when they know they have fellow officers from agencies like the Los Angeles Police Department advising them on police work."

One of the SFAT's unlikely contributions to the police force was helping them overcome Uruzgan's physical isolation.

"We brought them the internet," Siepmann said. "This has taken them from a system that relied on hand delivery over hundreds of kilometers to one that can send and receive information from Kabul and Kandahar instantly. ... Opening lines of communication can have an incredible impact."

With some advisers focused on improving the functionality of the police headquarters in the provincial capital Tarin Kot, other members of the SFAT contributed to training Afghan police officers.

"Our principle achievement was to facilitate formal instruction for nearly 300 police in areas like logistics, bomb detection, medical treatment and evidence collection," Siepmann said. "These more refined skills are still lacking throughout their force, but they have made significant gains in a number of critical areas."

"For the first time ever, they took evidence from a bomb blast, processed it effectively and transported it to the crime lab in Kabul," he said. "This had never happened."

As his tour came to a close, Siepmann said he sees hope for the people of Uruzgan.



Photo by Cpl. Harold Flynn

TOP: Soldiers with the CNG's 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team prepare to raise the U.S. flag at Multinational Base Tarin Kot in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, on Aug. 5. **ABOVE:** Sgt. Jeffery Nelan of the 79th provides security during a leadership engagement at the Afghan Uniformed Police headquarters in Uruzgan on Sept. 25.

"Tarin Kot is a clean city. I rarely see garbage, but I do see constant productivity. There are paved roads where only a few years ago there were none."

"The markets are vibrant," he said. "And so are the people."



Maj. Bobby Britton of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team returns home to San Diego on Dec. 10 following a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan.

Santa brought gifts

79th IBCT makes it home for the holidays

By MASTER SGT. JULIE AVEY
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

Watching. Waiting. "Hurry up, Dad!" Serenity Britton, 4, says to herself, anxiously scanning the arriving passengers at San Diego International Airport on Dec. 10. Finally, Serenity spots her dad, runs, jumps into his arms and refuses to let go of his neck.

"We're not only happy to have Dad home for Christmas but happy he's home in time for Serenity's fifth birthday," said Sherri Britton, wife of Maj. Bobby Britton. "We didn't make any drastic plans for the holi-

days as we weren't sure if he would be home or not."

Britton was one of about 70 Soldiers with the California Army National Guard's 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team who returned to California in December, brightening the holidays for the troops and their families.

Staff Sgt. Adan Mancilla and his wife made Dec. 10 a special day just for them and postponed his reunion with their children.

"It was difficult as we drove by the house," he said later. "I wanted to just say, 'Never mind our plan.' I wanted

to run in the house and give my children hugs."

Mancilla restrained himself, though, and surprised his kids the next day at the San Diego Zoo. During the Bird Show exhibit, the kids were called on stage as volunteers and were shocked and overjoyed to see their dad take the stage as well. They quickly ran to hug him as the crowd erupted in cheers and tears.

"This was fantastic. They were so surprised," said Adam's wife, Neisy. "We are so relieved to have him home safe with the family for the holidays."

"Sometimes people do not realize the sacrifice families go through," she continued. "Some of the amenities we have in this world are be-

cause of him and people like him. It feels good he is creating these opportunities for others."

In Afghanistan the 79th troops mentored Afghan security forces and police.

"The experience working with another country and culture was rewarding," Mancilla said.

The Soldiers made calls home when they first arrived in the United States, but there's no substitute for meeting in person.

"It made all the difference when I received his phone call," said Jennifer Munoz, fiancée of Spc. Marco Nunez. "Of course now that he is here with us for Christmas it is even more outstanding."

Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

The 'Nightmare' begins for 1-168th

By **CAPT. ANDREW COCHRAN**
Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division

A California National Guard-based medical evacuation (medevac) unit that includes Soldiers from Nevada and Washington is bringing a whole new level of experience to Task Force Nightmare in Afghanistan.

Most of the medics in Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, work full-time in emergency medical services or the medical field in their civilian jobs.

"Out of the 25 medics in my company, 19 are either paramedics or registered nurses who work in the medical field full-time back home," said 1st Sgt. Joseph W. Loader of Company C, who is a combat medic and a certified paramedic. "I even have a trained physician assistant filling in as medic."

The 1-168th is also old hand at the "back wall" medic program, which places a second medic inside the medevac helicopter to care for patients. Two medics are better at evaluating a patient's condition and providing the proper treatment on the way to the surgeons, said company standardization medic Staff Sgt. Andrew Neal.

"Back home, if you call 911 for a homeless drunk, you get four paramedics and a fire truck," Neal said. "If you don't treat a patient the right way on the battlefield, death might come later instead of sooner, or a patient's quality of life after recovery might be worse."

Aerial medical evacuation assets are highly sought after by the International Security Assistance Force and Afghan forces alike because of the proven critical nature of



Photo by Capt. Andrew Cochran

Afghan and U.S. military personnel rush a wounded Afghan Soldier to a UH-60 Black Hawk flown by Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, at Forward Operating Base Delaram II, Afghanistan, on Nov. 14.

treating injuries quickly and by trained medical professionals.

Task Force Nightmare Commander Lt. Col. Fred Dufault said he believes in the company's "quiet professionals" bringing

their civilian experience to the fight, and he respects and trusts them implicitly.

"I truly believe the medevac company is the most experienced out there and is at the top their game," Dufault said.

"I TRULY BELIEVE THE MEDEVAC COMPANY IS THE MOST EXPERIENCED OUT THERE AND IS AT THE TOP THEIR GAME"

— LT. COL. FRED DUFAULT, COMMANDER, TASK FORCE NIGHTMARE

'A-Team' changes Army medevac policy

CNG medics outperform active duty teams in Afghanistan, prompting Army to improve its training

By **SGT. IAN M. KUMMER**
69th Public Affairs Detachment

Throughout most of human history, death on the battlefield was unavoidable. Even injured Soldiers who lived to see an operating table were likely to die from lack of sanitation or awareness of basic medical concepts like circulation. For the U.S. Army, the likelihood of fatality has been reduced incrementally with each successive conflict, not just through improving technology but by improving the training given to Soldiers.

In December 2008, California, Nevada and Wyoming Army National Guard Soldiers from Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion (GSAB), deployed to Afghanistan with fifteen UH-60 Black Hawk



Medics with Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, train at Camp Roberts, Calif., in February 2013.

See the CNG medevac study in the **Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery**:
<http://tinyurl.com/klq6pvb>

helicopters for a medevac mission. Every flight medic in the company had received the 21-week Army course qualifying them as basic emergency medical technicians (EMT-Basic), but they all also had another qualification: These Soldiers were civilian paramedics. Not only were they more extensively trained than EMT-Basic medics, most of them cared for patients on a daily basis.

This increased training paid off. A study based on data gathered by Company C and published in the *Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery* in August 2012 showed the unit's patients had a 66 percent higher rate of survival than those evacuated by other units.

"I supported the recruitment of paramedics and provided aggressive medical training, including live-tissue training and hospital rotations," said Maj. Dan Anderson, who commanded the GSAB in Afghanistan. "I had the 'A-Team' of medic noncommissioned officers."

The Army took notice of the 1-168th's success and changed its standards accordingly. The Army now plans to certify about 950 active duty flight medics as paramedics in a newly created 55-week training course.

"I knew the Army does not change over feelings and

wants; it acts based on data, statistics, trends and studies," Anderson said. "So I was very strict with my [data collection]. In every mission, every patient had to be entered in the system."

Army medics in Afghanistan face a unique challenge: The distance between the medical unit and the patient's unit can be far greater than in more-urban combat zones, and the flight is therefore much longer.

Even after rescue, the journey for a critically injured patient is far from over. After being stabilized in a hospital, the troop must be transported for long-term treatment, again under the watch of a flight medic.

"So now you could have an EMT-Basic medic again handling an [intensive care unit] patient," said Staff Sgt. Emmett Spraktes, who deployed with the 1-168th.

Even the most qualified medic may face factors beyond their control, which means preparation is essential.

"Even if you don't make any mistakes, what if one patient was dehydrated when he left on the mission, so he bleeds out faster?" said Sgt. John Gonsalves, noncommissioned officer in charge of the CNG's Task Force Warrior pre-deployment training assistance element.

This medical mission is a key example of citizen-Soldiers bringing their civilian job skills to their duty in a combat zone.

"A medic in the active duty Army may not take care of patients every day," Spraktes said. "But this is what we do for a living; we have hands-on patients all the time."

To view the study that convinced the Army to change its training standards, visit <http://tinyurl.com/klq6pvb>.

The Critical 'golden hour'

When transporting wounded troops, every minute is crucial to survival

By **CPL. PAUL PETERSON**
2nd Marine Expeditionary Force

Helicopter 865 touched down outside the medical tent at Forward Operating Base Delaram II, Afghanistan, just shy of 8:50 a.m. on Nov. 14. Afghan National Army (ANA) medics had rushed an injured ANA Soldier into the base nearly 20 minutes earlier and staunched the blood flow from a gunshot wound in the lower abdomen. The wound posed a significant threat to the Soldier's life, so the medics requested an airlift to a surgical facility at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan.

"We have an hour to get that patient — from the time they incurred their injury — to a major hospital," said Sgt. Jeffrey Jacobs, a medic with the CNG's Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion.

Often referred to as the "golden hour," medics know an injured troop's chance of survival decreases greatly if more than 60 minutes pass before reaching that hospital.

"That 'golden hour' takes into account the time of injury to surgery," said Spc. Ryan Waller, the lead medic for the Nov. 14 flight to Camp Bastion. "We don't know if we

get there a minute too late if the patient is going to die."

Waller and fellow medic Sgt. Jeffrey Jacobs wrapped the ANA Soldier in a green wool blanket Nov. 14 and strapped an oxygen mask around his face.

"The fact that we are taking them up to altitude means ... the oxygen levels in the blood are not going to be as high as on the ground," Waller said.

Waller and Jacobs moved feverishly about the helicopter with an unspoken sense of purpose. Waller prepped a syringe, holding the needle out for his partner to see, as Jacobs tied off the patient's right arm and coaxed a vein to the surface.

"We've gotten used to each other's body language and the flow of events," Jacobs said. "I can look at him, see what he's doing, and prep for what's next."

Jacobs slid his needle into the Soldier's arm near the bend in the right elbow; Waller was already doing the same on the other side.

"The trust factor is huge," Waller said. "I know if he is off doing something, it's

important for the patient. He knows the same for me."

The two have handled roughly 30 trauma cases during their six months in Afghanistan. Since medical evacuation flights are for urgent patients only, they've honed their skills on the razor's edge of life and death for the patients in their care.

"Just the two medics in the back are performing the jobs of almost eight people in the hospital," Jacobs said. "It's humbling. At that point, you know it's just you."

The nature of the helicopter itself is a constant challenge, Waller added. The medics crawl around on their knees, hooked to the helicopter by a safety strap. The weight of their gear and the cramped conditions make it difficult to conduct traditional patient assessments. The shearing sound of the engines drowns out their ability to shout back and forth. Unable to feel for a pulse or listen to the patient's lungs, they rely on an array of medical equipment and instincts to monitor vital signs.

"The back [of the helicopter] really is where we shine," Waller said.

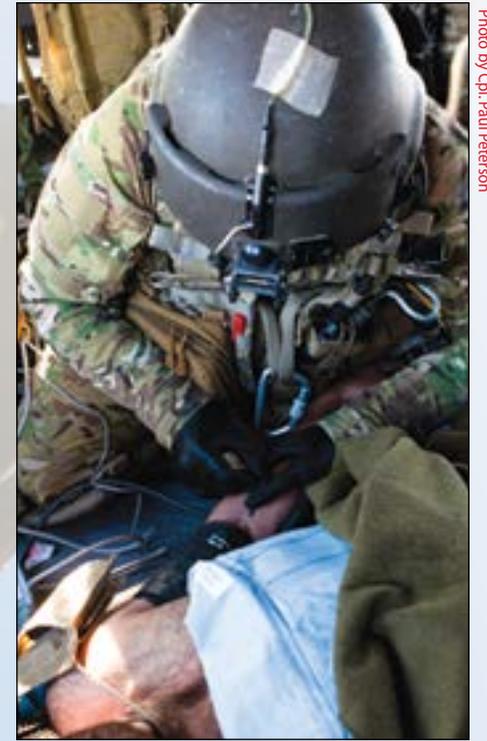


Photo by Cpl. Paul Peterson

Spc. Ryan Waller of Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, treats a wounded Afghan Soldier aboard a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter while flying the patient to Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, on Nov. 14.

By 9:11 a.m., Helicopter 865 touched down at Camp Bastion, where Waller and Jacobs turned the patient over to critical care personnel waiting by the flight line.

Lifesaving training kicks into reality

By **CPL. CLAY BEYERSDORFER**
ISAF Regional Command South

Eight Cal Guard Soldiers make their way into a dimly lit tent on a brisk December morning at Shindand Air Base, Afghanistan. This isn't the first time these Soldiers from Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, have gathered together, nor will it be the last time they tell the story of the day they met Andy Miller.

Each has their own perspective on that day, Sept. 7, 2013, each with a different role, a different task, all of which played a part in what became a lifesaving mission on top of a mountain in Western Afghanistan.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Miller, a helicopter instructor pilot at the Afghan National

Army training center at Shindand, was conducting pre-flight checks that day with a student. This was a routine Miller had been performing at Shindand for nearly a year, as he was just weeks from going home.

Miller and his Afghan co-pilot set off to practice landing helicopters on top of small points of mountain ranges, or "pinnacles."

"What happened next was something out of a movie, something you just couldn't believe," Company C Commander Maj. David Lovett says.

As the helicopter touched down, it set off a pressure-plate improvised explosive device, which destroyed the helicopter, leaving a blazing, smoking frame. Back on base, Lovett received a call of a downed

aircraft requiring immediate assistance.

"I got the call, and it was just go-time," Lovett says. "We scrambled together, got in contact with a quick reaction force team and we moved out immediately."

Miller removed himself and his co-pilot from the burning aircraft, even though he had a severely fractured leg, and applied a tourniquet to himself and three to his co-pilot. Lovett adds that Miller doesn't remember doing any of this, "Probably because of the sheer pain he was in. He was running on pure adrenaline."

It was an "all hands on deck" situation, as crews from the 1st Attack/Reconnaissance Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, Missouri National Guard, who were in the area conducting their own maintenance mission, flew in to provide aerial security, and Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 214th Field Artillery Regiment, Georgia National Guard, provided ground security.

When the medevac crew arrived, 1st Lt. Thomas Easter, a physician assistant (PA) with Company C, was one of the first on the ground. Easter's helicopter hovered over the crash site, and he was lowered down to Miller and his co-pilot, who were both unable to move because of their injuries.

"When I first got down there, I saw the burning aircraft and I knew it wasn't going to be good," Easter says. "Thankfully ... they were responsive and talking to me."

At that point, instinct took over, he says.

"I work as a PA in the emergency room back on the civilian side," Easter says. "As a medic, you just have so many tasks, and

from all the training and experience I have had, it just becomes mechanical."

Easter and his crew hoisted the two individuals to the aircraft in litters, in what Lovett says took only an hour.

"We weren't thinking about anything else or enemy threat," Lovett says. "Thanks to the quick reaction force team we had both up in the air and on the ground, we were able to extract Andy and the Afghan pilot quickly."

He smiles and says that only 24 hours earlier, his Soldiers had been practicing the exact same skills.

"It was just some weird form of irony that literally the day after we trained, here we are doing this," Lovett says. "It's just crazy how things happen."

Easter, along with the other seven soldiers in the room, echo that statement.

"It was just perfect timing," he says. "It was fresh in everyone's minds; everyone knew what they had to do."

Less than a week later, Miller was being treated at Fort Gordon, Ga. A couple of months after that, he wrote an email to Task Force Nightmare leadership to thank the people who had saved his life.

"A 'thank you' surely does not sum up how thankful I truly am. Your Soldiers, [noncommissioned officers] and officers truly saved my life that day," Miller wrote. "And even though I don't know any of the names of those involved, I am no less thankful to the professionals who rescued me."



Photo by Cpl. Clay Beyersdorfer

Cal Guard Soldiers with Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, disembark a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at Forward Operating Base Delaram II, Afghanistan, in 2013.

Sunburst creates future stars

Los Alamitos Youth ChalleNGe Academy celebrates 198 new graduates

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

Nearly 200 students from the CNG's Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy attended a Dec. 13 graduation ceremony in Los Alamitos. The graduates had lived at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, for five months while completing the residential phase of Sunburst's school program for troubled teens.

"The state of California invests

in your future," U.S. Rep. Grace Napolitano said, addressing the cadets. "Reach for the stars; even if you fail, you'll land on the moon."

The 198 cadets from Sunburst Class 12 arrived at the ceremony with their heads held high. They composed the third straight class to boast a 90 percent retention rate, meaning nearly all the cadets successfully completed the residential phase. The mean grade point average for Class 12 was about 3.5 of a possible 4.0.

"The program has two phases that the teens go through, which lasts a total of nearly 18 months," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CA) Robert Karleskint, a counselor at Sunburst. "The first 22 weeks, the teens are in a residency phase at Los Alamitos, going to school and receiving care and attention from the teachers and staff to help lead them in the right direction."

During that phase, each student developed a relationship with a mentor who will follow up with

them during phase two.

"The post-residential phase is when the students go back to their high schools and continue to get their education, and they will meet with their [Sunburst] mentors at different times to see where they are at," Karleskint said.

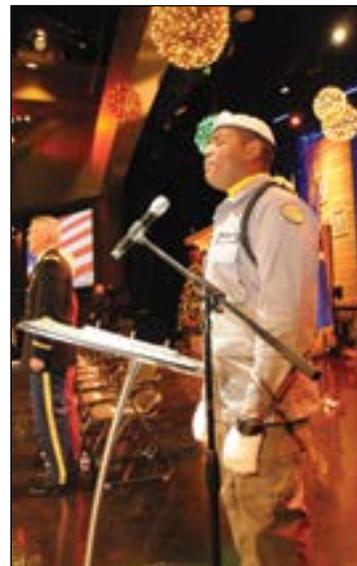
Not every Sunburst student follows the same path, however. Out of 198 students graduating the residency phase in December, 34 also graduated from their respective high schools and celebrated that achievement in Los Alamitos on Dec. 13.

Three-quarters of the funding for Sunburst comes from the federal government, with the state of California providing the remaining 25 percent.

Dr. Jeff Hittenberger, chief academic officer for the Orange County Department of Education, said the Sunburst cadets had shown attributes that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

"I grew up in Haiti," he said to the graduating class. "The two words that people live by there are 'resilience' and 'grit,' and that is something you have and will show as you go through life."

Several graduates shared their



Photos by Sgt. Matthew A. Wright

ABOVE: Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy cadet Jimmie Breland sings the national anthem during a graduation ceremony celebrating Sunburst Class 12's completion of the program's residential phase at CNG Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos. **LEFT:** Class 12 cadets listen to a guest speaker at the graduation ceremony.



Sunburst experiences with the crowd, describing how they changed from troubled youths with no direction or ambition to solid students with goals and a strong drive to improve.

Graduate Kimberly Gutierrez said her and her fellow students' time at Sunburst was valuable, and they would not let it go to waste.

"We are grateful for this, and we won't let you down as we go forward in our lives," she said.

JFTB welcomes community for WWR Expo

By **LT. COL. (CA) RICK LALOR**
CNG Recruiting & Retention Battalion

The citizen-Soldiers of the California Army National Guard stationed at Joint Forces Training Base (JFTB), Los Alamitos, swung open the gates to their base on Oct. 27 and welcomed the citizens they serve to the 12th annual Wings, Wheels and Rotors Expo.

An estimated 15,000 people attended the event, which was sponsored by the Los Alamitos Area Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber donates a portion of the proceeds to the JFTB Morale, Recreation and Welfare Fund.

There was plenty for the crowd to enjoy, including military displays, vintage warbirds, helicopters from the Guard and other public safety organizations, a car show featuring more than 300 vehicles, live music, a variety of vendors and even a pumpkin patch.

A number of national, state and local elected officials attended this year's event, including U.S. Rep. Alan Lowenthal and Cali-

fornia State Assemblyman Allan Mansoor.

"Whoever penned the words 'it takes a community' could very well have conceived that phrase for Wings, Wheels and Rotors," said Maj. Gen. Keith D. Jones, commander of the 40th Infantry Division and JFTB Los Alamitos. "Multiple agencies and organizations collaborated together in partnership with the base to create an event that not only entertained our community members, but also helped to educate them regarding the availability of many community services and showcased the important missions of the JFTB and the National Guard."

Los Alamitos Army Airfield at the JFTB is the only military airfield in the greater Los Angeles/Orange County area, and JFTB is home to the Southern California Regional Emergency Operations Center.

"This is truly a community event," said Johnnie Strohmeyer, chief executive officer of the Los Alamitos Chamber of Commerce,

"and we were grateful to receive formal recognition from a number of officials, including a certificate of congressional recognition from U.S. Rep. Loretta Sanchez that commended the organizers for their dedication and skill in overcoming a number of challenges, including the federal government shutdown of 2013."

JFTB Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Nathan Range said it is important for the JFTB to provide a safe and secure environment for the public attending Wings, Wheels and Rotors.

"Due to the government shutdown and the resulting manpower challenges we faced, there was serious concern during the three weeks leading up to event weekend whether we would have to cancel," he said. "But when the California State Military Reserve's Installation Support Command committed more than 50 Soldiers to handle security and other mission-essential tasks, it gave us the confidence to move forward, and we were very pleased with the outcome."

Jones said the National Guard is working hard to support the people in its communities.

"All of us who are privileged to

serve at JFTB, Los Alamitos, are proud to be a part of our local communities and look forward to continuing those essential partnerships," he said.



Photos by Pfc. (CA) David Zashov



ABOVE: Wings, Wheels and Rotors Expo attendees check out aircraft at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, on Oct. 27. **LEFT:** Retired CNG aviator Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ronald Warner shows the flight controls of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to his nephew Nicholas Warner, 11.

Mission accomplished: TASMIG returns home



By **CAPT. JASON SWEENEY**

California Military Department Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 1106th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group (TASMIG) Task Force 14 returned home in December just in time for the holidays after successfully completing a nine-month mission to Afghanistan and Kuwait.

"Being home in time for Christmas was definitely a treat," said Capt. Chris Renner, who deployed with the task force. "I'm glad we got everyone home safe. That's the biggest thing."

The 1106th TASMIG, based at an aviation facility in Fresno, is tasked to perform aircraft maintenance for Army National Guard aviation units in 13 western states.

In February 2013, about 100 Soldiers from the TASMIG were mobilized into Task Force 14 and deployed to Afghanistan and Kuwait. The task force was assigned to provide depot-level maintenance for two combat aviation brigades (CABs) in theater that were in command of about 400 aircraft. The task force was responsible for repairing aircraft that had sustained damage beyond the level that the brigades could repair on their own.

"Since their first deployment in 2004-2005 as the 1106th Aviation Classification and Repair Activity Depot, followed by another tour in 2009-2010, the TASMIG has set a precedent of specialized aircraft maintenance praised by Army combat aviation brigades in combat zones," TASMIG Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Cabrera said.

During its most recent deployment, the Soldiers of Task Force 14 repaired aircraft that were damaged by direct fire, indirect fire, hard landings, normal wear and tear, and at one point, a severe hailstorm that seriously damaged about 80 aircraft.

"If there was complex-type damage to an aircraft, our guys repaired it," task force Commander Col. Myles Williams said.

The task force was organized into four detachments. Detachment I was assigned to Camp Arifjan in Kuwait. Detachment II, III and IV were stationed in Afghanistan at Bagram Airfield, Kandahar Airfield and Mazar-i-Sharif Airfield, respectively. In addition, a liaison officer was stationed in Kabul.

Williams said being in command of four detachments that were dispersed not only by distance but by time zones was a challenge, but they were able to make it work and get the job done effectively.

"Task Force 14 situated themselves and de-



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Soldiers of the 1106th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group Task Force 14 gather at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, on Dec. 13 at the end of a nine-month deployment that took some members to Kuwait and others to Afghanistan. **Photo by the U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Schaubsluger, left, and Sgt. David Amezola prepare a helicopter engine for diagnostic evaluation at Camp Arifjan. Photo by Spc. Martha Lozano Staff Sgt. Demetrius McCowan works to fabricate an AH-64 Apache helicopter part at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Photo by Staff Sgt. Patricia Galloway Task Force 14 Detachment I leaves its mark on a blast wall at Camp Arifjan. Photo by Spc. Martha Lozano**

veloped a battle rhythm of work, exercise, self-improvement and rest," Cabrera said, adding that the task force's mechanics and maintenance test pilots were able to hone their skills during the deployment.

Lt. Col. Bruce Malarky was the officer in charge of Detachment III.

"If an aircraft was shot, we repaired it," Malarky said. "Three had been shot up through and through while we were at Kandahar."

Malarky said Kandahar Airfield was hit by 41 rockets during the nine months his detachment was there. Fortunately no one was injured.

On April 23, when the task force had been in country for about a month, a hailstorm hit Kandahar, damaging more than 80 helicopters assigned to the 3rd CAB.

"It was pretty intense," Malarky said of the hailstorm. "I've never seen anything quite like it. Every single aircraft on the ramp was damaged. It was an incredible amount of damage for basically a half hour of hail."

Repairing the aircraft became a group effort involving several units in theater and back in the United States; however, much of the work fell on the shoulders of Task Force 14. The task force provided extra manning to get the work done and ensure the aircraft would soon be back in the fight.

"Our Soldiers did great," Williams said. "They were extremely knowledgeable and knew what they needed to do."

Capt. Joseph Burke, officer in charge of Detachment II, said his detachment's bread and butter was repairing crash- and battle-damaged aircraft.

"Certain locations had a lot of damage from indirect fire, and there were a couple direct fire engagements on aircraft that we had to repair," he said.

Burke said the detachment's machinist, Staff Sgt. Adrian Lizarraga, was able to manufacture many needed parts and special tools that were unavailable or would have taken too long to arrive in country.

At one point an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter was unable to fly because of a missing bracket. The bracket would have cost about \$60,000 and taken a long time to arrive. Two Soldiers in the detachment, Staff Sgt. Demetrius McCowan and Staff Sgt. Jon Ward, got together with Lizarraga and devised a way to manufacture the bracket on site.

"They manufactured the part and got the aircraft back into the fight within a few weeks," Burke said. "That was a big deal."

At Arifjan, Detachment I was responsible for building aircraft engines and electronic components that were in high demand in theater. The detachment worked through

summer temperatures that exceeded 120 degrees.

"I had a good crew," Detachment I non-commissioned officer in charge Master Sgt. Rebecca Calleja said. "They kept busy."

With just six weeks left in the deployment, the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command in Kabul instructed the task force to shut down its operations at Mazar-i-Sharif and consolidate them at Bagram.

"I honestly did not think it could be done as fast as we did it," said Renner, the officer in charge of Detachment IV. "I was extremely pleased with how fast my guys took care of that work."

Renner said the detachment shut down within 30 days of receiving the order, with all equipment accounted for.

"It was a major muscle movement getting the site cleared of all the equipment, and it happened in a short period of time, but they got it done," Williams said. "Hats off to my guys."

Cabrera said he was proud of the way his Soldiers performed and how they improved their skills during the deployment.

"Task Force 14 returned home just in time for Christmas having fulfilled another successful deployment, with Soldiers better than they were when they left," he said.

ATTENTION

RIGHT: Sgt. Martin Tajra, far left, Pfc. Brandon Myers, Spc. Anthony Iwami and Sgt. Lance Fuller of the California Army National Guard's 49th Military Police Brigade compete in a four-way tug-of-war against teams from the Air Force, Navy and Marines during an intermission of the Nov. 10 game between the Vancouver Canucks and Anaheim Ducks on Military Appreciation Night in Anaheim. The Cal Guardsmen brought glory to the Army with a victory. **Photo courtesy of the Anaheim Ducks**



RIGHT: Maj. Bernadette Javier of the 149th Combat Communications Squadron salutes during a January change-of-command ceremony installing her as leader of the 149th, succeeding Lt. Col. Jeffery Richard. **Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 3 (CA) Jon-Nolan Paresa**



BELOW: Tech Sgt. Christopher Dominguez of the 129th Rescue Wing Maintenance Squadron conducts a tail-rotor inspection on an HH-60G Pave Hawk at Moffett Federal Air Field, Calif., on Nov. 26. **Photo by Senior Airman John D. Pharr III**



ABOVE: California State Military Reserve Soldiers meet Jay Leno prior to the taping of a recent episode of "The Tonight Show" in Los Angeles. **Photo by the CA State Military Reserve**
LEFT: Maj. Gen. Keith D. Jones, commander of the 40th Infantry Division and Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, kisses his mother, Myrtle, following his promotion to major general Dec. 7 in Los Alamitos. **Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Cossel**





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Staff Sgt. Peter Spackman of the CNG's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug uses a road grader Jan. 22 to rehabilitate a remote section of road used by U.S. Customs and Border Protection to patrol the U.S.-Mexico border near San Diego. **Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin M. Cossel** Senior Airman Bradley Peyton of the 144th Fighter Wing Fire Department competes in the wing's annual Firefighter Fitness Challenge on Jan. 10. **Photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Sanchez** Members of the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing Maintenance Group deliver toys to patients at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital on Dec. 18. **Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey** Airmen with the 144th Fighter Wing perform a chemical-decontamination exercise Jan. 11 in Fresno. **Photo by Staff Sgt. Christian Jadot** Master Sgt. Johniffer Fulmore, far left, Brig. Gen. Randall Ball, Cindy Ball, Senior Airman Sabrina Pulliam and Senior Airman Colleen Comperchio collect toys Dec. 22 at a shopping center in Citrus Heights, Calif., for the children of deployed service members and service members killed in action. **Photo by U.S. Air Force**



New state laws affect Guard members

California Military Department-sponsored bills address loan deferment, appeals of courts martial

Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler

By **MICHELLE LOPER**

California Military Department Office of State Policy and Liaison

In 2013, the California Military Department sponsored two pieces of state legislation — SB 720 and AB 1410 — and monitored, analyzed and provided guidance to the governor on more than 100 other bills.

Listed below is a summary of legislation relevant to military members that passed in 2013. The new laws went into effect in January. The laws' complete text can be found at www.leginfo.ca.gov.

For more information on laws affecting Guard members and veterans, contact the Military Department's Office of State Policy and Liaison at 916-854-3705.

SENATE BILLS

VA CLAIMS

SB 815 authorizes the California Department of Veterans Affairs to assist a veteran and his or her dependents or survivors in making a claim against the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs arising out of any military service. Previous law required assistance in making a claim arising out of war service only.

ASSEMBLY BILLS

FINANCIAL PROTECTIONS

AB 526 extends certain financial protections to all military reservists ordered to federal active duty after Jan. 1, 2014, and to their spouse or legal dependent. These protections — which cover deferments on mortgages, credit cards, property taxes, vehicle leases and other items as well as the reinstatement of health insurance — were previously provided to reservists called to federal active duty as part of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. The bill also authorizes the deferral of obligations owed to a

Bills sponsored by the California Military Department

LOAN DEFERMENT

SB 720 revises Military and Veterans Code §409.3 to align with MVC §§800-812. Both statutes address the deferment of loans and obligations upon a service member's call to active military service; however, these sections formerly treated repayment differently. By reconciling the statutes, service members and financial institutions have a clear statute that protects both parties. *(Introduced by Sen. Lou Correa)*

APPELLATE PANEL

AB 1410 codifies the Courts-Martial Appellate Panel, which serves as the appeals court for Military Department courts martial and is modeled on federal military appellate courts. *(Introduced by the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs)*

utility company.

PARKS PASSES

AB 150 permits the California Department of Parks and Recreation to offer veterans free day-use passes or reduced fees to state parks on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. The Parks and Recreation Department is expected to implement the benefit in 2014.

DISCRIMINATION

AB 556 adds "military and veteran status" to the list of categories protected from discrimination under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act. The bill provides an exemption for employer inquiries regarding military or veteran status for the purpose of awarding veteran's preference as permitted by law.

LICENSE PLATE

AB 244 requires the California Department of Veterans Affairs to sponsor a special interest license plate for veterans and requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue the plate if the Department of Veter-

ans Affairs meets statutory requirements. The license plates are subject to additional fees, and the DMV is required to deposit that revenue, after deducting its administrative costs, into the Veterans Service Office Fund.

STATE CIVIL SERVICE

AB 372 provides that whenever any veteran, widow or widower of a veteran, or spouse of a 100 percent disabled veteran achieves a passing score on an entrance exam for state civil service, he or she will be ranked in the top rank of the resulting eligibility list, except if the veteran was dishonorably discharged or released. Previous law required that credit be added to the percentage attained in the examination by the veteran, widow, widower or spouse.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

AB 639 authorizes the issuance of \$600 million in general obligation bonds to fund

the acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, and preservation of multi-family supportive housing, affordable transitional housing, affordable rental housing and related facilities for veterans and their families, if approved by California voters in the statewide election in June.

CaWORKS

AB 1094 expands the definition of disability-based unearned income to include veterans disability compensation for purposes of calculating income exempted for eligibility purposes under the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CaWORKS) program, which provides financial aid and services to needy California families.

VIETNAM MEMORIAL

AB 1289 establishes the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Capitol grounds in Sacramento as the official state Vietnam War veterans memorial.



Building strong bonds at home

Army program enhances Soldiers' readiness by strengthening military marriages

By **1ST LT. JAN BENDER**
California Military Department Public Affairs

Since the Strong Bonds program's launch by the Army in 1997, hundreds of thousands of Soldiers and their families have participated and walked away with the tools necessary to strengthen the foundational building block on which many Soldiers' readiness relies: the family.

Though the program was designed with active duty troops and families in mind, since 2006 the California Army National Guard has been offering families this valuable training. The program's mission is to build Soldier readiness by providing skills the Soldier can use to strengthen his or her marriage and other relationships.

With the constant ebb and flow of deployment cycles and training, it's critical for Guard Soldiers and their families to have the tools to stabilize life at home and reinforce relationships, said Master Sgt. Desmond Knight, the California Military Department's state chaplain's assistant.

"A happy family [equals] a better Soldier," he said. "If life at home is good for the Soldier, they're going to really enjoy being in the military and coming to work."

Strong Bonds is a fully funded, chaplain-led program that hosts three different seminars for Soldiers and their families, depending on where they are in the relationship cycle.

Two of the courses are marriage-enrichment retreats. While one is solely couples-focused, the other is a full family event allowing children age 8 and up to attend. Both events focus on strengthening relationships through training in communication, intimacy and conflict management.

As a result of the 2013 repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act, these courses are now available to same-sex couples. Like any other couple, the Soldier's partner must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or DEERS, prior to the course.

The third seminar option is the Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge seminar, or PICK. This four- to eight-hour curriculum educates single Soldiers on things to consider when choosing a partner, and it is typically offered to units at their armories during annual training. This curriculum teaches Soldiers to examine priorities, manage mate-choosing patterns and evaluate a relationship's potential for long-term success.

Sgt. 1st Class Kim Zenno, team leader for the California Army National Guard's San Diego Honor Guard and a mother of two, attended the couples retreat earlier this year with her husband of five years, an active duty Sailor.

"It was nothing like your typical military training event," Zenno said. "Everyone was in civilian attire, and they kept the environment really relaxed and interactive. There was no death by PowerPoint, and all the instructors were very well-versed and knowledgeable."

These events are often hosted at desirable destinations, and the cost of lodging, parking, meals and child care are included. Soldiers also can request orders from their unit to attend the events and have their travel cost covered.

Zenno said her personal interactions and communication with her husband benefitted greatly from the retreat.

"For us it was just a reminder of the tools that we already had in our belt and how to use them and that they're effective," Zenno said. "Some of the major takeaways that we brought home were ... not interrupting each other, summarizing and repeating back what your partner just told you and allowing one another to take timeouts."

During the retreat, Soldiers and families participate in

**Strong Bonds
Seminars**

February 21-23, San Diego

March 14-16, San Jose

March 21-23, Anaheim

April 11-13, San Diego

May 16-18, Sacramento

June 13-15, Long Beach

June 27-29, San Diego

July 18-20, Anaheim

To register, call 916-854-3383
or email desmond.d.knight.mil@mail.mil

small group activities that reveal common bonds and nurture friendships. This shores up spousal support at home, which can be vitally important with the unique challenges inherent to life in the Guard. In addition, Soldiers and families gain awareness of community resources that can assist with health, wellness and crisis intervention.

"It creates a network. Prior to the event, spouses might think they're the only ones who are having a certain type of problem, but you find out in the seminar that you're not alone [and] build relationships and a sense of community," said Knight, who has been helping facilitate Strong Bonds events across California since 2006 and has attended a retreat with his wife as well. "When active duty [units] deploy, the community is still intact, and all the support mechanisms are in place. Guard families don't have that."

Knight has been facilitating these events since 2006 and has witnessed many tangible results. Regardless of whether you're newly married or have been together for decades, and no matter the state of your union, these events will benefit your relationship, he said.

"I can't tell you how many evaluation forms we've received back at the end of these events where couples have told us that they were talking about divorce, and this seminar stopped all that," Knight said. "You'll get a different perspective coming to one of these seminars. It's so basic, yet so very powerful."



Photo by Capt. Will Martin

An Army National Guard couple works on their interpersonal skills during a Strong Bonds seminar Dec. 14 in San Diego.

Yribe joins CNG SARC office

First Lieutenant Anna R. Yribe is the new victim advocate coordinator in the Cal Guard's Office of the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC).

Her duties include ensuring that all victim advocates in the state are credentialed; managing the victim advocates' training and cases; ensuring the advocates have all the tools and resources they need to respond to any potential victims; and performing duties as an advocate herself. Yribe will focus over the next few months on reaching out to local hospitals and community resources, and developing partnerships to better support military victims of sexual assault.

CNG members who are victims of sexual assault may confidentially disclose the crime to Yribe or another victim advocate. If the victim chooses to file a restricted re-

port, he or she may receive medical treatment and counseling without triggering a criminal investigation or alerting a chain of command. The victim also may change their restricted report to an unrestricted report at any time.

If the victim opts for an unrestricted report, an investigation will be initiated, the chain of command will be notified and the victim will receive medical treatment and counseling, if desired.

Additionally, an unrestricted report enhances a commander's ability to provide a safe environment for the victim. The commander may issue a no-contact order or take other precautions to ensure the victim does not come into contact with the alleged offender. The victim also may request an expedited transfer.

Whether the victim chooses to file a restricted or unrestricted report, a victim advocate may be assigned to provide support and assistance throughout the process.

"I'm excited to be a part of the SARC program," Yribe said. "I hope that one day, my

Live 1-on-1 Help Confidential Worldwide 24/7

Help is just a Click, Call or Text away!

Go to www.SafeHelpline.org



Safe Helpline
Sexual Assault Support for the DoD Community

Call 877-995-5247

Text* 55-247

*Text your location for the nearest support resources

job will become obsolete. Until then, the SARC's office, [SARC Jennifer Lucero], myself and all the victim advocates who have volunteered and dedicated their time to get credentialed and trained will be available to guide and support victims of sexual assault. It's important work we do."

Yribe is available around the clock every day of the year to provide confidential assistance and support. She is located at the 115th Regional Support Group's armory in Roseville and can be reached at 916-854-1919 or 916-879-9410 (mobile), or via email at anna.r.yribe.mil@mail.mil.

Diplomacy in cybersecurity

CA State Partnership Program leads Ukrainian cyber seminar

By **1ST LT. CHRISTINA MUNDY**
CA Air National Guard Public Affairs

Members of the California Air National Guard traveled to Ukraine last year to present a Cybersecurity Awareness Seminar to Ukrainian Armed Forces. The mission was supported by the State Partnership Program between Ukraine and the California National Guard.

The effort was accomplished by a three-man team from the 261st Network Warfare Squadron, part of the 162nd Combat Communications Group. This was the second annual cyber defense event with Ukraine organized by U.S. European Command.

"Our team was greeted by the hosting Ukrainian delegation, and we covered many topics during the seminar, to include protecting sensitive and classified information systems, proper use of mobile computing devices, social media, social engineering, phishing and information security qualifications," said Capt. Soyuen Lee of the 261st

Network Warfare Squadron.

The 261st is the first and only organized and manned network warfare squadron in the California National Guard. The California Army National Guard stood up a computer defense team in 2013, but the 261st remains the only fully operational squadron.

"The goal of the cybersecurity seminar was to advance the cyber defense posture of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense and provide insight on how to build a secure cyber operations center," Lee said. "There is still much work to be done in the area of cybersecurity."

A team from the 261st will return to Ukraine this year for a contingency planning workshop. That event will familiarize Ukrainian Ministry of Defense personnel with the steps required to develop a seven-step contingency process for establishing a viable contingency-planning program for its critical information technology systems.

Google pledges support for Guard, Reserves

By **CAPT. JASON SWEENEY**
California Military Department Public Affairs

When several uniformed Guard members and Reservists walked onto Google's Mountain View, Calif., campus one afternoon in January, it was enough to make Google employees do double-takes as they pedaled past on their green, yellow and red company bicycles.

Members of the Guard and Reserve visited the campus Jan. 21 with representatives from the Defense Department's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) office for the signing of a Statement of Support by Google Senior Vice President of People Operations Laszlo Bock. The statement affirmed that Google recognizes, honors and supports the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, which prohibits employer discrimination based on military service and protects reemployment rights for military members after a period of service.

During the signing ceremony, Bock told the crowd that his father had defected from communist Romania and had come to the United States in search of freedom. He told the uniformed visitors, as well as several Google employees in attendance who have served or are currently serving, that he was grateful for their service.

"It's what all of you do ... that makes everything else that happens in this country possible," he said. "Our fundamental ideal

[at Google] is we believe people should be free, but that freedom comes at a cost, which is borne by all of you.

"I am delighted to be able to lend our brand, our name and our credibility, for all the good it will do, to this effort in support of the Guard and Reserve," he said.

ESGR Chairman Paul Mock, a retired Army major general, said the statement of support sets conditions for a friendlier environment in corporate America for Guard and Reserve members and helps create a supportive culture in the employment market so that those who serve can rely on steady employment.

"That's a huge factor as far as readiness for the individual Soldier," he said.

The Jan. 21 event was led by Google employee Carrie Lauren, who founded the Google Veterans Network, an employee resource group for those who have served, their family members and their supporters (www.googleforveterans.com).

"I wanted Google to be a place that was welcoming and caring and a warm environment for those who have worn the uniform," she said.



Doodle by Google

It's tax time; PFCs can help

By **HONG TRAN**
Personal Financial Counselor, Southern California

It's getting to be that time of year for tax planning, and some people are getting very excited. I have yet to meet any of them, but I am sure there are tens of people all across the country who throw tax parties with techno music and 1040 forms all night long. Yay for them ... boo for the rest of us. To help organize and prepare ourselves for tax-filing season, below are some tips that can get us prepared for our unwanted family partner, Uncle Sam.

PAY AS YOU GO

The U.S. tax system is based on a system in which you pay your taxes as you earn income. That is why federal withholdings are taken out of your paycheck. If you own a small business, the equivalent is quarterly 1040-ES payments. The idea is that you pay what you think you owe as you make it, and the tax return is the reconciliation at the end of the year. If you paid Uncle Sam too much, you get a tax refund. If you paid too little, you pay more with your tax return.

Preferably, you don't want to owe money with your tax return because Uncle Sam may charge you interest and penalties for not paying it throughout the year. You also don't want to get a big tax refund because that means you were paying too much throughout the year and let the government keep your money interest free. If you find that you are paying too much or too little in taxes, you can adjust your federal withholding by requesting a W4 form from your employer.

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RECEIPTS — HOW LONG?

The length of time you should keep a document depends on the statute of limitations for amending that tax return or how long the IRS has to assess additional taxes. Depending on the circumstance, you need to keep your records for three to seven years. To be safe, I suggest keeping all your records for seven years. Keep in mind, if you file a fraudulent tax return (To state the obvious: Do not file a fraudulent tax return!) you must keep your records indefinitely.

IRA AND TSP/401K DEDUCTIONS

If you have the terrible problem of making too much money, you may owe a lot in taxes. In that case, consider making an individual retirement account (IRA) contribution (if you qualify) or increasing your 401k and/or Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) contribution. These contributions can decrease your adjusted gross income, or AGI (to get invited to those wild techno 1040 parties, try throwing this term around), and thus lower your taxes.

100-MILE DRILL DEDUCTIONS

Most of you know that you can deduct your expenses

for drill weekends such as meals, lodging, mileage, parking, etc. ... However, this is usually limited to the Miscellaneous Deductions section, and you have to itemize your deductions. That means you may not be able to deduct your drill expenses, and if you are able to deduct them, you cannot deduct the entire amount.

If you live more than 100 miles away from your drill location, however, you may be able to deduct the entire amount — even if you do not itemize. For more information about deducting drill expenses, please contact a personal financial counselor or read more at this link: <http://www.irs.gov/instructions/i2106/ch02.html>.

TAX PREPARATION SOFTWARE

Starting around February, the website Military OneSource (www.militaryonesource.com) will provide free tax preparation software for service members. You will not be charged any fees to prepare or electronically file your federal or state taxes. The software is a great tool because it is formatted to ask military service questions such as non-reimbursed drill expenses. Military OneSource also will have tax consultants available whom you can call with issues or questions about your taxes.

A break from the big guns

Field artillery Soldiers head to the range to practice marksmanship

By SGT. IAN M. KUMMER
69th Public Affairs Detachment

The California Army National Guard's field artillery batteries are armed to the teeth with some of the largest weapons on the modern battlefield and can obliterate just about any target with pinpoint accuracy. But to be truly combat-ready, these Soldiers also must be proficient riflemen, able to defend their gun positions from enemy attack or bring the fight to the enemy as the need arises.

The Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery Regiment, traveled to Camp Roberts, Calif., for a weekend at the rifle and pistol ranges Jan. 10-12. During their stay at Camp Bob, the Soldiers completed other essential annual training requirements as well, including written exams for their gun crews and fire-direction control specialists, and recertification as combat lifesavers.

Though the battalion's 155-mm Paladin howitzers stayed at home at Fort Irwin, Calif., the 1-144th Soldiers had an enjoyable experience, both as individual warfighters and as a team.



Photo by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

Soldiers with the CNG's 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery Regiment, prepare M-4 carbine ammunition Jan. 11 at a qualification range on Camp Roberts, Calif. The battalion qualified more than 300 Soldiers on the M-4 in January.

"Weapons qualification gives the Soldiers an incentive to look forward to, something other than maintenance and [job-specific] training," said Sgt. 1st Class David Fernandez, a noncommissioned officer from Battery A. "It gives them bragging rights."

Nonetheless, the Soldiers looked forward to resuming their artillery training in upcoming months.

"Rifle qualification is all fine and dandy, but we joined artillery to shoot the big guns," said 1st Lt. Clifford Roland, commander of Alpha Battery's 2nd Platoon. "We can't wait to get back to firing."

Even as more than 300 Soldiers of the 1-144th cycled through the range, living out the old saying "hurry up and wait," their morale remained high and they worked together to complete the day's training as efficiently as possible.

"This is fun; I enjoy shooting," said Pvt. Brian Hallgrimson from Alpha Battery, 1-144th. "Everyone is squared away and respects each other."

At home on the range

By SGT. IAN M. KUMMER
69th Public Affairs Detachment

A former Marine combat veteran found his calling at Task Force Warrior, where as a member of the CNG's now-defunct pre-deployment training assistance element, he taught crucial marksmanship skills to fellow Soldiers.

Following the shutdown of the Camp Roberts-based task force late last year, Sgt. Ruben Astorga has continued to increase his knowledge of shooting techniques and share his expertise with others.

A seasoned noncommissioned officer (NCO) who is an ammunition team chief with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery Regiment, Astorga returned to his old stomping grounds when the battalion qualified on their M-4 rifles at Camp Roberts in January.

Astorga, who served in the Marine Corps as a cannoneer from 2000 to 2005, found himself right at home when he enlisted in the California Army National Guard in 2009, quickly landing a full-time instructor position with TF Warrior's Team Rifle.

"It was an easy transition for me," said Astorga, a Los Angeles native who lives in San Miguel with his wife and three children. "My unit was very supportive of me working with the task force."

Though Astorga misses TF Warrior,

he has found fulfillment in helping his unit at the range.

"I just like teaching people how to shoot or helping some of the other NCOs teach, who might not know all of the tricks," Astorga said.

Though Astorga holds an associate's degree in criminal justice from the University of Phoenix and plans on continuing his civilian education, there is still nothing he enjoys more than teaching Soldiers at the shooting range.

"I hope Task Force Warrior comes back soon, or something like it," Astorga said. "It would be great for the Soldiers."



Photo by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

Sgt. Ruben Astorga, an ammunition team chief with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery Regiment, coaches Soldiers on the M-4 carbine Jan. 11 at a qualification range on Camp Roberts, Calif.

CNG infantryman was decades ahead of her time

Spc. Cheryl Harvey Hill made history by serving in a Cal Guard combat arms unit in 1973

By SGT. MATTHEW WRIGHT
40th Infantry Division

The stereotype of girls in the 1950s and '60s was that they dreamed of getting married, having a house and raising children. But retired Spc. Cheryl Harvey Hill broke that mold. She didn't play house; she played army. And later she became one of the first women to serve in a combat arms unit — long before the Pentagon lifted that restriction last year.

Hill's story with the military started when she was fresh out of high school in Ohio in 1962. Wanting to travel, she enlisted in the Women's Army Corp, or WAC, just as the situation in Vietnam was becoming a main focus of the U.S. public's attention.

Hill was stationed at Fort Gordon, Ga., as an administrative supply technician for two years, but she left the WAC after she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and had exploratory surgery in 1964. Hill thought her Army career was over, but in 1972, while working for the Ventura County Health Department, she was approached by a recruiter for the National Guard.

Maj. Gen. Charles Ott, the 40th Infantry Division commander at the time, was trying out a new program: He wanted to put female Soldiers in combat units under the 40th ID. Hill was one of the women Ott selected to test the concept, and she suspects her dentist, who was a Reservist, recommended her.

Competing with 20 other Soldiers who had previously served in the military, Hill went through a series of

physical and mental tests for the position. She eventually won out.

Hill was placed in 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery Regiment, and in April 1973, she was sworn in by Ott and began her assignment with the 1-144th as a recruiter.

"I did it because I really wanted to serve my country again, and it was a great opportunity for me," she said.

During her 10 months with the 1-144th, Hill had two different jobs: She served as a traditional, part-time Guardsman as an administrative supply technician, and she worked full-time as a WAC recruiter for the 1-144th. Being a recruiter was a difficult job, as Hill was limited in whom she could recruit.

"I could not recruit males; it was considered soliciting," she said.

As the only female Soldier in the 1-144th, Hill was required to endure all the physical tasks required of the other troops — and prove she could keep up with them.

"Being a woman, I was small in stature, and I carried the heavy rucksacks and humped the ammo boxes with the other Soldiers," Hill said.

Her abilities and work ethic earned Hill the respect of her fellow Soldiers.

"Those Soldiers protected me, and I looked at them as not just Soldiers, but as 500 broth-

ers. And they were so good to me," Hill said.

Almost a year after being placed in the 1-144th, Hill learned her cancer had returned. She was medically discharged and left the unit, but this was still not the final chapter of her Army story.

The surgery was successful, and nearly 10 years later, Hill decided the Army was still in her blood. She went back into the California National Guard and was able to return to the 1-144th. She served with the unit for nearly a year, and during her annual training, she drilled as a public affairs specialist for the 40th ID.

She was sent to Fort Irwin, Calif., to cover an exercise that week, and she met Pvt. Benjamin Hill, who eventually became her husband. The couple married and moved to Las Vegas in 1983, which is where she finished her time in the National Guard. Benjamin stayed in the Guard, giving the couple opportunities to travel all over the world, and recently retired as a chief warrant officer 4 after 30 years of service.

Hill is proud of her career with the Army and the California National Guard, and she feels she made history by doing something that was not accepted by the Armed Forces for another four decades.

"I was so proud to be selected to represent such an amazing unit with such an honorable and exciting history," she said of the 1-144th.



Photo courtesy of retired Spc. Cheryl Harvey Hill

Resilient warrior

Nigerian with deep military roots finds home in CNG

By **CAPT. WILL MARTIN**

California Military Department Public Affairs

The U.S. embassy in Nigeria is more island than institution. Centered in the most exclusive section of Lagos, a booming city in Africa's most populous nation, America's embassy reflects both the affluence and strength one would expect from the world's lone superpower. To approach the U.S. seal that adorns its entrance is to pass through well-armed guards and manicured lawns. It was here, in 1996, that 25-year-old Wilson Ugah determined he would claim his birthright as a U.S. citizen.

AMERICAN BORN, AFRICA BOUND

Ugah's initial stay in the United States was short-lived. His father, a Nigerian infantry officer, was training alongside U.S. forces at Fort Benning, Ga., when his wife gave birth to Wilson in 1975. Less than a year later, the Ugah family was back in Africa, where his father wasted no time moving up the ranks of the Nigerian Army.

By 1985, Lt. Col. Ugah was a battalion commander in the nation's northern region. Wilson and the rest of the family enjoyed the relative luxury of a senior officer's quarters, including the security offered by several armed guards throughout the evenings. In the mornings, one armed guard typically remained to keep watch over the Ugah family.

Aug. 27 was strikingly different.

"I woke up that morning ... and 15 soldiers showed up," said Ugah, then age 10. "I remember that morning Mom was trying to get to the guest house, and the Soldiers wouldn't let her leave."

With his father away on duty, Wilson and his family grew restless in the confinement of this unexpected prison, submerged in worry and ignorance. By mid-morning, a helicopter landed carrying Lt. Col. Ugah, who emerged only long enough to grab his uniform before disappearing for the rest of the day. It wasn't until 6 p.m. that he returned and announced to the family there had been a coup, and he had been ordered by the nation's new regime to stay home until told to do otherwise.

"My younger brother [asked] 'What is a coup?'" Ugah remembered. "Everybody

was anxious, but the night passed quietly."

It was only in reading the morning newspaper that Lt. Col. Ugah learned he had been forcibly retired. Though bloodless, the coup went a long way in draining life from the 15-year veteran of the Nigerian armed forces.

"He took it pretty hard. He really wasn't himself for years," Ugah said of his father. "He really had no plans for anything outside the military."

Amid his despondency, Wilson's father failed to maintain critical records regarding his travels and family, something that would haunt Wilson upon graduating a Lagos high school in 1996.

"About that time I was deciding what I was going to do," Ugah said, when a family member suggested possibilities open to him, "if I could just get my hands on a U.S. passport."

Carrying only a U.S. birth certificate and the American dream, Ugah approached the U.S. Embassy to seize his birthright. But the gauntlet of guards proved as uncompromising in action as they were in appearance.

"The biggest issue people have at the Embassy is getting by the guys at the gate," Ugah said. "It would take me about two hours to get there, and I would go every day [only to be turned away for lack of identification]. The guard finally got sick of seeing me [after four months of daily attempts] and let me go in."

The obstacles that awaited Ugah inside proved even less forgiving. Every bit the Nigerian in mannerisms and appearance, his American citizenship made for a tough sell to U.S. officials.

"All I have here is a birth certificate and a body, and somehow I have to connect these two together," Ugah remembers being told by a skeptical Embassy official.

Embassy officials handed Ugah a task list that would have defeated a lesser man. They required he secure a new birth certificate from the United States, provide photographs from nearly every stage of his life and present any paperwork that

would prove he was indeed the son of the Nigerian infantry officer whose wife gave birth amid the oppressive humidity of the American South.

In 2000 — after three years constructing a paper trail proving he was a son of the States — Ugah was granted a U.S. passport.

NEW LAND, FAMILIAR CALLING
With a mere \$300 in his pocket but ambition to spare, Ugah hitched himself to a Canadian oilman who had befriended Ugah's mother during business in Nigeria. The family friend was headed to the Western U.S. in September 2000, and he offered his Alta, Calif., cabin to Ugah until he got on his feet in his new homeland. The cabin was so remote that it lacked power, depending only on an unreliable generator.

"I called my brother, who told me they didn't have power [in Nigeria]," Ugah said. "I told him I didn't have power either, and he said 'Are you doing drugs, already? It's not possible. You're in the U.S.'"

With a rich heritage of military service coursing through his veins, Ugah almost immediately made his way to the nearest Armed Forces recruiter. He chose the Marine Corps, in large part due to its association with the U.S. Navy.

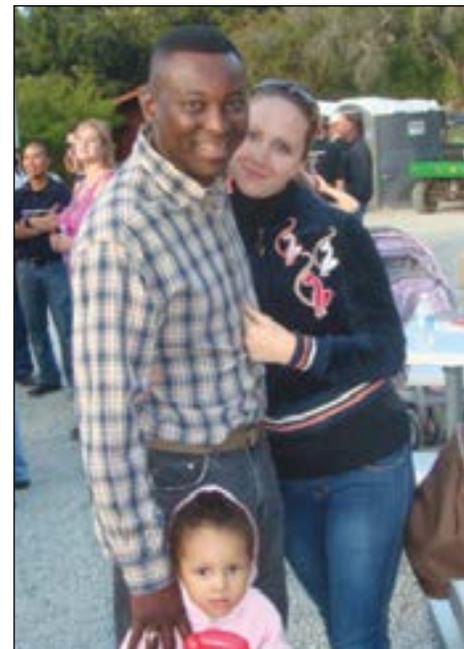
"For people outside the U.S., the might of the U.S. military comes in the form of the Navy," Ugah said.

That November, Ugah found himself lined up on the infamous yellow footprints at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, where drill instructors promised to transform him into a Marine or die trying. The transformation for Ugah, however, went smoother than for most.

"I had seen things kids didn't experience over here," said Ugah, who suffered intense corporal punishment and hazing at the hands of his peers in Nigeria's British-based boarding schools. "Someone yelling at me [in boot camp] ... I wouldn't be afraid."

Though his high aptitude-test scores allowed him to choose any military occupation, Ugah again honored his family heritage by becoming an infantryman. His training took him to Japan, Australia and Hawaii, and it was in Honolulu that his life would be changed forever, along with the rest of America.

"We were off on patrol early in the morning, and the patrols were called back," said Ugah, recalling his training on Sept. 11,



Photos courtesy of the Ugah family

Newly minted 2nd Lt. Wilson Ugah and his wife, Olga, and daughter, Sofia, celebrate his commissioning as an officer on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., in August 2010.

2001. "The officer asked if anyone was from New York, and there was one guy, and he handed him his phone so he could call his family. We had to run back to base because they were locking it down, and we got the full story of what happened. [The 9/11 attacks] were just horrible to watch occur."

TAKING UP ARMS

Ugah's immediate response to the attacks, like most patriots, was "Hey, let's go to war." But it would be a few years before his desire to trade blows with insurgents was realized amid the urban chaos of Iraq.

In 2004, Ugah found himself at Camp Snakepit, a company-sized outpost in Ramadi, Iraq, that offered none of the celebrated comforts of the massive U.S. installations that would later populate the country. Instead of Baskin-Robbins and salsa dance nights, the space was filled by "a place to sleep, a place to wash, a toilet, a chow hall — that's all you get," Ugah said.

If war was Ugah's trade of choice, he would soon ply it in earnest. With President George W. Bush's "mission accomplished" declaration and the traditional war behind them, Ugah and the rest of the U.S. forces found themselves in the thick of a maddening insurgency. The Marine battalion his unit replaced had suffered death or injury to about 50 percent of its men during its tour. "Not a friendly crowd," Ugah recalled.

Only one week into his deployment, Ugah found himself rolling down the recently christened Route Michigan in an armored vehicle when "everything just went black." The Marines in the vehicle behind Ugah "swore [my] entire vehicle went up in a ball of flames," he said.

Ugah exited his charred carriage and sized up the scene. Blood-soaked streets, decapitated heads once belonging to insurgents, screaming Marines and enemy fire from all directions made for a sobering crash course in reality. "It was a hell of a welcome."

Though he escaped his initial brush with death, Ugah would soon lose a close friend to combat, repeatedly gain promotions due to others' injuries as much as his own merit and work his way through a number of ambushes and close calls. Still, when Ugah

RIGHT: Wilson Ugah, then a sergeant in the Marine Corps, speaks with his future father-in-law, Igor Syrazetdinov, at the 2006 Marine Corps Birthday Ball in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Ugah had already struck up a conversation with Syrazetdinov's wife in a strategic move to gain introduction to their daughter. **FAR RIGHT:** Ugah, then a second lieutenant in the Army National Guard, attends a family appreciation event with his wife, Olga, and children, Sofia and Rian, on Fort Sill, Okla., in 2010.



continued on page 17

'Warrior' from 16

ruminates on his time in Iraq, he betrays an optimism and resilience that his time with the Marines exposed more than forged.

"We were always on the offensive," Ugah said. "We had a few more KIAs, but it ended up being a good deployment. We killed a lot of bad guys. We brought some safety and stability to that place."

A WARRIOR PUTS DOWN ROOTS

It would soon become evident that Ugah's dogged spirit translated beyond battles with embassy bureaucracies and Iraqi insurgents. Wanting some stability to pursue his education, Ugah became an embassy security guard with the Marines, a gig that begged "full circle."

During an embassy social event in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, a striking "lady in red" made her entrance, snapping the heads of Ugah and other socially starved Marines. Quickly sensing they were out of their league, the other Marines chose to admire from afar. In Ugah's case, however, social challenges triggered his courage as much as Ramadi firefights.

"No one was talking to her, so I did the smart thing and went and talked to her mom," said Ugah, beaming with pride over his innovative approach. "Once the mom introduces you to her daughter, you know you're in."

Ugah's social instincts were keen, as the woman of interest was also the daughter of the embassy's local guard chief, and she was studying to become a physician. It wasn't long before Olga and Wilson fell in love and found themselves married with a child, eager to make their way to the States. The process of gaining entry for Olga left Wilson shaking his head in

both delight and disbelief.

"It took her only three days to get an immigrant visa," said Ugah, remembering his three-year ordeal in securing his American birthright.

Once home, Ugah pursued his education in earnest, and soon set his sights on an officer's commission. Too old to become an active duty Marine officer, he learned of the Army National Guard and its diverse commissioning programs. He ultimately separated from the Marines and became a second lieutenant after two months in the accelerated Officer Candidate School.

Bouncing between several lackluster civilian jobs, including a stint as an insurance agent — "Of course, I didn't sell anything, so I didn't get paid" — Ugah finally found full-time work at the state Military Department, where he excels today as the state's ammunition manager.

His aspirations, however, include a position for which he seems ideally suited: liaison officer for the California National Guard in Nigeria, one of two nations (along with Ukraine) with whom the Cal Guard shares a state partnership program.

"It's something I'd really love to do," Ugah said. "I lived there for 25 years, have ties with their military through my family. ... I understand the people, understand the language, understand the culture."

Despite his international goals and experience — he travelled to more than 30 nations during his time with the Marine Corps — Ugah is quick to affirm that his heart rests with the United States, the nation of his birth.

"I am an American," Ugah said. "It is home."

Air Guard's Keck named CNG's top enlisted leader



Chief Master Sgt. Kristina Keck

On Oct. 1, Chief Master Sgt. Kristina Keck became the first Airman to fill the role of senior enlisted leader for the CNG. Keck, a traditional, part-time Guardsman, is working closely with Army Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark Jr., who fills the same role in a full-time capacity.

Keck joined the Air Force in 1986 and spent seven years on active duty before joining the Guard. In 1997 she joined the CNG's 129th Rescue Wing as a command and control specialist. She also served as the wing's human resource adviser and its 10th Wing command chief master sergeant. In those roles, Keck worked with most of her base's

population and grew relationships across the state and across the CNG's Air and Army components. Keck has a deep understanding of Defense Support to Civil Authorities and has regularly coordinated with the California Joint Operations Center, the Coast Guard, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and other agencies during rescue missions for the 129th. Keck also served as part of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

In her new role, Keck will support Col. Robert Spano when he serves as dual-status commander (DSC) for reserve and active duty forces responding to the same disaster. She recently attended the Joint Task Force Commander Training Course at Peterson Field, Colo., which develops leaders to execute DSC authority. Keck is one of two noncommissioned officers (NCOs) who have completed the course, which was designed for colonels and generals.

"Chief Keck brings an incredible amount of wisdom and experience to this important assignment," Spano said. "She is a very progressive thinker and willing to take on new challenges."

Keck is married with two sons and works as a vice president at risk-management firm Woodruff-Sawyer.



By STAFF SGT. FELIPE ARELLANO
California Military Department Public Affairs

The sun goes down. The neon lights of the Crest Theatre shine brightly. The red carpet rolls out, but it's not famous celebrities walking into the auditorium in downtown Sacramento; it's men and women serving in the California National Guard, along with family members and local public officials.

On Jan. 8, Comcast and NBC Universal presented a free advanced screening for

military members of the feature film "Lone Survivor" before its Jan. 10 release. In the Crest Theatre before the film began, NBC Universal Senior Vice President of Legal and Government Affairs Steven A. Nissen addressed the audience and expressed his appreciation for the service of California National Guard members.

California Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez and California National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin also spoke, thanking NBC for the event and

expressing their appreciation for the service of the military members present.

"It was good for the legislators to see this movie with service members," California Military Department Legislative Liaison Capt. Shannon Terry said. "I think it highlighted important service member issues and will open a dialogue on topics such as [post traumatic stress], re-integration and service member care. The legislature — specifically Speaker Pérez — has been a big supporter of the California Military Department."

Pérez played a critical role in creating the Work for Warriors program, which finds jobs for unemployed Guardsmen, and he has worked to increase funding for CNG behavioral health programs, Terry said.

Excitement and a feeling of anticipation were in the air before the movie began.

"My significant other signed me up, so we're here to watch it with him," said CNG Staff Sgt. Katy Digby. "Mark Wahlberg is a good reason to watch this movie."

"Lone Survivor" is based on a 2007 nonfiction book of the same title by retired Petty Officer 1st Class Marcus Luttrell. It dramatizes a failed mission in which four U.S. Navy SEALs were tasked to capture or kill Taliban leader Ahmad Shah.

"Fun night, great movie," Terry said after the screening. "I thought they did justice to the heroism portrayed by the author of the book and the story. ... It was raw and gritty. We had very visceral reactions."

At the end of the night, the 200-plus crowd left the auditorium with expressions of pride and humility and, for some, with reminders of battle scars and sacrifices our brothers and sisters have made.



Sending out an SOS

The Army's Survivor Outreach Services help family members through the loss of a loved one

By **MASTER SGT. PAUL WADE**
CA Military Department Public Affairs

We have all seen it: Old Glory draped over a casket. The grieving family handed a folded flag with offers of condolences as the funeral of a fallen comrade and loved one comes to an end.

Some of you have lived it.

But many of you walk away with a heavy heart not knowing that the job of a select group of caring individuals has just begun. Their privilege in this crucial stage of healing is to offer a shoulder to lean on, almost like a life preserver.

Upon hearing the term "SOS," many of us think of the international Morse code distress signal. But in the Army's gigantic library of acronyms, SOS is the way to refer to Survivor Outreach Services, a program that embraces and reassures those dealing with pain or suffering due to the loss of a loved one who served in the military.

The SOS mission is to build a unified program that helps survivors and assures them they will be linked to the Army family for as long as they desire. SOS was established in 2009, not as another layer of support with the casualty assistance officer, but as a long-term extension beyond the funeral.

This helping hand is offered, not forced. The thread connecting the family to the military is only as strong as the family wishes it to be. The need for that support

could surface days, months or even years after losing that special someone, and SOS will be there, walking beside you.

There is a lot of information out there on SOS; just typing it into a search engine nets 282,000 results. So we sat down with a few SOS coordinators in California to break down some important points. There are eight SOS coordinators in the state, managing anywhere from 40 to more than 700 survivors each.

Q: Spouses, parents, children, siblings and grandparents are eligible for SOS support, as well as "others." Who would that be?

A: It really depends. The deceased could have someone other than their immediate family noted on their life insurance or emergency data card, in which case we would provide support to that person. Or a family member could mention that the fallen Soldier's best friend deserves the support more than the family member.

Q: What kinds of benefits are offered?

A: There are at least 11 benefits to survivors, including counseling, life insurance, death gratuity and other compensation. Depending on the paperwork, survivors who are not in the immediate family might be limited in what they are eligible to receive, but we do what we can to help. In general any friend or family member is given information about benefits and entitlements, is connected with local resources and is provided grief, financial and family counseling, if and when desired.

Q: How long are survivors eligible to re-

ceive these services?

A: The door is never shut. We have seen the children of a fallen Soldier grow up and ask about benefits for college years after. Once we connect with a survivor, we are just a phone call away.

Q: What are some of the organizations that support your efforts?

A: There are 11 organizations we have wonderful relationships with, like our Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Gold Star and Blue Star mothers and the Red Cross, and we hope to get more.

Q: Does SOS host events to connect survivors with each other and with their communities?

A: Yes. In the past year, SOS invited family members to veteran recognition days, Gold Star Mothers gatherings, football camps and sporting events, to name a few.

Q: What have been some of your more interesting cases?

A: Usually the ones where our existence is found out by families of past generations. We recently helped a family whose father died in 1967. We are also helping the family of a veteran from World War II. In these older cases, we become a detective of sorts. There is a lot of re-

search, and help is needed from many resources. It helps when families keep records of service.

Q: Where do your cases come from, and how do you find survivors?

A: We get cases from many different sources. Casualty assistance centers call us. The Army Installation Management Command notifies us. Our own casualty assistance office [for the California Army National Guard] lets us know, and we also hear from people through our retirement seminars. A lot of it is word of mouth, and like a rippling effect, it reaches people and places we might not ever have known about.

According to the SOS coordinators, the way ahead is clear: The success of their program hinges on getting the word out. The contacts SOS has made with survivors of fallen Soldiers from historical wars, who never had an outreach program like this in the past, is the first sign that people are talking.

As SOS increases its footprint, more resources will become available, which in turn will expand the support network. SOS has many plans to grow its network — such as building a grief camp for kids — and will continue working with survivors to help them through the loss of their loved ones.

FIT to FIGHT with MAJ. JONATHAN SHIROMA

I teach a number of boot camp classes every week at a national fitness chain outlet in Sacramento. What sometimes makes it interesting is that there is a well-known burger joint right next door. Often as I am walking into the gym, the smell of the burgers on the grill mixes into the air and, quite frankly, sometimes I'd rather skip my workout and coaching to grab a juicy, greasy burger with fries instead.

Food. We all have a relationship with it, and for better or for worse, this relationship will be with us until death do us part.



But like any relationship, we need to learn how to make it work to foster a healthy exchange between the two parties.

"Too often we eat on autopilot: We associate food with certain activities or even times of the day, and without really paying attention to how much we're consuming, we overeat," Warren Huberman, a psychologist with the New York University Program for Surgical Weight Loss, said in an article on www.WebMD.com.

Many of us associate a certain food or drink with an activity or event — chips and dip with a beer during the game, a cream-filled donut with your coffee in the morning or a piece of candy from the dish on that co-worker's desk as you leave the office.

"Your brain stores things in a way that makes life easy for you, so if you do things in a certain manner a number of times, your brain says, 'OK this is how we do things.' When those habits include food, overeating can become a simple matter of unconscious association," Huberman told WebMD.

Behavioral eating is a lot like links in a chain, he added.

"When you continually find yourself in a situation that is conducive to eating, or conducive to eating a particular food, and you follow through by eating that food, you reinforce a chain link of behaviors that is very much like being on autopilot," Huberman said.

Keali'I Forsberg, a certified fitness coach in Sacramento, added that there is an experience of taste that we can sometimes be more in love with than the food and sustenance itself.

"There are comfort foods that are familiar to us, or something we can associate with our past," he said. "There are textures of foods that attract us to maybe crunch through an entire bag of chips, listening to them crush as you go. And all of this so far has nothing to do with what our body needs to sustain life."

There are three basic universal demands the human body requires for sustenance and performance, according to Huberman: carbohydrates, fats and proteins

"Most common in busy American diets is far-less-than-optimal protein and beyond-excess in carbohydrates and fats," he said. "It is these gaps and holes from early morning fueling that open the door to late after-

noon and evening disasters of cravings."

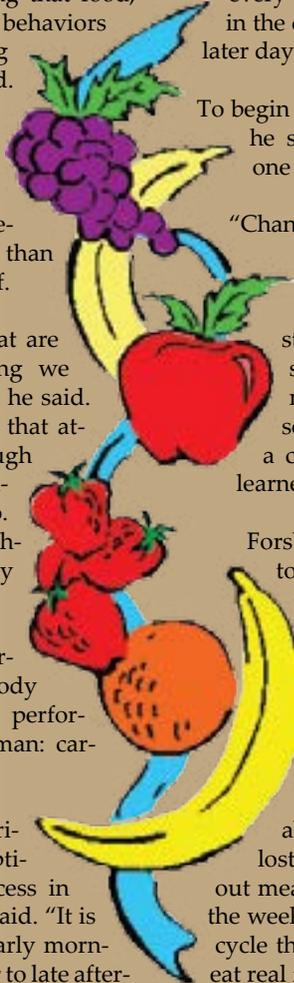
"If there is not a protein for every meal and every snack, for every three hours in the day, there will be chaos in the later day," Huberman said.

To begin to change your eating habits, he said, you just need to break one link in the chain.

"Change the time you eat, the TV show you are watching, the bowl you put the chips in. Eat with your left hand instead of your right hand," he suggested. "The point is to make your brain work a little so that every bite you take is a conscious decision and not a learned, automatic behavior."

Forsberg offered another simple tool: Prepare your meals in advance and stay away from the processed, easy-to-get fast food.

"Our bodies do need fuel, the right grade and at the right time. If we wait till we are hungry to even think about food, it will be a battle lost each time," he said. "Plan out meals and fueling for the day or the week, or rinse, wash and repeat a cycle that works for your goals. Just eat real food!"





Sp. Adilene Valencia of the CNG's Vallejo-based 349th Quartermaster Company sings with country music star Kellie Pickler during a USO concert at Forward Operating Base Walton, Afghanistan, on Dec. 23. Photo by Cpl. Clay Beyersdorfer

Make the cover of the Grizzly!

In celebration of the Month of the Military Child, which is recognized each April by the Department of Defense, The Grizzly Newsmagazine is asking children of California National Guard and California State Military Reserve members to submit their artwork for potential publication on the front cover or inside the April issue. Submissions should illustrate what it means to the artist to be a military child.

Winners will be chosen in three age groups: 3 to 7 years, 8 to 12 and 13 through 17. All winners will receive a CNG prize and have their design published in The Grizzly, with the overall winner's design published on the cover.

Please mail 8.5-by-11-inch submissions to: Grizzly Newsmagazine, California National Guard, Box 3, 9800 Goethe Rd., Sacramento, CA 95826. All submissions must be received no later than March 31 and will not be returned. Please do not fold artwork for mailing. We can't wait to see your masterpiece!

DoD launches parenting website

Service members who deploy or are otherwise separated from their families because of mission needs now have an online resource to help them hone their parenting skills as they reconnect with their children. Pam Murphy, the Defense Department's lead psychologist for www.militaryparenting.org, said the website offers unprecedented, comprehensive and free computer-based training on parenting and building strong relationships with children from a service member's perspective.

The interactive site develops and reinforces parenting skills to help families reconnect through in-depth technology solutions that appeal to younger parents, Murphy said. She added that a great deal of parenting information is available online, but it was previously difficult to find a free, private "military-centric" program.

Career Transition Program for spouses

The Institute for Veterans and Military Families has opened enrollment in its Veterans Career Transition Program to include spouses of veterans and active duty service members, enabling them to access online courses in four professional tracks at no cost. Program participants select an independent study track or follow tracks in professional skills, technology or human resources. The program is fully funded by JPMorgan Chase. In addition to coursework in the program tracks, students will prepare for industry certifications such as Six Sigma Greenbelt and Security+; gain insight into navigating the corporate environment; and work with a Syracuse University adviser who will guide them through the coursework and employment process. To apply, visit <http://vets.syr.edu/vctp>.

Free tax consultation, filing

The Department of Defense offers free tax consultation and e-filing services for military members and their families through Military OneSource. The service allows users to complete and file a federal tax return and up to three state returns electronically with the support of tax professionals.

Military OneSource tax consultants understand military personnel's unique tax requirements, can help service members maximize their refunds and can connect them with free financial counseling services.

For more info, contact Military OneSource at 800-342-9647.

DID YOU KNOW...

there are limits to the distance a Guard member can be required to travel for drill?

All National Guard members commit to participate in scheduled training periods each year. Soldiers and Airmen receive no reimbursement for traveling to their normal drill location. When a member has orders to travel to an alternate training site, however, he or she is reimbursed for mileage driven in their personally owned vehicle that exceeds the distance from their home to their normal drill site.

If government transportation is provided, no mileage reimbursement is authorized; this includes situations in which the Soldier or Airman has an option to take government transportation but uses their personal vehicle instead.

Army National Guard Soldiers may be involuntarily required to travel as far as 50 miles or 90 minutes from their home to a training site. If the Soldier's unit normally conducts multiple unit training assemblies on two consecutive days (MUTA-4), and government-provided meals and quarters are furnished at the training site, a Soldier may be required to travel 100 miles or three hours. This limit only applies to enlisted Soldiers.

References: Army Regulation 135-91, Paragraph 5-5; Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR), Chapter 2, Part G, Paragraph U7152, and JFTR Appendix O, Paragraph T4045.

CORRECTION: An article in the October issue misstated the name of a book written by Staff Sgt. Emmett Spraktes about California National Guard flight medics. The book is called "Selfish Prayer."



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Staff Sgt. Martin Krebs, a squad leader with the Long Beach-based 216th Mobility Augmentation Company, signals members of his patrol during a Jan. 22 mission to clear improvised explosive devices from a stretch of Highway 1 in Ghazni province, Afghanistan. Highway 1, which is also known as “the Ring Road,” connects several major cities in Afghanistan. Photo by 1st Lt. Laura Beth Beebe

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Address/subscription: CNG members must make changes through their unit.

Retired members, email brandon.honig@us.army.mil.



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