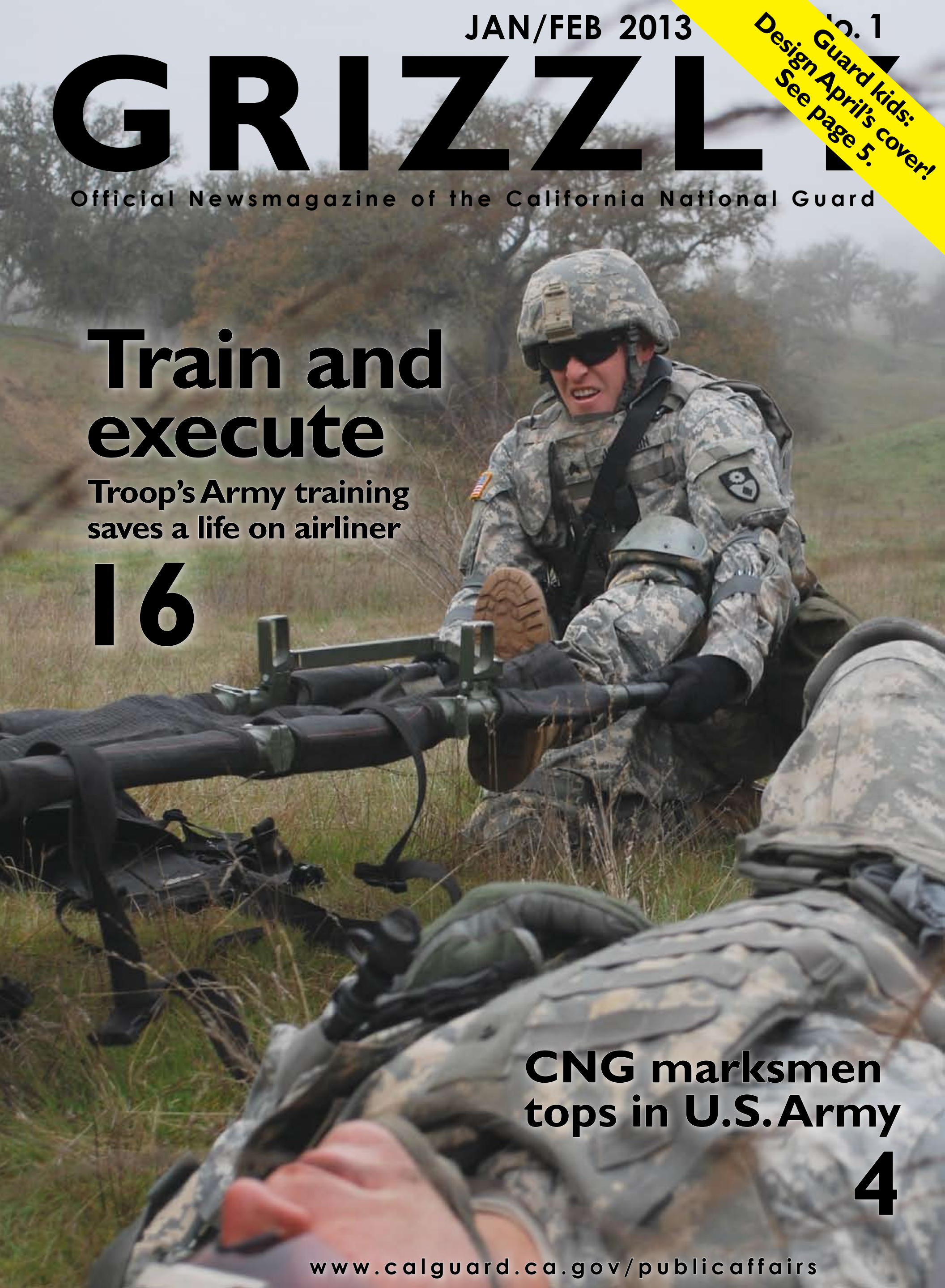
JAN/FEB 2013 No. 1

GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard

Guard kids: Design April's cover! See page 5.



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Leadership Corner

A better solution to DoD budget woes

Major General David S. Baldwin

After a decade of war, we have new national challenges and priorities that must be balanced with defense spending. Everyone recognizes that military budgets must be trimmed.

Unfortunately, the current budgeting paradigm in the Department of Defense makes it very difficult to find new and creative solutions to maintain a strong, powerful military at lower cost. Central to this is an overemphasis on a large standing military and an under-reliance on the capabilities of our nation's oldest military force. The answer exists outside the Beltway, in the small towns and large cities throughout our nation; it exists with the men and women of our National Guard and Reserve forces.

Instead of looking at the reserve components as an afterthought, it is time to place the National Guard and Reserves first when addressing our nation's missions and budgets: Any mission that can be accomplished by a reserve component unit should be assigned to a reserve component unit.

The reserve components do more with less at a time when such efficiencies are an absolute necessity. Until mobilized, the Guard and Reserves cost much less than the active component alternative. Large standing militaries are expensive, not just in current years but also down the line as troops retire.

Reservists are part-time and require less pay and lower medical, housing and other base-related costs when compared to full-time service members. They are called up when needed and return to civilian life when their mission is complete, whether that mission is fighting wars abroad or responding to emergencies at home.

A January report this year by the Defense Department's Reserve Forces Policy Board underscored earlier cost studies by showing that a reserve component service member incurs less than one-third the cost of an active duty counterpart when not deployed. In fact, the reserve components account for only 16 percent of the Defense Department budget, yet make up 39 percent of the U.S. military's overall force.

Even with those cost-saving differences, the reserve components still maintain the same standards and mission requirements as the active components. Once deployed, our nation can count on Guardsmen and Reservists to successfully perform the same missions as our full-time troops, and at roughly the same price. This is not merely a concept; it is a battle-tested fact, proven time and time again over more than a decade of war, as nearly 700,000 Guardsmen and Reservists have successfully executed missions overseas, at times accounting for more than half of the forward-deployed force in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait.

Additionally, these troops are always readily available to state governors during natural disasters and emergencies, as we've witnessed with hurricanes Katrina, Sandy and numerous other emergencies.

No one is suggesting that the Guard and Reserves can do it alone. There will always be a need for a strong, robust active duty force that maintains increased readiness levels for a wide variety of rapid-response missions. But for everything else, the reserve components are the more cost-effective solution.

By focusing resources on rapidly deployable forces and maximizing reserve component force structure for less time-sensitive missions, we can provide the widest variety of options to strategic planners and combatant commanders without breaking the bank.

Making this transition will require a fundamental shift in thinking among policymakers, as it would invert the current balance of forces. Since the Cold War began, our nation has maintained a large active duty force and filled in at the margins with the Guard and Reserves. And after every major conflict, we have irresponsibly drawn down our force structure to cash in on the "peace dividend," only to be forced into an expensive rebuild as new threats emerged. This is a model from a bygone era, and America can do better.

The National Guard and Reserves — the most cost-effective components of our military — stand ready to assume a larger role in the defense of our nation. Photo by 1st Lt. Jason Sweeney

Grizzly

The Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard

Jan./Feb.

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Publisher
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Submissions

Articles:

- ★ Articles range from 350 to 2,000 words. All articles must be accompanied by multiple high-resolution images.
- ★ Include first names, last names and military ranks. Always verify spelling.
- ★ Spell out acronyms, abbreviations and full unit designations on first reference.
- ★ Only submit articles that have been approved by your unit's public affairs officer.

Photographs:

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

E-mail submissions by the 15th of the month to:
GrizzlyMag.ngca@ng.army.mil

Feedback:
brandon.honig@us.army.mil

Cover Shot

Photo by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

Sgt. Skylar Johnson of the 235th Engineer Company kicks open a collapsible litter to carry a Soldier with a simulated injury during a Feb. 13 drill at Camp Roberts, Calif., where his unit was preparing for deployment to Afghanistan. While flying to Camp Roberts on Feb. 10, Johnson used his training to assist a fellow passenger experiencing a severe asthma attack.

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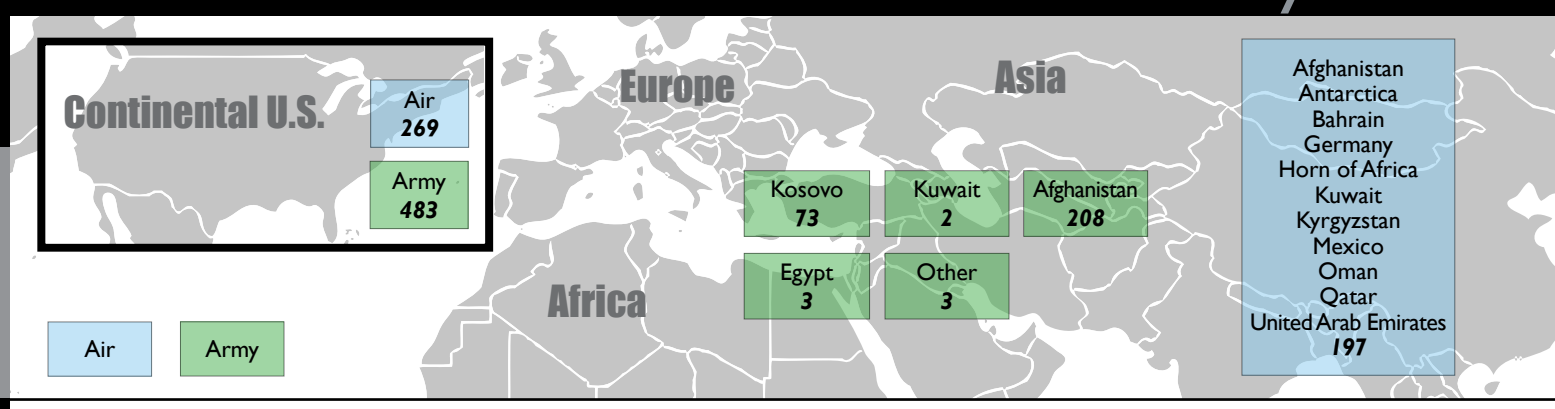


Taking aim at excellence

The CNG's marksmanship team defeats all comers at Army-wide Small Arms Championship

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

Countless hours of dedication and focus paid off for the four marksmen of Team California as they took the stage Feb. 8 at the Army Small Arms Championship on Fort Benning, Ga., to receive top honors in both the team and individual categories.

The team made up of California Army National Guardsmen clinched the Overall Team Championship and the Combined Arms Team Championship, while team member Sgt. 1st Class Geoffrey Applegate was named champion of the Overall Individual, Combined Arms and Open Class competitions, and Spc. Demetrios Iannios took 2nd place in the Overall competition for the Novice Class.

"We went out there to put California on the map, with a focus on staying positive and working as a team, and we did just that," said Team California member Sgt. Oscar Moreno, a three-year member of the team and a training noncommissioned officer (NCO) with Company A, 40th Brigade Support Battalion. "We're very proud of what we were able to accomplish, and it was humbling to be recognized amongst some of the Army's finest."

Team California was not the only group of Guardsmen to make a big showing at the Army-wide championship. Of the 27 teams competing, only five were National Guard teams, yet Guard shooters swept the team competition, claiming the pistol, rifle, combined arms and overall titles, while also locking up 2nd through 4th place in the Overall standings, followed closely by an Army Reserve team and an active duty Special Forces team.

Photos by Fort Benning Public Affairs

While Team California made its mark as a whole, Applegate was a force to be reckoned with in the individual events, dethroning defending four-time winner Master Sgt. Russell Moore as the competition's Overall Individual champion. Along the way Applegate also earned the Open Class and Combined Arms titles as well as the coveted Distinguished Rifleman's Badge and a Secretary of the Army M-1 Garand Trophy Rifle for his strong showing.

"I am still a bit overwhelmed," said Applegate, an infantryman with 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment. "I love this competition. I have a competitive spirit. [Marksmanship] is what I love to do, and to win at the all-Army is awesome."

Each team in the competition comprises four shooters and a coach. By regulation, three of the Soldiers may be an "old shooter," or someone who has competed at the national level before, while the fourth team member must be a "new shooter," who is competing at the national level for the first time.

"As an organization, we've been in the mix [for the championship] for the last couple years, but this year we were able to perfect our recipe," said Staff Sgt. Leif Devemark, an infantryman with 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment, and a three-year member of California's marksmanship team. "We really gelled as a team and focused on keeping each other positive."

The two-week event included competitions in three focused areas: pistol, rifle and combined arms. At the start, the members of Team California made a pact not to tally their scores during the matches and to keep their minds homed on the next set of targets. However, as results were announced and the team learned it had taken 3rd and 4th place in the pistol and rifle portions of the competition, respectively, they knew they needed every shot to count in the combined arms segment.

ABOVE: Team California, consisting of Spc. Demetrios Iannios, left, Sgt. Oscar Moreno, Sgt. 1st Class Geoffrey Applegate and Staff Sgt. Leif Devemark, compete Feb. 5 at the Army Small Arms Championship on Fort Benning, Ga. TOP LEFT: The competition pushes Soldiers beyond typical shooting practice, requiring participants to engage a variety of targets from traditional and improvised positions as they navigate combat simulations.

"The multi-gun portion is where we were going to make our money," Applegate said. "It was worth more than both the rifle and pistol portions combined."

Teams' combined-arms scores were based on both time elapsed and targets hit at each station. Every target a competitor missed added an increment of time to their final tally, stripping points from their score.

This was the third year Applegate had competed, and he reminded his teammates: "Go slow, make your shots count. You can't miss fast enough to win."

Team California's "slow is smooth, smooth is fast, fast is lethal" mindset pushed their shooters to the front of the pack.

COMPETITION BREEDS EXCELLENCE

The Army Small Arms Championship is just one of several annual events hosted by the Fort Benning-based Army Marksmanship Unit, which was established in 1956 to raise the level of marksmanship throughout the Army. Since its inception the AMU has assembled, trained and funded many of the Army's finest marksmen to compete globally, with resounding success.

The unit also serves as a Center of Excellence, developing and standardizing Army small arms training and working tirelessly to innovate new platforms and systems to enhance combat effectiveness. The unit's specialized personnel were instrumental in developing, testing and fielding today's M-21 and M-24 sniper systems, special purpose rifles and squad-designated marksman rifles.

Competitions enable the AMU to bring together many of the top shots from across the Army. This year's Small Arms Championship pulled Soldiers from many active duty units, including Special Forces and Ranger battalions, as well as National Guard and Reserve units.

"I've been to this match twice before, and I'm always impressed by the level of competition," Applegate said. "There are always some outstanding shooters."

The Small Arms Championship is designed to push Soldiers beyond the sterilized protocol and layout of a standard Army range. Each match is varied in its focus and stressors, forcing shooters to engage a variety of targets from traditional and improvised positions as they navigate a range laid out to simulate a combat situation. Technique and focus are critical.

"Competitions like this allow us to figure out what works under pressure and bring those tested methods back to Soldiers here in our home state for their benefit," Devemark said.

Sgt. 1st Class Geoffrey Applegate
1st place, Overall Individual
1st place, Open Class
1st place, Combined Arms

Though no Soldier makes it to this level of competition without a proven record, many see their education as ongoing, and the cross-pollination of expertise and enthusiasm was evident throughout the competition.

"Every time I go to a competition, I learn something I would have never learned otherwise," Applegate said. "The majority of the competitors are NCOs, so training is second nature, and it's a great environment to learn from one another and perfect our craft."

LONG-RANGE TARGET

Team California hopes its Overall win will highlight the members' level of seriousness and dedication, and generate interest and support for California's marksmanship program for years to come.

"We'd like to maintain the momentum from an accomplishment like this and use it as a foundation to build upon for future successes," Moreno said. "This program brings great accolades to the [CNG] as an organization and a great training value back to individual units and Soldiers."

The team members recognize that competing at this level requires dedication and sacrifice from those who support the marksmen as well.

"There are a lot of key players outside the ranks of our small team, like our families and our home units, who were critical in getting us to [Fort] Benning," Devemark said. "We couldn't have brought it all together without them backing us."

Despite the amount of personal time and sacrifice it requires to keep their skills honed, the team members share a deep belief in the importance of their trade and the community that surrounds it.

"The three Army pillars are shoot, move and communicate. … What comes first, and why?" Applegate asked. "Because it needs to be the foremost," he answered, "and we've got a lot of passionate people in the state working toward that end.

"Our success is a product of those professionals and their dedication. Now we've just got to keep this momentum. "

Kids, get published!

The Grizzly will put your artwork on the cover in honor of the Month of the Military Child

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: 5 to 8 years, 9 to 12 and 13 to 18. All winners will receive a CNG prize package 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 postmarked no later than April 8 and will not be returned. Please do not fold artwork for mailing.

April was established as the Defense Department's Month of the Military Child in 1986 as an opportunity to recognize military children and the sacrifices they make. All components of the U.S. Armed Forces organize events in April to honor the contributions of military children, and the California National Guard is no exception.

Last April, the CNG hosted its first annual Military Children's Appreciation Ball at two locations simultaneously, in Fresno and Sacramento. This year, the festivities will be extended to Orange County.

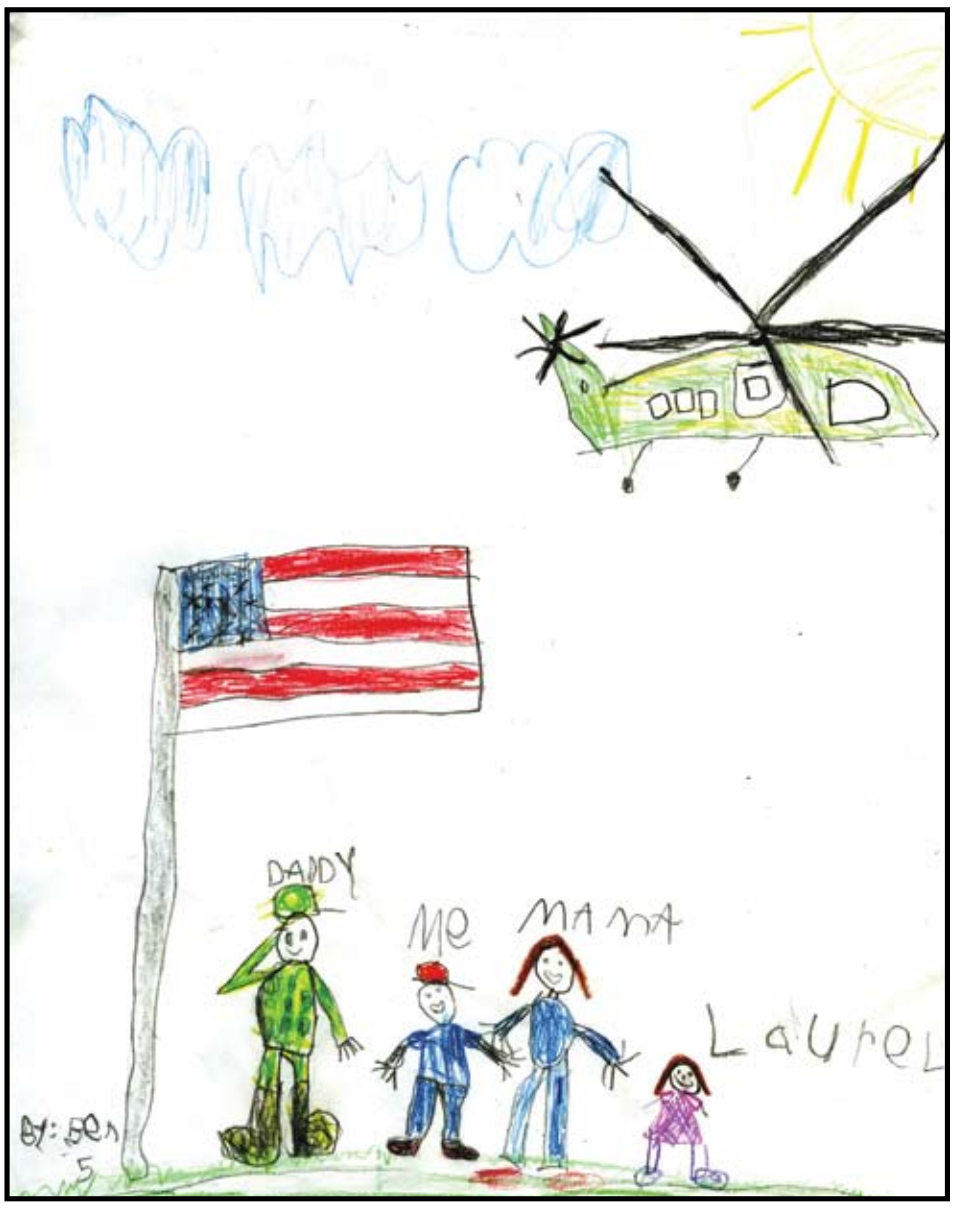
The Ball will be held April 19 in Fresno, April 20 in Orange County and April 27 in Sacramento. For details, check the "California National Guard Operation Ready Families" page on www.facebook.com, email philip.j.morlock.ctr@mail.mil (Sacramento), melanie.c.diaz.ctr@mail.mil (Fresno) or Ontariobell@gmail.com (Orange County), or call 800-449-9662.

The CNG Child and Youth Program is also collaborating with several school districts to establish April 15 as this year's Purple Up Day, when students and faculty will wear purple to show their support for military children.

"My desire is to gain community support for our military kids and, through this support, work with the individual school districts to better meet the needs of military children both academically and socially," said Philip Morlock, lead coordinator for the CNG Child and Youth Program. "Purple Up Day will bring awareness of a side of the Military that often is overlooked and forgotten about: our military kids."

The Cal Guard is fortunate to have a robust Child and Youth Program that offers resources for children of all ages. The CNG organizes quarterly activities for Guard children in Northern, Central and Southern California, and family assistance specialists host monthly "We Care" meetings for parents, where toys are available for kids to enjoy while they wait.

In addition, organizers of California National Guard family days or other child-focused activities can check out Child and Youth Program equipment such as team-building kits, outdoor theater systems, Nintendo Wiis and Xbox 360s. Contact your nearest family assistance specialist to coordinate equipment use or visit www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies.



One of last year's runners-up in the Grizzly cover contest celebrating the Month of the Military Child was submitted by Ben Loeffler, then age 5, son of Master Sgt. David Loeffler of the CNG's 144th Fighter Wing.

Morlock describes vision for Youth Program

Philip Morlock, who serves in the Marine Corps Reserve, is the new lead coordinator for the California National Guard Child and Youth Program.

PHILIP MORLOCK
CA National Guard Child and Youth Program

I am the new lead coordinator for the California National Guard Child and Youth Program. I took on that role to help families understand the vital roles they play in the lives of their Soldiers and Airmen. My vision for the Child and Youth Program is to provide a range of activities for youths of all ages that will provide the skills to handle a loved one's service before, during and after a deployment.

It is of great importance to me that military children feel our support and appreciation for serving as the son or daughter of a CNG member. It is my passion to ensure that each child feels our gratitude for their sacrifice, whether that is achieved through the child attending a youth camp, receiving support at their school or spending time with other youths who understand the struggles military families experience.

The Child and Youth Program is here to meet the needs of all National Guard children throughout the state and to build camaraderie among young members of our National Guard families.

I was born and raised in Maine, so naturally outdoor activities consumed much of my time. After high school, I moved to Florida to attend Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. In 2007, I relocated to California, where I met my wife, Angelina. We married in 2008 and expect our first child in April.

Growing up I found U.S. history fascinating, particularly military history. Most of this fascination came from the fact that my grandfather served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. He retired from the Army as a sergeant major in 1973 after 33 years of active duty service that included earning a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star for his actions in combat during World War II.

In 1997 my grandfather passed away, taking with him years of knowledge but leaving behind a legacy. Desiring to follow in his footsteps, I set my sights on serving in the military, and in 2006 I joined the Marine Corps Reserve, serving in Fresno with Detachment A, Wing Support Squadron 473, as a military police officer.

Prior to becoming the lead coordinator for the Child and Youth Program, I was the Step Up After School Program facilitator for Peyton Elementary School in Stockton, Calif., working closely with 120 students to improve their social and academic skills.

I continue to serve in the Marine Corps, and throughout my service, I have desired to help military families. Understanding the difficulties of incorporating one's family into a "one weekend a month, two weeks a year" lifestyle, I wanted to make sure my family felt as much a part of my Marine Corps life as possible, and I want to do the same for each family of the California National Guard.

If you have questions about the Child and Youth Program or other California Guard Family Programs, please visit our website, www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies. I look forward to serving with you!

Get credit for your military skills, training

Civilian professional licenses and certifications are now available in California based on previous military training

The California Military Department Office of State Policy and Liaison has been working diligently with other state Departments and the California State Legislature to enable you to use your military training to acquire civilian licenses and certifications. As a result of that effort, several new state programs, which are listed below, can help you turn your military experience into credentials that could help you in your civilian career. For further information, contact the State Policy Office at 916-854-3705.

DRIVERS

Do you operate heavy vehicles for the National Guard? The passage of Assembly Bill 2659 in 2012 authorized the Department of Motor Vehicles to waive the driving test portion of the commercial driver's license examination for service members who are currently licensed by the U.S. Armed Forces, possess the necessary driving experience and have a driving record compatible with regulations passed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Service members still must pass a written exam for their commercial driver's license. The Department of Motor Vehicles estimates this waiver should be available beginning in July of this year.

Photo by Spc. Darriel Swatts

CONTRACTORS

Are you skilled in engineering, construction or a trade field? The Contractors State Licensing Board (CSLB) already accepts military experience and training as credentials toward state licensure, but the Board is seeking to accelerate the process. The Veterans Application Assistance Program was launched recently to expedite licensing of military personnel. This program, which is currently active, offers priority services to military applicants by evaluating transferable military experience, training and education. For more, visit the CSLB website, www.cslb.ca.gov/applicants/veterans.

SECURITY GUARDS

Are you interested in work as a security guard? The Bureau of Security and Investigative Services, in partnership with the California National Guard Work for Warriors Program, is streamlining the security guard certification process and helping Cal Guard members obtain their Guard Card certification at no cost.

Every security guard must have a valid security guard registration. Basic requirements include that the guard must be at least 18 years old, undergo a criminal history background check through the California Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and complete a 40-hour course of required training. The training and exam may be administered by any private patrol operator or by a certified training facility. Through their innovative efforts, the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services will recognize the Work for Warriors Program team members as certified trainers for the Guard Card class.

Photo by Senior Airman Nicholas Carzis

The Work for Warriors Guard Card program will commence early this year. Trainers in both Northern and Southern California will conduct quarterly classes that will include the no-cost, one-day certification class, live scan fingerprinting and on-site interviews with prospective employers.

Additional information regarding security guard requirements is available at www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/guard_fact.shtml. Information on upcoming class dates and registration for the Work for Warriors training program can be found at www.calguard.ca.gov/EIP/Pages/Default1.aspx.

MEDICAL PERSONNEL

The state Department of Public Health currently accepts military medical experience toward some, but not all, of its licensing programs. The California Military Department is working with the Department of Public Health, the Governor's Interagency Council on Veterans and other interagency partners to ensure military medical training is properly understood and maximum credit is accepted toward credentialing.

In addition Assemblyman Bob Blumenfield's office is coordinating a pending program with the University of California, Los Angeles, that would apply military medical training toward higher educational goals.

PEACE OFFICERS

In the future, military police personnel will be recognized by the state of California as peace officers transferred from another state. At present, the Army Military Police School at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., is working with the state of Missouri to obtain accreditation. Once the school is accredited, military police Soldiers will be acknowledged by the state of California as out-of-state applicants and receive credit for having completed the Regular Basic Course.

Photo by Spc. Eddie Siguenza

DoD opens all military roles to women

Photo by Master Sgt. Paul Wade

Female service members like Sgt. 1st Class Brisilia Jiminez, seen here competing in the California National Guard Best Warrior Competition in September, are now able to serve in any role in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The Department of Defense on Jan. 24 rescinded a 1994 rule prohibiting women from serving in direct combat roles, removing all gender-based policy barriers to service in the U.S. Armed Forces.

"Women have shown great courage and sacrifice on and off the battlefield, contributed in unprecedented ways to the military's mission and proven their ability to serve in an expanding number of roles," Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta said. "The Department's goal in rescinding the rule is to ensure that the mission is met with the best-qualified and most capable people, regardless of gender."

This decision was more than a move toward equality, but a tactical advancement as well, the California National Guard said in a press release.

"By increasing the diversity of the Armed Forces across its ranks, we also increase our cultural and social capabilities," the Cal Guard said. "This greater diversity translates directly into mission success, both in combat overseas and during domestic operations here at home."

Nearly 202,400 women serve in the U.S. military, accounting for about 15 percent of the total force, and during the past decade, more than 280,000 women have deployed in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Female leaders already hold some of the highest positions in the California National Guard, and as members of the nation's most frequently deployed National Guard force, our female Soldiers and Airmen have repeatedly deployed into harm's way since the attacks on 9/11," said Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general for the California National Guard. "Their contributions and experience have proved invaluable, as they will undoubtedly do so on future battlefields."

The recent decision builds on a February 2012 move to open more than 14,000 positions to women by allowing them to serve in select positions in ground combat units at the battalion level.

The Department of Defense said in a press release that it is determined to successfully integrate women into the remaining restricted occupational fields in the military, while simultaneously preserving unit readiness, cohesion and morale.

Eligibility for training and development within designated occupational fields should consist of qualitative and quantifiable standards reflecting the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for each occupation, the Department said, and occupational performance standards must be gender-neutral, as required by law.

The assimilation of women into units that were previously closed to women will be guided by continual in-stride assessments and pilot efforts, the Department of Defense said. Panetta directed each military department to submit a detailed plan for the implementation of this change by May 15.

The process should be completed by Jan. 1, 2016, he said.

CSMR fosters dream to serve

A congenital disorder couldn't stop Zachary Foster from serving his country

By CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 (CA) RICK DE LA TORRE
CA State Military Reserve Regional Support Command–South

Sgt. (CA) Zachary Foster has that fit-and-ready look in an Army combat uniform (ACU), just like the other squared-away troopers of the 20-something generation who serve as Soldiers all around California. But for Foster, there is a little something extra about how he carries himself in ACUs, and there is a little something different about how he handles himself on assignments for the California State Military Reserve (CSMR) Installation Support Command (ISC) at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos.

Foster, who served as a CSMR company clerk from 2008 until last year, when was assigned to the ISC's new public affairs unit as a writer, carries what he calls "15 pounds of machinery" slung over his shoulder and attached to his body. The device is a prosthetic right forearm and hand, something Foster has lifelong familiarity with because he was born missing those body parts.

"It's been interesting," the 24-year-old from San Dimas, Calif., said of his service. "It's definitely been quite a journey."

The journey almost never got started, as his enlistment request stirred some concerns and controversy. It took the personal approval of the CSMR commander at that time, Brig. Gen. (CA) Jack Hagan, to get Foster into uniform.

Foster, a former Eagle Scout, had been looking for a way to serve since graduating from high school during the gung-ho era of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Marine Corps, Foster's first choice, along with the Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard, all had politely turned him down.

"I thought, 'Gosh, there's got to be some way I can get into the service,'" he recalled. "It was my generation's time to step up, and I did not want history to leave me behind. I did not want it said that I did nothing."

Photo by Staff Sgt. (CA) Gene Arias

Photo by Jaime Feldman

ABOVE: Sgt. (CA) Zachary Foster works with a volunteer on Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, in January during Operation Valentine, a community effort to provide free lunches to Soldiers training on the base that day. RIGHT: Foster frequently participates in Army exercises as a casualty role-player.

Finally, after an unsuccessful attempt to obtain a waiver for Foster to join the Army National Guard, a Guard recruiter connected him with the CSMR recruiting team. ISC Deputy Commander Col. (CA) Karl Vogeley remembers his first encounter with a confident Foster, who was wearing civilian clothes and looking like a young Elvis Presley.

"He said, 'I want to be a Soldier and I want to be in the SMR,'" Vogeley recalled. Foster also promised he would ably take on the duties asked of him.

"He performed in exemplary fashion," Vogeley said of Foster's tenure as a company clerk. "And as far as limitations go, I don't see any. He asks for no allowance. He's right in there with everybody else. He's just a credit to the unit."

Foster, a political science major at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, has also found other ways to contribute in uniform. He recently signed on with the Civil Air Patrol and is serving as a second lieutenant in La Verne. In addition he works part-time as a contractor, participating as a casualty role-player in medical training activities for active duty and Reserve Army units on Fort Irwin, Calif.

Outfitted with make-up and uniform alterations, Foster adds a startling realism to his performances while simulating injuries. Soldiers tending to Foster's simulated wounds sometimes make smart-mouth remarks about him, but Foster always stays in character and will sometimes even the score a bit with exaggerated pain and suffering.

"I love it," he said about the role-playing. "It makes me [feel] alive."

CSMR, CNG, Marines team up to feed needy

Military personnel work with civilian nonprofits to package, distribute 30,000 meals during holiday season

By CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 (CA) RICK DE LA TORRE
California State Military Reserve Regional Support Command–South

Keeping up an end-of-year tradition, California State Military Reserve (CSMR) Soldiers teamed up with Marines and California Army National Guard troops to help community volunteers and organizations send thousands of holiday meal packages to needy families across Orange County.

Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CA) Rick de la Torre

Spc. (CA) Steven Mai works with civilian and military personnel to assemble meal boxes for needy families Dec. 16 at the Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County warehouse.

Nearly three dozen CSMR troops, two dozen active duty Marines and a number of Cal Guard Soldiers participated Dec. 16 in the Roosters Foundation of Orange County's 17th Annual Holiday Food Drive, the sixth straight year the CSMR has been involved in the campaign. The annual drive is sponsored in partnership with the Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County.

The service members joined with hundreds of civilian adults and children that morning to assemble 60,000 pounds of food into packages featuring frozen turkeys, canned goods and energy bars at the Food Bank's sprawling warehouse on the grounds of the old El Toro Marine Corps Air Station.

The work produced 3,000 meal boxes, each with enough food for a family of eight to 10 people. The packages were then picked up by or distributed to 50 charity groups around Orange County, and hundreds of boxes for needy military families were delivered to Marine Corps Camp Pendleton in San Diego County and the Cal Guard's Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos.

"I think the Roosters and the Food Bank are great in terms of putting these meals together," said Maj. (CA) Dan Woodward of the CSMR's 3rd Battalion (Army Support), 1st Brigade, which spearheaded the CSMR's involvement. "Think of how many thousands of people are getting a holiday meal because of all the hard work of all these people out here. It's just outstanding. It's a great day."

In addition to Woodward's unit, the CSMR was represented by members of its Joint Forces Training Base Installation Support Command and its 1st Battalion (Civil Support), 2nd Brigade.

Marine Corps Maj. Brian Perez and the other Marines at the event had returned only a few months earlier from a rough yearlong deployment to Afghanistan's Helmand province, and Perez said it was nice to be back and have the opportunity to work with and for the people of Orange County.

"The Marines are really happy to be here," said the member of 5th Regiment, 1st Division. "There are a lot of missions that we have that are never in the job description, but it's something like this where we can give back to the community."

CNG honors its best

First-ever joint banquet recognizes California's Soldiers, Airmen of the Year

By MASTER SGT. JULIE AVEY
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

Photo by Master Sgt. David Buttner

ABOVE: Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, congratulates Tech. Sgt. Jason B. Ganner on winning the award for the California Air National Guard's Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year during a ceremony Jan. 12 in Garden Grove, Calif. The Jan. 12 event was California's first-ever joint awards banquet recognizing the top enlisted members of the Army National Guard, Air National Guard and State Military Reserve. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: Master Sgt. Gerald Lockwood of the 562nd Air National Guard Band of the Southwest plays during the Jan. 12 awards banquet.

California National Guard and State Military Reserve Soldiers and Airmen gathered to honor their organizations' best Jan. 12 in Garden Grove, Calif., at the first annual joint Airmen of the Year and Best Warrior Competition awards ceremony.

The state's Air National Guard, Army National Guard and State Military Reserve previously held separate awards banquets.

"The joint awards ceremony was a significant event for the California Guard and in my opinion was long overdue," said Sgt. Maj. Harold E. London, the top enlisted member of the California Army National Guard. "We as a military have recognized the importance of joint operations, and our adjutant general continues to look for ways Army and Air can work together."

The Army National Guard honors a Soldier of the Year and a Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year annually. This year's winners, Spc. Ryan Ziegler of the 100th Troop Command and Staff Sgt. Jarrad Negherbon of the 49th Military Police Brigade, distinguished themselves during a grueling four-day competition on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., in September that included marksmanship, combatives, obstacle courses, an appearance board and a few surprises.

"Physical fitness, mental stamina and technical expertise is what it takes to be a Soldier or Airman of the year," Ziegler said. "These three things are like the triad of the competition. Without any one component, the competitor will not make it to the top."

Ziegler added that his support network is what set him apart, saying that without the help of the noncommissioned officer (NCO) support chain at his unit, he never could have won the competition.

"It takes dedication, hard work and support," Negherbon agreed. "I know I would not have been able to win the competition without the support of Sergeant First Class [Brandon] Morey and Sergeant First Class [Michael] Lunsford. They ensured I had everything I needed, and without their support I would not have been able to perform as well as I did."

The Air National Guard's five winners were chosen by a series of selection boards that reviewed submissions detailing the nominees' job performance, base and community support, and self improvement. The State Military Reserve's two winners were chosen in a similar review board process.

"The funny thing is that I don't see anything I do as standing apart," said Tech Sgt. Jason Ganner, the Air Guard's NCO of the Year, who is from the 144th Fighter Wing. "I am always a part of a team, whether I'm working with Central Valley Animal Lovers or [explosive ordnance disposal].

"[The] things I have done in the Air National Guard reflected upon my supervisors and peers, and this award is no different," he continued. "Our leaders have taught us what we need to succeed, and my teammates and I make it happen."

Supporters' cheers loudly resonated throughout the ballroom along with the blare of air horns and clang of cow bells as each winner's name was called Jan. 12.

Master Sgt. Douglas Marshall, the Air Guard's First Sergeant of the Year, who is from the 146th Airlift Wing, said the annual competition is valuable because it enables young Airmen and Soldiers to see standards met and exceeded, providing them with goals to reach for and helping them pick role models and mentors.

"The best advice I received was to lead by example," said Marshall, the first sergeant of the year. "Understand the position as a force multiplier designed to help other senior NCOs guide the Airmen on a path to achieve."

Marine Sgt. Maj. Bryan B. Battaglia, the senior enlisted adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, attended the ceremony and spoke highly of the nominees, calling them a group of individuals who have worked hard, made difficult decisions and displayed fortitude and moral courage.

"This group of enlisted men and women here today come with a variety of talent, expertise and art. … They are men and women who are trained, prepared and ready," he said. "Heroic in their desire and courageous in their hearts, they stand shoulder to shoulder to proudly wear the cloth of our nation."

2013 Top Soldiers, Airmen

Staff Sgt. Jarrad Negherbon
NCO of the Year
Army National Guard

Spc. Ryan Ziegler
Soldier of the Year
Army National Guard

Master Sgt. Douglas Marshall
First Sergeant of the Year
Air National Guard

Master Sgt. Jennifer Oberg
Senior NCO of the Year
Air National Guard

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Koenig

What it takes to win

Staff Sgt. Jarrad Negherbon is a combat engineer and squad leader for the 235th Engineer Company, 579th Engineer Battalion, 49th Military Police Brigade. Negherbon enlisted in the Army National Guard in June 2003 and has since served on multiple deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He also has deployed to the Sinai Peninsula in support of a peacekeeping mission. His qualifications include Combat Lifesaver, Mine Detector Unit Master Trainer and Explosive Ordnance Clearance Agent. Negherbon is pursuing a bachelor's degree in computer science.

Spc. Ryan Ziegler is a human intelligence collector for Company B, 223rd Military Intelligence Battalion, 100th Troop Command. Ziegler enlisted in the Air Force in 2007 and deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He joined the Army National Guard in 2009 and is Combatives Level 1-certified and Combat Lifesaver-qualified. He is working toward a master's degree in public health.

Master Sgt. Douglas J. Marshall is the first sergeant for the 146th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, 146th Airlift Wing. Marshall enlisted in the Air Force in 1981 in the maintenance field and became a craftsman-level trainer for multiple airframes. In 1991 he enlisted in the Air National Guard as an aeromedical service attendant. He has since deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Belize, Germany and Pakistan, and has facilitated the transportation of more than 4,000 patients out of hostile locations.

Master Sgt. Jennifer L. Oberg is an MQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial vehicle communications instructor for the 163rd Field Training Detachment, 163rd Reconnaissance Wing. Oberg enlisted in the Air Force in 1990 and shortly thereafter deployed to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, in support of Operation Desert Shield. She expects to complete her master's degree in aeronautical science this year.

Tech. Sgt. Jason B. Ganner is an explosive ordnance disposal craftsman with the 144th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight, 144th Fighter Wing. Ganner enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1993 as a narcotics officer and, following a break in service, enlisted in the Air National Guard in 2002. He has since deployed to Afghanistan, Haiti, Mexico and Panama. Ganner is pursuing a bachelor's degree in administration of justice.

Senior Airman Jacob R. Ellwood is a flight engineer assigned to the 129th Rescue Squadron, 129th Rescue Wing. Ellwood enlisted in the Air National Guard in 2007. He completed the Aircrew Fundamentals and Basic Flight Engineer technical courses with a 97 percent average in each. During his tenure with the Guard, Ellwood has supported domestic medical evacuations, firefighting efforts and counterdrug operations. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree in aeronautics.

Staff Sgt. Daniel Stephens is a chaplain's assistant for the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing. He enlisted in the Air Force Re-

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Guest speaker Battaglia tours CNG facilities

Marine is top enlisted member in U.S. Armed Forces

By SENIOR AIRMAN JESSICA GREEN
California Military Department Public Affairs

Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia, the senior noncommissioned officer in the U.S. Armed Forces, visited California National Guard members and facilities in January in conjunction with his speaking engagement at the Cal Guard's annual awards ceremony on Jan. 12.

Battaglia, the senior enlisted adviser to Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, conducted multiple site visits Jan. 11-13 and held town hall-style meetings with Cal Guard Soldiers and Airmen. As the voice of more than 2 million active duty, Guard and Reserve enlisted troops, Battaglia stressed the importance of Total Force Fitness.

"This is about resiliency," he said. "Resiliency is nothing more than the ability to overcome adversity or injury and return your body and mind to a new optimal level of performance."

Total Force Fitness is a joint-service program specifying eight domains of fitness that reach the body, mind and spirit. It encourages individuals to evaluate their social, physical, environmental, medical, spiritual, nutritional, psychological and behavioral characteristics.

"Service members have to get beyond the mindset that fitness is based solely on physical agility. Fitness is more than that," he said. "Widen your aperture."

Overcoming adversity isn't just about serving in combat, Battaglia said: It's about life and the stumbles people go through each day. Adversity may hit while driving down the road, shopping for groceries or balancing your budget.

"When you hit the barricade, you have a choice to make: You can go through it, over it, under it, around it, or you can turn around and run the other way," he said. "We teach that if you hit the barricade, you assess it, you develop some courses of action, choose one or two of those that are most informed and you go for it."

The sergeant major held a town hall-style meeting Jan. 11 at the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing's home, March Air Reserve Base in Moreno Valley, Calif. Speaking with Guard and Reserve Airmen, he highlighted Dempsey's priorities for the 2013: achieve national objectives in current conflicts; develop the capability for globally integrated operations with allied nations, an initiative known as Joint Force 2020; renew the nation's commitment to the military's profession of arms; and provide support for military families.

"The chairman is a very strategic thinker, and while his first objective may say current conflicts, there's a future objective as well, and that's why we continually train, man, equip and educate for future adversaries," Battaglia said. "We want to do things other than go to war. That doesn't always take place and happen because the enemy gets a vote."

During his whirlwind tour, Battaglia stopped at the Guard's Joint Forces Training Base Los Alamitos in Southern California to interact with Guard and Reserve Soldiers. Now more than ever, he told them, this is the time for service members to renew their commitment to the profession of arms.

"We all took an oath," he said. "Think

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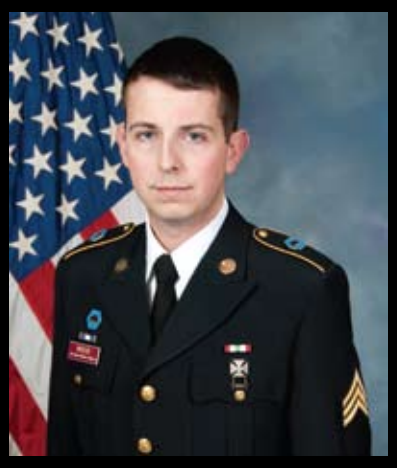
Photo by Senior Airman Jessica Green

Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia, senior enlisted adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaks with Staff Sgt. Michael Opel of the CNG's 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, on Jan. 12 at Camp Roberts, Calif., where Opel's unit was conducting live-fire training.

Tech. Sgt. Jason Ganner
NCO of the Year
Air National Guard

Senior Airman Jacob Ellwood
Airman of the Year
Air National Guard

Staff Sgt. Daniel Stephens
Honor Guard of the Year
Air National Guard



Sgt. Matthew Reece
NCO of the Year
State Military Reserve

Spc. Kevin Cox
Soldier of the Year
State Military Reserve

Lining up for duty

870th MPs prepare for Quick Reaction Force mission in NorCal

Photo by Spc. Danica Cho

BY SPC. DANICA CHO
870th Military Police Company

Soldiers of the California Army National Guard's 870th Military Police Company focused on weapon qualification and civil-disturbance training during the unit's Jan. 4-6 training weekend in preparation for taking on Quick Reaction Force (QRF) duties in February.

QRF elements are prepared to respond to any critical or emergency situation in a short timeframe, be it a natural or man-made disaster or a civil disturbance, according to 1st Lt. William L. Anderson, commander of the 870th MP Company. "The QRF's job is to find the problem, fix the problem and finish the job," he said.

The 870th recently took over QRF responsibility for Northern California from the CNG's 270th Military Police Company, which held the duty through January 2013.

"I must say, we have some big shoes to fill," Anderson said. "Essentially we are held to the standard of following the five military police functions at a given notice, during peace time or conflict: area security, internment and resettlement, maneuver and mobility support, police intelligence operations, and law and order. With this, an MP Soldier's role will change with every mission requirement, from security guard to observer to protective service detail."

To prepare for their new role, the Soldiers of the 870th commuted from their home station detachments in Eureka, Mountain View and Pittsburg, Calif., to rendezvous at Camp Parks in Dublin, Calif., and begin day one of their three-day drill weekend. The 870th troops had been advised previously to physically and mentally prepare themselves for a new routine of hardcore training.

"We need to instill basic Soldier discipline and develop our Soldiers to be tactical and technical leaders," said 1st Sgt. Brock Kelly.

After a risk assessment and safety briefing, day one began with Soldiers applying their fundamental rifle marksmanship skills on the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) 2000 — an indoor, virtual-target-shooting system that prepares Soldiers for live-fire qualification. The Soldiers wore combat helmets and Interceptor Body Armor vests as they laid prone in the dark, carefully aiming their electronic rifles at digital targets. After each spent magazine of virtual ammunition, a computerized scoring system provided instant feedback.

> "The QRF's job is to find the problem, fix the problem and finish the job."
>
> **–1st Lt. William L. Anderson**
> *Commander, 870th MP Company*

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Melissa C. McDonald

TOP: Soldiers of the 870th Military Police Company train with their M-4 rifles at a California Highway Patrol Academy range in West Sacramento on Jan. 5. LEFT: MP troops march in column formation toward a role-playing protestor Jan. 6 at the CHP Academy. BELOW RIGHT: Staff Sgt. Michael Cruz walks a firing line of 870th Soldiers training with the M-4 rifle to ensure the troops adhere to safety policies and procedures Jan. 5 in West Sacramento.

As an added challenge, the Soldiers were required to shoot at distant enemy muzzle flashes during simulated night fire, then don gas masks and shoot at targets during nuclear, biological and chemical-response training.

While a handful of 870th Soldiers were testing their marksmanship skills indoors on the EST 2000, the rest of the company's Soldiers braved the cold, crisp outdoor air and reviewed standard operating procedures for civil-disturbance training.

"It was good training that covered the big picture of civil disturbance," Spc. Eric Craig said. "We covered topics like operational planning, organizing your teams, communication and supplies, conducting reconnaissance, security, patrols, rules of engagement, working with chemical agents like [pepper] spray, legal policies, required authorizations for conducting searches and working with law enforcement."

Day two began at 0600 hours, with a bus ride from the Pittsburg Readiness Center to the California Highway Patrol firing range in West Sacramento for live-fire weapon qualification. After a risk assessment and safety briefing, Soldiers spent the day qualifying on the M-9 pistol and M-4 rifle.

On the M-9 range, shooters received 40 rounds of ammunition and fired from standing, crouching, kneeling and prone positions at targets 50 meters away. On the M-4 range, shooters received another 40 rounds of ammunition and fired at targets 50 to 300 meters away. Army weapon qualification standards require Soldiers to hit a minimum of 23 out of 40 targets.

The unit's range safety officers, operations personnel, supply staff and range-detail volunteers worked cohesively like a well-oiled machine, issuing weapons, conducting range operations, stapling targets, counting and stacking magazines of ammunition and recording marksmanship scores. Noncommissioned officers (NCOs) coached Soldiers on the firing line, analyzed shot groupings on the targets and ensured strict adherence to safety policies.

"It's extremely important for all our Soldiers to be qualified with all their assigned weapons," said Staff Sgt. Janneth Rendon, training NCO for the 870th MP Company. "Going to the range is a chance to re-familiarize ourselves with our weapons, therefore maintaining our basic Soldier skills and confidence in firing a weapon."

The 870th has recently increased its emphasis on weapon qualification. Although the Company conducted M-9 qualification only two months earlier, during its November drill weekend in Richmond, Calif., the additional training in January provided opportunity for continued improvement.

Day three began at 0500 hours with an Army Physical Fitness Test at the Pittsburg Readiness Center for many 870th Soldiers. After the fitness test, the troops loaded onto buses and commuted to the California Highway Patrol firing range for another full day of training. Members of the 870th MP Company Headquarters Platoon continued weapon qualification on the rifle range, while other troops participated in civil-disturbance training on a wide cement lot.

Staff Sgt. Michael Cruz spearheaded the civil-disturbance training, drawing from his skills in civilian law enforcement, his military police training and his experience in emergency activations for the CNG. Cruz began the session by sharing lessons learned from historical civil disturbances, followed by a review of policies on safety and rules the for use of force.

Soldiers then jumped into the meat and potatoes of crowd-control tactics by responding to hand-and-arm signals and forming squad-level line, echelon-right, echelon-left, wedge and diamond formations. Soldiers also formed and maneuvered in shield, baton and extraction teams to practice reacting to civil disturbances, then paired into two-person teams to rehearse proper blocking and striking techniques using batons and foam pads.

At the end of the day, the 870th MP Company Soldiers enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing that the hard training, teamwork and camaraderie they had forged during the past three days meant the days were time well-spent, and the 870th Soldiers are now ready to stand as guardians and take on QRF duty for Northern California.

Photo by Spc. Danica Cho

1072nd TC, 649th MP troops return home

Transportation company, military police troops complete yearlong logistics, security mission in Afghanistan

By SGT. GLEN BAKER
224th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Families and friends cheered and held up brightly colored homecoming signs as Soldiers from the 1072nd Transportation Company based in Long Beach returned from their yearlong deployment to Afghanistan at the Fresno Yosemite International Airport on Jan. 27.

The 1072nd, which is a component of the CNG's 224th Sustainment Brigade, deployed about 90 Soldiers to Afghanistan in 2012 for a yearlong logistics mission. They were joined by more than 30 members of the CNG's 649th Military Police (MP) Company based in San Luis Obispo, who provided security for the 1072nd's convoy missions. The MPs returned to California on separate flights, and many 1072nd Soldiers returned to airports other than Fresno's.

Photo by Sgt. Glen Baker

A crowd at the Fresno Yosemite International Airport eagerly awaits the return from Afghanistan of 18 Soldiers with the CNG's 1072nd Transportation Company on Jan. 27.

"My experience in Afghanistan was an amazing journey of self-awareness and adaptability to the many situations that were presented to me," said Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Valdez Jr., senior food service noncommissioned officer in charge for the 1072nd. "It really tested me to my fullest. Doing the right thing and the Army Values were always on my mind. Also, I was in awe of the great culture and long and rich heritage of the Afghan people."

Valdez said he was proud to be a part of a team of 38 Soldiers called Team Lighting, which provided shower, laundry and gym facilities as well as morale, welfare and recreation activities and tactical communications for 400 people, and dining facilities for 1,200 people. Those activities enabled the completion of the Regional Command–North Strategic Logistical Hub in only 30 days, he said.

In addition to assisting in the development and construction of the Logistical Hub, the Soldiers of the two CNG companies completed nearly 380 combat convoy operations covering more than 400,000 miles of Northeastern Afghanistan, provided intelligence to International Security Assistance Force elements and played a role in the closure of Forward Operating Base Deh Dadi 2 (FOB DD2).

"We had our line platoons doing two to three flips a night, going back and forth between FOB DD2 and Camp Pratt," said Spc. Natalia Sanchez, a supply specialist with the 1072nd and a resident of Fresno. "We took shipping containers that were full of equipment not only from our Company, but also other companies that were out there. They really did a great job, and I believe they finished moving DD2 earlier than they expected."

Sanchez said she learned a lot about herself, her job and her fellow Soldiers while on deployment.

"It was definitely an experience I will never forget, but I would gladly do it all over again," she said. "These experiences are definitely going to help me grow as a person and help me grow in my military career."

Sgt. 1st Class Angel Perez, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 1072nd's personnel security detachment and a resident of Fresno, said being the last American convoy to drive around FOB DD2 after it was emptied was priceless. Now that he's home, Perez is looking forward to spending time with his family.

"I haven't seen my boy in so long," he said. "I left for Afghanistan when he was just 4 months old, so I was afraid he would forget me. Now it's just dad-and-son time, and it's great."

Valdez said he is proud to have served in the Army for 22 years, and the lessons he has learned in the military made him the man he is today. Nonetheless, nothing compares to coming home from deployment.

Company B, 1-126th, flies Afghan skies

By CAPT. BENJAMIN D. BOWMAN
Company B, 1-126th Aviation Battalion

The cold, dark mountains of Regional Command–East in Afghanistan bring little variety to the day-to-day lives of the Soldiers and aviators of Company B, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment. However, late one afternoon in January at the unit's two high-altitude bases, Company B received a pair of visitors from their home state of California: Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, and his top enlisted adviser, Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark Jr.

Company B, a heavy-lift CH-47 Chinook helicopter unit, is deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The deployment is Company B's second tour in Afghanistan and its third overseas deployment since 2001.

CH-47 Chinook helicopters are the primary means of providing Army aviation support throughout Regional Command–East, with each aircraft capable of moving 33 fully loaded combat Soldiers at high altitude, day or night, in all weather conditions. Used in a variety of support roles, the Chinook mission in Afghanistan is diverse and exciting, Soldiers of Company B said.

"Flying in Afghanistan is one of the few times [the Chinook] can be used to its full potential," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 William Craig, standardization instructor pilot for the unit.

Company B's yearlong training schedule to prepare for its mission in Afghanistan took the Soldiers all over the Western United States. Preparation started at the troops' home base in Stockton, where they regularly lift off for high-altitude training missions in the Sierra Nevada mountains between Yosemite National Park and Lake Tahoe.

Photo Courtesy of Company B, 1-126th Aviation Battalion

Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general of the California National Guard, left, presents challenge coins to CH-47 Chinook helicopter maintainers for Company B, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan, in January.

The Soldiers then completed advanced aerial door gunnery training on San Clemente Island northwest of San Diego before heading to the mountains again, this time in Colorado at the High Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site in Gypsum, where the troops received training on "high, hot and heavy" flight techniques.

The Company spent its final two months before deploying to Afghanistan at Fort Hood, Texas, collectively training for what was to come. About 100 of the unit's Soldiers and 12 Chinook helicopters departed Stockton together on an early August morning before splitting up on their two-day journey to Texas.

The instruction at Fort Hood included air-assault training, multi-ship operations and various aerial movement exercises. The highlight was an intensive two-week exercise in the high mountains near Albuquerque, N.M., where the unit honed its dust-landing and mountain operation skills. Although mountain flying is a common component of the Northern California unit's training, practicing multi-ship night dust landings at high altitudes was essential to Company B's success in Afghanistan, where high peaks tower over the landscape.

Upon arriving in Afghanistan, the unit was split up between Bagram Airfield and Forward Operating Base (FOB) Salerno. However, after a short stint at FOB Salerno, those Soldiers were transferred to FOB Shank to assist in sustaining combat operations.

In January the unit's distinguished visitors, Baldwin and Clark, visited Bagram to check in with Company B's Chinook contingent there, which goes by call sign "Golddigger." The pair then grabbed a helicopter ride to FOB Shank, where they received a briefing that highlighted the 24-hour heavy-lift support provided by Company B's Soldiers on FOB Shank, who go by call sign "MotherLode."

Baldwin and Clark toured the unit's command post at FOB Shank and took the time to speak with many Soldiers during their visit. Baldwin was clearly interested in each Soldier's background and work history, and he encouraged all the troops he met to enroll in the Cal Guard's Work for Warriors program if they did not have definite employment lined up for their return to California.

The Cal Guard leadership continued their tour with a visit to the Chinook hangar and maintenance "shack" on FOB Shank. There they were able to visit with more Soldiers and learn about the immense list of tasks required to sustain a fleet of giant helicopters operating in a harsh mountain environment. Baldwin also took the opportunity to present challenge coins to a group of maintainers, recognizing the monumental task of keeping the Chinooks in a ready-to-launch posture 24 hours a day.

Baldwin and Clark then thanked the troops for their service and departed to visit other Cal Guard units serving their country in locations throughout Afghanistan.

ABOVE LEFT: Staff Sgt. Jorge Barriere, left, and Staff Sgt. Antonio Galindo of the 561st Air Force Band's saxophone quartet perform Feb. 2 outside the California State Military Museum in Sacramento in celebration of Sacramento Museum Day. The Feb. 2 event was the final performance before deactivation for the 561st, which was based at Moffett Federal Airfield, Calif. Photo by Master Sgt. Kim A. Rodriguez

ABOVE RIGHT: Soldiers from the 235th Engineer Company wait their turn to fire at a rifle qualification range run by the CNG's Task Force Warrior instructors Feb. 18 at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif. The engineers were training for a June deployment to perform a route-clearance mission in Afghanistan. Photo by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

RIGHT: Spc. Cameron Powell, a helicopter mechanic with Company B, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, sweeps snow off the roof of a CH-47 Chinook on the flightline at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, on Jan. 12. | For more on Company B, see page 11 Photo by Sgt. Duncan Brennan

BELOW: A Soldier with Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion (Air Ambulance), takes aim while training with Task Force Warrior on Feb. 4 at Fort Hunter Liggett. The aviation unit was preparing for a March deployment to Afghanistan to provide medical evacuation support. Photo by Warrant Officer Kevin Crisp

TOP: Tech. Sgt. Joseph Prouse of the CNG's 163rd Reconnaissance Wing, who is deployed to Kabul province in support of NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, films two Afghan Soldiers performing a live-fire demonstration of a 60-mm mortar in February. The exercise's success made this Afghan infantry unit the first to be trained and qualified on the 60-mm mortar. Photo by Bill Costlow **ABOVE LEFT:** Sgt. Rob Correa of the 2668th Transportation Company enjoys being on American soil Dec. 5 at Fort Bliss, Texas, following a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan to perform convoy operations and train Afghan National Army forces. The CNG's 2668th sent about 125 troops to Afghanistan, where they were accompanied by 45 members of the CNG's 649th Military Police Company. Photo by U.S. Army Directorate of Mobilization and Deployment **ABOVE RIGHT:** Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Valdez, senior food service noncommissioned officer in charge for the 1072nd Transportation Company, holds his son Apollo while speaking with Staff Sgt. Carter Skillman, supply sergeant for the 1072nd, on Jan. 27 at the Fresno Yosemite International Airport, where Valdez had just returned from a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan. Photo by Sgt. Glen Baker **LEFT:** Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Morey, first sergeant for the 235th Engineer Company, fires his pistol at a qualification range run by the CNG's Task Force Warrior instructors at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., on Feb. 18. Photo by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer | For more on the 235th and Task Force Warrior, see page 16

'Combat cop' looks back on storied career

Brig. Gen. Donald J. Currier, former California Army National Guard commander, served for 33 years

By CAPT. WILL MARTIN
49th Military Police Brigade

The Army gave Don Currier a chance when not many others would.

On a day in the late 1970s, Currier found himself in the office of his guidance counselor at the now-defunct La Sierra High School, in Carmichael, Calif., where he would soon walk across the stage, hoping there'd be a diploma awaiting him at the other end. Reflecting on Currier's low academic marks ("The only thing I was good at was shooting," Currier says now), the counselor offered some rather bleak direction to the young Currier.

"He told me not to bother going to college, because I'd only fail and just embarrass my family," Currier said. "At first it was demoralizing, but you know, he was right. I had terrible focus problems in school."

Fortunately for Currier, the educator's dire prophecy failed to prove prophetic. In fact, the self-labeled "at-risk youth" eventually made his way to college — as well as the Army Officer Corps, the Sacramento Police Department, law school, the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's staff and, most recently, the California State Superior Court as a supervising judge.

And after 33 years of service, the five-times-mobilized Currier is quick to attribute his success as both a citizen and a Soldier to the Army from which he retired as a brigadier general in December.

"The Army gave me an opportunity of a lifetime," Currier said. "It provided a structured environment in which I could grow up."

ASSIST, PROTECT, DEFEND

Currier was born into a family rich in military service. His father was a veteran of the Korean War, and two uncles had served in World War II. But his own motivations for joining, he confesses, were more practical than patriotic.

"I only entered the military because I wanted some job training," Currier said. "I wanted to be a police officer."

Currier joined the active duty Army on Dec. 6, 1976, choosing to enlist in the Military Police (MP) Corps to gain law enforcement training. The impressionable Currier took to the structure and mentoring the Armed Forces offered, performing tours in Fort Carson, Colo., and Frankfurt, Germany. Along the way, he gained not only on-the-job training as a "combat cop," but earned 58 college credits in criminal justice through Army distance learning programs. Unlike high school, however, Currier excelled.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Yarnall

ABOVE: Brig. Gen. Donald J. Currier, left, cases the colors of the CNG's 49th Military Police Brigade on July 27, 2010, at Camp Victory, Baghdad, at the end of Currier's second tour in Iraq with the 49th, this time as its commander. BELOW LEFT: Then-Colonel Currier walks through Baghdad with then-Captain Jonathan Shiroma and CBS News Reporter Kim Dozier on Dec. 14, 2005, one day before the country would hold its first-ever vote to fill the Council of Representatives, the main body of elected officials in the new Iraqi government.

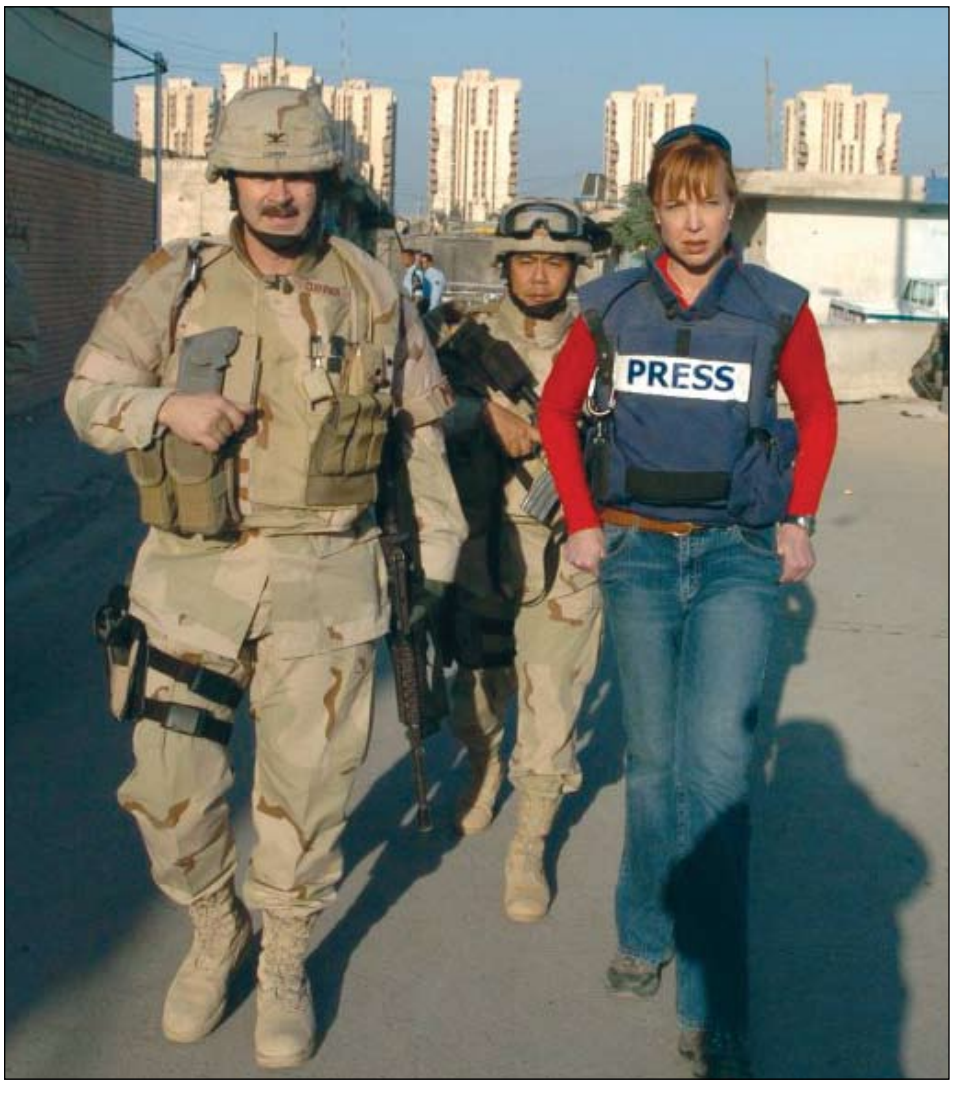


Photo by Staff Sgt. Ulises Villalba

"When I was interested in the topic, I found that I was a very good student," Currier said. "That experience taught me I could really succeed at school."

Having completed his enlistment, Currier found his good grades and veteran status were enough to gain him entrance into the ROTC program at California State University, Sacramento. He also joined the California National Guard's 270th MP Company in Sacramento, serving simultaneously as an ROTC cadet and a traditional Guardsman.

"Between ROTC, the G.I. Bill and drill pay, I made it on potatoes," said Currier, who also worked as an intern at the Sacramento Police Department. Soon after, he enrolled in the Department's academy while finishing his last semester of college. In 1982, he became an Army officer through an early commissioning program.

Currier's once questionable future now seemed like a bad memory, his guidance counselor's doubts extinguished by his own confidence and hope — as well as sheer busyness. Everything seemed to be converging for 2nd Lt. Currier.

"[One weekend] I graduated the police academy on Friday, attended my college commencement on Saturday, and headed to Fort McClellan for [Officers Basic Course] on Monday," he remembered.

It wasn't long before Currier was in a patrol car for the Sacramento PD, embracing what he still refers to as the "most fun I've ever had on a job."

"Every day was completely different; I would run the complete gamut of emotions on almost every shift," he said. "I couldn't believe they were going to pay me to literally drive around using someone else's gas."

Currier's underachieving days long in his rear-view mirror, he enrolled in night courses at Sacramento's Lincoln Law School. Utilizing some creative time management skills, he would occasionally issue the majority of his tickets during the first half of his shift, and focus on his studies from the comfort of his patrol car throughout the remainder of the evening.

"My motto was, 'A full car is a happy car,'" he said. "It was not unusual for me to have four DUIs in the same car before I'd head back to the station. You can't do that anymore, but for me, it was common practice."

In 1991, Currier was selected as a deputy district attorney with the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office. In his first week on the job, he received a call from the 185th MP Battalion that would set the tone for the remainder of his career.

"Pack your stuff; you're going to war," said the voice on the other end.

IRAQ

Currier deployed to Saudi Arabia as a battalion operations officer in support of Operation Desert Shield. As the operation evolved into Desert Storm, his unit joined active duty units headed inside Iraq. Looking over the seemingly barren landscape and urban blight, Currier remembers thinking, "'If we ever have another war, I hope it's not here.' If I had known then what I know now, I probably would have quit."

When he returned to the U.S., Currier began what remains his favorite military assignment: company commander for the 270th MP Company, where he got his start in the National Guard. Under Currier, the 270th MPs "stayed really freakin' busy," regularly training at Fort Ord, Calif., travelling to Korea for exercises and, most notably, leading a convoy of 40-plus Humvees into the fires of the L.A. Riots.

"I got to experience leadership in its raw form," Currier said. "The Soldier has to know you are as competent as they are in doing their job. … You control their lives. They want somebody who is fair, competent and sharp."

Several years passed before Currier and the rest of the nation would watch the ominous 9/11 attacks that saturated the world's television screens. Shortly thereafter, he again mobilized with a Cal Guard MP battalion to provide security support for the Soldiers of Fort Lewis, Wash. But the mission was merely a precursor to his full duties in the Global War on Terrorism.

Then-Colonel Currier joined the 49th MP Brigade as its deputy commander as the Headquarters and Headquarters Compa-

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Medical personnel find order in chaos

Multi-agency exercise Rolling Chaos tests emergency response, identifies areas for improvement

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

The main parking lot of a normally calm college campus in Fremont, Calif., is in total mayhem, marred by a grisly pile-up of mangled vehicles and injured people. The hallways of the school overflow with wounded, while the classrooms and offices are used as makeshift medical clinics and distribution points for supplies and equipment. Soldiers and civilian medical personnel dart through the chaos, treating and evacuating the injured as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Fortunately this was not a real crisis, but an exhaustive training exercise designed to replicate an actual mass casualty event for the California Army National Guard's 297th Area Support Medical Company, the Northern Regional Support Command of the California State Military Reserve (CSMR) and civilian medical personnel.

The major objective of Operation Rolling Chaos, hosted by Unitek College on Feb. 9-10, was to build an understanding between the emergency response agencies involved and improve overall readiness for real-life emergencies. The exercise simulated the conditions of a major disaster like Hurricane Katrina, said Staff Sgt. Kasey A. Schmidt, the noncommissioned (NCO) officer in charge of the 297th ASMC contingent at Rolling Chaos.

"That way, the military and civilian sectors could talk to each other, so that if something were to happen, we could work better together," Schmidt said.

In a real mass casualty event, a single agency may not have the manpower to meet the needs of all the victims, requiring other organizations to provide assistance.

"Unitek provided a lot of the registered nurses," Schmidt said. "They're just as good as our providers."

Rolling Chaos gave both Soldiers and civilians a chance to understand their counterparts' organizations and equipment, increasing their ability to work together efficiently.

"This is the only way we're going to be able to see the inside of civilian ambulances, to see how the civilians work from the medical side of the house," Schmidt said.

Civilian responders appreciated the exercise as well and found the 297th to be a formidable ally.

"During the scenario it was very chaotic," said Marites Pascual, a registered nurse at Unitek. "The National Guard helped us through guidance, directing where patients should go, and helping us be a little bit clearer with our communication to the higher-up and also to the patients."

The CSMR, an all-volunteer military force that includes many highly educated and motivated civilian professionals, provided guidance and training needed to successfully run a field hospital.

Sgt. 1st Class (CA) Michael Frangadakis

ABOVE: Members of the California National Guard's 297th Area Support Medical Company carry a role-player with simulated injuries during the Operation Rolling Chaos disaster-response exercise at Unitek College in Fremont Calif., on Feb. 10. LEFT: Soldiers with the California State Military Reserve (CSMR) apply first aid to a role-player during Operation Rolling Chaos on Feb. 10. The CSMR troops joined California National Guard Soldiers and civilian medical personnel in responding to a simulated mass casualty event during the two-day exercise.

"If this was actually happening, we'd be ready to go," said Lt. Col. (CA) Anthony Dintcho, the CSMR's senior medical officer at the event. "We have all the makings of a small [mobile army surgical hospital]."

The CSMR contingent brought a unique skill set to teach their fellow service members at Rolling Chaos.

"We are a bit more efficient because we do this all the time," Dintcho said.

Rolling Chaos by no means went perfectly; many things went wrong. But that was not only an expected part of the event, but a welcome one. A goal of the event was to make mistakes, so they could be identified and corrected.

"That's why it's called an exercise," Dintcho said. "We're not supposed to be prepared for it."

CNG artillery unit learns new weapon cold

By 1ST LT. JOSEPH TROVATO
Wisconsin National Guard

Artillerymen from the California Army National Guard spent two weeks in February braving freezing temperatures to learn a new weapons system from Wisconsin National Guard members.

About a dozen Soldiers from Wisconsin trained about 45 members of the Bakersfield, Calif.-based Battery B, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, on Fort McCoy, Wis. The California troops gained hands-on experience with the M777 howitzer, a weapons system they had expected to use in Afghanistan later this year.

Photo by 1st Lt. Joseph Trovato

Soldiers from the California Army National Guard's Battery B, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, conduct live-fire training with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute on Feb. 12 at Fort McCoy, Wis.

Battery B traditionally has been trained to fire the M119 howitzer, which shoots a 105-mm round, but in Afghanistan the unit was slated to use the M777, which fires a 155-mm round.

The Battery's Afghanistan tour has since been canceled, leaving many disappointed Soldiers, but the Wisconsin training provided valuable experience, as the Battery will convert to using the M777 instead of the M119 in fiscal year 2014.

The Battery's 15-day training rotation in Wisconsin culminated with a Feb. 12 live-fire exercise.

"It's good learning more artillery pieces to make us more proficient at our job," said Sgt. Michael Bones of Bakersfield. "It's good preparedness for our impending mission, but I'm trying to get acclimated [to the weather]," he added with a laugh.

Pvt. Sam Mabanta of Fresno said that even though he is a snowboarder, he had never experienced such cold temperatures. He added that the unit previously considered a 60-degree day to be a cold day in the field.

"It's a great experience because … this will train us to acclimate to the weather and the conditions," Mabanta said. "The [426th Regional Training Institute] staff is phenomenal, and we just can't wait to shoot these rounds."

The Wisconsin National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute offers one of the few M777 training opportunities within the National Guard. Its instructors were assisted in training the California unit by members of the Wisconsin Guard's 1st Battalion 120th Field Artillery Regiment.

Battery B's June deployment would have marked the first time in its history that the unit went to combat and fired field artillery, said Sgt. 1st Class Todd Hunt of Battery B. Like many National Guard artillery units, Battery B's recent deployment history includes convoy security, route clearance, quick reaction force and detainee operations missions instead of artillery missions.

Combat lifesaver becomes civilian lifesaver

On a commercial flight to train with Task Force Warrior, Sgt. Skylar Johnson puts his training to the test

By SGT. IAN M. KUMMER
Task Force Warrior Public Affairs

Every noncommissioned officer in the U.S. Armed Forces is trained, and many have years of experience, including tours in a combat zone. But even for seasoned leaders in the Armed Forces, an important question remains: In a time of crisis, will he or she be able to apply that training in a real world emergency? For one Soldier, that question has been answered.

What started out as a routine flight to sunny California turned into a nightmare Feb. 10, when a young woman suffered a severe asthma attack. An alarmed flight attendant, not knowing what else to do, called out for anyone on board with medical training.

The passengers were stunned. Most had no idea what to do, or lacked the nerve to take charge of the situation. Only one person rose to the challenge — a uniformed noncommissioned officer in the California Army National Guard.

Sgt. Skylar Johnson of the 235th Engineer Company (Sapper) used every ounce of military training and knowledge he could find within himself to save his fellow passenger from a potentially fatal asthma attack while flying from Phoenix to San Luis Obispo, Calif.

At the time, Johnson was traveling from his hometown, Salt Lake City, to join his unit at Camp Roberts, Calif., for training with Task Force Warrior, a CNG element that specializes in teaching combat drills and other important skills to deploying Guard units from around the country. Johnson had temporarily left his unit to attend a funeral.

Photo by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

Sgt. Skylar Johnson, a combat lifesaver with the 235th Engineer Company, prepares to evacuate a Soldier with a simulated gunshot wound during a Feb. 13 drill with the CNG's Task Force Warrior at Camp Roberts, Calif., where his unit was preparing for deployment to Afghanistan on a route clearance mission. While flying to Camp Roberts on Feb. 10, Johnson used his training to assist a fellow passenger experiencing a severe asthma attack.

The Feb. 10 crisis situation occurred shortly after Johnson boarded a connecting flight in Phoenix.

"No one stood up, so I, having [Combat Lifesaver] first responder training, stood up and said I could render aid to the best of my abilities," Johnson said.

Johnson moved to the woman's seat and learned she was suffering from a severe asthma attack, but her albuterol medication inhaler was in her checked luggage. Johnson began applying first aid.

A retired service member who was also on the plane said he was deeply impressed by Johnson's actions.

"Sergeant Johnson immediately took charge of the situation, calming the passenger, checking her vital signs and communicating with the flight crew," the service member recalled. "As her distress grew worse, to include moving in and out of consciousness, Sergeant Johnson remained calm, put some of the plane's emergency medical equipment to use and requested the captain land at the nearest airport to get immediate medical assistance."

After the plane landed, Johnson assisted the local responders and helped move the patient off the plane.

"The medics came on board, we got her albuterol," Johnson said. "She didn't regain consciousness until after we got her off the plane and she started coming to."

Johnson and the woman continue to keep in touch on her road to recovery. Despite all this, Johnson remains humble about his actions and credits his Army National Guard training for enabling him to handle the medical emergency.

"I'm just glad she's alive," he said. "The training I had in the military directly affected her life. There's no question about it."

235th Engineers prepare for Afghanistan tour

Three-week training rotation with Task Force Warrior prepares sappers for upcoming route-clearance mission

By SGT. IAN M. KUMMER
Task Force Warrior Public Affairs

A staggered column of Soldiers in full combat gear carefully patrols down a dirt road. They are moving slowly, cautiously, inch by inch, scanning for even the slightest hint of enemy movement, or worse, an improvised explosive device (IED).

Suddenly a cry rings out, "Contact right!" Members of the patrol's forward element dart to the berm at the edge of the road, readying their weapons to return fire against the enemy. The team at the rear of the column moves out across a grassy field, protected by the covering fire of their fellow Soldiers, creating a flanking movement against the opposing force and pinning them with devastating rifle and light machine gun fire from two sides.

The "firefight" ends as abruptly as it began, and an instructor calls the troops to gather around for an after-action report. This was only an exercise, but that doesn't make the lessons learned any less important, for these Soldiers may soon repeat these movements in Afghanistan, in combat, with live ammunition, against an all-too-real enemy.

Photo by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

Sgt. Louis Hicks, right, a team leader for the 235th Engineer Company, directs his squad-automatic-weapon gunner, Spc. Daniel Sanchez, during a simulated ambush Feb. 7 at Camp Roberts, Calif., during training with the CNG's Task Force Warrior. The unit's three-week stint with Task Force Warrior provided skills the troops will need during their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

The Soldiers of the 235th Engineer Company (Sappers), 579th Engineer Battalion, arrived at Camp Roberts, Calif., on Feb. 1 to train with Task Force Warrior, a team of instructors who teach the soldiering skills needed in combat to deploying Guard units from across the country. This was the Sappers' time to once again prove themselves as an effective military unit and prepare for a June deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"Overall we are meshing more and more in our team dynamics," said 1st Lt. Andrew Smith, the executive officer for the 235th. "We're defining each area of responsibility for each task and just bonding as a team."

There is a wide range of experience among the Soldiers of the 235th, making training and unit cohesion all the more important.

"We're focusing right now on the nametape level — just evaluating and monitoring our younger guys, making sure they're grasping these basic skills they're learning here," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Caddy. "That way, we can build platoon [standard operating procedures], company SOPs and go from there."

The junior members of the 235th also found the training events with Task Force Warrior to be good team-building experience.

"It's like basic [training] without the drill sergeants," said Spc. West Boyer. "It's nice to get to know the guys you're going to deploy with."

While the Task Force Warrior instructors strive for Soldiers to get the most out of their training events, in the end it is the responsibility of company leadership to use their time at Camp Roberts wisely.

"We train even when we move between training sites: We do patrolling exercises, practicing IED strikes along the way," Smith said. "We [train on physical fitness] every morning, operational briefs every night."

Both senior leaders and junior members of the 235th expressed a sense of pride and team spirit during the three-week training period with Task Force Warrior.

"Let me tell you about the Sappers; we are a very 'hooah' unit," said Spc. Stephan Sandoval of Headquarters Platoon. "The 235th are, in my opinion, the best trained unit in the National Guard."

A well-rounded and adaptive force, the 235th left each training event with Task Force Warrior stronger than when it arrived. The unit's team spirit and quick learning will both be critical elements of success in the combat zone.

CSMR swears in new commander

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Flagg

Brig. Gen. (CA) Timothy Albertson discusses his command philosophy Jan. 5 in Sacramento, moments after receiving the California State Military Reserve (CSMR) guidon from Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, center, signifying Albertson's assumption of command, succeeding Brig. Gen. (CA) Roland Candee, right.

By California Military Department Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. (CA) Timothy Albertson has been assigned as the commander of the California State Military Reserve (CSMR), effective Jan. 5, succeeding Brig. Gen. (CA) Roland Candee.

"I have clear goals for the California State Military Reserve: to increase recruiting and retention, increase professionalism, and increase integration of the California State Military Reserve into the California Army and Air National Guard."

From February 2011 until the time of this appointment, Albertson had served as the CSMR's director of medical services. He retired from the California Army National Guard on May 31, 2008, following a 20-year career in the Army Reserve and Army National Guard.

"Brig. Gen. (CA) Albertson is an extraordinary leader with an impressive record of accomplishments," Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, said in a memo announcing the change of command. "He lives the Army Values and brings a wealth of military experience to the CSMR."

Albertson's Army career included a 2004 deployment to Iraq, an assignment as the California Army National Guard state surgeon and Medical Detachment commander, and a term in Washington, D.C., as the senior reserve component medical adviser to the deputy assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. He is a professor at the University of California, Davis, School of Medicine and a fellow in the American College of Physicians and the Royal College of Physicians of London.

"His long service as a California Army National Guard Soldier and dedicated support to the State Military Reserve, combined with his experience at the national level and professional success uniquely qualify him to lead the State Military Reserve," Baldwin wrote.

Among other awards, Albertson has earned the Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Medal with one Bronze Star, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Bronze Hourglass and Mobilization Device, Office of the Secretary of Defense Shield and the Order of Military Medical Merit.

Candee retired following a career that dated to his commission as an officer in 1975. He attended law school from 1975 to 1978, then served in the active duty Army until 1986. He joined the California Army National Guard in 1986 and became its staff judge advocate in 2000. He served in that role until 2008, when he retired from federal service and joined the CSMR.

"I would like to thank Brigadier General (CA) Roland Candee for his impressive and dedicated service to the CSMR," Baldwin wrote. "The organization has benefitted immeasurably from his exceptional leadership."

Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Bince

Spc. Andrew Kennedy of the Redding, Calif.-based 132nd Multi-Role Bridge Company gets a free ride after landing at the Redding Municipal Airport on Jan. 20 following his unit's yearling deployment to Afghanistan, where the 132nd was the only U.S. Army bridge-building unit in the Afghan theater.

132nd MRBC jumps into homecoming celebration

More than 140 Soldiers of the Cal Guard's 132nd Multi-Role Bridge Company were welcomed home from Afghanistan by friends and family at airports across California on Jan. 20 and 21.

During their yearlong deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, nearly 190 Soldiers of the 132nd MRBC served as the sole U.S. Army bridge-building unit in Afghanistan.

The 132nd provided Soldiers and equipment to transport, assemble, disassemble, retrieve and maintain a wide array of bridging systems throughout the Afghan theatre. The unit also transported and emplaced more than 12,000 tons of gravel to improve roadways and trained their Afghan counterparts to operate a full spectrum of roadway construction equipment.

All told, the Soldiers covered more than 11,000 miles as they emplaced nine bridges, removed seven others, inspected 31 structures and repaired more than 60 bridges along the country's main routes.

The 132nd's daily operations exposed them to the constant threat of roadside bombs and insurgent attacks, and 11 of the unit's Soldiers received Purple Heart medals for injuries sustained during the tour.

129th RQW sends more than 75 Airmen overseas

More than 75 Airmen from the 129th Rescue Wing deployed overseas in late January, some journeying to Afghanistan and others to Djibouti.

The Airmen will provide combat search-and-rescue support for Operation Enduring Freedom and Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa for the next four months.

"After demonstrating our lifesaving capabilities during stateside rescue missions last year, our Airmen are ready to perform our combat search-and-rescue mission overseas," said Col. Steven Butow, 129th Rescue Wing commander. "The care our Airmen take in every lifesaving mission is noteworthy, recognized by our families, our community and our country."

Equipped with MC-130P Combat Shadow refueling planes and HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters, the 129th has performed a total of 957 successful rescue missions, including nearly 370 combat saves, since being entrusted with its search-and-rescue mission in 1975.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ray Aquino

Airmen from the 129th Rescue Wing load an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter into a C-5 Galaxy transport plane Jan. 24 at Moffett Federal Airfield, Calif. The Pave Hawk was then flown overseas to support a Wing deployment.

Photo by Sgt. Manuel Montero

Soldiers with Company B, 1st Battalion (Light), 184th Infantry Regiment, form a defensive perimeter around a UH-60 Black Hawk from 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, on Feb. 9 at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., where the two California Army National Guard units were conducting joint air-assault training.

Infantry, aviators team up for air-assault drills

By Fresno Army Aviation Flight Activity; and
Company B, 1st Battalion (Light), 184th Infantry Regiment

Soldiers from the CNG's Fresno Army Aviation Flight Activity and its Los Alamitos-based 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, linked up with Company B, 1st Battalion (Light), 184th Infantry Regiment, on Feb. 9 to conduct air-assault drills and aviation operations at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif.

"This training is invaluable," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Bryan Bartucci, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot. "It not only helps the infantry Soldier sharpen and expand his skill set, it gives the aviation troops a chance to practice and plan our mission as an air assault battalion."

The term "light" in today's infantry refers to a unit's lack of heavy weapons and armor, and a reduced number of vehicles. Light infantry units make up for those differences with greater mobility and an increased ability to undertake missions in difficult terrain and weather.

Despite its name, a "light" unit normally carries heavier loads than other infantry units because they must carry everything they need to fight, survive and win. However, the "ground-pounders" still need to be positioned near their objective before letting their boots move them, so the Feb. 9 exercise enabled both CNG units to follow the adage, "train as you fight."

After touching down on a helipad at Fort Hunter-Liggett, the aviators gathered their customers together, briefed them on safety concerns and discussed "cold" and "hot" loads: getting on a helicopter with the blades moving or static.

"The training was great. We usually don't get a chance to do this kind of thing," said Sgt. Manuel Montero, team leader for 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1-184th. "I was able to walk [my troops] through the process and watch their reaction as some of them entered and exited a Black Hawk for the first time."

The pilots and crew members shared knowledge that only comes from hundreds of flight hours, including deployment experience in Iraq.

"Having done this before, it also helped me refresh my past knowledge and learn new things about air-assault missions," Montero said. "I hope we can continue getting opportunities like this. It builds confidence in how to operate the aircraft's equipment and our own combat loads."

"We learned how to adjust our pre-combat inspections," Montero added, "which in turn will help us load faster, and then we can focus on the mission."

40th ID prepares for Warfighter exercise

By MAJ. JONATHAN SHIROMA
40th Infantry Division Public Affairs

Close to 100 Soldiers with the 40th Infantry Division spent a week at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., in early January, receiving critical guidance from advisers with the Mission Command Training Program and discussing the 40th ID's upcoming Warfighter exercise there in June.

"This seminar set the overall parameters of the exercise, nature of the conflict, operating environment, tactical and operational tasks," said Brig. Gen. Keith D. Jones, the Division commander.

He added that the seminar established a common understanding of the mission and will help the ID achieve a unified effort across all of its warfighting functional areas.

"This is the Division's sixth Warfighter exercise," said Lt. Col. Peter G. Szczepanski, the Division's operations officer. "Unlike past exercises, we will replace the tens of thousands of Soldiers maneuvering through the field with simulation."

The Warfighter exercise will be a culminating, collective training event for the troops, which will provide extended operations, round-the-clock exercise-play supported by digitally generated scenarios and real-world interaction with professional role players, Jones said. By exercising in simulation, the Division will be able to train every element of its staff on how to succeed in today's modern and complex battlefield, Szczepanski added.

"Imagination is our only limit," he said. "We can craft events to train in space operations, integration of airpower, artillery and non-lethal engagements through our targeting process, humanitarian and civil support. You name it, we will train it."

The exercise's role-players will replicate battlefield interactions with people such as embassy personnel, local civilian leadership, criminal operatives, and local and national media.

"Bringing all these assets together provides a high [operational tempo and] a continuous area of operations environment including offensive, defensive and stability operations both stressing and testing the effectiveness and integration of our warfighting functions across the full spectrum of unified land operations," he said.

The Division will participate in two command post exercises at Camp Roberts, Calif., in March and April to prepare for the June mission. Many of the Division's troops are looking forward to the Warfighter experience, which will keep the 40th in tip-top shape should it be called on for combat.

"The world continues to change, and the Warfighter exercise enables us to not just keep up but get ahead of our potential adversaries," Szczepanski said. "The Warfighter exercise is not practice for Afghanistan; it is practice for the war after this one."

Educators honor CNG Counterdrug Task Force

By California Military Department Public Affairs

The Drug Demand Reduction Team of the Cal Guard's Joint Task Force Domestic Support–Counterdrug earned an Outstanding Contribution to Education award from Orange County educators in November.

"The local chapter of the National Guard has been a tremendous partner to the Orange County Department of Education prevention programs including Friday Night Live and Peer Assistance Leadership," the Orange County Department of Education said in a press release. "Their support is available throughout the year, enhancing existing drug education programs."

The Drug Demand Reduction Team has participated for many years in countywide youth events and conferences by providing free skill-building workshops, including a Rugged Outdoor Physical Experience System (ROPES) course, "which is always the highlight of youth events," the Department said. In the ROPES course, students face a series of challenges with a group of people they may not know. The exercises focus on team-building, collaboration and communication.

"It is exciting to see students accomplish something that, at first glance, seems impossible and figure out a strategy to solve the task together," said Dr. Ken L. Williams, president of the Orange County Board of Education. "These activities, which also focus on positive risk-taking and making healthy choices, support the goals of the Friday Night Live and Peer Assistance Leadership programs by engaging youth in activities that build leadership skills."

Elke Petras, program manager for Friday Night Live (FNL) and Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL), who nominated the Cal Guard team for the award, said many students feel the Guard activities are the best parts of her programs. When asked about their favorite part of FNL and PAL sessions, students have responded, for instance: "ROPES, because we were active and it helped me be a leader," and "The National Guard's outside activities that help you communicate and work as a team."

Outstanding Contribution to Education awards are presented six times a year in Costa Mesa, honoring individuals and organizations that make significant contributions to education in Orange County.

Photo by Orange County Education Department

Members of the Cal Guard's Drug Demand Reduction Team accept an Outstanding Contribution to Education award from the Orange County Department of Education in November.

Recruiters work round-the-clock to man CNG force

By PFC. BRIANNE ROUDEBUSH
69th Public Affairs Detachment

In November 2011, Time magazine ran a story about "the other 1 percent," which described the growing gap between members of the military and the rest of the U.S. population. The article said many Americans today know very little about the military.

In an era when the majority of people have little or no connection with the military, the California Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion (RRB) has made it a priority to be an active presence in California communities. Recruiters have a unique opportunity to be "the face of the Guard" as they meet people and get involved at a local level.

Many recruiters are coaches and leaders of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Future Farmers of America. They also help out at "Sober Grad Nights," support Junior ROTC programs and cadet balls and participate in parades and other community events.

"Recruiting is never about sitting behind a desk and waiting for someone to walk through your door," said Sgt. 1st Class Jerome Connor of recruiting Team Shasta.

The job demands a lot of time and energy since many of the activities recruiters participate in occur outside of regular business hours. Lt. Col. Richard Lalor, the public affairs officer for the RRB, said recruiters are genuine citizen-Soldiers who serve their country, state and community, volunteering to deploy overseas and responding to disasters within California. They also sacrifice their personal time to make sure the California National Guard has great service members.

"You never know where your next enlistment will come from," Connor said. "A common trademark of the most successful recruiter is that they are always looking for an opportunity."

Sgt. 1st Class Fred Goode, a recruiter with Team Sacramento, said that even when he is not in uniform, he usually wears something that identifies him as a Guardsman as another way to "brand himself" in the community. Goode said it is important that people know who he is so they can ask questions.

"It takes a lot of personal time, so you have to have the drive and passion for it," Connor said. "If you don't have the passion, you're not going to be very successful."

One of the most successful recruiters in the Battalion, Sgt. 1st Class Marrlee Fuchs of Team Shasta, said each recruiter is different, and each needs to figure out what works for them in their community and adapt. "You just keep busy and never give up," she said.

Education is also a big part of recruiting. The RRB has programs in elementary schools that teach kids the importance of exercise and healthy eating, for example.

Maj. Mario Acevedo, the executive officer for the RRB, said a recent study shows that three out of four kids are not qualified for military service because of weight, tattoos, criminal activity or a number of other factors. Acevedo said it is therefore important for recruiters to educate students while they are young about things they should and should not do.

"If we focus on that 7th and 8th grade level and teach them now, we can keep that pool open for recruiting in the future," he said.

Photo courtesy of Recruiting and Retention Battalion

Staff Sgt. Jesus Rojas, a recruiter for the California Army National Guard, referees a pugil match between potential future Soldiers at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Air Show in October.

The mission is to man a ready force, Goode said, and if they don't accomplish that, it shows.

"There's a sense of pride as an individual recruiter to recruit the very best," Acevedo said.

Goode added that one of the most rewarding things is seeing a recruit turn into a Soldier.

"Recruiters get to serve as mentors, and that is what makes it special," he said. "It makes you feel good to see that you had a chance to have an impact like that."

CNG volunteer efforts aid Kosovo youths

By CAPT. MICHAEL D. FERRER
HHC, 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment

Cal Guard Soldiers currently deployed to Kosovo are charged with providing air support to enable a safe and secure environment as well as freedom of movement in the country, which declared independence following a United Nations administration period in 2008.

In addition to their primary mission as part of Task Force Cash, the Soldiers of the CNG's Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, who deployed July 5 for a year in Kosovo, have taken on several humanitarian initiatives.

HHC troops organize and teach English classes for local residents in two cities, Ferijaz and Gjilane, twice a week. They also provide support to the Hopes and Homes Children of Kosovo orphanage in Pristina and regularly host or participate in events to benefit the local community.

Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Cory Shelton

Twenty local children join members of 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, for a holiday party in December. All the children are students in English classes taught by members of the Battalion.

In October, seven HHC Soldiers helped rebuild a school and church at the Don Bosko Center in Gjilane, volunteering for hours of painstaking work on their day off. The Soldiers accomplished a great deal of work, which saved the school enough money to pay tuition for several students. In addition the wood left over from demolition was distributed to several underprivileged families to be used as firewood in the winter.

The troops worked side-by-side with members of the school and church with the common goal of providing a future for the children of Gjilane. The day built camaraderie among the troops and between the Soldiers and members of the community.

"When assigned the job of removing the ceiling of the Don Bosko center, I had estimated the progress of a day's labor to only partially finish the job. With team effort, hard work and perhaps some blessing from God, we succeeded in completing the entire job," Sgt. Justun Mendosa said. "By day's end, our crew had cleared the entire ceiling and celebrated with the church staff with a feast."

For the Task Force Cash holiday party in December, HHC troops invited 20 local children from Gjilane who are students in the HHC's English classes to celebrate the holidays at Camp Bondsteel, and the children shed a light on the party in a way that only children can. The Soldiers and children shared a meal together and played games throughout the evening, which was filled with smiles and laughter.

The Soldiers and children both enjoyed each other's company, with many troops saying the children's presence reminded them of their own kids at home. To cap off the evening, the Task Force presented gifts to each child, which was a surprise, as the presents had been hidden in a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter that doubled as Santa's sleigh.

Earlier in the holiday season, HHC Soldiers and their families had donated money for presents to be given to children at a nearby orphanage as well. The donations enabled the children to receive much-needed winter clothing as well as some toys.

"Walking through the doorway with presents in our arms, the kid's eyes lit up and were glowing with happiness, which I will never forget," said Sgt. Nathan Dodd. "Participating in this event brought joy and warmth to my heart, making holiday season memories away from home great ones."

HHC troops have been providing donations to the Hope and Homes orphanage since arriving in Kosovo. Their support has provided hygiene products and snacks for the children, but their efforts had been lacking in direct support for the individual child, HHC Soldiers felt. To expand upon their efforts, HHC leadership recently initiated a program called Operation Little Battle Buddy, which matches a Soldier-sponsor with an individual child in the orphanage to provide for specific needs.

The initial meeting between the sponsors and children was an overwhelming success. The troops arrived at the orphanage with presents in hand and were greeted with smiles, hugs and homemade Christmas cards.

Operation Little Battle Buddy may not have made a huge impact on the ongoing orphan problem in Kosovo, but the Soldiers' acts of kindness left a great impression on the children at Hope and Homes.

The HHC also held a fundraiser at its holiday party to raise money for firewood for the orphanage to prepare for the extremely cold winter months. Valbona Citaku, executive director of Hopes and Homes, was presented the donation, which left her practically speechless.

The HHC will continue its efforts to support Kosovo communities throughout the remainder of its tour. On any deployment, there is a time to fight (or keep the peace, in this situation) and a time to help. The HHC has been successful at both, accomplishing its primary mission and simultaneously assisting the people of Kosovo.

A year to remember

Every year brings different missions and developments for the California National Guard, and 2012 was no different, with service members showing their skills and talents in a wide variety of domestic and combat roles. Familiar missions in 2012 included deployments to Afghanistan and calls to battle wildfires statewide. Less common developments included a new California National Guard employment program, the end of the Southwest border mission and the certification of the 49th Military Police Brigade Homeland Response Force.

January

Civil Reunion

Members of the 146th Airlift Wing Civil Engineering Squadron were reunited with their families following a six-month tour at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where the unit maintained the expeditionary legal complex and Camp Justice, including constructing two buildings.

February

Homeland Security Guard

The National Guard closed Operation Phalanx, a four-state effort to curb the smuggling of people, drugs, weapons and cash over the Southwest border. From Aug. 24, 2010, through Feb. 4, 2012, about 260 CNG members were assigned to seven U.S. Border Patrol stations, manned eight entry identification team sites and collected and analyzed intelligence. Their efforts contributed to the seizure of 110 tons of marijuana and the arrest of 6,662 individuals.

Protecting Several States and Territories

Following two years of intense training, the 49th Military Police Brigade Homeland Response Force earned certification as the key military operations element covering one-tenth of the country for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The approximately 570-member Homeland Response Force combines a command-and-control element, a battalion headquarters, a security company and a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive enhanced response force package to respond to any incident involving an airborne pathogen, "dirty bomb," nuclear detonation or other contaminant in FEMA Region IX.

Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

2012 Deployments

California Army National Guard Unit // Number of Soldiers

Afghanistan
Co. B, 1-126th Aviation Bn. // **123**
132nd Multi-Role Bridge Co. // **185**
217th Finance Det. // **26**
250th Military Intel Bn. // **30**
578th Engineer Co. // **171**
649th Military Police Co. // **78**
756th Transportation Co. // **169**
1072nd Transportation Co. // **90**
2668th Transportation Co. // **123**

Kuwait
140th Chemical Co. // **143**

Kosovo
3-140th Aviation Bn. // **58**

Afghanistan, Egypt, Kosovo
Several units // **20**

California Air National Guard Unit // Number of Airmen

Continental United States
All units // **350**

Outside Continental U.S.
All units // **341**

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Gail Braymen

March

Operation Enduring Freedom

More than 120 Soldiers of the 1072nd Transportation Company and 649th Military Police Company departed California for a year-long deployment to Northern Afghanistan, where the 1072nd Soldiers were tasked with hauling personnel and equipment for coalition forces with the MPs providing security.

General Praise

Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. and the California National Guard promoted Col. Sylvia R. Crockett to the rank of brigadier general in a ceremony at the state Capitol in Sacramento. Crockett, who serves as director of strategic communications for the state's Military Department, is the first Latina general officer in the Cal Guard's history.

Hire Power

The Cal Guard and Speaker of the State Assembly John Perez introduced the Work for Warriors (WFW) program, which works to refine job-seekers' resumes and interviewing skills, and also seeks out employers that value characteristics Guardsmen bring to their jobs and establishes relationships that lead to interviews and job opportunities. In 2012, WFW placed more than 325 Guard members in full-time jobs.

Best Hiring Practices

The California Military Department was recognized by the State Personnel Board Office of Civil Rights for the Department's efforts to hire people with disabilities and to provide upward mobility for employees in low-paying occupations. The CMD's representation of employees with disabilities was 14 percent in 2012, exceeding the Board's goal of 13.3 percent.

April

Bridge Authority

The Redding-based 132nd Multi-Role Bridge Company deployed to Afghanistan, where it was the only U.S. Army bridge unit in the country. The 132nd was charged with emplacing, inspecting, repairing and removing all bridges in the theater as well as conducting bridge reconnaissance and supporting other engineering projects throughout Afghanistan.

Kuwait Mission

The 140th Chemical Company assumed responsibility for the Camp Arifjan Zone 6 Camp Command Cell in Kuwait, with a mission of maintaining and improving living conditions for the Soldiers there.

May

Solar System Up, Barracks Down

Camp Roberts, a 43,000-acre Guard training base north of Paso Robles, opened a 5-acre, 1-megawatt solar energy farm after 32 months of planning and nearly four months of construction. The plant is expected to power the entire base, at least during non-peak hours, for up to 25 years, increasing the post's cost-efficiency and lessening its environmental impact. About six months later, in December, the base would begin a three-phase demolition project to remove more than 600 dilapidated World War II-era buildings, which will make way for new facilities and infrastructure.

June

View from Above

Fifty-eight Airmen from the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing Civil Engineering Squadron returned from a six-month tour at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, where they established a high-altitude surveillance system and accomplished several other engineering projects, completing more than 1,000 work orders.

Keeping the Peace

Nearly 60 Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3-140th Aviation Security and Support Battalion, departed California for a year supporting peacekeeping operations in Kosovo. The 3-140th is providing administrative and refueling support to coalition units that use UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

July

Battling the Blazes

Soldiers and Airmen of the Cal Guard fought wildfires across California in July, August and September, saving countless homes from disaster. Guard helicopters flew 920 hours in Northern and Southern California, filling 660-gallon buckets with water from lakes and other sources about 3,000 times and dropping 1.8 million gallons on fires. In addition, Guard planes equipped with 3,000-gallon Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems made 93 fire-retardant drops in California, totaling 265,000 gallons.

Drug Sweep
During Operation Mountain Sweep in July and August, the Guard's Joint Task Force Domestic Support–Counterdrug joined with 14 other local, state and federal agencies to eradicate illegal marijuana grow sites and reclaim land in Northern California. The effort eliminated more than 130 marijuana grow sites on public lands in California, seizing 540,000 plants and 14 firearms and indicting 26 defendants.

August

Ruling the Road in Afghanistan
Nearly 170 Soldiers of the 756th Transportation Company returned from a yearlong mission to Afghanistan, where they performed 421 convoy missions, escorted 952 Afghan trucks, completed nearly 900 logistical movement requests that comprised more than 4,000 pieces of cargo, and moved 11,523 personnel throughout the Kabul Base Cluster.

On the Road Again
About 100 Soldiers and a dozen CH-47 Chinook helicopters from Company B, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, deployed for the unit's third tour in Afghanistan or Iraq since 2003. The unit is performing air-assault missions and transporting personnel and equipment throughout Afghanistan.

Focus on the Family
The California National Guard opened a first-of-its-kind Family Wellness Center, which is open to members of all branches of the military and is located in the San Diego community rather than on a military base, like many wellness centers. The Wellness Center offers assistance with everything from career counseling and financial advice to tutoring for children and help with post-traumatic-stress-related family issues.

September

Mission Complete
More than 160 Soldiers of the 578th Engineer Battalion returned from a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan, where the 578th commanded Task Force Mad Dog, which included two construction companies, four route clearance companies and one forward support company. The 578th oversaw Operation Devil Hammer, the largest military construction project in the Afghan campaign, which produced nine forward operating bases and six tactical operations centers. The 578th also cleared 30,000 miles of routes, disarming more than 1,000 improvised explosive devices.

Photo by Sgt. Glen Baker

October

Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Duty
Every California Army National Guard unit conducted a full day of suicide-prevention training during their October training weekend, incorporating activities that encouraged honest personal interactions and countered the stigma associated with seeking counseling. The results were in some cases immediate, as several Soldiers inspired by the training contacted suicide-prevention representatives to express concerns over their own mental health. The Guard is working to train a host of master resiliency trainers and resilience training assistants across the state.

November

957 Saves and Counting
The 129th Rescue Wing launched a successful mission to treat a ship's hand and transport him to the United States after he suffered a serious head injury on a boat 300 miles off the coast of Mexico. The November rescue was the 129th's third in international waters west of Mexico in 2012, following a March rescue 500 miles west of Acapulco and a September rescue more than 1,400 miles off the coast of Acapulco. The Wing has saved 957 lives in combat and non-combat situations since being entrusted with its search-and-rescue mission in 1975.

December

Honoring Their Service
The Guard renamed two of its readiness centers in 2012 for Soldiers who had died in Afghanistan in 2011. In December the 870th Military Police Company dedicated its Pittsburg armory to the memory of Spc. Sean M. Walsh, who was killed by indirect enemy fire in November 2011. Previously in September, the 756th Transportation Company had dedicated its home in Lancaster to Sgt. Carlo F. Eugenio, who was killed by a suicide bomber in October 2011.

"From here on, every Guardsman who trains here will know [Eugenio's] name and recall his story," Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, said before the dedication in Lancaster. "This is just one of the ways we will continue to honor this warrior's service and sacrifice to a grateful state and nation."

Photo by Master David J. Loeffler

Photo by Capt. Will Martin

Photo by 49th Military Police Brigade

CNG officers train Nigerian military on domestic ops

By CNG Current Operations Division

California Army National Guard officers deployed to Abuja, Nigeria, in January to conduct a training seminar on the joint planning process for military support to civil authorities during emergencies.

The Guard officers worked with the Nigerian Directorate of Civil Military Operations and the U.S. ambassador to Nigeria's Office of Security Cooperation to present the interagency training event focused on building Nigeria's capacity for crisis response.

"The preparation and participation of the Nigerian military and their interagency partners — the National Police, National Fire Service and National State Services — demonstrated their commitment to military transformation and improving their capabilities for mutual security," said Lt. Col. Dan Markert, chief of Current Operations for the Cal Guard. "They included their emergency management agency, meteorological agency and the Nigerian Red Cross.

"They were all very interested in working better together in responding to natural disasters and man-made emergencies," he continued. "It was very rewarding for us to share with them our planning doctrine and lessons learned from our own disaster and emergency response here in California."

The Jan. 22-24 training event was organized under the National Guard's State Partnership Program, which evolved from a 1991 U.S. European Command decision to set up the Joint Contact Team Program in the Baltic Region utilizing U.S. reserve component Soldiers and Airmen. A subsequent National Guard Bureau proposal paired U.S. states with three nations emerging from the former Soviet Bloc, and the State Partnership Program was born. The Program has since become a key U.S. security cooperation tool, facilitating cooperation across all aspects of international civil-military affairs and encouraging people-to-people ties at the state level.

The California Guard maintains two partnerships through the Program, with Nigeria and Ukraine. As part of the Program, a Cal Guard field-grade officer is assigned to each embassy as a bilateral affairs officer.

"I work for the ambassador's Office of Security Cooperation and coordinate with [U.S. Africa Command], the National Guard Bureau and the California National Guard [Strategic Planning Directorate] in order to match mutual Nigerian and United States security requirements with capabilities that create opportunities for mutual training and benefit," said Maj. Matt Hook, who is in his second year as the Guard's bilateral affairs officer in Nigeria. "Matching up Lieutenant Colonel Markert and Lieutenant Colonel [Seth] Goldberg with the Nigerian Defence Headquarters director of civil military affairs, Air Commodore Ademola Onitiju, was a great opportunity for developing civil support relationships."

Goldberg is the Cal Guard's deputy director of operations and works as an attorney in his civilian career.

"The Nigerians have flooding every year and have wildfire risks, as well as have suffered several terrorist bombings," Hook added. "Both [Markert and Goldberg have] personal experience at disaster response, combat operations and advising foreign security forces."

One of the key benefits of the State Partnership Program is that the Guard is able to draw upon its diverse military and civilian experience to provide scalable, tailor-made force packages for combatant commanders to shape their security environment and develop long-term regional relationships.

"It really maximizes our militia heritage," Goldberg said. "We come on duty for short periods of time, bringing both our civilian expertise and military operational experience to help bolster the capacity of our international partners. It also keeps us sharp."

Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Daniel Markert

Lt. Col. Dan Markert, right, and Lt. Col. Seth Goldberg complete paperwork for the Joint Seminar on Long-Range Disaster-Response Planning held in Nigeria in January. The event was a collaboration of the California National Guard, the U.S. ambassador to Nigeria's Office of Security Cooperation and the Nigerian Directorate of Civil Military Operations.

'What it takes' from page 9

serve in 2005 as a security forces apprentice. While assigned to the 452nd Security Forces Squadron, he deployed to Kirkuk Regional Air Base, Iraq, and was chosen to provide personal security for Vice President-elect Joe Biden. In 2010 he joined the Air National Guard and retrained into the chaplain's assistant field. Three years ago, Stephens joined the Blue Eagles Honor Guard, which comprises Airmen from three bases, and has since dedicated nearly 500 volunteer hours and performed funeral honors for more than 400 individuals.

Sgt. (CA) Matthew J. Reece is an administrative noncommissioned officer for the California State Military Reserve's (CSMR) Recruiting Task Force–North. Reece joined the CSMR in July 2009 and has since completed the CSMR's Basic Orientation Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course and Combat Lifesaver Course. His most recent activation was during last year's wildfires, when he served as the training noncommissioned officer in charge for the Emergency State Active Duty teams.

Spc. (CA) Kevin Cox currently serves in the CSMR's 2nd Brigade. He previously served for one year as a logistics specialist for the CSMR's 1st Brigade. In October of last year, Cox was presented a certificate of appreciation from the CSMR for outstanding service while off duty in recognition of actions that helped save a motorist's life following a traffic accident. Cox is nearing completion of his schooling to obtain a registered nurse license, and he is working on sponsoring himself through the police academy.

'Combat cop' from 15

ny (HHC) was about to deploy to Iraq in 2004-5. Then in 2009-10, the HHC again deployed to Iraq, this time with Currier as the Brigade's commander.

Though both tours centered on training the embryonic Iraqi police forces, they were heavily contrasted in nature. During the first tour, Currier and the rest of the Brigade were repeatedly attacked, and suffered the tragic loss of Sgt. 1st Class Isaac Lawson, whose name the Brigade headquarters in Fairfield, Calif., bears today. The second tour was quieter and centered more on successfully handing the reins of the nation to the Iraqi forces.

In surveying his military career, however, Currier looks back to his first tour in Iraq as the most defining: "Desert Storm was a turning point for the National Guard."

A PROFESSIONAL FORCE

"When we were in Desert Storm, we drove cutvees and didn't even have radios and maps that allowed us to communicate with the rest of the Army," Currier said. "We relied on the good graces of the regular Army."

Desert Storm not only awakened the rest of the Armed Forces to the necessity of integrating the National Guard into strategic operations, he said, but it also began a concerted effort at professionalizing the reserve components.

"The whole paradigm of never going into war if you're in the Guard had just been broken," he said. "Relying on the Guard was no longer conceptual, it was a reality."

Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, he said, only accelerated that transformation, and today, the California National Guard "is as professional and ready as we've ever been."

Currier said the Guard is not only on par with its active duty counterparts, but in many areas, probably superior.

"In the active duty, you don't get to go out and do your job as much as you would think. In the National Guard, at least we spend half our drill weekends actually training," he said, adding that the civilian experience and maturity of the usually older Guardsmen give them an edge in many career fields.

"I would match an MP National Guard Company for an active duty MP Company any day of the week," he said.

'Battaglia' from 9

about that for a minute: 'To support and defend the Constitution of the United States, against all enemies, foreign and domestic.' So you're saying, whether you know it or not, 'I'm willing to give my life for my country.'"

Next the sergeant major visited the CNG's 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, which was conducting live-fire training on Camp Roberts, Calif., in preparation for a tour in Afghanistan.

"When General Dempsey says [his objective is to] 'keep faith with the military family,' he wants you to understand that if you happen to be deployed or sent on an operation somewhere, that your family will be taken care of." Battaglia said.

Leaders can be confident a service member is focused on the mission at hand, rather than worrying about their family, if the troop knows their family is taken care of, he added.

Battaglia and Dempsey are also focused on taking care of their "uniformed family," ensuring service members are trained, educated, molded and developed with proficiency and competency in their fields and specialties.

"That's not going to go away, despite the fiscal calendars that we have going on right now," Battaglia said. "Service members will get the schooling and education they need to make them proficient."

Before returning to the Pentagon, Battaglia attended the Cal Guard's first annual joint Airmen of the Year and Best Warrior Competition awards ceremony in Garden Grove. He said the first-class event and the competitors' efforts showcased the CNG's commitment to the profession of arms, and he was honored to be a part of the celebration.

"The chairman and I are so tremendously proud of our force, proud of you," he said at the banquet. "I was very impressed with my short visit here."

He added that meeting the CNG's high-speed troops was a memorable experience. "There is no way the active component could have sustained for the amount of time we have invested in Iraq and Afghanistan without the help, assistance and embedded deployments of our Reserve and National Guard forces, especially the highly capable and mobile force in California," he said.

Violinist Dick Bright performs the national anthem Jan. 16 before an NBA game between the Miami Heat and Golden State Warriors in Oakland, while Capt. Nathan King and seven other members of the CNG's 129th Rescue Wing stretch a large U.S. flag across the court. Photo by Brandon Honig

Same-sex couples gain DoD benefits

The Department of Defense on Feb. 11 extended 22 family member and dependent benefits to same-sex domestic partners of military members and their children, adding to 20 benefits that were previously available to any person based on the service member's designation. Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta added that he expects the Department will grant full benefits of all types to same-sex partners in the future.

"One of the legal limitations to providing all benefits at this time is the Defense of Marriage Act … . There are certain benefits that can only be provided to spouses as defined by that law, which is now being reviewed by the United States Supreme Court," he explained. "While it will not change during my tenure as secretary of defense, I foresee a time when the law will allow the department to grant full benefits to service members and their dependents, irrespective of sexual orientation."

Panetta added that discrimination based on sexual orientation "has no place in the Department of Defense."

"Taking care of our service members and honoring the sacrifices of all military families are two core values of this nation," he said. "Extending these benefits is an appropriate next step under current law to ensure that all service members receive equal support for what they do to protect this nation."

Among the benefits newly available to families with same-sex partners are ID cards, commissary and exchange privileges, emergency leave, youth programs, disability and death compensation for dependents of service members held captive, space-available travel, child care, legal assistance, and morale, welfare and recreation programs.

Free tutoring for Guard families

Department of Defense-funded website www.tutor.com provides free, personalized tutoring in a wide range of subjects for students of all levels and abilities. Guard members and their family members are eligible regardless of their deployment or duty status, and assistance is available any day, any time.

In addition to all core K-12 subjects, the site's 2,500 expert tutors offer assistance with Advanced Placement exams, standardized test preparation and college-admission essays. The tutors are also available to help with many college courses as well as career-transition activities such as writing resumes and cover letters and preparing for interviews.

Accidental deaths on decline in Army

The number of fatal accidents among on- or off-duty Soldiers declined 17 percent in the first quarter of fiscal year 2013 as compared with the first quarter of fiscal 2012, the Army said. First-quarter aviation-related incidents showed the biggest drop, from five in 2012 to zero in 2013. Accidental deaths have decreased or remained steady every full year since 2007, resulting in 2012 being the safest year since Sept. 11, 2001, and the third-safest on record.

Strong Bonds seminar in April

Families with children aged 8 years or older are invited to participate in a two-day retreat whose fun activities teach skills that enable families to strengthen relationships and work through challenges together. The Strong Bonds Family Wellness Seminar offered by the California Army National Guard Chaplain's Office begins at noon on Saturday, April 27, in San Diego and concludes at 12:45 p.m. the next day. Participation is limited to 30 families. For a registration form, email desmond.knight@us.army.mil.

DID YOU KNOW...

command and staff inspections measure compliance with specific requirements and provide leaders valuable feedback at all levels?

Army: Are you a company-level commander? Did you receive a command inspection within 180 days of assuming command? If not, demand one from your next higher commander; it is required by regulation. Command and staff inspections provide the commander the most accurate representation of a unit's status and readiness in relation to their assigned state and federal missions.

Aside from a few minimum requirements, regulations do not specifically direct how Army command inspections will be established or implemented. Therefore, inspections grant the commander a significant amount of latitude to develop procedures that provide subordinate leaders with a clear focus on goals, standards and priorities.

Air Force: The Commander's Inspection Program is managed by each wing commander and is used to assess groups, squadrons and other organizations below the wing level. The program focuses on managing resources, leading people, improving the unit and executing the mission. Primarily, commanders are required to conduct internal inspections to improve unit performance, military discipline, readiness, efficiency, effectiveness and quality of life for their Airmen. The inspections evaluate unit performance in relation to established standards.

Further information can be found in Army Regulation 1-201, chapter 3-3, and in Air Force Instruction 90-201, chapters 2.3 and 6.0.

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Address/subscription: CNG members must make changes through their unit.
Retired members, email GrizzlyMag.ngca@ng.army.mil.

Soldiers from the California Army National Guard's Bakersfield-based Battery B, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, conduct live-fire training under the instruction of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 426th Regional Training Institute on Feb. 12 at Fort McCoy, Wis.
Photo by 1st Lt. Joe Trovato | For more on Battery B, 1-143rd, see page 15

THE GRIZZLY NEWSMAGAZINE 2013

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