

GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard



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Accept help for post-traumatic stress

Major General David S. Baldwin



Research cited by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) indicates only 40 percent of Soldiers returning from Iraq said they would seek help if they were experiencing mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress, or PTS. That statistic is appalling and unacceptable.

The 60 percent who would not seek help feared that admitting a problem would create a perception that they are weak and would hurt their military career. Those 60 percent were wrong.

Seeking help shows strength. It benefits the individual as well as the organization, and no member of the California Guard will be penalized for seeking medical care.

PTS is a medical condition that produces measurable changes in the brain, which cannot be faked. It is essential that those affected by PTS seek counseling and support, so they can improve their own lives and those of their families, and so they can return to service fit for duty.

A healthy force is a ready force, and there will never be a stigma attached to a CNG Soldier or Airman seeking help for a medical condition. Though it is common to refer to PTS as post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, we in the Cal Guard prefer PTS to emphasize that it is not a disorder to be ashamed of, but a natural condition affecting many service members.

June is nationally recognized as PTSD Awareness Month and June 27 as PTSD Awareness Day in honor of Staff Sgt. Joe Biel, a North Dakota Army National Guardsman

“A healthy force is a ready force, and there will never be a stigma attached to a CNG Soldier or Airman seeking help for a medical condition.”

**- Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin
The Adjutant General**

whose birthday was June 27 and who took his own life following two tours in Iraq. Averting the senseless loss of service members like Staff Sgt. Biel has been a focus of the Armed Forces and the VA for several years.

VA statistics show that PTS affects between 11 percent and 20 percent of veterans returning from Iraq or Afghanistan. The likelihood of developing PTS is affected not only by the trauma one experiences but also by their genetics.

Since 2009 the VA's budget for mental health funding has increased 57 percent, and the VA has hired 1,600 mental health clinical professionals in the past year alone. The Army and Air Force, meanwhile, have greatly increased resiliency training for all members, particularly those who are deploying or returning from deployment, and have made a variety of mental health resources available

anytime, anywhere.

The California National Guard is training hundreds of resilience trainers and resilience trainer assistants to help those in need, and we have clinicians, therapists, counselors, social workers, psychologists and chaplains available 24/7 to assist members of every unit in the California Army and Air National Guard.

The identities of service members who seek psychological health care are kept confidential in all but the most extreme cases, such as those in which a patient requires hospitalization or duty restriction. Even in those circumstances, our commanders throughout the California National Guard know that treatment for this serious condition is vitally important, and the days in which one might attach a stigma to seeking medical care are long gone.

We take care of our battle buddies and wingmen in the California National Guard. Not only should you seek help for your own symptoms without hesitation, but each of you should be looking out for those at your side who may show signs of combat stress, substance abuse, depression or suicidal ideation. Through our caring and understanding, we can eradicate any stigma that remains from a time when this condition was less understood by the medical and military communities.

Nothing is more important to our commanders and to your fellow service members than the well-being of every California National Guardsman. We are ready to help you, but you must take the first step.

Don't face it alone

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Articles:

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

Photographs:

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

E-mail submissions and feedback to:
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Cover Shot



Photo by
Master Sgt. Ben Bloker

Staff Sgt. Michael Sweeney of the CNG's 144th Fighter Wing Security Forces Squadron greets an Afghan boy during a June 13 security detail in the town of Saka near Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, where U.S. Air Force engineers were rebuilding a road connecting Saka with the town of Payan Janqadam.

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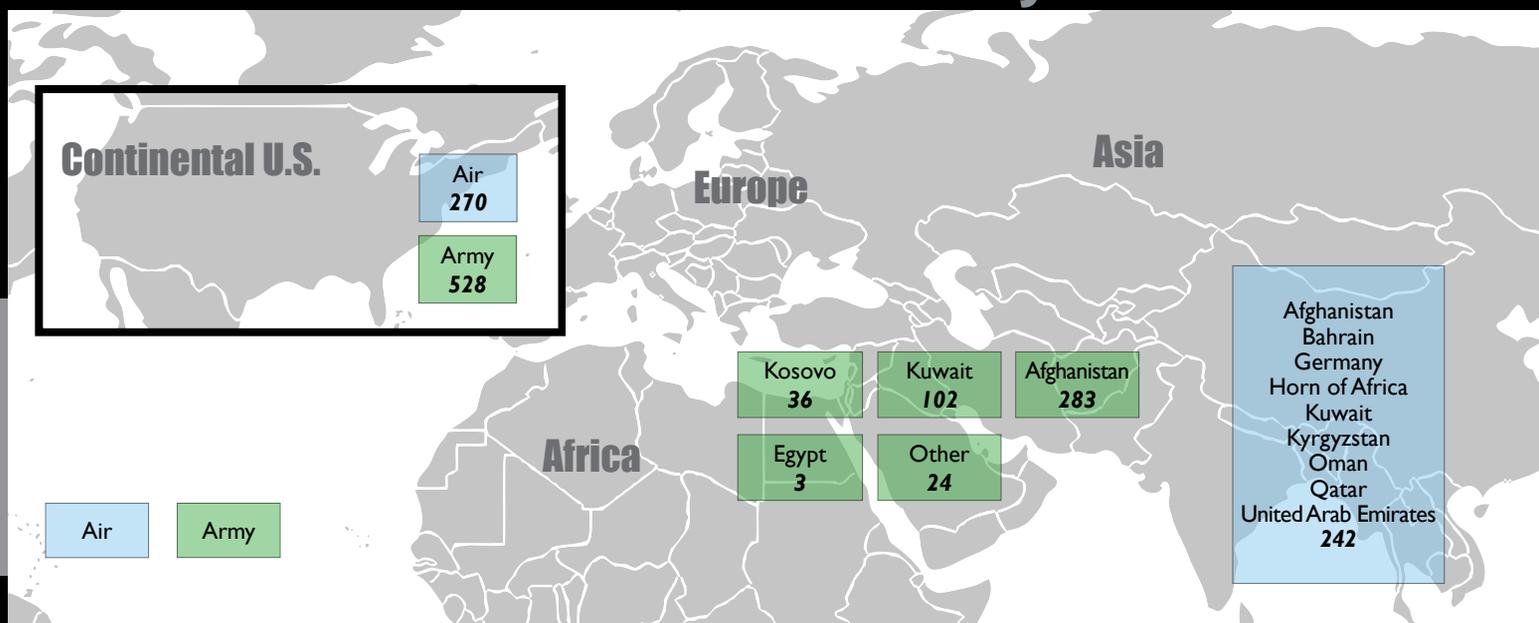
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California National Guard mobilizations as of June 2013



Making a change for the better

CNG Innovative Readiness Training brings medical care to remote American Indian reservation

By **SGT. 1ST CLASS JESSICA INIGO**
Los Angeles Regional Public Affairs

From just one year to the next, hundreds of Californians with little to no medical or dental insurance saw their quality of life increase because of the California National Guard. The Guard's annual medical mission on the rural Santa Barbara County Reservation of the Band of Chumash Indians provides humanitarian medical aid, and repeat visitors say they are living better because of the treatment they have received over the years.

"There are patients who saw me again for the first time after last year's mission, and they hugged me, had tears in their eyes and said I was their hero," said Maj. Ophelia Willis, a physician with Company C (Medical), 40th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB), 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, out of Montebello, Calif. "I actually got them to change just one thing in their lives. They see that it wasn't hard and that it worked.

"Next time we'll talk about just one other change they could make for the better," she said. "Getting healthier is really just that easy."

Willis is part of a 13-member medical team that collaborated with the Santa Ynez

Tribal Health Clinic to provide free medical and dental care to anyone who was unable to access basic health care services May 6-17.

"This is a whole person who has very many problems — not just someone with a headache or who needs a pap [smear]," Willis said. "They have kids and family members. They need advice and guidance.

"Just allowing them the time to speak and to get to know them helps relieve some of the pressure and eases some of the pain," she said. "Plus, some of these patients haven't had a complete check-up in 10 or 20 years, so this was needed."

Among the medical services provided were physical exams, pediatric care, immunizations, health education and physical therapy. Dental services were also provided, including restorative procedures, oral surgeries, root canals and digital radiographs. The team also provided residents with medical preparedness kits.

In addition to Dr. Willis, the 40th BSB team included a physician's assistant, a dentist, dental technicians, a behavioral health specialist, a physical therapist and administrative support personnel.

The team examined more than 420 patients:

LEFT: Physician Maj. Ophelia Willis of the CNG's Company C (Medical), 40th Brigade Support Battalion, discusses American Indian medical practices with Adelina Alva Padilla, the spiritual grandmother of the Chumash Band of American Indians, on May 9. Company C was performing a two-week mission to provide free medical services for those who lacked access to care on the rural Reservation of the Band of Chumash Indians in Santa Barbara County. BELOW: Dental assistant Spc. Kraiwit Krairophon assists dentist Capt. Osleydis Diaz as she provides a May 9 check-up for Angelica Bourbon of Santa Maria, Calif., on the Chumash reservation.

78 received lab work; 130 had dental procedures, including emergency extractions; 37 received physical therapy; and 30 obtained social services care from the behavioral health care specialist.

Brig. Gen. Sylvia Crockett, director of strategic communications for the California Military Department, toured the clinic and expressed her support for the humanitarian mission.

"This really is a great community project," she said. "This is a great opportunity for our Soldiers to use their specialized skills for those who really need it."

First Lieutenant Summer Haviland, the team's doctor of physical therapy, said the

mission gets to the heart of the reason she joined the Armed Forces.

"Personally speaking as a medical provider from the civilian world who joined the Armed Forces," she said, "going beyond the Hippocratic Oath, I truly feel a desire to reach a whole new level of human connection where I can serve as a Soldier, but also provide the needed medical care that I have been trained to do."

Since 2008 the Santa Ynez medical mission and other National Guard medical outreach programs in California have served 4,000 dental patients and nearly 2,700 medical patients. An additional 11,200 patients' records have been reviewed by the medical teams.

Innovative Readiness Training Get Involved!

The Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program aims to enhance military readiness while simultaneously providing health and infrastructure support to underserved communities, often on American Indian reservations. IRT missions are funded by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs and the National Guard Bureau. This summer the California National Guard IRT program will provide medical and dental care on multiple American Indian reservations and will participate in a road rehabilitation project for the La Jolla band of Luiseno Indians in Pauma Valley, Calif. If your unit is interested in participating in an IRT project, contact Maj. Pat Slavin at 916-854-3326 or patrick.e.slavin.mil@mail.mil.



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Inigo

Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

144th upgrades to F-15 fighters

By **1ST LT. JASON SWEENEY**
California Military Department Public Affairs

The roar of two fighter jets flying over Fresno Air National Guard Base marked the beginning of a new era June 18. The jets made a pass over a crowd of National Guard members and civilians who had assembled in front of the 144th Fighter Wing's maintenance hangar. One of the jets was a single-engine F-16C Fighting Falcon; flying beside it was a larger, dual-engine F-15 Eagle — the first of 21 slated to arrive from Montana.

The F-15s are replacing the 144th Fighter Wing's F-16s, which have been flying a

F-15 Eagle



Speed: 1,875 mph

Range: 3,450 miles

Engines: Two with 23,450 pounds of thrust each

Armament: One M-61A1 six-barrel, 20-mm cannon plus four AIM-9 Sidewinder and four AIM-120 AMRAAM missiles (or eight AIM-120s)

homeland defense mission out of Fresno since 1989. As the F-15s arrive, the F-16s will depart for Arizona, where they will be used for training.

"We're going to miss the F-16. There's not a fighter that we've had nearly as long," 144th Fighter Wing antiterrorism officer Lt. Col. Dave Johnston said. "But the arrival of the F-15 means we have the right aircraft for the mission. From a capabilities standpoint, it's much better suited for the role. It's big. It's got a lot of power. Its radar is exponentially better. It can do things the F-16 can't."

The 144th Fighter Wing's mission is to provide air defense for the West Coast of the United States as well as air superiority in support of worldwide operations. When the Wing first arrived in Fresno in 1954, it flew P-51 Mustangs. The F-15 is the eighth type of fighter flown by the Wing.

"The F-16 has been a pleasure to fly," said Lt. Col. Ron Schriber, who flew F-16s for the Wing for nearly 10 years. "But the F-15 represents a step forward in our capability."

"It's got tremendous power, great maneuverability and incredible firepower," added pilot Lt. Col. Rob Swertfager.

The pilot who flew the F-15 over the crowd June 18, Maj. Jon Burd, taxied in front of the maintenance hangar and parked it next to an F-16 and a P-51. He then shut down the F-15's engines and opened the cockpit canopy to cheers from the crowd.

"It's been a long time coming," he said of the F-15's arrival. "It's a beautiful day. It couldn't have been more perfect."

The future of the 144th Fighter Wing in



Bill Kimzey Sr. and his grandson Alex Kimzey look in the cockpit of the 144th Fighter Wing's first F-15 Eagle following a ceremony unveiling the fighter June 18 at Fresno Air National Guard Base.

Fresno had been uncertain until recently. The Fresno base had been considered for closure, but with the F-15 projected to be a viable air defense asset through 2025, the Wing's mission in Fresno appears secure for the foreseeable future.

The Wing's transition to the F-15 has been years in the making. The Wing's pilots and mechanics have been training on the new airframe and gearing up to make the switch after more than two decades of working with F-16s. Chief Master Sgt. Cameron Williams, a maintenance superintendent, said the crew chiefs who maintain the aircraft are upbeat and excited about the transition.

"It's a new aircraft to learn, a new system," he said. "It's time to shake things up a bit."

Senior Airman Raymon Figueroa, a crew

chief who has been working on F-16s since joining the Wing in 2008, said he looks forward to working on the new fighters.

"Some people work on one aircraft their whole career, but now I can say I've worked on two," he said. "The F-15 is a bigger aircraft, a lot more work, but that's not a bad thing. You have more of a challenge and you've got to push yourself."

In remarks to the crowd, Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingen said the city is fortunate to have the Wing based there. The Wing brings jobs to the community and provides a substantial and positive impact on the local economy, she said.

"This is a day we have all been waiting for, and it is long overdue," Swearingen said. "We are proud of you."

Building something that lasts in Afghanistan

By **SENIOR AIRMAN TORRI INGALSBE**
U.S. Air Forces Central Public Affairs

Airmen from the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron (ESFS) and the 577th Expeditionary Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force Squadron (EPBS) teamed up to repair Route Safeside, a heavily traveled road just outside of Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, on June 13.

The 455th includes eight Airmen from the California Air National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing Security Forces Squadron, who are performing a variety of security duties during their six-month tour in Afghanistan. An additional 24 Airmen from the 144th Security Forces Squadron are currently providing base security in Kuwait.

Route Safeside, which runs between the Afghan villages Payan Janqadam and Saka, had fallen into disrepair from heavy foot patrols and tactical vehicle traffic.

"This is a primary road for us," said Capt. Christopher Heinen of the 455th ESFS. "Bringing so many tactical vehicles down it has caused a lot of damage to the road."

Heinen said the road is extremely important to the local community, as it not only connects the two villages but also runs between a local school and a mosque. The road also leads to one of the largest humanitarian hospitals in the area, providing health services to the local population.

"The way the road was before, people would have to risk damaging their vehicles traveling on it, or they would have



Photo by Master Sgt. Ben Bloker

Airmen with the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, which includes eight members of the California Air National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing, watch June 13 as U.S. Air Force engineers work to repair a vital road connecting the Afghan villages Payan Janqadam and Saka.

to walk," Heinen explained. "By fixing it, the Afghans will have an easier time traveling between the two villages."

Villagers watched the project progress, and many thanked the Airmen for rebuilding the much-traveled and vital road. The mile-long stretch in need of repair required four loads of rocks brought in by dump trucks, several passes with a grader followed by finishing with a rock crusher.

Throughout the process, 455th ESFS Airmen provided overwatch for the mission and its personnel.

"It's definitely a team effort," said Tech. Sgt. Grant Allettad of the 455th. "We've been coordinating this for several months now, and it's good to see it all come together."

Master Sgt. Adrian Roth of the 577th EPBS said that by repairing the road, the engineers were fulfilling a promise made to local residents several months earlier.

"We're giving the people here a safer road to travel," Roth said. "It feels good to leave them with something that will make things better for them and something that will last."

The 144th Airmen are one of the last groups to deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, which began in 2001. As of May, about 120 California Air National Guard members and 220 California Army National Guard troops were serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, working toward the transition of all authority and responsibility for security in Afghanistan to the Afghan people.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, Cal Guard Airmen have deployed across the globe in support of the fight against terrorism more than 14,000 times, and Cal Guard Soldiers have deployed more than 24,000 times. Throughout the Cal Guard's participation in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, both Army and Air units have greatly contributed to engineering and infrastructure projects such as the one on Route Safeside.

CNG medevac unit takes to Afghan skies

Charlie Company, I-168th GSAB, begins nine-month tour in Regional Command–West

By **CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 JON GUIBORD**
Company C, I-168th GSAB

After months of preparation and with a wealth of experience in previous overseas deployments as well as domestic search-and-rescue missions, California National Guard medical evacuation unit Company

C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion (Medevac), has begun its mission in Western Afghanistan.

A hundred and twenty Charlie Company aviators from California, Nevada and Washington officially took responsibility for medevac operations throughout Regional Command–West during a relief-

in-place ceremony June 4 on Shindand Air Base, Afghanistan.

"We are excited to take over the medevac mission in RC–West," said Maj. David Lovett, commander of Company C. "As an organization we pride ourselves in our ability to be ready to respond to any mission, 24/7, and save lives. That is what [the Army air ambulance call sign] DUSTOFF is all about: Dedicated Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces."

Charlie Company employs UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters crewed by two pilots, a crew chief and one or two flight medics. Many of the Company's medics work as full-time paramedics or firefighters in their civilian jobs, which provides them with skills and experience in critical care transport that are not commonly found in active duty Army medevac units.

"The ground forces know they have a tough mission, but they have confidence in each other and confidence that if something bad happens, medevac will be there to take care of their injured with world class medical care at the point of injury as well as en route to follow-on care," said Col. Allan M. Pepin, commander of 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

For these West Coast aviators, performing air ambulance duties in hot, mountainous conditions is no new task. Charlie Com-

pany previously deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2008-2009.

"We come to the table with a tremendous amount of experience," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jeff Ducharme, a Company C standardization pilot from Reno, Nev. "Most of these guys have been here before, done this mission before and never dropped a mission. Our medics set the standard for active duty, and we are all backed by top-notch maintenance and support personnel."

Charlie Company will have some big shoes to fill, continuing the mission previously fulfilled by aviators from Company C, 1-211th General Support Aviation Battalion (Air Ambulance), composed of National Guardsmen from Iowa, Kansas and Minnesota. During their nine-month tour, the Midwest aviators successfully completed all of their assigned missions, totaling more than 2,000 flight hours and never needing more than their 15 allotted minutes to get wheels-up en route to a patient.

"Every American Soldier on the battlefield has the confidence to know that DUSTOFF units like ours are ready to respond at a moment's notice to get them the medical care they need," Lovett said. "For the American and Coalition forces in RC–West, they can have that confidence knowing we will be there for them when they need us."



About 50 California National Guardsmen with Company C, I-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, stand in formation during a departure ceremony March 4 at Army Aviation Support Facility–Sacramento. The Soldiers later deployed to Afghanistan, where they linked up with Company members from Nevada and Washington for a nine-month tour.

CNG troops show civilian SAR team the ropes

By **1ST LT. JASON SWEENEY**
California Military Department Public Affairs

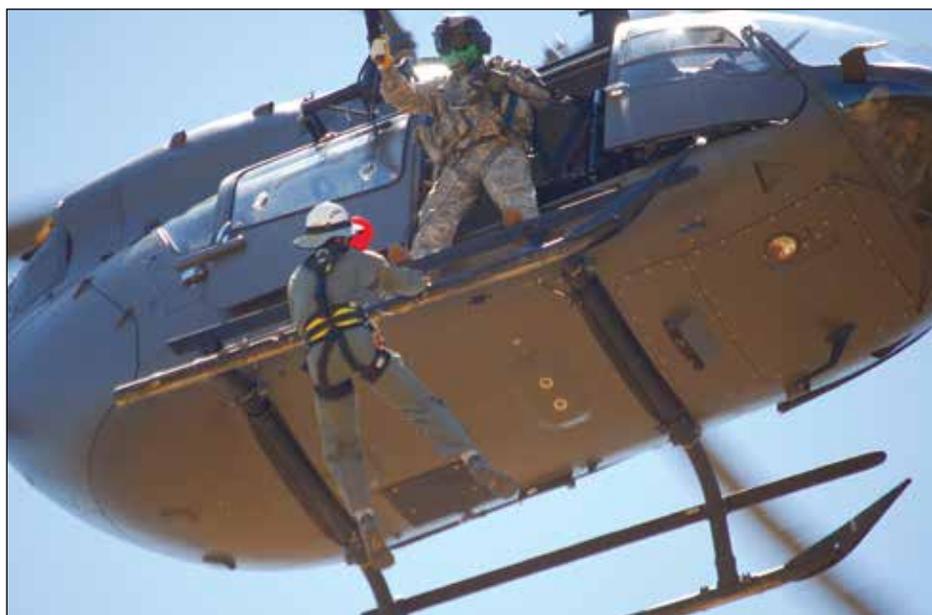
Standing on the skid of a UH-72 Lakota helicopter as it zooms high over New Melones Lake can be quite a rush.

"I loved it," Tuolumne County Search and Rescue (SAR) Team member Autumn Fox said. "I just wish it didn't have to end."

Fox and nine other members of the civilian SAR Team conducted helicopter orientation and hoist training with CNG troops June 7-8 in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains just outside Columbia, Calif. The training was part of a Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department search-and-rescue exercise called SAREX, which presented a scenario of missing hikers in need of extraction from remote locations.

The Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department requested air support for SAREX, and the Guard complied with a UH-72 Lakota helicopter from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, out of Stockton as well as a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from Company F, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, out of Mather Field near Sacramento.

The two aircraft picked up the SAR team at the Columbia Airport and dropped them off on flat-topped Table Mountain high above New Melones Lake. The helicopters then hovered above the mountain and dropped hoist cables to the ground, and the SAR team members were hoisted one by one about 100 feet into the aircraft.



Sgt. 1st Class Edward Moe of the CNG's 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, instructs a member of the Tuolumne County Search and Rescue Team during hoist training on a UH-72 Lakota near Columbia, Calif., on June 7.

For some added excitement, the team members got to stand on the skid of the Lakota as it circled over the lake after each hoist.

"It's great practice," Fox said. "The experience, the noise, [it] prepares us for when we do go out."

SAR team member Rob Barr said this was his first time training with helicopters. "It was awesome," he said. "I'm feeling more confident I can do this for real."

The Tuolumne County SAR Team is run

by the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department. The Team is made up of volunteers who work day jobs but are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Should a hiker get lost in Tuolumne County, the Team gets the call and the search is on. Usually the California Highway Patrol provides air support, but National Guard helicopters can provide greater capabilities if needed.

The purpose of the June training was to familiarize the SAR Team with California

Army National Guard assets.

"If it's a lengthy search, when it comes to shuttling us into the search area, the Guard is it," said Robert Lyons, Tuolumne County Sheriff SAR coordinator and incident commander for the exercise.

"The bottom line is you can't underestimate the capabilities the Guard brings to the table in regards to enhancing wilderness search and rescue," said Assistant Chief Paul Tassone, California Emergency Management Agency Law Enforcement Division Region 4 coordinator. "This exercise allows us to learn the National Guard's capabilities, and we want the National Guard to understand the capabilities of the SAR team."

Lakota pilot Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Lacosta said the SAREX provided the Guard crews with good training.

"We should train as we fight," he said. "The cooperation between us and the Sheriff's Department needs to be continuous and ongoing because if there is a natural disaster, we're all going to be working together."

Sgt. 1st Class Edward Moe, a crew chief on the Lakota, said that although he and the other Guardsmen who participated in the exercise are well-versed in hoist operations, it was good to work with non-military personnel, who were very professional.

"It's great working with civilians," added Spc. Jordan Sy, who is also a crew chief on the Lakota. "That's why I joined the National Guard — to help the community."

49th MP Soldiers get CERT-ified

By **CAPT. WILL MARTIN**
California Military Department Public Affairs

Smart ideas often come in short bursts. The burst that inspired the concept for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) lasted about only 20 seconds, when a 5.9-magnitude earthquake ripped through Whittier, Calif., on Oct. 1, 1987, killing eight people and displacing 9,000.

In the wake of the \$400 million in damage caused by the Whittier Narrows Earthquake, the Los Angeles Fire Department awakened to the need for trained civilians who could ably respond to assist their neighbors in times of emergency. That need ultimately led the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to launch CERT programs across the nation.

Earlier this year, several members of the 49th Military Police Brigade enrolled in CERT training through the local chapter in Fairfield, Calif., where the Brigade is headquartered. As the seat of the FEMA Region IX Homeland Response Force (HRF), the Brigade is central to the California National Guard's emergency-response network in Northern California.

"[The CERT mission] follows suit with our current mission," said Staff Sgt. Trevor Butters, an HRF operations noncommissioned officer (NCO) for the Brigade, who initiated the partnership with the local CERT chapter. "It's important that we form and hold these relationships with the community. Really, we're all here to save lives."

During CERT training, local emergency-response agencies — in this instance, the Fairfield Fire Department — educate trainees on basic emergency-response skills. When disaster strikes, CERT members are encouraged to assist their neighbors and co-workers until professional responders

arrive, and they are encouraged to educate their communities on disaster-preparedness skills.

"I just wanted to be further involved in the community," said Spc. Jennifer Munn, a full-time Guardsman with the Brigade. A Vacaville resident, Munn hoped her CERT training would identify her as a resource in her community. "The people will come to me."

To further their involvement in the program, the Brigade's CERT members joined about 20 of their civilian colleagues to conduct a day of training during the unit's June drill weekend in Fairfield. Focusing on emergencies that might arise during a San Francisco Bay Area earthquake, civilians and Soldiers stood side by side while quenching fires, moving seemingly immovable objects (e.g., a soda vending machine) and triaging and treating role players' wounds.

Proficiency in these skills proves indispensable in a time of emergency, said CERT instructor James Holliday.

"If the professional resources are depleted, this becomes the front line," he said. "By training these individuals, we've added to that front line."

Holliday's military metaphors were not lost on Theresa Hamner, program administrator for the Fairfield CERT. She said the skills the program strives to instill in its civilian trainees are the same that permeate the Armed Forces, especially the community-based National Guard.

"I think the training and skills translate well (from the military to the CERT)," said Hamner, who retired from the Air Force as a senior NCO. "It's another way to network within our community. We're always focusing on disaster preparedness in the military."



Photo by Capt. Will Martin

Sgt. Wesley Adams, right, and Sgt. Daniel Greene of the Fairfield, Calif.-based 49th Military Police (MP) Brigade practice fire-suppression techniques June 1. The MPs were training with the Fairfield Fire Department through a partnership with the local Community Emergency Response Team, which is managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

MPs shift focus with Koga arrest training

By **SGT. 1ST CLASS JESSICA INIGO**
Los Angeles Regional Public Affairs

Ernest Hemmingway wrote, "We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master." This is true, even according to those whom others think are masters, especially when it comes to perishable skills.

Dozens of military policemen (MPs) and civilian police

officers, mainly from the Long Beach Police Department, joined together for arrest and control training at the Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, gym April 22-26. The course's instructor, Charles Watts of the Koga Institute, is a master of the craft who still calls himself a student.

A retired Pomona Police Department officer who served on the force for 30 years, Watts has been providing instruction on the Koga System in a train-the-trainer format for

11 years. The System was developed by Robert Koga, a retired Los Angeles Police Department officer, who offered the training to military members free of charge.

The field of arrest and control tactics includes approaching and contacting a suspect as well as searching and handcuffing. But it is not limited to those techniques. Koga students come to understand vicarious liability, control, escalation and de-escalation of force, the dangers of emotional response, and awareness — not only awareness of their surroundings, but of what they are doing and why.

"The arrest and control techniques they taught us enhanced the Army doctrine training taught to military policemen," said Staff Sgt. Bach Zavala, the Training Base's provost sergeant. "It's completely different and exposes a whole new side of everyday law enforcement, rather than combat-focused training that we get as MPs."

Sgt. Lance Fuller, the Training Base's Security Forces noncommissioned officer in charge, added that the Koga training was pivotal and timely because military policemen are shifting their focus from combat to garrison operations as overseas operations wind down.

"The instructors inspired me to change the way that we do things on base as far as apprehensions go and the way we approach people," he said.

Other Security Forces personnel in Los Alamitos had the opportunity to take Koga classes earlier in the year, including Sgt. 1st Class Wade Scott, who benefitted from a course in using a policeman's baton. "It took it to another level; it's very advanced, focused, but far more effective than anything I've been taught before," he said. "It's common sense-based — less risk to the user and effective."

Now with this instruction under their belts, these service members can embark on the long road of pursuing mastery and teaching it to others.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Inigo

Staff Sgt. Bach Zavala, provost sergeant for Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, right, practices a Koga arrest and control technique on Sgt. Lance Fuller, the Training Base's Security Forces noncommissioned officer in charge, under the instruction of officer Roger Trias of the Long Beach Police Department on April 23 in Los Alamitos.

Out and proud to serve

Staff Sgt. Dana Varab looks back on her early days in the National Guard, when she 'had to hide who I was'

By CAPT. SHANNON TERRY

Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Think about your Basic Training experience. You were likely proud, a little scared and excited all at the same time. Many adjectives might describe an average trainee, but "ashamed" is not usually one of them.

"I was ashamed that I didn't stick up for myself, and I sunk into a deep depression."

The year was 2001. A young lesbian Soldier, who had been comfortable and confident with her sexual orientation for years, was keeping a secret. Because of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, Dana Varab had decided not to expose her sexual orientation for fear of being discharged. She knew when she joined the Army that silence was in her future, and she gladly accepted that condition.

"I was out and proud [as a civilian]," said Varab, now a staff sergeant with the California Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion. "I knew when I joined that I would face a lot of internal challenges because I had to hide who I was."



For more photos, scan this QR code or visit Flickr.com

What Varab didn't expect was how quickly her secret would begin to eat away at her spirit. With gay jokes and slurs flooding her ears at Basic Training, Varab said, "I had to keep my opinions to myself and my mouth shut. I was screaming and yelling inside."

Afraid a gay witch hunt would ensue, Varab turned the other cheek rather than express her opinions about her fellow trainees' narrow-minded comments.

In an attempt to cope with her situation and rectify her internal conflict, Varab told another female trainee that she was lesbian. That person told their drill sergeant, who interrogated Varab based on a "perception" that she was gay. Then Varab's belongings were searched for "evidence."

"Everything that I had worked so hard to



Photo by Capt. Will Martin

accomplish — the long exhausting days and physical pain of training — were in jeopardy," Varab said.

She denied the accusation, knowing her dreams of becoming a Soldier and serving her country were in question.

"Knowing there was nothing wrong with being gay and that I was just as good as any other Soldier, I told myself that I would not allow this type of mentality to affect my decision to join and serve in hope that one day that policy would change," she said.

That policy did change. In 2011 the Department of Defense (DoD) repealed "don't ask, don't tell." Now all branches of the military are inclusive to members of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) community.

The California Guard has been welcoming LGB Soldiers and Airmen since the repeal and is taking strides to ensure the organi-

zation reflects the diversity of the state in which its members live and serve. These efforts include CNG recruiters actively engaging members of the gay community and reaching out to potential recruits at Pride events throughout the state.

"We strive for our organization, which serves the people of California, to be the people of California," said Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark Jr., the senior enlisted member in the CNG. "The California National Guard is thankful that DoD policies have changed to allow us to actively recruit and retain in this community."

Col. Laura Yeager, chief of staff for the California Military Department, added that each new member brings unique skills and experiences to their service.

"We are a community-based organization, and in order to understand our operating environment and earn the trust of our citizens, it is critical for our membership to mirror our [state's] demographics," she said.

California is renowned for its history of embracing the gay community, so it comes as little surprise that the CNG would seek the contributions of gay service members.

"The nation as a whole is moving rapidly toward inclusiveness of LGB people, but California has been at the forefront of gay and lesbian rights for decades," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mario Garcia, a longtime Guardsman and a member of the LGB community.

Command Sgt. Maj. (CA) Michael Winstead of the Joint Staff agreed, saying Californians have grappled with the issue of equality for the gay community longer than people in other states. "Many people would argue that the fight for LGB rights originated in California, and for this reason our Soldiers have less to grapple with," he said. "This generation has accepted that all Californians should be given equal treatment."

As a values-based force, membership in the CNG is coupled with the expectation that members will treat one another with dignity and respect.

"We are all Soldiers and should be treated [appropriately], with no concern of race, religion or sexual orientation," said Sgt. Maj. Sean Robinson, operations sergeant major for the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. "We are all brothers- and sisters-in-arms and depend on each other every day, in war and at peace."

Current and prospective members should know that harassment and discrimination are not tolerated, Yeager added.

"While we don't have full control over every member of the Military Department, we absolutely will not tolerate harassment in any form and will take swift corrective action," she said.

Above all, candidates should know the California Guard is a performance-based force in which sexual orientation is immaterial to one's ability to serve and excel, she said.

"Lifestyle does nothing to either enhance or take away from your ability to Soldier," Winstead said. "A good Soldier is a good Soldier."

For Garcia, the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" allowed him to "join the conversation." During his first 29 years of Guard service, Garcia wasn't always able to include his loved ones at "family day" events or discuss his vacations at work.

"It's not that I wanted everyone to know I was gay for some political statement," he said. "I just wanted to join the conversation at work and drill like everyone else."

"Today I don't have to worry about that anymore," he said. "My co-workers, my bosses, my subordinates all know me and they support me completely. ... We are one big extended family."



Photo by Capt. Will Martin

TOP: Staff Sgt. Dana Varab waves to the crowd June 9 during the Los Angeles Pride Parade. **ABOVE:** Speaker of the State Assembly John A. Pérez speaks about the Cal Guard's commitment to diversity while sharing a vehicle with Cal Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin at the Pride Parade.

CNG launches outreach and diversity campaign at Pride events

Initiative includes joint Army and Air Guard recruiting, advertising in publications for the gay community, expansion of Military Department diversity programs and updates to command policies

By **CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 MARIO GARCIA**
CNG Network Operations and Security Center

For the first time, the California National Guard is actively recruiting gay, lesbian and bisexual (LGB) residents to join its ranks, with Army and Air Guard recruiters planning to engage attendees at thirteen Pride events this summer.

The first such event attended by California National Guard recruiters was the Pride festival June 7-9 in Los Angeles, where CNG Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin and State Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez showed their support for gay service members and rode in a military vehicle together in the June 9 parade.

LA Pride also marked the first time California Army and Air Guard recruiting teams joined forces in their efforts, simultaneously manning recruiting booths so attendees could speak with members of both components. Other recruiting efforts planned for this summer include Pride events in Oakland, Oceanside, Orange County, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose and San Luis Obispo.

Recruiting at Pride events is just one part of an outreach and diversity campaign spearheaded by Brig. Gen. Matthew Beevers, assistant adjutant general for the California National Guard. The Guard also is planning to advertise in publications that focus on the gay community, expand CNG diversity programs to include gay military and civilian personnel; update command policies; and take other steps to increase awareness that the CNG is welcoming — and seeking — members of the gay community to join its ranks.

Department of Defense regulations do not permit transgender individuals to join the Armed Forces, but the Cali-



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Inigo

“Patriotic and talented Soldiers and Airmen were forced out of military service over those many years due to their sexual orientation. This effort to recruit from the [lesbian, gay and bisexual] community will not necessarily correct past discrimination, but it will make our organization even richer in diversity and better able to meet the challenges of the future.”

– **Col. Laura Yeager**
Chief of Staff
California Military Department

fornia State Military Reserve (CSMR) does accept transgender service members.

Col. Laura Yeager, chief of staff for the California Military Department, which comprises the California National Guard and the CSMR, serves as chair of the Department’s Outreach Working Group. The Working Group includes senior leaders from the Military Department’s Command Section, Equal Opportunity Office and State Policy Office; Army and Air Guard headquarters; the Army and Air Guard recruiting commands; the CSMR; and several gay and lesbian California National Guard and CSMR members.

“I entered the service prior to implementation of ‘don’t ask, don’t tell,’ so at the time it was instituted, it was a step forward,” Yeager said. “When I met, fell in love and married my husband, no one judged my choice. I felt at the time it was extraordinarily unjust that others did not have that same freedom.”

“Patriotic and talented Soldiers and Airmen were forced out of military service over those many years due to their sexual orientation,” she continued. “This effort to recruit from the LGB community will not necessarily correct past discrimination, but it will make our organization even richer in diversity and better able to meet the challenges of the future.”

More than 13,000 military members nationwide were dis-



Photo by Capt. Shannon Terry

TOP: Members of the California Guard observe a moment of silence for casualties of the AIDS epidemic and homophobic violence as well as for service members who have deployed and made the ultimate sacrifice June 9 during the Los Angeles Pride Parade. **ABOVE:** Staff Sgt. Michelle Wilson of the California Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion discusses Guard service with festivalgoers June 15 at the Sacramento Pride event. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Recruiter Master Sgt. Albert Castinado speaks with Sacramento Pride attendees.

charged because of their sexual orientation during the 17 years “don’t ask, don’t tell” was in place. Those individuals possess a wealth of institutional knowledge the Cal Guard hopes to capitalize on by bringing those members into its ranks.

Word of the California National Guard’s recruiting efforts has garnered positive attention from organizations that support the gay community, including OutServe–Service Members Legal Defense Network, a nonprofit that serves gay military personnel and veterans.

“We are thrilled to see the California National Guard recognizing the value that gay and lesbian service members bring to the military,” said Zeke Stokes, director of external engagement for OutServe. “We are proud to work with the Guard to help foster a climate of inclusion that honors the service and sacrifice of all service members, veterans and their families this Pride season.”



Photo by Capt. Shannon Terry



RIGHT: Soldiers from the Vallejo Calif.-based 349th Quartermaster Company transport a simulated casualty June 14 during a Combat Lifesaver exercise with the California Army National Guard training element Task Force Warrior. The 349th trained with TF Warrior on Camp Roberts, Calif., in preparation for a July deployment to Afghanistan.

Photo by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

TOP RIGHT: Pararescuemen from the 129th Rescue Wing perform static-line jumps June 2 over the Wing's base at Moffett Federal Airfield, Calif. **Photo by Staff Sgt. Kim Ramirez**

TOP LEFT: Two 129th pararescuemen work on a patient with simulated injuries on an MC-130P Combat Shadow plane over the Grand Bara Desert in Djibouti during a Feb. 20 combat search-and-rescue exercise. **Photo by Airman 1st Class Nicholas Byers**

ABOVE: Pararescuemen from the 129th walk to a Combat Shadow with patient role players Feb. 20 in the Grand Bara Desert. **Photo by Airman 1st Class Nicholas Byers**

At a Glance



LEFT: Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment, fire a parachute flare during a nighttime live-fire exercise at Camp Roberts, Calif., in May. **Photo by 2nd Lt. Mark Phelan** **CENTER:** Campers and volunteers gather June 18 after completing a five-day Leadership Camp for 13- to 18-year-olds on Cal Guard training installation Camp San Luis Obispo. The event, which included a high ropes course, a confidence course and leadership skills exercises, attracted 76 teens who are Cal Guard family members or were sponsored by a Guard member. **Photo by 144th Fighter Wing Family Readiness Group** **TOP LEFT:** Efren Moises Duenas, 7, salutes after winning 1st place in the Essay Recitation portion of the Compton Unified School District's Patriotic Oratorical on May 31 at Enterprise Middle School. The theme for the event was "Our Country, Our Future, Our Choice," and Duenas recited the Soldier's Creed in honor of his father, Staff Sgt. Moises Duenas, and his fellow Soldiers in the Cal Guard's 40th Brigade Support Battalion, outshining the School District's other 2nd and 3rd graders. **Photo courtesy of the Duenas family** **TOP RIGHT AND ABOVE:** Members of the California National Guard Honor Guard present the colors (top) during the 46th annual Memorial Day Tribute at Mount Vernon Memorial Park in Fair Oaks, Calif., and stand at attention in front of The Moving Wall, a traveling half-size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, at Mount Vernon. **Photos by Master Sgt. David Loeffler**

Preventing suicide one 'friend' at a time

Staff Sgt. Daniel Caddy's humor page on Facebook spawned a suicide prevention nonprofit for veterans

By **1ST LT. JASON SWEENEY**
California Military Department Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Daniel Caddy is assisting in the fight against suicide on his own time and in a unique and personal way.

Caddy, a platoon sergeant with the Petaluma, Calif.-based 235th Engineer Company, is founder and president of Battle in Distress, a nonprofit that works to pair emotionally distressed veterans and service members with battle buddies who can provide support through hard times.



Staff Sgt. Daniel Caddy

"When we say you're in 'distress,' we mean you're being overrun. Life is throwing more things at you than you can handle on your own," Caddy said. "What do you do when you're being overrun? You call for support. And who comes running? It's your fellow troops."

Army suicides are at an all-time high. In 2012 there were 296 confirmed suicides among active duty, National Guard and Reserve Soldiers, with 28 possible suicides still being investigated. The Department of Defense has provided resources and training to address the issue, but a solution to the high suicide rate remains elusive.

In October 2012, Caddy saw firsthand that social media can be used as a tool in the fight against suicide. That August, Caddy had established a humor-focused Facebook page called "Awesome S--- My Drill Sergeant Said." The edgy and often profane page quickly attracted a following, with several drill instructors serving as page administrators. Within two months, the page

had collected more than 70,000 "likes" from users who followed the page.

Then one night in October, Caddy checked Facebook before going to bed and saw a disturbing message. A follower of his page had posted that his battle buddy was planning to kill himself. The suicidal Soldier had texted and posted his intent on Facebook, but his friend couldn't get a hold of anyone in the distressed troop's vicinity to help. An online conversation ensued as users attempted to locate people in the area who could get to the Soldier in time.

"The brotherhood, the bond, the 'Never leave a fallen comrade' mentality kicked in," Caddy said.

The conversation stretched to more than 1,000 comments as military members and civilians tried to find a way to save the endangered Soldier. Eventually, Caddy managed to track down a phone number for the Soldier's executive officer in Tennessee, who got a hold of the Soldier's company commander. The commander then showed up at the Soldier's door in time to avert a potential suicide.

"He's safe," the commander posted to Caddy's Facebook page. "We got him. Thanks for your help."

"It was a revolutionary use of social media to crowd source and provide a complete response from the military and civilian community toward a common goal," Caddy said.

The experience showed Caddy how social media could be used to intervene before a suicide occurs. There are numerous resources available to veterans and military members who are contemplating suicide, he said, but the distressed individual often doesn't know where to begin.

"The onus is on the person who needs

the help, but there's no clear start point," Caddy said. "They run up against cultural barriers and organizational barriers. That's where we come in. We give them that immediate peer-based support."

In January he took Battle in Distress live and launched www.battleindistress.org. The nonprofit is run by a five-person board and is funded by donations. Thousands of people around the country have volunteered to serve as battle buddies.

After a distressed Soldier makes contact through the Battle in Distress Facebook page, a three-tier system is employed, Caddy explained. The first tier involves a "battle captain" taking information from the distressed individual and matching it with local volunteers in the nonprofit's database who have similar backgrounds. A volunteer then makes contact with the individual and assesses the situation.

In the second tier, the organization provides the individual with guidance and assistance specific to their needs. For the third tier, the individual is directed toward

available resources such as therapy or other services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The individual is also connected with a support group of volunteers. The Battle in Distress team then follows up to ensure help is being provided.

"You start talking to people at the end of their rope," said Reed Pacheco, a former Soldier who was one of the organization's initial volunteers and serves as its director of operations. "Then you start swapping stories. There's nothing better than hearing them laugh and talk like you've been friends for 10 years. It rekindles that brotherhood that people don't feel when they get out of the service or change duty stations."

Pacheco said most military members and veterans come to Battle in Distress just to vent and know they're not alone. The organization has helped more the 300 people since January, 80 of whom sought help during an active suicidal crisis, he said.

"We are able to ... bridge that gap that our brothers and sisters are falling into fatally hard," Caddy said.



Staff Sgt. Daniel Caddy of the 235th Engineer Company, right, participates in a Combat Lifesaver exercise at Camp Roberts, Calif., on July 9, 2012. Caddy has since established a nonprofit that helps veterans and service members find "battle buddies" to help them through hard times.

Photo by Pfc. Branne M. Roudelush

Junior cadets gain military skills at Camp Honor

By **1ST LT. KARA SIEPMANN**
Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug

With faces in the dirt, the hot April sun beating down and not one game console in sight, 65 Manteca, Calif.-area high school students endured a weeklong dose of military training after leaving the comforts of home behind.



Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets from Manteca, Calif., navigate a Leadership Reaction Course during an April training event in Dublin, Calif.

Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) cadets from East Union and Lathrop high schools in Manteca participated in Camp Honor, an annual event for cadets at Camp Parks Reserve Forces Training Area in Dublin, Calif. Events included physical training (PT), first aid tasks, an obstacle course, rappelling and navigating a Leadership Reaction Course.

"I love PT in the morning," said cadet Justin Bygum, the student first sergeant at East Union High. "I want to be in the Navy when I graduate high school, and this is getting me used to how it will be."

Each event taught the cadets about teamwork and individual resiliency.

"I'm learning about being a good team member and looking out for each other," said cadet Johanna Natocea, a 14-year-old student from Lathrop High.

Members of the Cal Guard's Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug, who trained and mentored the cadets during the April 24-28 camp, said the week was enjoyable and fulfilling.

"Providing a positive and lasting impression on our youth

is one of the many benefits of being a Counterdrug service member," Staff Sgt. Mark Karandang said.

Karandang demonstrated proper litter-carrying and movement techniques for the cadets to practice. When cadets performed the tasks improperly, Karandang and his fellow Counterdrug instructors didn't hesitate to correct the cadets in traditional Army fashion — with push-ups, followed by a refresher on the proper technique.

The cadets appeared to enjoy the physical challenge and embraced the fast-paced, intense tone of the camp.

"In addition to the physical activities, cadets were mentored about Army values," a Counterdrug Soldier said.

The ultimate goal was to support the motto of the Army JROTC: To Motivate Young People to be Better Citizens. But the California National Guard may ultimately benefit from participating in the camp.

"The 27 cadets we took to Camp Honor came back to school and their homes, and they still talk about the training," said Karl Knutsen, an instructor at East Union High School. "Some have decided to join up in the military for their future."

‘Shoulder to shoulder’ in the Philippines

Training event Balikatan brings U.S. and Filipino Soldiers together for military training, humanitarian outreach and relationship building

By **SPC. BRANDON BATCHELOR**
79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

American and Filipino Soldiers sprint to a UH-1 “Huey” helicopter, ducking to avoid the whirling rotors, which create a violent wind all around them. The Filipino Soldiers load up and buckle in, many for the first helicopter ride of their lives.

“It’s definitely exhilarating,” said Sgt. Scott Peterson of the Cal Guard’s 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, who was an instructor for the air insertion training. “You load up and you’re a little nervous because you hear that rotor wash going, but once you actually get on the bird and you feel that power take off and just lift you off the ground ... it absolutely feels amazing.”



For video of Balikatan, scan this QR code or visit YouTube

Peterson deployed to the Philippines in April for Balikatan, an annual joint exercise between the U.S. and Filipino militaries. Balikatan means “shoulder-to-shoulder” in Tagalog, and it expresses the nature of the exercise, which partners U.S. and Filipino service members from all branches of the military and the U.S. State Department. The 1-184th sent about 175 Soldiers to the Philippines for the April 5-17 exercise, where they were the main U.S. Army force.

“This is a joint exercise to gain and develop skills and tactics, share languages and enhance the camaraderie of all the troops,” said Sgt. Jojo Acuna of the Philippine Army.

Acuna is a squad leader who participated in and led his Soldiers through the air insertion training. For each company of Filipino Soldiers, the air insertion exercise involved a full day of training on helicopter mock-ups, which led up to a real flight that delivered them to a live-fire range for a squad attack.

“The U.S. and the Philippine Army are sharing knowledge,” said Pfc. John Sanchez, a squad automatic weapon (SAW) gunner for the Philippine Army. “It’s really a great opportunity and a privilege for me to work with U.S. Soldiers and for them to impart their knowledge.”



Combat drills and jungle survival training are integral parts of preparing Filipino Soldiers for any contingency. They must learn to deal with humid weather and thick jungle conditions.

“I’ve learned a lot, especially about operating a SAW,” Sanchez said. “I had a malfunction in my SAW and I applied what Sgt. Noger had just taught us about the SAW malfunctioning.”

Combat exercises are not the whole story of Balikatan; there is a strong community outreach aspect as well. Soldiers from the Philippine and U.S. armies worked hard together shoveling gravel and pouring concrete by a village church near Fort Magsaysay. Surrounded by green rice paddies interspersed with groups of trees and small farm buildings as far as the eye could see, the Soldiers created a solar dryer, which is “pretty much a concrete pad,” according to Sgt. 1st Class Minh Bosque of the U.S. Army’s 130th Engineer Brigade.

“Currently most of the farmers are using the roads in drying their rice grain,” said Sgt. Reymuno Bathang Jr. of the Philippine Army. “So the importance of this is to provide an area for the farmers to quickly dry their rice grain.”

“They want to use the solar dryer to expand their economy,” Bosque added. “This is important because as an engineer, I believe that our job is to help people.”

Though training is a serious matter, another important aspect of Balikatan is for the American and Filipino Soldiers to bond. One of the ways they built camaraderie was by playing basketball, a popular sport in both countries.

“No matter where you’re from or how you grew up, basketball is basketball,” Pfc. Keith Hudson of the 1-184th said. “It’s fun and it’s easy to get together and enjoy it with other people.”

Soldiers and local residents gathered at a court near Liwayway late in Balikatan to watch four teams of U.S. and Filipino Soldiers square off. “It’s not important who wins,” Capt. Ariel Lobusta of the Philippine Army said. “What’s important is we play our best and everybody’s happy.”



Photos by Capt. Cody Gallo

TOP: Members of the Cal Guard’s 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team compete in a friendly basketball tournament April 11 with Soldiers from the Philippine Army in Liwayway, Philippines. ABOVE: Sgt. Scott Peterson of the 79th IBCT instructs members of the Philippine Army during April helicopter training at Fort Magsaysay, Philippines.

40th ID plans for Cobra Gold



Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. John McBrearty

Soldiers with the CNG’s 40th Infantry Division Plans Section joined service members from seven other nations in Thailand to plan for the 2014 Cobra Gold field and command post exercises in February.

By **LT. COL. JOHN MCBREARTY**
40th Infantry Division

Soldiers from the Cal Guard’s 40th Infantry Division participated in this year’s Cobra Gold exercise Feb. 11-22 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Cobra Gold includes participants from eight nations and is U.S. Pacific Command’s largest and longest-running military exercise in the Asia-Pacific Region.

A regularly scheduled joint exercise, Cobra Gold is designed to promote peace in the region and strengthen the Royal Thai Armed Forces’ ability to defend Thailand and respond to regional contingencies. In addition to the U.S. and Thailand, Cobra Gold includes military elements from Australia, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea.

Cobra Gold is one of several training events the U.S. conducts with Thailand each year. U.S. Marine Forces Pacific plays a primary role in organizing and planning Cobra Gold, which also includes U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force units.

From a land forces perspective, Cobra Gold consists of three major lines of effort: a live field training exercise, conducted at the battalion level and below, at various sites in Thailand; a command post exercise executed at the division, corps and joint task force levels; and a humanitarian civil assistance effort aimed at improving the civilian infrastructure in Thailand.

Cobra Gold is conducted in two-year cycles, with the odd-numbered years slated for planning the field training and command post exercises, which take place in even-numbered years.

In February of this year, the 40th Infantry Division Plans Section deployed 19 Soldiers to fulfill combined army forces planning requirements. The 40th ID contingent worked with planners from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand to complete the military decision making process for next year’s exercises, resulting in a sound operations order and concept of operations for Cobra Gold 14.

“I will never forget the relationships we developed with the wonderful people of the Republic of Thailand,” 40th ID planner Staff Sgt. Linda Kaing said.

Guardsmen: We are 'Austrian tough'

By **1ST LT. JASON SWEENEY**
California Military Department Public Affairs

There's tough, and there's Austrian tough.

That was the running joke over three days in June when 27 National Guardsmen earned Austrian and German armed forces proficiency badges. First Sergeant Mark McNabb from the Hayward, Calif.-based 95th Civil Support Team (CST) had asked Austrian Army Sgt. Mahir Subasic if he thought a 14-kilometer trek the Guardsmen and European Soldiers planned to make up Mount Diablo in Contra Costa County while carrying a 40-pound pack was tough.

"It's tough," Subasic replied. "But not Austrian tough."

Austrians are widely regarded as some of the best mountaineers in the world. As proof of their mountaineering skills, expert Austrian climbers used to pin Edelweiss flowers to their clothes, because the flower grows above 6,000 feet in hard-to-reach, rocky terrain. In 1907, the Austro-Hungarian military therefore created the Edelweiss Badge to award to its accomplished mountain troops.

In June, for the first time in California, National Guardsmen had an opportunity to earn the Badge, thanks to Subasic, who flew from Austria to provide the training and validation. It was a rare opportunity, since Austria is not a member of NATO. Subasic flew over on his own dime with five members of the German Army and Navy, who were invited by McNabb to conduct German Armed Forces Proficiency Training with California, Arizona and



Photo by 1st Lt. Jason Sweeney

Spc. Kristopher Chelini of the CNG's 95th Civil Support Team, left, and Capt. Mathew Benasuly of the Georgia National Guard trek up Mount Diablo in Northern California with Austrian and German service members on a June 12 hike that would earn them the Austrian Edelweiss Badge.

Georgia National Guard troops.

"It was an opportunity to build camaraderie with each other and test ourselves not only with the Army standards but to see how we are with Austrian and German standards," McNabb said. "As the Austrian said, it was Austrian tough."

The training entailed various events conducted June 10-12 in Hayward and at Camp Roberts and Camp San Luis Obispo. At Chabot College in Hayward, participants qualified in a 100-meter sprint, 1.85-mile run, long jump, 200-meter swim and shot put.

Then they conducted marksmanship training on the M-9 pistol, M-4 rifle and M-240 machine gun at Camp Roberts. Following

the marksmanship training, the Soldiers moved to Camp San Luis Obispo, where they ran an obstacle course.

The culminating event was the 14-kilometer Edelweiss Badge climb up Mount Diablo's North Peak and the Mount Olympia sub-peak while carrying a 40-pound pack and rifle. The Soldiers sprinted the last 100 yards of the trek to cheers and encouragement from fellow service members as well as civilian hikers and horseback riders.

The first Soldier to complete the climb was Sgt. Thomas Emery from Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), Maneuver Training Center, Camp Roberts.

"It's a different experience working with the Germans and Austrians," he said. "It

was cool to see the way they do things."

Subasic said the Edelweiss Badge earned by the Guardsmen is a sign that they have mastered a tough environment.

"We've done the training to give a glimpse of what combat is like in a mountain environment," he said.

In addition the Soldiers earned the Austrian Sports Badge, European Police Proficiency Badge, German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge, German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge-Reserve, German Olympic Sports Federation/German Sports Badge and the Marksmanship Badge of the German Bundeswehr.

The California National Guard Soldiers who participated were members of the 95th CST; HHC, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment; HHC, Maneuver Training Center, Camp Roberts; HHC, 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment; and the CNG Army Personnel and Army Operations headquarters. Arizona National Guardsmen from the 91st CST also completed the training and earned the Edelweiss Badge.

German Army Reserve 1st Lt. Oliver Oswald played a central role in organizing the training. He had worked with the National Guard while deployed to Afghanistan and had met McNabb through a personal friend during the deployment. Oswald said the training was a great way to build camaraderie and personal ties between the two NATO nations, as well as with the Austrian military.

"It's been a lot of fun," he said. "We've made a lot of friends."

746th transportation mission a 'win-win' for CNG

By **1ST LT. CHRISTOPHER WALL**
746th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

The California Army National Guard's 746th Combat Sustainment Support Bat-

talion (CSSB) takes to heart the time-worn phrase, "You call, we haul."

On April 23, in the midst of a period of necessary fiscal restraint and a need for maxi-

mum utilization of Guard resources, the 746th CSSB and its subordinate transportation companies began transporting excess property from units throughout Southern California to the U.S. Property and Fiscal Office at Camp San Luis Obispo in California's Central Coast region. The CSSB had been designated the Southern California Property Transportation Team, responsible for transporting the region's excess equipment.

Using traditional, part-time Guardsmen in transportation companies to perform the Southern California Property Transportation Team mission is a win-win situation, said Lt. Col. Ted Arlauskas, commander of the 746 CSSB.

"We are saving the California Army National Guard thousands of dollars by using [traditional training funds] to fund the missions," he said. "Plus our Soldiers and units gain valuable training experience conducting real-world missions similar to those we'd conduct in a civil emergency or while deployed overseas."

The 746th CSSB comprises the Van Nuys-based Headquarters Company and three transportation companies — the 1072nd Transportation Company in Fresno, the 1114th TC in Bakersfield and the 756th TC in Lancaster, as well as the 756th's detach-

ment in Van Nuys. These units possess a great depth of expertise and experience, including deployments to Afghanistan in 2011 for the 756th and 2012 for the 1072nd. Those deployments required the units to run convoys covering thousands of miles in hostile territory.

Though nothing compared to those Afghanistan tours, the Southern California Property Transportation Team mission has proven to be unpredictable and action-packed. On May 8, for instance, 1114th Transportation Company personnel witnessed a civilian vehicle roll-over in front of their convoy.

The 1114th convoy stopped immediately, and its Soldiers cordoned off the accident site and assisted the injured until California Highway Patrol and medical personnel arrived. After about 30 minutes of adrenaline-fueled action, the 1114th resumed its mission and headed to Camp San Luis Obispo.

As of the end of May, the 746th CSSB had completed seven transportation missions that moved a total of more than \$1 million worth of equipment for six Southern California units. The Battalion has already planned nine more Southern California Property Transportation Team missions for the coming months.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Paz Assan

Members of the 1114th Transportation Company assist the driver and passenger of a vehicle that rolled over in front of an 1114th convoy May 8 on Highway 101 near San Luis Obispo, Calif. The Soldiers cordoned off the accident site and assisted the injured until California Highway Patrol and medical personnel arrived.

146th trains with active duty AF, Army Reservists

By SENIOR AIRMAN
NICHOLAS CARZIS
146th Airlift Wing

The crickets next to a dirt landing strip go silent under twinkling stars as a distant noise becomes a roar, growing louder and louder. The sound continues to come closer, and suddenly the intensity of knowing something very big is on its way descends upon the landing strip. The engines of a C-17 Globemaster airplane scream as it touches down and lumbers down the gravel runway, leaving a huge cloud of dust in its wake.

Taking into consideration the size and speed of the aircraft, the 146th Airlift Wing Airlift Control Flight (ALCF) of the California Air National Guard had prepared the runway using laser range finders and infrared markers placed in specific areas of the landing zone known as "the box."

"The crew is basing where to land the aircraft on where we set up the infrared lights at the approach end and the one flashing infrared light at the departure end," said Lt. Col. Samuel Svitenko, commander of the 146th ALCF. "They have no ambient light; the night vision goggles and our lights are all they are using."

Night operations bring perspective to the risks and dangers of landing an aircraft in complete darkness, but it is a key tactic in military operations.

"In a sense, when ALCF is sent out, there isn't any infrastructure there," Svitenko said. "The air crew are relying heavily on ALCF guidance and their equipment to land the plane safely in complete darkness."

The air crew in this case was a group of active duty Airmen from Travis Air Force Base, Calif., who required training on night landings using night vision goggles and infrared lighting. Their training needs matched up perfectly with those of the ALCF and of the Army Reserve's 801st Combat Support Hospital, which required training in preparing and moving personnel onto large aircraft such as the C-17.

The three units came together March 18-21 at Fort Hunter-Liggett, Calif., to accomplish all their training objectives in one four-day exercise. The training included landing aircraft in pitch black darkness, guided by the 146th ALCF Airmen on the ground, who were running command and control of all the airlift operations at the simulated deployed location.

When performing engine-running onload/offload, or ERO, the ALCF personnel were responsible for creating a safe and realistic training environment for all involved.

Transferring personnel on board while the aircraft's engines are running is something that happens frequently in real-world deployed locations. Recreating a similar environment while maintaining safety around the aircraft provided valuable experience for the 801st Combat Support Hospital personnel, who need to be able to perform ERO in a real-world situation.

In addition to 146th ALCF personnel, Tech. Sgt. Angel De la Cruz of the 146th Airlift Wing Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron participated in the March exercise at Fort Hunter-Liggett, providing valuable training and perspective for the Army medical technicians. De la Cruz explained to the



ABOVE: Members of the 146th Airlift Wing Airlift Control Flight watch a C-17 Globemaster land on a runway prepared by the Control Flight on Fort Hunter-Liggett, Calif., during a joint exercise March 18-21. The Globemaster was piloted by active duty Airmen from Travis Air Force Base, Calif., and was used by members of the Army Reserve's 801st Combat Support Hospital to train on how to prepare and move personnel. LEFT: Airman 1st Class Brittany Collins of the Airlift Control Flight completes paperwork during the joint exercise in March.



Soldiers his role as a member of the Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and shared lessons he'd learned on previous missions, which helped the troops understand what needs to happen when a patient is transferred onto a plane and what will happen once the patient is on board.

Participants from all three components said the exercise accomplished their training needs. They added that it also created a sense of camaraderie that is only found within tight-knit groups and is a crucial ingredient for success in the real-world scenarios that await them in the future.

'Winning means survival' for 146th SFS troops

By SENIOR AIRMAN NICHOLAS CARZIS
146th Airlift Wing

Members of the 146th Airlift Wing Security Forces Squadron (SFS) participated in a four-hour war skills training course May 6. Led by instructor Sgt. (CA) Mike DeLio and his trainers from Combative Fighting Arts, a company that specializes in teaching tactical hand-to-hand combat, the SFS personnel learned combative techniques that could help them survive life-or-death close combat scenarios.

"The bumps and bruises that we heal today help us grow stronger for the battles tomorrow," DeLio said as the trainees listened excitedly in a circle around him.

DeLio, who is a sergeant in the California State Military Reserve, began the course by demonstrating combatives



techniques, then the SFS Airmen mirrored his moves. Each participant practiced with a rubber-covered knife, and DeLio explained in detail exactly what each technique is used for while demonstrating the movements.

The hands-on training changed from demonstration to execution as groups were split into two-person teams. DeLio blew a whistle and the maintenance hangar erupted into close-quarter combat. Every participant had eyes on their attacker, exchanging blows with the practice knives.

In the midst of the noise and training, a knife was dropped, just as it might in the chaos of combat. DeLio then blew the whistle again — this time it was a signal that someone must pay for losing their weapon. The individual at fault dropped to push-up position and started exercising. Then the other participants attacked the individual with their practice knives. DeLio reminded all participants that these consequences merely represented the possibly fatal consequences of dropping one's weapon during combat.

The training continued with blocking, paring, trapping, stabbing, thrusting, slashing, footwork and countering techniques, all covered in detail. As step-by-step exercises detailing the various techniques continued, the participants executed the techniques with practical and reality-based methods, enabling them to get the feel of an actual knife-fight attack and the measures needed to win.

"Winning means survival. The bottom line is to protect our freedom, our nation, our communities from these bad guys that want to see us fall," said SFS Chief Master Sgt. Steve Timbol. "I agree with Mike's mindset. ... At the end of the day, get home to your loved ones, no matter what it takes."



ABOVE: Senior Airman Erik Castillo strikes Senior Airman Justin Cookson with a training knife during a four-hour war skills training exercise for the 146th Airlift Wing Security Forces Squadron on May 6 at Port Hueneme, Calif. LEFT: Senior Airman Guillermo Cazares pins Staff Sgt. Jeremy May during the Security Forces training. The students' shirts show the locations of vital organs, and their rubber-covered knives leave red dye where they hit.

CNG officer Capitol-izes on jobs program

Maj. Angelica Christensen lands job with State Sen. Lou Correa through CNG's Work for Warriors initiative

By **1ST LT. JASON SWEENEY**
California Military Department Public Affairs

State Sen. Lou Correa has shown his support for the California National Guard's Work for Warriors program both in spirit and in deed.

Not only does Correa support the jobs program in the State Assembly, he used the program to hire a Guard member to work in his own office.

In April, California National Guard Director of State Policy Lt. Col. Darrin Bender and Work for Warriors Program Manager Maj. Ty Shepard met with Correa to give him a rundown on the Work for Warriors program. After Correa heard the overview, he asked if Shepard could send him a candidate for a position he was trying to fill. Shepard knew the perfect candidate and forwarded him Maj. Angelica Christensen's resume.

Christensen drills once a month with the 40th Infantry Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company, serving as a plans and operations officer. As a West Point graduate, UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot and Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, Christensen was more than qualified. Af-

ter an interview, Correa's office offered her the job.

"I'm very pleased to have Angelica Christensen join our team," Correa said. "Our military veterans spend the most vital years of their lives protecting the rest of us so that we can raise our families in safety and advance our own careers. We have a moral obligation to return the favor and lend veterans a hand as they rejoin us in civilian life."

For Christensen, the job was a good fit. She had left the active-duty Army years ago and become a stay-at-home mom while drilling one weekend a month and two weeks a year as an "M-day" member of the National Guard. Now that her two children are a little older, she is ready to work full-time again.

The job in Correa's office is near Christensen's home in Orange County, and as a one-time political science major, she said it has re-sparked her interest in government and politics.

"It's my first civilian job since high school," she said. "I've only done Army [work] for the past 12 years. I feel like now I'm getting a true M-day experience. I know what the Soldiers are going through."

Christensen said working for a state senator will give her good work experience and plenty of networking opportunities. She added that she's grateful Work for Warriors got her foot in the door.

Work for Warriors got its start March 29, 2012, through the efforts of CNG Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin and Assembly Speaker John Perez. The Work for Warriors staff helps Soldiers and Airmen craft their resumes and prepare for job interviews. It also keeps them informed of job openings across the state and works with employers to match them with job candidates who fit their needs.

Since the Work for Warriors program launched, it has placed about 1,200 Guard members in jobs — everyone from young privates and airmen up to full-bird colonels.

"These employers just want good people," Shepard said. "We give them good leaders and good followers who have technical skills."

Shepard said Soldiers and Airmen are more effective Guardsmen if they have income and stability and are able to support themselves and their families.

"Getting California National Guardsmen employed is a readiness issue," he said. "It's important because Soldiers and Airmen who are employed are able to respond to state and federal disasters and the war on terrorism."

Christensen urged Guard members who are looking for work to get in touch with the Work for Warriors staff. "Go ahead and sign up because you never know what unique opportunity will become available to you," she said.



Web: www.calguard.ca.gov/WFW
Phone: 916-854-4426
Email: ng.ca.caarng.mbx.jobs@mail.mil (CNG)
or ng.ca.caarng.mbx.job-partners@mail.mil (employers)

Military Appeals Panel hears first oral arguments



Photo by Capt. Shannon Terry

California Military Appeals Panel Chief Justice David Minier, left, and Associate Justice Thomas Barth hear arguments June 2 in Sacramento.

By **CAPT. SHANNON TERRY**
California Military Department Public Affairs

If you find yourself convicted in a California National Guard court martial, rest assured you will have your right to an appeal.

On June 2, the California Military Appeals Panel (CMAP) convened at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento to provide a Soldier with the opportunity to have his arguments heard.

"This is the first time the CMAP has heard oral arguments," said Chief Justice David Minier, a retired California State Military Reserve colonel and retired Superior Court judge. "It is a very significant moment in the history of military justice in California."

The CMAP is a three-judge court that was established by a general order issued by Gov. Gray Davis in 2002, followed by an identical general order issued by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2007.

"The court issued one opinion — State v. Habberstad — in 2007 and was then inactive until 2010, when the current justices were appointed," said Maj. (CA) Nicklas Akers, clerk of the court. "There are currently two appeals pending."

The CMAP reviews all courts martial involving punitive discharges or dismissals, as well as cases in which the CMAP grants a petition for review.

"We hope this will show the troops that they have a full-blown military justice system whereby their rights are protected," Minier said.

3 CA employers among ESGR Freedom Award finalists

Three California employers have been recognized by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense (DoD) agency, for their exceptional support of reserve component employees. The Los Angeles Fire Department, C.W. Driver of Pasadena and Safeway of Pleasanton were named finalists for the 2013 Employer Support Freedom Award, which is the DoD's highest recognition for employers that support Guard and Reserve members.

A review board of military and civilian leaders selected 30 finalists from a pool of 2,899 nominations submitted by National Guard and Reserve members. The finalists distinguished themselves by implementing formal policies and informal initiatives that assist and encourage Guard and Reserve service.

Contractor C.W. Driver was nominated by

an employee who is a member of the Navy Reserve. The Sailor said C.W. Driver routinely sends letters and care packages to deployed employees, hosts send-off and welcome home parties, and supports spouses and families while a service member is deployed. C.W. Driver also stays in contact with its deployed employees, even arranging for an employee who was serving overseas to lead the Pledge of Allegiance via video conference during a company meeting. In addition C.W. Driver partners with the Department of Defense employment program Hero2Hired to encourage other local employers to hire National Guard and Reserve members.

A Navy Reserve Sailor also nominated the Los Angeles Fire Department, which has established a military liaison officer position to coordinate support for National Guard and Reserve employees and serve

as a constant point of contact for service members and their families. The Fire Department also provides preferential hiring for service members and allows them to take promotion exams while deployed. One deployed employee's spouse reported she received numerous phone calls from her husband's fire captain, who offered the Department's appreciation and support.

Safeway was praised by its nominator, also a Navy Reserve member, for creating an intensive management training program for National Guard and Reserve junior officers and noncommissioned officers. So far 81 National Guardsmen and Reservists have been promoted as a result of the program. Safeway also features its military employees on a "Wall of Honor" at the corporate office. The nominator said he would not have been able to serve his

country in the Navy Reserve without his employer's support.

"The 2013 Freedom Award finalists demonstrate the type of outstanding support our National Guard and Reserve service members count on when answering the nation's call to serve," said ESGR National Chair James G. Rebholz. "These employers recognize the valuable role they play in the lives of our citizen-warriors, and in supporting these men and women, the finalists have made a critical contribution to our national security."

A board of senior DoD officials, business leaders and prior Freedom Award winners will select 15 winners from the 30 finalists, which will be honored during a ceremony in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 26. Visit www.FreedomAward.mil for a full list of the finalists.

185th military police personnel share the pain

Less-lethal weapons training builds camaraderie while preparing MPs to use Taser, pepper spray

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

As every good Soldier and leader knows, any position of trust and authority comes with responsibility. The most demanding responsibility a typical Soldier may ever have is his or her weapon — to carry and handle it safely, and be prepared at any moment for the possibility of being called on to use it in a lawful, moral manner.

With this concept in mind, cadre from the CNG's 185th Military Police (MP) Battalion, 49th MP Brigade, located out of Pittsburg, Calif., conducted less-lethal weapons training June 11-16 during the Battalion's two-week annual training period at Camp Roberts, Calif. The MPs were taught how to employ the Taser X-26 electrical weapon and oleoresin capsi-cum, which is commonly known as pepper spray.

"We need to be familiar with the non-lethal weapons that we use in the National Guard," said Sgt. Brian O'Neil, a less-lethal weapons instructor who is a member of the 270th MP Company. "Any MP should be able to effectively employ the Taser or pepper spray."

After a period of classroom instruction, the MP Soldiers not only fired the Taser X-26 but were given the opportunity to be Tased themselves.

"This gives MPs an idea of how it feels to be Tased, which gives them credibility if they need to testify in court or their actions are questioned in the media," said Capt. Jason Carlisle, commander of the 649th MP Company.

Every Soldier attending the course went through a training scenario with the Taser, first running 100

meters then loading and firing the Taser into two test dummies.

"We try to make this as realistic and immersive as possible," O'Neil said. "People really get into these scenarios."

For the final and most difficult event of the training, each Soldier was sprayed directly in the face with pepper spray, then ran through an obstacle course demonstrating take-down techniques and various other combat skills, like being able to navigate doorways and visually follow a moving target.

"If you're pepper sprayed, you need to still be effective," O'Neil said.

Though pepper spray is not lethal, it is still a hazardous substance that requires careful safety considerations.

"We need to make sure we know about any pre-existing injuries or medical profiles or anything else that could be a hazard, like contact lenses," Carlisle said.

Training with the Taser and pepper spray taught the 185th MPs the weapons' capabilities as well as their limitations.

"A Taser isn't going to stop a charging assailant dead in his tracks," O'Neil said. "The laws of physics still apply."

The less-lethal weapons training also served as a valuable team-building exercise.

"Painful training causes great morale," Carlisle said. "I know that sounds strange, but by the end of the day, everybody is laughing about it and sharing videos. This really brings everyone together."



Photos by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer



ABOVE: Spc. Maraiiah Brys of the California Army National Guard's 185th Military Police (MP) Battalion, 49th MP Brigade, takes on an opponent as part of an obstacle course she was required to complete after being sprayed directly in the face with pepper spray during less-lethal weapons training on June 15 at Camp Roberts, Calif. **LEFT:** Members of the 185th MP Battalion, based in Pittsburg, get a shock from the Taser X-26 electrical weapon on June 15. Taser training is an annual requirement for all MP personnel; those who get shocked gain credibility in case they are later called to testify about the weapon's use.

270th MP Company medic stands out at AT

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

A platoon of 670th Military Police Company Soldiers are training in combat lanes on Camp Roberts, Calif., during a blistering heat wave as summer approaches. While training in full combat gear, and with the temperature in the high 90s, the Soldiers have been warned to be watchful of themselves and their peers for heat exhaustion.

One Soldier starts feeling dizzy, has difficulty walking and, most dangerously of all, stops sweating. An ever-vigilant medic notices the symptoms and pulls the Soldier aside. After a few brief questions, the medic takes the Soldier indoors and instructs her to drop her gear, sit down and sip water.

Later, after the 670th had completed its three-week annual training (AT) rotation at Camp Roberts, the training element Task Force Warrior recognized that medic, Spc. Emily Angel, for her hard work and dedication throughout the training cycle.

"Angel is very professional and dedicated," TF Warrior instructor Staff Sgt. Robert Pitts said in May at the end of the rotation. "She's very caring about her job. She really impressed the staff; she really impressed a lot of [the infantry] here."

Angel is a Japanese-Spanish Soldier who is a native of Stockton, Calif., and a member of the 270th MP Company, but she attached to the 670th for the training with TF Warrior. Throughout the rotation, she went above and beyond the duties expected of her, not only striving to take care of her own Soldiers, but constantly communicating with TF Warrior personnel to assist in coordinating training events.

"I love my job," Angel said. "I feel that to be a medic you have to be dedicated to the Soldiers, not focused on yourself, because when as a medic you're focused on yourself, you lose sight of what you're supposed to be doing."

Angel joined the California Guard because she was not satisfied with her direction in life, and because of her per-

sonal drive to make a difference.

"I was working a dead-end job; I felt that I didn't have a future," Angel said. "Ever since I was a child, this was something I wanted to do — to enlist."

Residing in El Dorado Hills, Calif., with her child, Angel works full-time with the California National Guard Incentives Task Force in Sacramento, a unit dedicated to assisting Guard Soldiers with their auditing needs and resources.

"[The Guard has] given me all my medical skills and taught me confidence, both as a Soldier and as a parent," she said, "confidence for my everyday life."

While the MP Soldiers trained with TF Warrior to learn how to take care of those in need, Angel worked to take care of the Soldiers themselves.

"It's not paperwork or pay you're worrying about," she said. "It's their well-being, their health, their lives."

Air, Army, CSMR

Three forces form one militia

By **BRANDON HONIG**

California Military Department Public Affairs

When Chief Master Sgt. Rick Nowaski was flying medical evacuation missions as wildfires scorched Northern California in August 2012, he knew he and his crew were not alone up there. They had the might of three military organizations behind them, working seamlessly as one.

"It's great to be out in the field and see our brothers and sisters from the Army Guard and [State Military Reserve] there to support us," said Nowaski, an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter flight engineer for the Air National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing. "We work so well together; it's definitely a case of the whole exceeding the sum of its parts."

Formed in 1849, the California National Guard comprises 16,500 Soldiers and 4,600 Airmen who are supported by the 1,300 members of the California State Military Reserve.

Both the California Army National Guard and Air National Guard bring water bucket-equipped helicopters and rescue helicopters to firefighting operations, and the Air Guard flies Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems-equipped cargo airplanes. Soldiers and Airmen may also use shovels, axes and bulldozers to build fire lines.

When activated for fire duty, many of those troops will be mobilized through a process run by the California State Military Reserve (CSMR), a volunteer force that receives no compensation for its monthly and annual training periods. CSMR troops also operate mobile satellite communications platforms during firefighting operations; coordinate logistics; provide chaplain, medical and legal services; and man key positions in the California Military Department Joint Staff and Joint Operations Center, among other duties.

"In fires or other disasters ... we watch and make sure our people at headquarters are apprised of what may be coming down the road," said Lt. Col. Steve Casagrande, a liaison officer for the CSMR who also volunteers his expertise as a dentist to the organization. "We're there to facilitate the assets of the Guard; we are eyes and ears of the Guard."

Casagrande joined the CSMR in January 2012 at the age of 62, fulfilling a lifelong goal to show his gratitude for the brave service members who have defended his country.

"Our Guard troops went to war and gave their lives and [endured irreversible wounds] in Afghanistan and Iraq.

What they have given of themselves has kept those places safe and kept the people of the U.S. safe," he said. "I'm too old to go fight. ... I feel grateful that I've been given the opportunity to come in at this stage of my life and be able to fulfill a duty — to be a part of something of this stature."

CNG Soldiers have deployed overseas nearly 25,000 times since the war on terrorism began in 2001, and CNG Airmen have deployed nearly 15,000 times. The Army Guard boasts highly trained aviation, infantry, military police and sustainment brigades, with a wide variety of specialized units. That formidable force is complemented by the Air Guard's skilled service members supporting fighter jet, rescue helicopter, unmanned reconnaissance plane, airlift and state-of-the-art communications operations.

"There's a lot of admiration and respect between the Army and Air Guard, based largely on the things each has done and sacrificed in hostile environments overseas, as well as during domestic disasters," said Maj. Peter Lewis, an officer in the Joint Force Headquarters Strategic Planning Directorate and an instructor at the Oakland Military Institute. "I'm a member of the Army, but I'm also a California National Guardsman, and that makes me equally proud."

Wildfires are a fact of life in California, but so are floods, earthquakes and the threat of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive (CBRNE) incident. The California Military Department has prepared for such an event by combining the capabilities of its components.

California is home to the Homeland Response Force (HRF) for Federal Emergency Management Agency Region IX, covering nearly 400,000 square miles of U.S. territory. The newly created team comprises both Soldiers and Airmen, as do the Cal Guard's CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) and its two civil support teams.

"The Homeland Response Force covers several states and territories. It is a huge responsibility, and it requires the best the Cal Guard has to offer, regardless of which component a service member is with," said Sgt. Maj. Ben Jandreau, the operations sergeant major for the 49th Military Police Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company, which is the HRF's headquarters unit.

Other opportunities for the state militia's components to work together include joint training, base security operations, the Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug and the Youth and Community Programs Task Force.



Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler

CSMR Staff Sgt. Jeremy Tilt said cadets quickly notice the difference in uniform between Army, Air and CSMR personnel at Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy, a live-in, military-style school that provides a second chance for high school dropouts and at-risk students. The youths, however, also see the three components work in tireless cooperation to fulfill their joint mission: to produce graduates who become successful adults.

"People here all speak the same language, whether they are Air, Army or CSMR," said the Sunburst case manager, who served 18 years in the active duty Army and Army National Guard before joining the CSMR. "It basically comes down to the person in the uniform and their willingness to represent themselves as a professional and an ambassador for who they work for."

Together the Military Department's three components form one militia protecting the citizens of California, improving their communities and supporting federal missions overseas.

"We're all Americans, and we're in this together, so we help one another however we can," said Capt. Marc Unger, a chaplain who joined the CSMR after his son, Cal Guard Soldier Spc. Daniel Unger, was killed in Iraq. "This is what the Guard is all about."

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Inigo



TOP RIGHT: Helicopters from the Air National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing and the Army Guard's 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, work together to douse the Ponderosa Fire near Redding, Calif., on Aug. 24, 2012. **RIGHT:** A 144th Fighter Wing Airman and a 49th Military Police Brigade Soldier carry a role player with a simulated injury Nov. 4, 2011, during the Vigilant Guard Exercise in Phoenix, which simulated a flood followed by a nuclear detonation. **ABOVE:** Members of the California State Military Reserve and the California Army National Guard jointly train for security forces operations June 16, 2012, on Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Sahr



A 129th Rescue Wing combat rescue officer conducts a preflight inspection of an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter May 25 at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan. Photo by Senior Airman Scott Saldukas

Affordable homes for veterans

Habitat for Humanity of the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys is building an 87-home community for veterans in Santa Clarita and a 12-home community for veterans in Sylmar in collaboration with the California Department of Veterans Affairs. The environmentally responsible, affordable homes are available to veterans, veterans' families and families of fallen veterans who have household incomes lower than \$83,650 a year. Minimum income requirements also apply.

"This is such a wonderful opportunity for veterans living in North Los Angeles County interested in owning a home," said Peter J. Gravett, secretary of the California VA Department. "Veterans who participate in this program will be able to provide sweat equity, which not only makes the home more affordable but also gives veterans and their families a sense of accomplishment in knowing they helped build their home. Veterans should get their applications in to Habitat for Humanity as soon as possible so they can hopefully move into their new home within 18 to 24 months."

Families who qualify will pay no more than 35 percent of their monthly income for mortgage, taxes, homeowners association dues, insurance and water. In addition, social services such as financial training, post-traumatic stress counseling, healing art workshops and classes on maximizing veterans benefits will be provided on site, free of charge. To apply, call 818-884-8808 or visit www.HumanityCA.org.

Airmen earn CAFA awards

The California Air Force Association (CAFA) recognized seven California Air National Guard and California State Military Reserve (CSMR) members as well as one Air Guard unit with CAFA awards during a June ceremony at Vandenberg Air Force Base.

The 163rd Reconnaissance Wing was named CAFA's Air National Guard Unit of the Year. The Wing also took two individual awards, with Maj. Todd Linton being named Field Grade Officer of the Year and Master Sgt. Jennifer Oberg taking Senior Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year.

The 144th Fighter Wing also took two individual awards, with Capt. Kevin Swayne earning the Company Grade Officer of the Year award and Tech. Sgt. Jason Ganner winning NCO of the Year. Senior Airman Jacob Ellwood of the 129th Rescue Wing took home the Airman of the Year award.

CSMR members Staff Sgt. Jeff Speltie and 1st Lt. Ken Davis were recognized as the CSMR's NCO of the Year and Officer of the Year, respectively.

Free admission to Sea World, others

National Guard, Reserve and active duty military members can obtain one free weekday admission for themselves and up to three dependents to visit SeaWorld, Aquatica San Diego, Adventure Island, Busch Gardens, Sesame Place or Water Country USA anytime in 2013. To register for the program, visit www.wavesofhonor.com.

Free access to 2,000+ museums

Service members can gain entry to more than 2,000 museums nationwide for themselves and up to five family members through the Blue Star Museums program. Free admission is available May 27 through Sept. 2 for National Guard, Reserve and active duty military members who show a valid military ID. Kids who visit one of the museums are eligible to win electronics and savings bonds by creating an image or video inspired by their trip and entering the Way Cool Creativity Contest.

For more information look under "Programs" at www.bluestarfam.org.

DID YOU KNOW...

Active Guard Reserve (AGR) and other federal duty personnel are eligible for line-of-duty investigations?

A line-of-duty investigation determines if an injury, illness or disease was incurred or aggravated as a result of military duty, or if the condition is due to the service member's gross negligence or misconduct. A common mistake made by commanders is to fail to process a line-of-duty investigation for a service member who is in an authorized federal duty status, including AGR.

It is imperative that all line-of-duty investigations be processed in a timely manner. If an AGR employee waits until close to the date of their retirement or separation from the AGR program to submit their request for a line-of-duty investigation, the process will be more difficult.

An informal line-of-duty investigation requires less paperwork and is therefore processed more quickly, in general. A formal investigation requires an investigating officer's report among other paperwork, and the National Guard Bureau will make the final determination on the investigation, which can take considerable time.

In some instances, a line-of-duty investigation is returned as a "sick call," meaning the Medical Services Branch has determined that the service member is experiencing no lingering effects of their condition and any claim against the government is therefore invalid. The Medical Services Branch cannot process an investigation while the service member is on Title 10 active duty.

Consult your unit's medical liaison for further guidance. References: Army Regulation 600-8-4; Air Force Instruction 36-2910.



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Soldiers with the 670th Military Police Company perform a three-mile march in tactical gear May 14 to conclude their three-week training rotation on Camp Roberts, Calif., with Task Force Warrior, a specialized CNG unit that prepares Soldiers for overseas tours. The 670th had been scheduled for an Afghanistan tour later this year, but that deployment was canceled. Photo by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

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