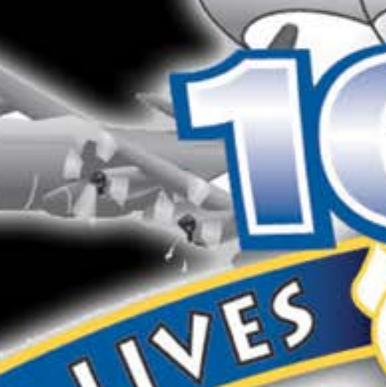


# GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard



**129th reaches lifesaving milestone**

1975 THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE 2013

# 10000

LIVES

129<sup>TH</sup> RESCUE WING

SAVED

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146th AW feels the heat of wildfire season

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# Leadership Corner

## A force that mirrors our community

Major General David S. Baldwin



The National Guard's most unique attribute is that it is a community-based military force. The noncommissioned officer at your local armory may also be your accountant or your kid's teacher in their civilian life.

There is a great bond between a state's Guard members and its citizens, and many in the Guard joined specifically to improve the lives of those close to home. Our commitment to the community is a commitment to all its members, and if you feel the calling to serve, we are happy to serve alongside you, no matter who you are. The Army and Air Force values of honor, integrity, respect and loyalty form the foundation of our organization, and all members are judged by the same criterion: performance.

The diversity of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives in California is one of our state's greatest strengths, and we strive to mirror that diversity in the California National Guard. With the repeal of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy in September 2011, we finally can meet that goal without asking members to hide in the shadows.

When you put on an Army or Air Force uniform, you be-

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***"Our commitment to the community is a commitment to all its members, and if you feel the calling to serve, we are happy to serve alongside you."***

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

---

come part of something greater than yourself. Our team is driven to achieve common goals and uphold shared values, and the bond formed through our struggles and triumphs is unbreakable.

It has been said that in the Army, we are all "Army green," and this is true. Regardless of your background, beliefs, lifestyle or personal characteristics, you can be our brother or sister in arms. We only ask that you dedicate yourself to your duty and live the Army values. A

good Soldier is a good Soldier.

Since the repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, morale has improved among gay, lesbian and bisexual Guardsmen, and in their units. Longtime friends and exemplary service members have finally felt free to speak openly and, in some cases, finally felt safe introducing their civilian family to their military family. A greater kinship has grown, and a new level of trust has emerged among people who already trusted each other with their lives.

The freedom our gay, lesbian and bisexual service members now experience in the Armed Forces community is emblematic of the freedom this nation has fought for since our forefathers first wrote that all men are created equal and entitled to the same inalienable rights. We will fight for this freedom as vigorously as we have any other, and we will not tolerate any harassment or poor treatment of our members by those within our ranks.

Since 1849, the California National Guard has pledged to protect every Californian from every type of danger. Finally we can say that every Californian is invited to serve. We welcome your contributions, and we are stronger because of you.

"For more than two centuries, we have worked to extend America's promise to

**ALL OUR CITIZENS.**

Our Armed Forces have been both a mirror and a catalyst of that progress, and our troops,

**including gays and lesbians,**

have given their lives to defend the freedoms and liberties that we cherish as Americans."

— President Barack Obama

**Publisher**

Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin  
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### Submissions

**Articles:**

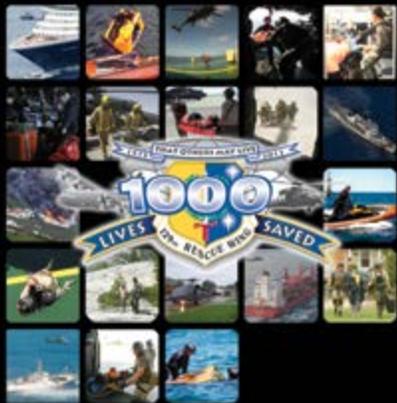
- ★ Articles range from 350 to 2,000 words. All articles should be accompanied by multiple high-resolution images.
- ★ Include first names, last names and military ranks. Always verify spelling.
- ★ Spell out acronyms, abbreviations and full unit designations on first reference.
- ★ Only submit articles 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:  
brandon.honig@us.army.mil

### Cover Shot



Cover design by  
Master Sgt. Paul Wade

The California National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing, based at Moffett Federal Airfield in the Silicon Valley, has rescued 1,000 service members and civilians from battlefields, mountaintops, vessels at sea and other dangerous situations since the Wing took on its rescue mission in 1975.

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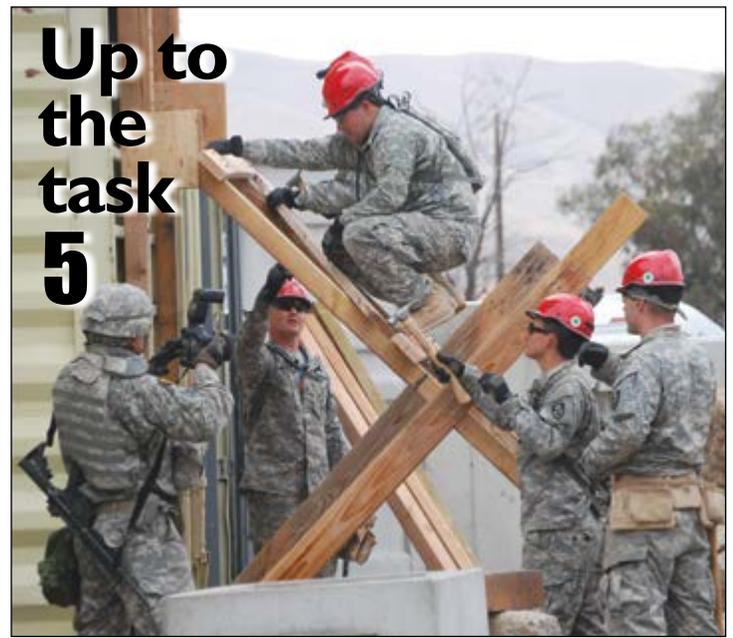
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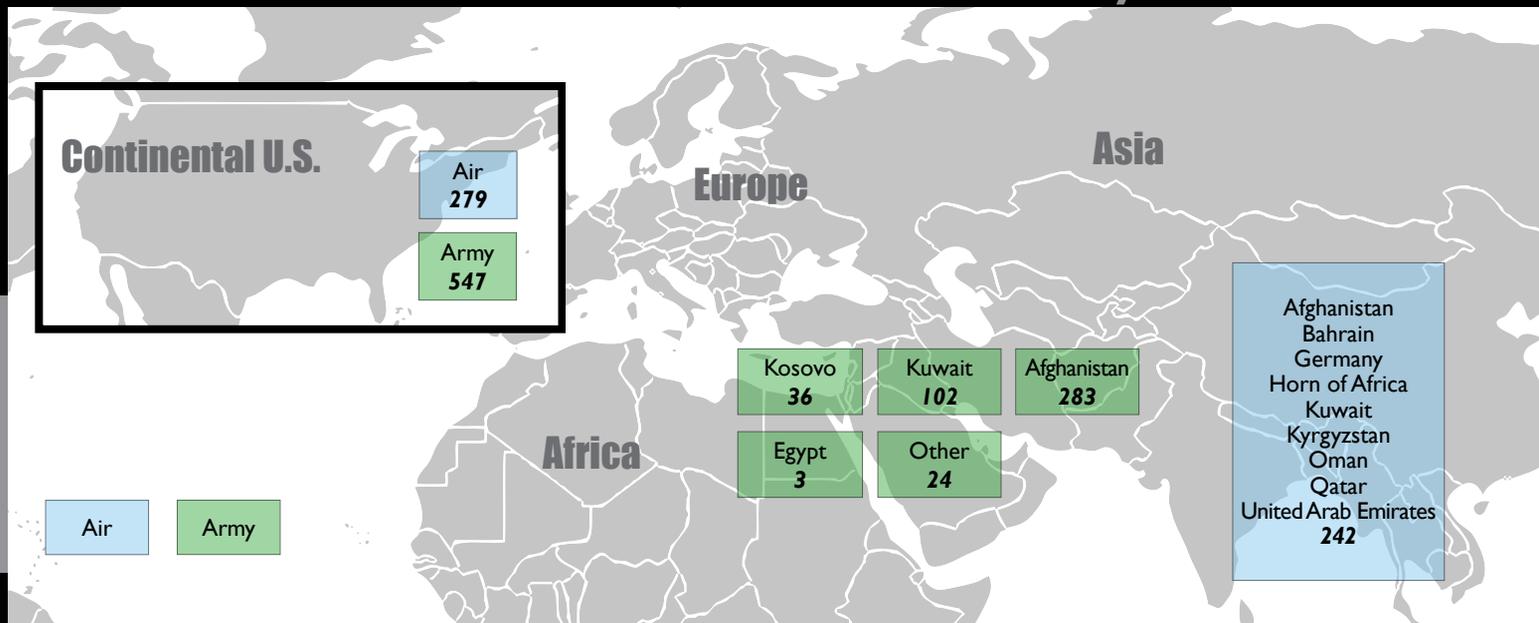
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## California National Guard mobilizations as of May 2013



# 146th AW fights fires close to home

Airlift Wing drops retardant on its own neighborhood in first assignment of wildfire season

By MAJ. KIM HOLMAN  
146th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

When hot, dry, gusty winds from the east, known as Santa Ana winds, carried the sparks and embers of the Camarillo Springs wildfire dangerously close to homes and neighborhoods in early May, the California National Guard members who responded alongside California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) personnel had a unique opportunity — to protect their own homes and communities.

The Port Hueneme, Calif.-based 146th Airlift Wing, which flies C-130J aircraft equipped with the Modular Airborne Fire-fighting Systems II (MAFFS), is called upon each year to fight fires across the United States. Last year the 146th and the Air Force's three other MAFFS units dropped more than 2 million gallons of fire retardant on wildfires in eight different states.

This year the fire season kicked off early, and right in the 146th's backyard, as the unit's Airmen were called upon May 3 to fight the flames in Ventura County. In ad-

dition to requesting that two C-130J aircraft take to the skies, Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, authorized air tanker base operations to be staged out of the 146th's home, Channel Islands Air National Guard Station in Port Hueneme. This enabled shorter response times for the civilian and military aircraft working the fires, which were less than 5 miles from the base.

"As far as operationally, it's the same," 146th pilot Lt. Col. Bryan Allen said shortly after dropping retardant on Newbury Park, near the home where he grew up. "We took an oath to serve because we want to help save Californians' lives and property, and everyone deserves a quick reaction time.

"But it just hits home flying over your neighborhood that this is your house, or your friend's house, or your family's house," he continued. "When it comes home, well, the anxiety level raises a little bit."

The 146th Airlift Wing has responded to numerous state and federal firefighting missions in the past, but this was the first time the 146th's flightline was used as a tanker base. Staging operations at Channel Islands provided a huge advantage for the firefighters, said Lt. Col. Brian Kelly, 146th vice commander.

"The aircraft were able to have a 12- to 17-minute turnaround time on fires that were within just a couple miles," he said. "Previously the nearest reload base would

have been about a 30-minute flight away." Kelly is a Camarillo native and C-130J pilot whose home was within a few miles of the Camarillo Springs Fire.

"This was definitely a different kind of fire for me," said Master Sgt. Amy Zuniga of the 146th. While Zuniga was working with CalFire to set up tanker base operations at Channel Islands, her 23-month-old son and his babysitter were fleeing Naval Air Station Point Mugu, which is next door to the 146th's base.

"The focus was not only on preparing our tanker base; we were all worried about protecting our families and our own homes," Zuniga said. "It was a little unnerving, but the babysitter called and let me know that they were safe in Oxnard, far away from the fire."

MAFFS is capable of dropping 3,000 gallons of water or fire retardant at a time. The system slides into the back of an aircraft, and retardant is released through a nozzle located on the rear left side of the plane. MAFFS equipment and aircraft are activated to supplement U.S. Forest Service and civilian air tankers during periods of high wildfire activity throughout the nation.

"California is no stranger to wildfires," said Chief Ken Pimlott, director of CalFire. "Our well-exercised and long-standing relationship with the California National Guard allows for rapid, effective deployment of these additional resources during times of elevated fire activity."

Photo by Senior Airman Nicholas Caris



Smoke from a nearby wildfire approaches a C-130J belonging to the California National Guard's 146th Airlift Wing on the Wing's flightline at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station in Port Hueneme. The plane and the flightline would soon be put to use fighting the fires.

# 670th MP company gets ready for action

Military police unit trains for combat despite cancelation of Afghanistan deployment

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

The three-week training cycle the 670th Military Police Company began in May started off on a disappointing note when the Soldiers learned their scheduled deployment to Afghanistan had been canceled. Nonetheless they pushed forward and learned everything they could from Task Force Warrior, a specialized California Army National Guard unit that prepares deploying Soldiers for overseas tours.

The National City, Calif.-based 670th troops brushed up on their infantry skills while training with Task Force Warrior at sunny Camp Roberts, Calif., beginning May 14. Their intense training included combat drills, land navigation, radio procedures, combat lifesaver skills and Humvee operator training.

"The training was excellent," said Pfc. Breanna Bingen of the 670th. "I've trained with Task Force Warrior before, and this was the best I've seen from them so far. I've learned a lot of things personally that I

need to do to make sure myself and my fellow Soldiers are well-prepared for things to come.

"Even though we have been off-ramped from the deployment, we still have state-side emergencies we could be called up for," she continued. "Task Force Warrior has really helped with our camaraderie and with our hands-on skills."

The 670th, which has more than 300 Soldiers overall and sent 168 Soldiers to train with TF Warrior in May, is composed of Soldiers from multiple smaller units. For many of the Soldiers, the May rotation was their first training event coming together as a team.

"As the training went along, we learned how to work together, communicate and get over the fact that we weren't originally all from the same unit," said Spc. Malachi Beasley of the 670th.

The instructors at Task Force Warrior live by a famous saying by Gen. Douglas MacArthur: "In no other profession are the penalties for employing untrained per-



ABOVE: Soldiers from the California Army National Guard's 670th Military Police Company crawl under concertina wire during a training event with Task Force Warrior at Camp Roberts, Calif., on May 10. TF Warrior taught the MPs vital combat skills needed for deployment overseas. RIGHT: Soldiers from the 670th perform an ambush drill with Task Force Warrior at Camp Roberts on May 9.



sonnel so appalling or so irrevocable as in the military." The TF Warrior instructors, therefore, accept nothing less than absolute proficiency from their students.

"If we go out there and don't do it right, [the instructors give us] a 'No-go,' because they want us to do good, and they want us to make sure we know everything we need to know," said Spc. Susana Bran. "This is

my first time training with [TF Warrior]. I have done a lot of training in the past, but I feel like this is a lot more learning than usual."

Photos by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

# Rapid responders tackle radioactive situation

The 49th Military Police Brigade Homeland Response Force assisted role players affected by a terrorist attack during a May field exercise

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

If terrorists were to strike with a dirty bomb, the 49th Military Police Brigade Homeland Response Force (HRF) has the tools and skills to respond. The HRF descended on Camp Roberts, Calif., in May for a field exercise meant to sharpen operational readiness and test command processes.

"I personally love the training," said Pfc. Charles Northup, who provided security in front of a decontamination tent while wearing a hazardous materials suit and gas mask. "It's very realistic. We don't joke around out here."

Made up of elements of the Army National Guard's 49th Military Police Brigade and medical personnel from the Air National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing, the HRF is tasked to respond within 48 hours of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive (CBRNE) event. It is responsible for all of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region IX, encompassing Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada and several Pacific islands.

"The HRF provides specialized, rapidly deployable life-saving capabilities to our communities in times of their greatest need," said Col. Kelly Fisher, commander of the 49th Military Police Brigade. "Whether it's a natural or a man-made disaster, our highly trained Soldiers and Airmen are ready to help."

The May 3-7 exercise at Camp Roberts was a trial run for



Photos by 1st Lt. Jason Sweeney



**"The HRF provides specialized, rapidly deployable lifesaving capabilities to our communities in times of their greatest need. Whether it's a natural or a man-made disaster, our highly trained Soldiers and Airmen are ready to help."**

—Col. Kelly Fisher  
Commander, 49th Military Police Brigade



an August evaluation by the National Guard Bureau's West Virginia-based Joint Interagency Training and Education Center (JITEC). That evaluation will determine if the HRF will be recertified to perform its mission.

The exercise scenario at Camp Roberts simulated a terrorist attack on the Capitol in Sacramento that included multiple explosions, collapsed buildings and a radioactive plume that spread over the city. When civilian emergency responders were overwhelmed, the governor called in the HRF.

Twenty-five civilian role players with simulated burns and wounds took part in the exercise. Some were real-life amputees with severe-looking simulated wounds that provided a shocking realism to the event. The role players were rescued from a rubble pile and taken through checkpoints and into tents for decontamination and emergency medical treatment.

About 500 Soldiers from the 49th MP Brigade participated in the exercise, including members of the 49th's Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 149th Chemical Company, 235th Engineer Company, 270th MP Company, 330th MP Company, 649th Engineer Company and 579th Engineer Battalion.

The chemical and engineer companies compose the HRF's CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package, or CERFP, which provides search-and-extraction, decontamination and medical capabilities in contaminated areas.

Private 1st Class Eric Merida of the 235th Engineer Company out of Petaluma assisted in the extraction of casualties from the rubble pile, which served as a simulated collapsed building.

"Throughout these last three days, I've gone from knowing a little to knowing a lot," Merida said. "My [noncommissioned officers] definitely know what they're doing.

**LEFT and ABOVE: Members of the 49th Military Police Brigade work to assist survivors of multiple simulated explosions during a Homeland Response Force exercise in May on Camp Roberts, Calif.**

They're good mentors."

The 49th MP Brigade HHC is the HRF's command-and-control element. The HHC set up tents in a field, which became home to a tactical operations center (TOC) where the various command sections coordinated the HRF's response.

As part of the exercise, the HHC spent five days encamped in the field to better simulate a real-world situation.

"We have a lot of new Soldiers, so this is a great way to introduce them to how it works," said 1st Lt. Cyndi Pearl Auza, HHC commander. "It's helping us get out of our comfort zone."

Sgt. Eric Parkhurst was responsible for the TOC's on-screen map and for placing units in the field and distributing information to them. This was his fourth field training exercise with the HRF.

"This is the first time we've been completely self-contained with no outside assistance," he said. "It proves we can do it without a hard site or Internet drops or anything like that."

HHC Chief of Operations Capt. Jaime Long said the exercise was a great training opportunity. "We worked on improving our mission command processes, assuming command of a developing situation and supporting our civilian partners," he said. "It's not just good training for the test in August but good training overall."

Thirty-two observer/controller/trainers from JITEC provided support and evaluation for the exercise.

"The HRF mission is to save lives and mitigate suffering in a context of defense support for civil authorities for a domestic CBRNE incident," said Maj. Ken Barrett, JITEC military lead trainer for the HRF command post. "The 49th HRF is tracking well toward the goal of being revalidated."

Maj. Jim Reese, another observer/controller/trainer from JITEC, said he expects the HRF will be successful in its August evaluation. "I think you've got the right leadership and skill sets to accomplish the mission."



# Job well done

3-140th Aviation Battalion returns from Kosovo

Maj. Steven Sherrill of Task Force Phalanx leads troops in a salute on Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, during a May 1 transfer-of-authority ceremony. TF Phalanx assumed responsibility for the aviation mission on Bondsteel, enabling TF Cash and its California National Guardsmen to return home. Photo by Sgt. Angela Parady

By SGT. ANGELA PARADY  
121st Public Affairs Detachment

About 60 members of the Cal Guard's 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, began their journey home from Kosovo in May following the completion of peacekeeping duties in support of Task Force Cash, the aviation unit of Multinational Battle Group-East (MNBG-E).

TF Cash passed responsibility to TF Phalanx in a May 1 transfer-of-authority ceremony on Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo.

"The time has come in our deployment for us to cash out and begin our journey home to family and friends," said TF Cash Commander Lt. Col. Matthew McDermott. "We have set the conditions for success for Kosovo Force 17 aviation, Task Force Phalanx, to successfully execute aviation oper-

ations in support of the MNBG-E mission of providing a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for the people of Kosovo."

The outgoing task force included Army National Guard Soldiers from California, Arkansas, Hawaii and South Carolina who deployed in support of NATO's Operation Joint Guardian peacekeeping mission.

They began their deployment July 5, 2012, when they were mobilized to train at Camp Atterbury, Ind. They left the United States for Camp Bondsteel on Aug. 11 to conduct mission-rehearsal exercises and complete extensive training with their predecessors in the peacekeeping operation.

The Task Force's responsibilities included air movement, resupply, quick reaction force, command and control and medical evacu-

ation (medevac) missions. Through it all, Task Force Cash provided continuous, effective and safe aviation support to MNBG-E.

From Sept. 1 to May 1, Task Force Cash flew 1,940 flight hours, including 16 medevac missions, 19 quick reaction force missions and transportation of more than 2,200 passengers. It also trained multinational forces.

"You have done an excellent job here," said Col. Waymon B. Storey, commander of MNBG-E. "Kosovo is an interesting environment to perform in, especially as an aviator. I have seen every facet of weather here, within an hour, and most of it I wasn't expecting. But it didn't matter where we were, or what the mission called for: You all made it happen.

"You made a daily difference here," he continued. "Every mission set that we focused

on, that we planned, was centered on aviation. Never once did [TF Cash members] say, 'We can't do that sir; we don't have the assets.' They always said, 'Yes sir. We got it.'"

Aviation duties for the NATO mission will now be assumed by Guard Soldiers from Florida, Indiana, Maryland and Oregon.

"You all, in my eyes, fit the professional aviator that we need here," Storey told the incoming Soldiers on May 1. "I am sure you will keep pushing us towards the conclusion of the mission in Kosovo.

"We can make a difference on a daily basis so that we can turn this mission over to the people of Kosovo," he added. "As long as we keep sending the professional Soldier who is committed to making a difference, we will be successful."

# Black Hawk down... Now what?

'Mini-SERE school' prepares Charlie Company, 1-168th, for upcoming Afghanistan deployment

By 1ST LT. KAT KALISKI  
166th Aviation Brigade Public Affairs

What do you do when your helicopter crashes and armed civilians rapidly approach firing small arms in your direction? In this situation your ability to make speedy decisions, and to quickly employ your communication gear, is of life-or-death consequence.

During its training of Army National Guard and Reserve units mobilizing for deployment, the Fort Hood, Texas-based 166th Aviation Brigade tests and retests such skills in a realistic setting at its personnel-recovery lanes on North Fort Hood.

The Brigade's 3rd Battalion, 383rd Aviation Regiment, from St. Louis traveled to North Fort Hood in April to train and prepare the California National Guard's Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion (Medevac), which is preparing to deploy to Afghanistan.

Sgt. 1st Class John Steffey of the 166th, who served as an observer/controller for one of the 20 groups practicing the downed

aircraft scenario, said the training is like a mini-SERE school, which stands for survival, evasion, resistance and escape. During the training Soldiers practiced land navigation, breaking away from the enemy, using a Combat Survivor Evader Locator radio and preparing an aircraft for destruction to keep it out of enemy hands.

Four-Soldier teams from Company C traversed the Texas Hill Country as quickly and quietly as possible, using hand and arm signals to communicate with each other. Members of 166th, meanwhile, lurked in the brush, playing the role of opposing forces and waiting to pounce.

To ensure safe evacuation, each Charlie Company member implemented techniques they had learned the previous day in class, such as message authentication, frequency changes, proper antenna placement, manual GPS inputting, and sending and receiving messages.

Another key lesson from the exercise, according to 1st Lt. Servando Maldonado of Company C, was becoming accustomed to your gear: what you need, what you can do



Photo by 1st Lt. Kat Kaliski

First Lieutenant Servando Maldonado of the Cal Guard's Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion (Medevac), left, receives feedback from trainer Sgt. 1st Class John Steffey of the active duty 1st Battalion, 383rd Aviation Regiment, during a downed aircraft exercise April 17 on North Fort Hood, Texas, where Company C trained before deploying to Afghanistan.

without and how to arrange it so you can move quickly for a long time.

Maldonado, a team leader who is beginning his fourth deployment, has earned a Ranger tab and graduated from the Army's prestigious SERE school. Nonetheless when his seat belt jammed following a simulated crash, with enemy role players quickly approaching, he left his gear bag in the heli-

copter as he and his team ran for cover.

"Even leaders need to be checked," he said.

Following a crash, it might take days for an air crew to reach safety. The April exercise lasted only three hours but ensured that every Soldier became familiar with the equipment, techniques and procedures that could serve them well on their worst day.

# 1,000 saves, and counting

The Mountain View-based 129th Rescue Wing has saved 1,000 lives in combat and domestic situations since gaining its rescue mission in 1975

By SENIOR AIRMAN JESSICA GREEN  
129th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

The 129th Rescue Wing has saved its 1,000th life.

The milestone was reached May 18, when air crews and pararescuemen from the 129th Rescue Wing who are deployed to Afghanistan rescued an Afghan national policeman who had been shot, raising the number of lives saved by the unit to 1,000.

Since its inception nearly four decades ago, the 129th has launched numerous missions from its home station of Moffett Federal Airfield and various deployed locations worldwide, resulting in 1,000 lives saved. The Wing is credited with more than 400 combat saves and nearly 600 civilian saves.



For video of the 129th, scan this QR code

Embracing the motto of the Air Force Rescue community, "That Others May Live," the 129th's federal mission is to "rapidly deploy worldwide to conduct combat search-and-rescue operations over land or water, in both hostile and permissive environments." In addition to its combat mission, as a California National Guard asset, the Wing provides civilian search-and-rescue support to the governor during times of state emergencies, including earthquakes, hurricanes, fires and floods.

For members of the Wing, saving lives is the most honorable and important mission they undertake. A "save" is defined as recovering an individual in danger of losing their life, eyesight or a limb. If a 129th Rescue Wing member participates in a recovery mission, whether on a pickup aircraft, as a formation partner or on a ground team, then a "save" is credited to the Wing.

Operating in California since 1955, the 129th was brought to life at the Hayward Airport as an Air Resupply Group tasked to airlift personnel and material using Curtiss C-46 Commando aircraft. Not long after its launch, the Group underwent a variety of name changes, several aircraft conversions and multiple Air Force major command assignments.

The 129th's rescue presence dates to 1975, when it was designated as the 129th Aero-

space Rescue and Recovery Group operating HC-130 Hercules cargo aircraft and HH-3E Jolly Green Giant helicopters. The 129th ARRG conducted its first rescue mission in 1977 during the Red Flag combat exercise at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. One of the Group's Jolly Green Giant helicopters saved a severely injured pilot who had ejected from an A-7 attack aircraft before it crashed in a nearby range.

To provide better rescue capability to the state and the nation, the 129th ARRG moved to Naval Air Station Moffett Field. The move was completed in 1984.

The 129th's first long-range, over-water rescue was completed Oct. 13, 1986, assisting a crewman with appendicitis on the ship MS Reunion in the Pacific Ocean. The 129th ARRG coordinated with U.S. Coast Guard assets to rescue the patient and transport him to a hospital in Acapulco, Mexico. The mission, resulting in the Group's 145th save, covered a total of 4,200 miles, including 1,200 miles flown over water. To date, it is still the furthest distance the Wing has traveled to execute a mission.

Also in 1986, during flooding in California's Sonoma, Sutter and Yuba counties, 129th Airmen saved 33 lives in five days.

In the aftermath of the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, the 129th established command post operations and was chosen to coordinate all military aircraft activities in the San Francisco Bay Area. By the decade's end, the Group had saved 190 people.

The 129th's first operational night mission was flown Dec. 27, 1991, to rescue a crewman with major face and body injuries on board the MV Martha Majesty more than 400 miles southwest of San Francisco, resulting in save 207.

Having transitioned from Jolly Green Giants to more modern HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters in 1991, the Group was expanded into the 129th Rescue Wing in 1992 and extended its rescue detachments into squadrons at the renamed Moffett Federal Airfield. Today, Pave Hawks, MC-130P Combat Shadow aircraft and Guardian Angel pararescuemen are assigned to the 129th, 130th and 131st rescue squadrons, respectively.

Through its transformation years, the Group remained mission-ready and established an impressive pattern that would be followed for years to come. An impromptu rescue resulting in the Wing's 250th save was conducted on April 4, 1996, when Combat Shadow air crews diverted from a routine training mission near Moffett to save a Navy pilot who had ejected from his F-18 Hornet fighter aircraft 30 miles off the coast of Big Sur, Calif. The Combat Shadow crews dropped the Navy pilot a survival kit, while Pave Hawk crews and pararescuemen headed to the scene, hoisted the pilot to safety and transported him to Stanford Hospital.

After the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, citizen-Airmen from the 129th Rescue Wing deployed to support rescue missions for operations Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, setting an unprecedented standard in combat search-and-rescue efforts by supporting operations in five countries while still performing their stateside mission.

While deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 129th Rescue Wing executed the first combat save for any Air National Guard or Reserve unit, on April 15, 2003. Pave Hawk air crews picked up a severely injured Special Forces Soldier from an isolated location and transported him across hostile Iraqi territory to a field hospital during inclement nighttime weather, resulting in the Wing's 299th save. During the 2003 deployment, the Wing sustained zero aircraft or personnel losses, injuries or mishaps and executed 15 saves, bringing the Wing's total to 310 lives saved.

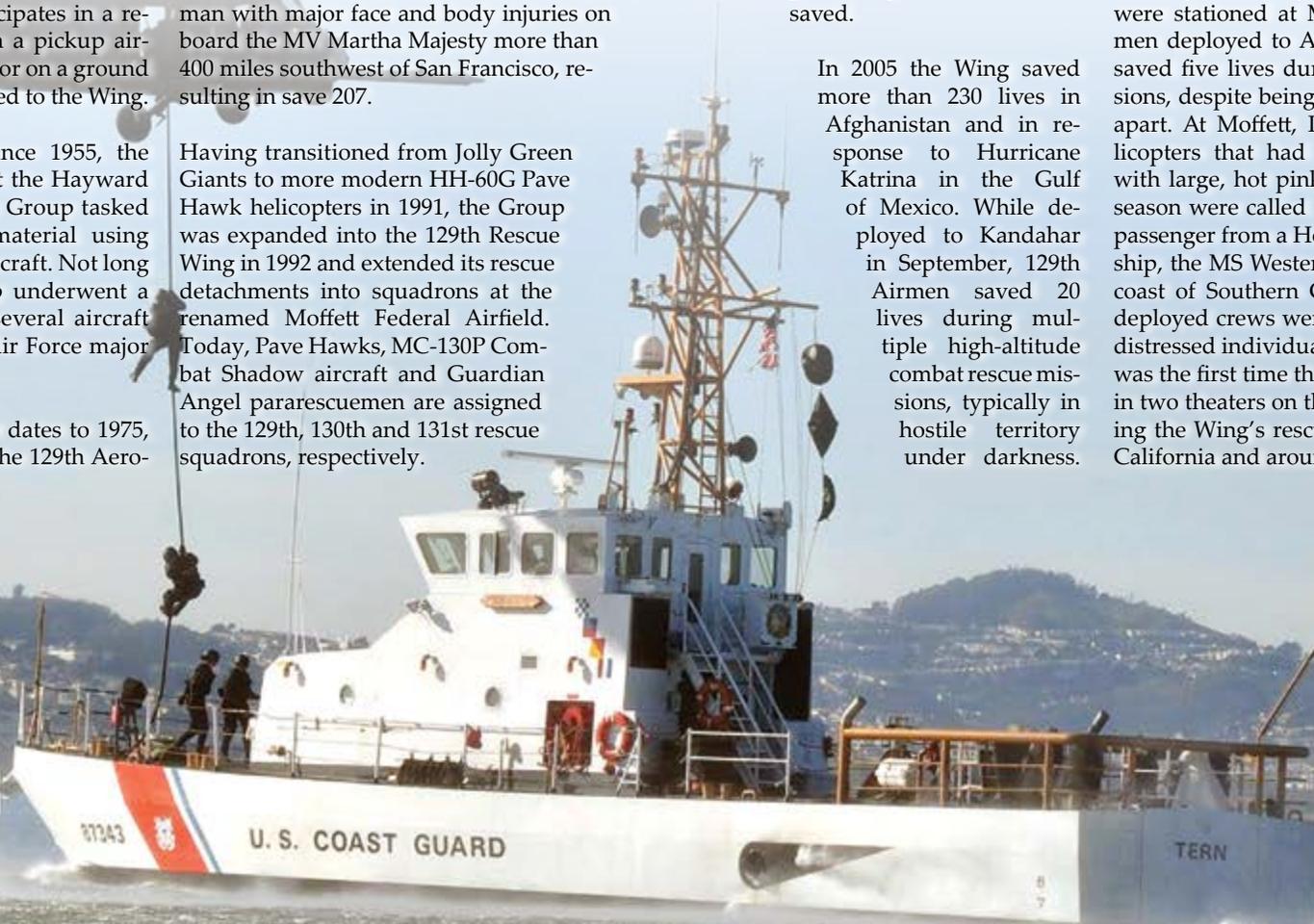
In 2005 the Wing saved more than 230 lives in Afghanistan and in response to Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf of Mexico. While deployed to Kandahar in September, 129th Airmen saved 20 lives during multiple high-altitude combat rescue missions, typically in hostile territory under darkness.

On the home front, Airmen provided lifesaving rescue operations and disaster relief following the hurricane that devastated the New Orleans and Mississippi Gulf Coast area. As first responders, pararescuemen saved 212 lives while searching for survivors in rescue boats on flooded suburban streets. Similarly in 2008, Airmen from the Wing saved 34 lives in the Texas Gulf Coast area in response to Hurricane Ike, bringing the Wing's total to 598 lives saved.

During their four-month deployment to Afghanistan in 2009, 129th Rescue Wing air crews and pararescuemen saved 307 lives, the largest number of lives saved by the Wing during a single deployment. The intense combat deployment included rescues of coalition forces, local nationals and sister-service members, bringing the total to 907 lives saved for the Wing. The following year, pararescuemen again deployed to Afghanistan, saving an additional 37 lives and increasing the Wing's total to 946.

More recently the 129th has launched an impressive series of complex civilian rescue missions, saving distressed crewmen on international vessels off the Golden Coast. Air crews and pararescuemen from the 129th saved the life of an injured crewman on board a Marshall Islands-flagged merchant vessel about 300 miles off the coast of Mexico on Nov. 29, 2012. Pararescuemen treated the patient during the two-hour flight to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, and the patient was subsequently transported to San Diego for further treatment. The multi-day rescue brought the total number of lives saved by the Wing to 957.

On May 4 of this year, 129th Airmen who were stationed at Moffett and 129th Airmen deployed to Afghanistan collectively saved five lives during two separate missions, despite being more than 7,500 miles apart. At Moffett, Pave Hawk rescue helicopters that had already been painted with large, hot pink numbers for wildfire season were called to rescue a critically ill passenger from a Holland American cruise ship, the MS Westerdam, 300 miles off the coast of Southern California. Meanwhile, deployed crews were called to rescue four distressed individuals in Afghanistan. This was the first time the Wing had saved lives in two theaters on the same day, epitomizing the Wing's rescue capabilities, both in California and around the globe.



# 3 generations of CNG artillery command

By **CAPT. CODY GALLO**

79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

Commanding a California Army National Guard artillery battalion is a rare achievement that few people can claim. But in Lt. Col. Craig Sandman's family, reaching that stature is a family tradition.

Sandman assumed command of 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery (FA) Regiment, in January, following in his father's and grandfather's footsteps.

"The opportunity to lead a unit that I have spent most of my career with, and especially to come full circle from private to battalion commander, this was something I knew I wanted to do back in 1987 when I enlisted," the younger Sandman said.

Craig was just a young boy and therefore does not remember when his father, John Sandman, served in the 1-143rd.

Nonetheless Craig said he and his brothers grew up surrounded by the 1-143rd crest and its messages.

"I learned at a young age what the Battalion motto, 'Facta Non Verba,' stood for," he said. "It means 'Deeds not Words,' and my grandfather had a great saying that I remember: 'Never miss an opportunity to keep your mouth shut!'"

Craig's grandfather, Otto Sandman, enlisted in 1911. He was followed in 1949 by his son John, who enrolled in California's first Officer Candidate School class the next year.

"I was field artillery from the start," John said. "In Northern California it was primarily FA units at the time, so we were very FA-minded."

He would go on to serve as operations officer and executive officer of the 1-143rd. Then he commanded 3rd Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, from 1969 to 1972.

John said the L.A. and Berkeley riots were challenging times for his unit, and recruiting was always a problem, but serving in an FA unit wasn't nearly as complicated back then. "Now the equipment is state-of-the-art," he said. "I'm amazed at the things they can do now."

An artillery Soldier's duties have changed a great deal since Otto Sandman enlisted, when 90 percent of his unit's training time was spent on horses, according to a 1971 interview with the Stockton Record. But each generation of Sandman has exhibited the same strength of character that is so vital to the 143rd.

Otto first held a unit command in 1916, when his unit, Battery C of the 1st California Field Artillery, was deployed to Arizona to protect towns and railroads from raids from Mexico by Pancho Villa's forces. Sandman, a first lieutenant, took command after the unit's top officer needed to leave. Sandman commanded Battery C for three months.

"[He was] respected and well-liked," John said. "He was old school in that he believed you always took care of your horses and equipment before you took care of yourself."

When the unit boarded a train back to California, the men wrote "Sandy's Battery" on a boxcar, showing he had done right by his troops during his short time in charge.

In 1933, Otto oversaw the 143rd's transition to a motorized unit. Then as Regiment commander in 1938, he led 101 vehicles and twenty-four artillery pieces on a 16-day, 2,000-mile road march through California, Nevada and Utah to test the unit's ability to move through varied terrain. Otto would go on to attain the rank of major general and command the 49th Infantry Division of the California Army National Guard.

Many things have changed in the California Guard since Sandy's men wrote his name on that boxcar in 1916, but at least one thing remains unchanged: the Sandman family's dedication to serving this state and nation.



**ABOVE:** Lt. Col. Craig Sandman holds the flag of 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, after taking command of the Battalion on Jan. 13, at Camp Roberts, Calif., succeeding Lt. Col. Michael Leeney. **RIGHT:** Sandman's grandfather Maj. Gen. Otto Sandman served California beginning in 1911.



## Soldier's heroic acts continue to inspire

Lt. Col. Kevin Bender of the CNG draws strength from the legacy of his deceased father

By **MAJ. JONATHAN SHIROMA**

40th Infantry Division Public Affairs

This year on Memorial Day, Lt. Col. Kevin Bender of the CNG's 49th Military Police Brigade will remember, like he always does, the heroic acts of many of America's veterans. There is, however, one special veteran — and one heroic act that saved many lives — especially close to his heart.

What makes this year's Memorial Day special is that, now, there is a permanent monument at Fort Benning, Ga., to honor that man, Bender's father, Staff Sgt. Gernot Bender. In October, Company E, 3rd Battalion, 81st Armor Regiment, 194th Armored Brigade, dedicated one of its barracks in honor of Gernot Bender to honor his service. For Kevin Bender, it was a bittersweet moment.

"It is difficult to describe when something as great as this is bestowed upon your family," he said. "However, it truly was a double-edged sword, maybe more so for my mother than I. It is an honor, but it pulled back memories and sadness for us

in remembering that [he] was pulled away from us. It is like opening an old wound that never truly heals."

In 1969, the younger Bender was a 4-year-old without a care in the world. For his dad, it was quite a different story. On March 25, while in the Hau Nghai province of Vietnam, Staff Sgt. Bender's unit, Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, was ambushed.

"Reaching the ambush site, [Bender and his troops] found the [enemy] had moved to a new hiding place, and the squadron and troop commander had advanced alone to [survey the area]. When firing was heard, Sergeant Bender immediately drove his tank to the aid of the two officers," according to the citation that accompanied the posthumous presentation of Bender's Distinguished Service Cross. The Cross is the second-highest military award given to a Soldier for extreme gallantry and risk-of-life in combat.

"Seeing that they were pinned down by a machine gun bunker, [Bender led] an assault as the rest of his unit followed. Intense hostile fire wounded several men and a rocket-propelled grenade scored a direct hit on an armored personnel carrier," the citation continues. "Bender moved to secure the carrier and provide covering fire while the casualties were rescued, throwing grenades and firing his rifle af-

ter his vehicle's weapons became inoperative. He then pulled back to a defensive position where he placed suppressive fire during the evacuation of the wounded. ... As his troop again moved forward, he assaulted a machine gun bunker, destroying it and killing its occupants, and then engaged and destroyed a rocket-propelled grenade team that exposed itself to fire on one of the carriers. Seconds later his vehicle was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade, seriously wounding him in the leg. Ignoring his wounds, he continued to fight, thus allowing the lesser-wounded to be evacuated to safety. Soon Sergeant Bender collapsed as his own injuries proved fatal."

Kevin Bender said he has spoken with his father's platoon leader and his company commander, and both said Gernot was an ardent Soldier and a true noncommissioned officer.

"I consider my father to be a hero and one with a high standard and moral demeanor," Kevin said. "My father was a very humble man; I think he would have felt that he was undeserving and there were other Soldiers that were more deserving of this honor. He would have felt that he was doing what a Soldier does and that he did nothing remarkable other than his duty."

Kevin admitted he still mourns the loss of his father, but in spite of his death, Gernot's



**Staff Sgt. Gernot Bender, father of Lt. Col. Kevin Bender, earned the military's second-highest award for gallantry and risk-of-life in combat during a battle that took his life in 1969. Fort Benning, Ga., named a barracks after him in October.**

legacy lives on and provides his son guidance in his own growth as a Soldier.

"I am sad that I was not able to know him and grow up with his influence, but I am so grateful that he died in a way that fell in line with his principles," the younger Bender said. "And for me, he will always be an amazing man and Soldier that I will try to copy and live up to."

# Only elite need apply

## CNG Special Forces company puts candidates through grueling test

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

Seventeen men in military fatigues stood side by side on a dusty road under the sweltering California sun. Despite the heat and the burden of their loaded rucksacks, they broke into a full run.

Though they came from many different military backgrounds and from around the country, these men were all simply “candidates” sharing a common goal: to join the ranks of the most elite Soldiers in the Army — the Special Forces. The candidates competed May 11 in a semi-annual Special Forces Readiness Evaluation, or SFRE — known informally as a Safari — held by Company A, 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne), at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif. The Safari is the first step in the challenging journey to become a Special Forces Soldier.

“Special Forces want to have the best and most elite Soldiers. This is a chance to take and refine yourself so you can be qualified to be one of those Soldiers,” Hamilton said.

“I feel I have more to contribute to the National Guard,” said New York Army National Guard 1st Lt. Nathan Holt. “I want to take the lessons learned and the education I am currently receiving and implement that into the National Guard SF. I feel there’s a lot more that I could do for the community.”

Exemplifying the model of the “quiet professional,” the 5-19th Soldiers introduced the candidates to a culture of humility and a work ethic of striving to better oneself without expectation of reward or recognition. “We are not better forces,” the Alpha Company commander said. “We are Special Forces.”

The SF community is renowned throughout the country for its unique mission and Soldiering skills, which attract candidates from not just the Army, but other services as well. Hamilton said the 5-19th Special Forces Battalion is one of the highlights of the California National Guard.

“In my dealings with recruiters of other branches from active duty components in Northern California to the Marine Corps in Southern California, they all know how elite the



19th Group is,” he said. “Their reputation precedes them.”

The Safari was a grueling ordeal that started off with an Army Physical Fitness Test immediately followed by a pull-up test. One aspect that makes the Safari a unique evaluation is that candidates do not know what score is required to pass.

“We don’t want you to quit in the middle of an event; we want you to push through even if you didn’t pass,” the Alpha Company commander said.

After a brief break, the candidates returned for an exercise in which they were assigned to small teams for a mile-long march while wearing 55-pound rucksacks. During the event, the candidates took turns carrying full water cans and buddy-carrying each other as simulated casualties.

“This is not a graded event,” the Safari noncommissioned officer in charge said. “We want to know who the natural leaders are and who the slackers are in each team.”

Earning a Special Forces tab requires not just physical strength and ability, but strong adherence to the Army Values. “We need more than door-kickers,” the Alpha Company commander said. “We need well-rounded Soldiers and leaders.”

After the team event, the candidates were given their scores for the graded physical fitness events. At this point, only 17 of the original 34 candidates had passed all of the events, and the most difficult test of the day was yet to come.

After another brief break, the remaining candidates reported with their 55-pound rucksacks for a march of undisclosed distance. Amazingly the 17 Soldiers took off



**TOP:** Former Marine Sgt. Aaron Jouvenat pushes through the swim qualification of the Special Forces Readiness Evaluation (SFRE) held May 11 at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., by Company A, 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group. The SFRE attracted Guardsmen as well as current and former members of other components from around the country. **ABOVE:** Spc. Zach Ross of the Army Reserve’s 328th Combat Support Hospital in Sacramento cools off during an SFRE ruck march.

at a full run.

“They put forth an effort you don’t usually see,” said Staff Sgt. Frank Hamilton of the California Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion. “[The candidates] ruck march right after a [physical fitness] test, and after they’ve done a mile of weighted-carry teambuilding. Taking off on a full run was just an amazing feat.”

**Continued on page 15**

## Former Marine strives to work with the best



**Cpl. Jacob Bridger marches with a 55-pound pack during a Special Forces readiness evaluation May 11 at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif.**

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

Every National Guard Soldier has a goal or dream unique to that person. Since the beginning of Cpl. Jake Bridger’s Army career, that dream has been to join the ranks of the Special Forces.

Bridger passed the first checkpoint in achieving his dream May 12, when he was chosen for the selection process by Company A, 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne), at the unit’s semi-annual Special Forces Readiness Evaluation (SFRE) at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif.

“I want to be Special Forces because I want to work with the best, to work with people who totally focus on the task at hand and bring me to a higher level of proficiency,” said Bridger, a former Marine infantryman now assigned to the CNG’s 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment.

The grueling daylong event tested the

candidates’ physical training [PT] and willpower in a wide range of evaluations. The initial tests ensured the candidate has a high level of physical fitness, Bridger said, “Then going into a ruck [march] is going to get to a point of more heart than anything else. You just got to be able to push yourself.”

Bridger works long hours as a full-time instructor with Team Bayonet of Task Force Warrior, a CNG training element at Camp Roberts, Calif., that prepares units for overseas tours. But he used his little free time wisely to prepare for the SFRE.

“I see him physically training almost every day,” said Staff Sgt. Rob Pitts, the noncommissioned officer in charge of Team Bayonet. “And when he’s not training, he’s reading the Ranger handbook to make sure he knows the skill sets he’ll need in SF.”

Though Bridger has not yet reached his goal of earning a Special Forces tab, he

earned the California Commendation Medal in 2012 for his efforts in establishing and running training events for Task Force Warrior, and he continues to impress with his drive and dedication.

“His rank is corporal, but his knowledge is more like that of a staff sergeant,” Pitts said.

After years of preparation and discipline, Bridger arrived at the SFRE fully prepared to succeed. “There’s nothing that surprised me about today’s events,” said Bridger, who joined the Guard in 2009. “The 19th Group was very forthcoming with information about what was going to happen today.”

Bridger, who lives in Paso Robles, Calif., with his wife and daughter, said he has a simple philosophy about preparing for the SFRE: “PT, PT, PT as much as you can. When you come here, just make sure that’s what you want 100 percent and give 100 percent while you’re here.”

Photos by SGT. IAN M. KUMMER

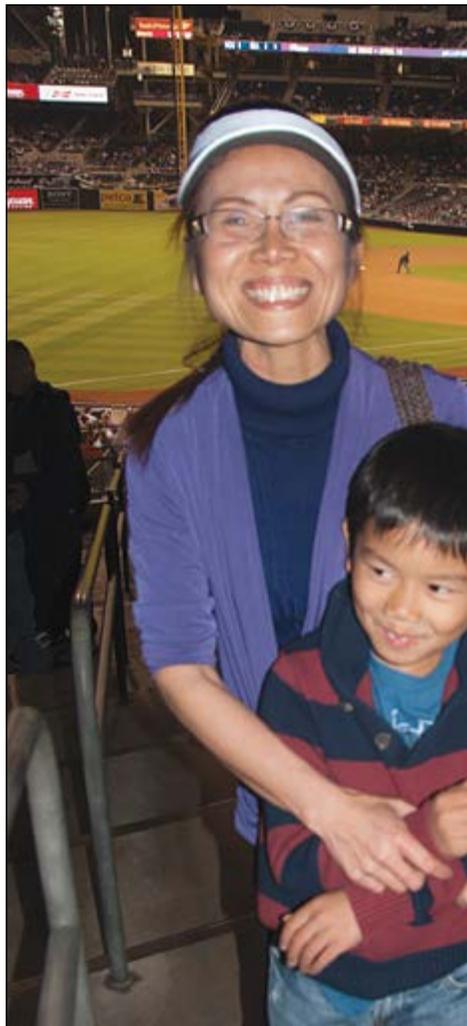
**RIGHT:** Col. Robert Spano, director of the California Military Department Joint Staff, prepares to “Walk A Mile In Her Shoes” as part of the May 4 “Walk A Mile” event in Sacramento to raise awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault. **Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Flagg**  
**FAR RIGHT:** Jennifer Lucero, the Cal Guard’s sexual assault response coordinator, takes part in the “Jump Into Prevention” from 13,000 feet April 26 in Lincoln, Calif., to bring attention to sexual assault during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. **Photo by Master Sgt. David Loeffler**



**ABOVE:** Cadets from the Cal Guard’s Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy on Joint Forces Training Base (JFTB), Los Alamitos, enjoy a well-earned meal May 7 after supporting the JFTB Fire Station’s annual Burn Quest barbecue to raise awareness of burn survivors and generate funds for the nonprofit Firefighters Quest for Burn Survivors. **Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Inigo**  
 Senior Airman James Bivin, left, Staff Sgt. Abraham Ocano and Staff Sgt. Cirilo Silva assemble the boom and feed on a ground multi-band terminal April 23 during the 147th Combat Communications Squadron’s Operational Readiness Exercise in San Diego. The terminal supports a wide range of theater-deployable and domestic emergency-response communications equipment. **Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey**



**RIGHT:** Monique Phommasy takes her 7-year-old son, Ethan, out to the ballgame April 11, courtesy of the San Diego Padres and the Army’s Survivor Outreach Services (SOS). Phommasy’s husband, Spc. Thithavy Phommasy of the CNG’s 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, died in January 2010 while attending an Army geospatial engineering course in Virginia. SOS cares for families of fallen service members through a holistic, multi-agency approach to delivering services in the families’ local communities. **Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey**



# At a Glance



A C-130J plane and crew from the California National Guard's 146th Airlift Wing drop 3,000 gallons of water on the Angeles National Forest during wildfire training May 14.  
Photo by Senior Airman Nicholas Carzis



The 40th Infantry Division Band performs May 18 during the 54th annual Armed Forces Day Parade in Torrance, Calif. About 500 recruits for the various military branches enlisted in front of the crowd at the parade, and the 40th ID Band played multiple free concerts throughout the weekend.  
Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Inigo

# The West Point of public schools

The National Guard's Oakland Military Institute teaches academics and much more

By **SPC. JAMES WILTON**  
69th Public Affairs Detachment

The cool calm of a San Francisco Bay Area morning is broken by the roaring cadence of Oakland Military Institute (OMI) company slogans. Rallying cries like "Never say, 'I can't!'" fill the air, reminding cadets why they're there and what it means to be a member of OMI.

The college preparatory academy was founded in 2001 by then-Mayor Jerry Brown, who wanted to create a school that held its students to higher expectations of student achievement, conduct, character, patriotism and leadership than a traditional middle or high school. Brown knew the best way to do this was through a partnership with the California National Guard, whose military values already mirrored those ideals.

According to the school's mission statement, OMI provides, "a structured and rigorous academic program where cadets develop as leaders, scholars, critical thinkers and citizens. Through a military framework, the school inspires honor and pride within its cadets, cultivating lifelong re-

spect, confidence, physical fitness and wellness and appreciation for others."

Students apply to attend the academy before 6th grade and, if accepted, attend a summer camp where they are first introduced to OMI's guiding principles, including the Cadet Code of Honor: A cadet is respectful and will not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do.

Upon satisfactorily completing the summer camp, a cadet is allowed to attend the following semester at OMI as a pledge. Once there the pledges must demonstrate to the administration and their fellow students that they understand what is expected of them in the fields of leadership, academics and citizenship.

The students aren't alone on their journey, however. Dedicated Guard Soldiers like Sgt. Jason Fox, a cannon crew member for the Lodi-based Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, have made it their mission to train, assess and counsel (TAC) OMI students on their path to college.

"You become someone that the kids can approach with anything from everyday problems to academic problems," Fox said. "With the way the TAC team is designed, the student grows with the same team members.

"The teachers change over the years as the cadets progress through the different grades, but their TAC team stays the same, and that allows for a stronger relationship," he continued. "It allows us to really bond with the students and become a good mentor."

Each student joins a military-style company upon entering OMI and stays with that company until graduation. The company's TAC team meets with the cadets throughout the week in a classroom envi-

**continued on page 14**



Photo by SPC. James Wilton

## Ready to run

Cadets volunteer, participate in Oakland Running Festival

By **ALEAH and YERALDI**  
Oakland Military Institute Cadet Corps

Eight cadets from the Oakland Military Institute (OMI) volunteered to help set up for the fourth annual Oakland Running Festival in March. The festival is a dynamic event that encourages fitness not only among the citizens of Oakland but people from around the world who travel to attend it as well.

The OMI cadets spent more than eight hours setting up fences, tents and garbage receptacles March 22 to help create a clean and safe environment for the event.

"We set up every barrier, put up every banner and put out all of the trash receptacles for a race with 9,000 participants, and the cadets made a point to have fun doing the work," said Maj. Peter Lewis, who teaches OMI's Leaders of Character course and organized the outing. "The next day, we all ran the 5K and went to Zachary's Pizza for a celebration. We're going to do more of these."

Throughout the weekend, the cadets received compliments assuring them how much their work was appreciated.

"[Your students'] participation as volunteers on Saturday created the foundation that allowed more than 9,000 runners to participate in the fourth Oakland Running Festival," event coordinator Janet Novak of Corrigan Sports Enterprises wrote in a letter to OMI. "More often than not, runners are not aware of the tremendous preparation work required for them to reach the finish line at the end of a race.



**ABOVE: Oakland Military Institute (OMI) cadet Hasani helps set up the race area for the Oakland Running Festival on March 22. Hasani and seven other cadets volunteered March 22, then returned the next day to run the 5K. Photo by Maj. Peter Lewis** **BELOW LEFT: OMI cadets Yeraldi, left, Aleah, Nicollette, Vlad, Selena and Erin get psyched up to run the 5K on March 23. Photo by Lisa Vonnegut**

"Our staff was impressed with the way your students conducted themselves, followed directions and in general enhanced our ability to create the environment for both runners and spectators."

The next day, the OMI cadets returned to run the 5K race. It was an exciting event that challenged the cadets to push themselves and tested their endurance.

It was warm and beautiful outside, and the sun was high in the sky — a perfect day for such an amazing event. Many of the cadets' hearts began to race at the countdown to the start of the event, and their adrenaline started to rush as they grew more and more ecstatic.

At the finish line more than 3 miles later, a cadet runner exclaimed that completing the race was "a real rush," and most of the cadets said they would be eager to try a 5K again. They are also anxious to find out what event the group might take on next.

"It was real fun to volunteer. It wasn't a chore at all," said cadet Nicollette Brown. "It was a fun [outing]."



Photo by Gustavo



Photo by Arts

**TOP RIGHT: Oakland Military Institute staff member Sgt. Jason Fox shares a laugh with a cadet, Zebreun, on March 15. ABOVE: OMI cadet Van displays her talent during an art class in May. ABOVE LEFT: OMI cadets Lizette, left, and Sierra perform during a May drama class.**

# CNG opens 2nd STARBASE learning facility

Hands-on program in Los Alamitos teaches 5th graders science, technology, engineering and mathematics

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

A handful of 5th graders from Bushnell Way Elementary School in Los Angeles left their classroom May 22 to board a bus with Army National Guard Soldiers headed to a new facility that not only promised a different approach to learning but also promised to make magic happen.

A new Department of Defense STARBASE learning facility opened its doors that week on Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, and welcomed its first group of students, hopefully sparking in them a lifelong desire for learning.

"All the things they learn here, the people that they meet and the jobs that are introduced to them — that's what will remain with them," said Warrant Officer Candidate Stacey Hendrickson, director of the Los Alamitos STARBASE, who holds three teaching credentials. "We're giving them that tangible thing to hold onto that will keep them going when they want to give up. We're creating that magical moment for them that will give them the love of learning and make them persevere through the tough times."



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Inigo

**ABOVE:** Two STARBASE students join California National Guard leaders, STARBASE faculty and Speaker of the State Assembly John A. Perez in opening the STARBASE facility in Los Alamitos for business. **LEFT:** Students in the first class taught at the new STARBASE facility use remote control devices that enable them to immediately answer questions and check their work May 22 after a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new facility. The students typically attend Bushnell Way Elementary School in Los Angeles.

STARBASE, which stands for Science and Technology Academics Reinforcing Basic Aviation and Space Exploration, is aimed at teaching supplemental and innovative courses in science, technology, engineering and math, commonly known as STEM subjects. This is only the third facility of its kind in California, joining its National Guard predecessor in Sacramento and a Navy counterpart in San Diego.

STARBASE students learn subjects such as Newton's Laws, including the law of inertia and the law of force. Then they move to the laboratory to test the information they've learned.

To test some of Newton's theories, the students created a safety harness for an egg that was placed into a rocket glider, then tried to land it without damaging the egg. Later they measured how much force is needed to launch a rocket.

"We create an environment that's fun," explained Cynthia McGraa, an instructor at the Los Alamitos STARBASE. "The kids are screaming and are excited; they're learning, but having a fun time doing it. Then afterward we come back in and talk about what happened. We call it controlled chaos."

One additional instructor will be hired to work the two

classrooms at the new STARBASE facility, and eventually the Guard plans to build an additional facility with two more classrooms and hire two more instructors.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held May 22 to officially open the doors. National Guard and State Assembly leadership attended the ceremony, which included a facility walk-through, a reception and a light lunch.

John A. Perez, speaker of the California State Assembly, who happens to be a Bushnell Way Elementary School alumnus, welcomed the students and reminisced about his former instructors and days at the L.A. school. Perez said he is proud to be able to support a program that helps his former school and schools across Southern California.

"Our state is committed to education and to the opportunities that come with it," Perez said. "We owe it to our students to make certain that they have all that is required to have the best start in life."

"We put the emphasis on science and technology, engineering and math fields — fields that are vital to the future of our state," he continued. "For that reason my colleagues and I are very proud that STARBASE is up and running and that we were able to play a small part in providing the fund-

ing to expand this amazing program."

STARBASE is sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. The program brings groups of 5th grade students out of their traditional classrooms for one week each year and provides stimulating and challenging experiences in the STEM subjects at military bases across the nation.

California National Guard leaders at the ribbon-cutting included Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general; Brig. Gen. Sylvia Crockett, director of Strategic Communications; and Brig. Gen. (CA) James Gabrielli, Youth and Community Programs Task Force commander.

Cadets from the National Guard's Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy based in Los Alamitos also supported the event with a color guard, marking the first time students from those two Guard youth programs have interacted as part of a Guard event.

"We really are trying to create that magical moment for the kids so they'll want to be a lifelong learner," Hendrickson said May 22 in a new classroom lined with robotic equipment. She added that she believes the program will ignite a spark that will produce some of our country's next leaders.

# Grizzly cadets assist in public health exercise

By MAJ. JOHN OBERG  
Grizzly Youth Challenge Academy

Cadets from the National Guard's Grizzly Youth Challenge Academy

my took part in a public health exercise coordinated by the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department on May 2 at Camp San Luis Obispo, the Guard training

base that is also home to Grizzly Academy.

The exercise enabled the Public Health Department to practice response activities it would implement if a biological agent were accidentally or intentionally released into the environment.

In the exercise scenario, the Health Department needed to quickly distribute and administer antibiotics to the County's population.

"The goal of the exercise was for the staff to not only provide the most appropriate type and dose of medication but to also do it as efficiently and quickly as possible," said Michelle Shoresman, Health Department Emergency Preparedness Program manager.

Exercise objectives included training County and local personnel to

run a public point of distribution for the antibiotics. Grizzly Academy cadets played the role of citizens potentially exposed to *Bacillus anthracis*, the bacterium that causes anthrax.

The cadets were given either Skittles or M&Ms to simulate one of two drugs used to treat inhalation anthrax: ciprofloxacin and doxycycline.

"I played the role of a 54-year-old with an allergy to doxycycline. The nurse identified my allergy and dispensed ciprofloxacin instead," a cadet named Matthew said. "The health personnel were very helpful and gave instructions clearly."

Dr. Penny Borenstein, San Luis Obispo County health officer, said the exercise helped prepare the County for a pandemic or other

biological threat to the public's health.

"Exercises like these are always a great way to foster the ongoing communication and coordination that's so valuable to response when disaster strikes," she said.

Lt. Col. (CA) Joseph Righello, Camp SLO commander, added that the exercise was an excellent example of intergovernmental cooperation.

"Camp San Luis Obispo is closely linked to the community, and we are pleased to be able to host activities that enhance training for public health workers and provide Grizzly cadets with an opportunity to serve the community," he said. "This was a cost-effective way to accomplish training, which is always a key part of our mission."



Photo by Grizzly Youth Challenge Academy

**Mia, a Grizzly Youth Challenge Academy cadet, plays the role of a San Luis Obispo County resident potentially infected with the bacterium that causes anthrax during a County Public Health Department exercise May 2.**

# Predator squadron gets 'total deployment experience'

By MASTER SGT. JULIE AVEY  
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

The sun rose over the desert as Staff Sgt. Joshua Sexton, a crew chief for the 163rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (AMS), stepped to the flightline, donned his headset and prepared to conduct preflight checks on an MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft. Sexton and his crew performed forward, aft and wingtip functional checks, started up the engines and prepared to launch the Predator from the Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville.

That launch and a series of other training sorties originating from Victorville were part of a quarterly training exercise in February intended to maintain the unit's proficiency standards and develop the skills of the unit's Airmen.

"Operation Victor Drill provides us a unique opportunity to train like we fight," said Maj. Keith Krolczyk. "[It] is a total deployment experience, beginning Friday and ending Sunday afternoon when we return to home base, utilizing all of the logistics necessary for the troop movement."

Prior to each launch, a crew chief ensured the Predator was fully operational. Once their inspection was complete, the crew chief conducted a final assessment while communicating over a headset with the pilot, who was performing the items on their pre-launch checklist.

"Generally what [crew chiefs] look for are any anomalies



Senior Airman Manuel Holguin, left, and Airman 1st Class Michael Muela of the 163rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron conduct pre-flight checks on an MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft before a Feb. 8 training flight in Victorville.

with the flight controls and to ensure the overall integrity of the airframe," Master Sgt. Christopher Stout explained. "They ensure all flight controls operate as designed, check the brakes and tires as well as check the pitot [instrument system] and lens heaters are operational."

Some of the experienced crew members headed straight to work once they received an order. But for traditional, part-time Guardsmen who serve mainly during training weekends, this was a time for on-the-job-training. The exercise enabled supervisors to mentor and share their knowledge with up-and-coming Airmen.

"I have witnessed traditional Guardsmen leading the way and taking on tasks," said Tech Sgt. Michael Astolfo, a crew chief for the 163rd. "It is rewarding to see Airmen train and know their job [and] take on greater responsibilities."

Staff Sgt. Dustin Cornell said he valued the hands-on training provided by Operation Victor Drill as well as the opportunity to familiarize himself with the Predator.

"Having more time to physically touch an aircraft is always good for anyone because it gives us the chance to train and expand our skills," he said. "I [also] had the chance to improve on my leadership skills since I was put in charge of packing up an aircraft during the exercise."

The AMS includes specialists in several fields, including avionics, weapons and the communications systems that enable the Predator to be piloted remotely.

"OVD allowed communications personnel to experience the launch-and-recovery-element facet of the mission more thoroughly than a normal training mission," Tech. Sgt. Cameron Holman said. "It allowed us to see the full mission, from start to finish, in the mission's full context."

The training also helped unify the Squadron members as they worked together to achieve their goals. "During the exercise our members continued to increase teamwork amongst all shops and make us that much more ready for the mission," Cornell said.

## 'West Point' from page 12

ronment to provide instruction in subjects like leadership, citizenship and health and wellness. These sessions are on top of the



The California National Guard's Oakland Military Institute (OMI) is a first-of-its-kind public charter school based in a military environment for students in grades 6-12.

cadets' typical academic classes, which are handled by civilian teachers.

Unlike other military schools, OMI is not a private institution. It is available to anyone, including lower-income families that wouldn't normally think they could send their child to this type of academy, Fox said. As long as a student is willing to make the effort, OMI will give them the opportunity.

As with most military schools, discipline is very important at OMI. The school has a low incidence of fights and other disruptive behaviors, which makes for a safe learning environment.

"This is the West Point of high schools — the West Point of the West Coast," Fox said. "Through our discipline process, we get rid of the disruptive students. The ones that don't want to follow our discipline guidelines don't last long."

"Just because a student has good grades doesn't mean we are going to keep them," Fox continued. "Academics are important, but we strive to teach them more than just book smarts, and the students know this coming in. They make a decision to come here and follow our structure."

Personal responsibility is important at OMI. The decision to attend the school lies more with the student than with their parents. During the application process, the

admissions officer makes a point to ask every candidate if he or she thinks OMI is a good fit for them.

That personal responsibility doesn't stop at the admissions desk. It is reinforced every day at OMI, where each student is required to keep a daily journal. In it they track their daily schedule — everything from classes to afterschool activities like sports or clubs.

The journals are also an integral part of a unique approach to health education: They are used as a health and wellness record in which students detail their physical activities, diet and sleep habits.

"Our take on health education is something I have never seen before," Fox said. "I mean, I didn't have to record what I ate everyday for my [physical education] teacher. But it works and it makes the students more aware of what they're putting into their bodies."

While personal responsibility is important at OMI, leadership requires greater responsibility. Based on a student's performance at OMI, he or she may be offered a student leadership position ranging from team leader or squad leader to first sergeant or commander, both at the company and school-wide level. The student leaders do everything from run the morning formation to look after their fellow students, making sure they stay on the right track.

This approach instills more than leadership principles; it makes the school seem like one big family. Fox recalled a time when a cadet died because of a heart condition. Though it was a solemn time, Fox was comforted by the strength the school showed.

"It was amazing seeing the whole school come together," he said. "You could see and feel the support coming from everyone — the teachers and the cadre and the student leaders alike. The students knew that they had someone to turn to no matter where they looked."

The ultimate goal of OMI is to send its students off to college and see them succeed. Everything the school does is geared toward that ideal, and it's succeeding, as illustrated by the fact that 80 percent of students from OMI's first graduating class were accepted to a four-year university, and every class since has had similar success. Many of those students return to OMI to speak about their college experiences, and their stories often sound very similar.

"A lot of students say, 'I see the maturity level of kids coming out of normal high schools compared to what I have, and I know that I am a step ahead of them,'" Fox said. "Not only does that help my self-confidence, but it allows me to focus on my schoolwork and succeed."

# Panther to employers: Hire Guard workers

By **MASTER SGT. JULIE AVEY**  
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

Before hitting the streets with thundering sounds on a racetrack in downtown Long Beach in April, J.R. Hildebrand set out to educate employers about National Guard Soldiers.

Hildebrand drives the National Guard-sponsored IndyCar, and with his team, Panther Racing, he reaches out to employers through a program called Operation: Hire Our Guard. On race mornings, the team hosts local business and military leaders to discuss the importance of hiring service members.

"[Guard members] fight for us, and it is our turn to fight for them," Hildebrand said April 21 as part of a presentation to employers during the three-day Grand Prix of Long Beach.

Battling unemployment among veterans has been a key element of Panther Racing's partnership with the Guard, and according to the team, 4,300 Guard members have found employment through Operation: Hire Our Guard.

John Barnes, Panther Racing managing partner and CEO, said more than 50 employers attended the April 21 presentation, "The Road Map to Help."

"Our partnership with Panther Racing has proven to be invaluable," said Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the California National Guard. "They don't just fly the Guard logo. Owner John Barnes, driver J.R. Hildebrand and the entire Panther Racing team are fully committed to and passionate about Guard members and their families."



Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

**Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Cowie of the California National Guard's 1113th Transportation Company hangs out with the Panther Racing pit crew after she was honored by Panther as a Hometown Hero during a pre-race ceremony at the Grand Prix of Long Beach IndyCar event. Panther's other pre-race activities included speaking to employers about the importance of hiring qualified National Guardsmen, many of whom are currently out of work.**

Operation: Hire Our Guard is a Panther Racing initiative to educate business leaders about the increasing unemployment crisis facing the National Guard and to connect business leaders with Guard members.

"We feel this is an opportunity we have been given," Barnes said. "We have a good relationship with employers and want to help provide opportunities to National Guardsmen."

Unemployment is estimated at 13 percent in the National Guard and 30 percent for Guard veterans in the 18-to-30 age group.

In total there are about 65,000 unemployed National Guard members, which the Guard views as a potential readiness issue.

"We feel that by providing jobs, we give the opportunity [for the Guard] to retain Soldiers," Barnes said. "Considering the cost it takes to train these individuals, it is very important to the Guard's Recruiting and Retention Command to keep Soldiers on board."

The California National Guard's Work for Warriors (WFW) program, which was established in March 2012, has partnered with Panther Racing in the mission to find

employment for California's unemployed Guard members. Work for Warriors has so far placed more than 1,100 service members in jobs.

"Our adjutant general views employment as a readiness issue," said Capt. Aaron Roggow, WFW program manager. "Historically high unemployment and underemployment in our ranks has been negatively affecting morale, training and accountability. The Work for Warriors program was developed to solve this readiness problem."

Panther also partners with the National Guard Youth Challenge program, which intervenes in the lives of 16- to 18-year-old high school dropouts and at-risk students, producing graduates with the values, skills, education and self-discipline to succeed as productive adults.

Panther Racing and the National Guard Youth Foundation announced a new initiative, the Racing Toward Success Scholarship Program during the Grand Prix of Long Beach and presented \$2,000 scholarships to Breeana Skidmore and Christian Klein. Both recipients graduated from the Los Alamitos, Calif.-based Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy in December and will attend college in the fall.

"We've been associated with the National Guard Youth Challenge program since 2008, and the Racing Toward Success scholarships are another way we want to help support the second chance many of these cadets have earned," Barnes said.

For more on Work for Warriors, visit the CNG website, [www.calguard.ca.gov](http://www.calguard.ca.gov), and click the "Jobs" tab at the top of the page. For info on Operation: Hire Our Guard, see [www.pantherracing.com](http://www.pantherracing.com).

## Haramalis assumes Camp Roberts command

By **MASTER SGT. CARI BEETHAM**  
Camp Roberts Maneuver Training Center

Col. John N. Haramalis assumed command of Camp Roberts, Calif., on Saturday, April 6, becoming the ninth garrison commander since the National Guard took possession of the training site in 1971.

Haramalis previously served as commander of the 100th Troop Command and has deployed to Afghanistan, Kosovo and Bosnia. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in international relations, a juris doctorate and a master of laws degree in international law. Haramalis is also a graduate of the Naval War College, the Army Command and General Staff College, the Counterintelligence Officer Course, and the Command and Staff Service School.

Haramalis succeeded Col. Barbara A. Nuismer, who had served as garrison commander since October 2009. Nuismer was charged with restoring Camp Roberts, which had many dilapidated World War II-era buildings when she took over. Nuismer oversaw Phase I of the installation's transformation and is credited with building a quality pre-mobilization



Photo by Susanne Thomas

**Col. John N. Haramalis, left, receives the Camp Roberts guidon from Brig. Gen. Keith D. Jones on April 6, signifying his assumption of command.**

training center that has significantly benefitted service members training on Camp Roberts.

Haramalis will oversee Phase II of the five-year, \$102 million renovation project, which includes building demolition, barracks renovation, utilities upgrades and new range construction. He said he is energized to continue the momentum from Nuismer's term and looks forward to restoring Camp Roberts to its former glory.

## 'Special Forces' from page 9

Upon completing the ruck march, the candidates cooled down with a final test, swimming two laps in the base pool in full uniform. But even after passing every event, candidates still had to be approved by the selection board.

"There is no set number or limit to how many candidates pass. All we are looking for are [candidates] who we think have what it takes to be Special Forces," a 5-19th Soldier said.

"I would highly encourage [any interested participant] to make sure he is in the best physical shape," Holt said. "Today was no joke. Definitely physically and mentally exhausting, and you need to be prepared."

Out of the original 32 candidates, three were approved to continue to selection. But even those who didn't make it were encouraged not to give up.

"This is not a setback; this is an opportunity for you yourself to see your shortcomings, where you can improve, and make yourself better," Hamilton said.

"[Not passing] gives me something to look forward to," Holt said. "I know the event now; there's nothing that is going to surprise me. I can train harder in the [areas] I didn't make the cut in and then work toward that for future assessments."

With the next Safari scheduled for September, all qualified individuals are encouraged to apply. For more info, including contact information for recruiters, visit [www.calguard.ca.gov](http://www.calguard.ca.gov).

"This is one of the reasons people want to join the military," Hamilton said. "They want to be elite. They want that Special Forces tab and that green beret."

# 40th ID 'pucksters' fight in virtual space

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

It's only fitting that the 40th Infantry Division Plans Cell used the Battle Simulation Center on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., to conduct an internal Warfighter exercise April 10-14 in preparation for its large-scale Warfighter on Fort Leavenworth, Kan., this summer. Not only does the proximity make sense, a mere hour's drive from 40th ID headquarters at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, but a handful of the Plans Cell members are former Marines who are no strangers to Camp Pendleton.

"When the general says, 'We speak Marine,' he means it," said Lt. Col. John McBrearty, the Plans Cell officer, who was stationed at Camp Pendleton 30 years ago.

Though the 40th ID's former Marines saw the exercise as a bit of a homecoming, they knew it would take more than just "speaking Marine" to succeed in their roles as "pucksters." During World War II, the term puckster was borrowed from hockey, since back then warfighters would push wooden blocks across large maps to show units' locations on the battlefield.

Nowadays pucksters engage the simulated battlefield via technologically advanced software. At Camp Pendleton, the 40th ID pucksters ran simultaneous Marine and Army computer-based online battle simulations to engage the main tactical operations center at Camp Roberts, Calif.



**Lt. Col. John McBrearty, 40th Infantry Division Plans Cell officer, left, and his deputy, Maj. Dennis Nowicki, discuss best practices April 15 outside the Battle Simulation Center on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif. One day earlier, the Plans Cell had completed an exercise at the Simulation Center that prepared its troops for a large-scale Warfighter exercise to be held on Fort Leavenworth, Kan., later this year.**

"This doesn't replace the Warfighter [in Kansas]; it's just getting us ready to go to Warfighter, as it provides the same type of tactical and technical issues that we would have to work through during the real thing," explained Maj. Kevin McMahan, the Plans Cell's night shift leader.

For the April exercise, Guardsmen used the Marine Tactical Warfare Simulation system at Pendleton and then uploaded that information into the Army's Command Post of

the Future system. As the two systems do not speak to each other directly, each role player was required to run each platform simultaneously.

Both systems are designed to test the commander and their staff with a command-and-control device, enabling them to practice standard operating procedures during real-time engagements and movements. During the training scenarios, separate operators act as the opposing forces, challeng-

ing the Direct Air Support Center, pilots and artillery batteries responding to tactical traffic on the communication nets.

Beyond the battle simulations, the pucksters also worked through facets like communication and logistics during the April exercise.

"I call it a success," said Maj. Dennis Nowicki, the Plans Cell's day shift leader. "We were able to communicate with the [command post], working around communications issues. Most importantly, this gave us real-time simulations of battlefield effects and the ability to rehearse key events and parts of the plan."

Off the simulated battlefield, aka the real world, tactical communications were brought to the pucksters by the 40th ID Signal Company Detachment out of Lancaster, Calif., which set up its Joint Network Node and its Satellite Transportable Terminal for voice and data capabilities.

"It's a good learning process to work up to before the actual Warfighter," said Staff Sgt. Eric Rotondo of the Signal Company Detachment. "It's important as it helps everyone keep up on their skills. They're perishable skills, so if you don't use them, you lose them."

The Division is scheduled to complete its Warfighter exercise on Fort Leavenworth in June. If for any reason it cannot make it to Kansas, the Camp Pendleton simulation center would be the next best thing, according to Division leadership.

## Junior NCOs take first steps as warrior leaders

By **SGT. IAN M. KUMMER** and  
**PFC. BRIANNE ROUDEBUSH**  
69th Public Affairs Detachment

The California Army National Guard's newest generation of trained junior enlisted leaders returned home April 26 from their first level of instruction as noncommissioned officers (NCO): the Warrior Leader Course (WLC).

The 17-day course given at Camp Williams, Utah, by the Utah Army National Guard's 640th Regional Training Institute gave Soldiers from around the nation skills needed to be more effective leaders and to help their home units maintain Army standards.

"Coming through WLC [shows students] the way things should be done, but it's up to them to use these tools and resources and apply them to their units when they get back," said Staff Sgt. Jeff Jones, an instructor for the 640th RTI. "Hopefully they're taking what they've learned here back and applying it at the unit."

Like any other Army course, WLC has minimum standards that need to be achieved in order to graduate, but in the end, how much the students get out of the course is entirely dependent on individual effort.

"You only get out of it what you put into it," Jones said. "Some people put more effort into this than others, and those are the

ones who go back home and apply it."

The students learned a variety of tactical skills like land navigation and squad movements, and also learned administrative tasks like how to give a counseling statement, draft an award recommendation and write a memorandum for record.

"I think I will be able to pass a lot of this knowledge on to other Soldiers," said Spc. Nick Lebeau, a signal support systems specialist with the 132nd Engineer Company, 579th Engineer Battalion, out of Redding, Calif. "I want to teach people how to motivate Soldiers, to care about Soldiers, to

listen to Soldiers, to mentor them and teach them how to progress in their careers in the Army."

Unlike in previous years, the distance-learning-based Structured Self Development Level 1 course is now a prerequisite for Soldiers to complete prior to attending the WLC.

"Now that [Structured Self Development Level 1] is a requirement, there are a lot more people picking up and understanding what they are going into," Jones said. "It gives them the information that will be covered a lot more in depth here."

Communication is a two-way street, and the WLC staff at Camp Williams encourages students to provide input on ways to improve the curriculum.

"Without finding out what went well and things that need to be improved, we don't really know what is going to work the best," Jones said.

In the end, the true yardstick of the course's effectiveness will be the professionalism of its graduates, he added.

"As a leader, your success is based on how well your subordinates do," Jones said.

**"I want to teach people how to motivate Soldiers, to care about Soldiers, to listen to Soldiers, to mentor them and teach them how to progress in their careers in the Army."**

—Spc. Nick Lebeau  
132nd Engineer Company



**Soldiers graduate from the Warrior Leader Course at Camp Williams, Utah, on April 25.**

# 224th, CSMR hit the road

## Reserve, Guard cross-training is part of new pilot program

By **SGT. GLEN BAKER**  
224th Sustainment Brigade

California State Military Reserve (CSMR) Soldiers took advantage of a rare opportunity to work with Soldiers of the Long Beach-based 224th Sustainment Brigade, California Army National Guard, during driver training May 5 at the 224th's armory.

Troops from the CSMR's 3rd Brigade out of Los Alamitos have embedded with the 224th each of the past two months during the 224th's regular training as part of a pilot program intended to provide assistance to the Guard unit and create an opportunity for the two organizations' Soldiers to cross-train.

"They are learning how to drive the [medium tactical vehicle], which is the up-armored vehicle expand-o-van," said Sgt. Alfredo Rosas of the 224th, who was the noncommissioned officer in charge during the driver training. "They are getting familiar with the vehicle and they are learning how all the equipment works, how to tilt the bed and how to take down the tire."

Rosas, who has been conducting drivers' training for four years, said working with the CSMR troops is his favorite part of the training. The CSMR troops are volunteers who support the National Guard mission. They are unpaid, except when called to emergency state active duty.

"I liked learning from them. They have a lot of civilian experience and they're offering it to us," he said. "They don't get paid, they buy their own uniforms. I'm very happy that I'm working with this type of personnel."

Formed in 1848 and headquartered in Sacramento, the CSMR consists of citizens with a wide variety of skills. Many of its members are former members of the California Army and Air National Guard or other branches of the U.S. military.

Spc. (CA) Martin Garcia of 3rd Battalion, who is also an officer in the Oxnard County Police Department, said the 224th's hands-on approach to the training was effective and enjoyable.

"We could sit here all day long and look at the [training manuals] ... and they're confusing until you sit in front of the actual vehicle that you're dealing with, and then it makes sense," he said. "We're doing the familiarization and the pre-maintenance inspection ... and checking all the fluids. ... I have a lot of gratitude for the 224th for bringing us in with open arms."

The CSMR troops have previously worked with other Guard units, acquiring valuable skills during search-and-rescue instruction, small-arms training and other courses. Sgt. 1st Class (CA) Mike Nguyen of 3rd Battalion said his Soldiers "just light up" when they receive instruction from Guard trainers.

"[The CSMR troops] are enthusiastic about this training and about being able to rub shoulders with the Guard and



**ABOVE:** Spc. Martin Garcia (CA) of 3rd Battalion, California State Military Reserve, operates a medium tactical vehicle May 5 during training with the California National Guard's 224th Sustainment Brigade at the 224th's armory in Long Beach. **LEFT:** Sgt. Alfredo Rosas of the 224th raises the cab of a medium tactical vehicle during the May 5 training.

get to know the Soldiers," he said. "My NCOs have been pushing for this training. ... They love learning how to use the equipment."



Photos by Sgt. Glen Baker

# CSMR vigilance saves hypothermic mud runner

By **CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 (CA)**  
**RICK DE LA TORRE**  
California State Military Reserve

Military training provides Soldiers and Airmen with skills that are useful during traumatic circumstances on the battlefield or elsewhere, such as if someone stops breathing or suffers a massive loss of blood. It also engrains an awareness of people that can help one spot a person who might be in trouble in a less obvious way.

California State Military Reserve (CSMR) Soldiers put that training to use April 14 during the Down & Dirty Mud Run at the Castaic Lake State Recreation Area in Los Angeles County. A six-man recruiting team for the CSMR had set up a display area near the finish line of the race, which is part of a national series of events that tests runners' strength and stamina on a muddy military-style obstacle course.

The end of the course includes a 100-meter trudge through waist-high lake water followed by a crawl through a mud pit near the finish line. Once they have crossed the finish line, the runners walk through a car-wash-like device that sprays them with cold water to remove the mud.

At about noon, when the weather had become noticeably warm, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (CA) Thomas Murphy noticed a runner exhibiting symptoms of hypothermia near the CSMR display. Although

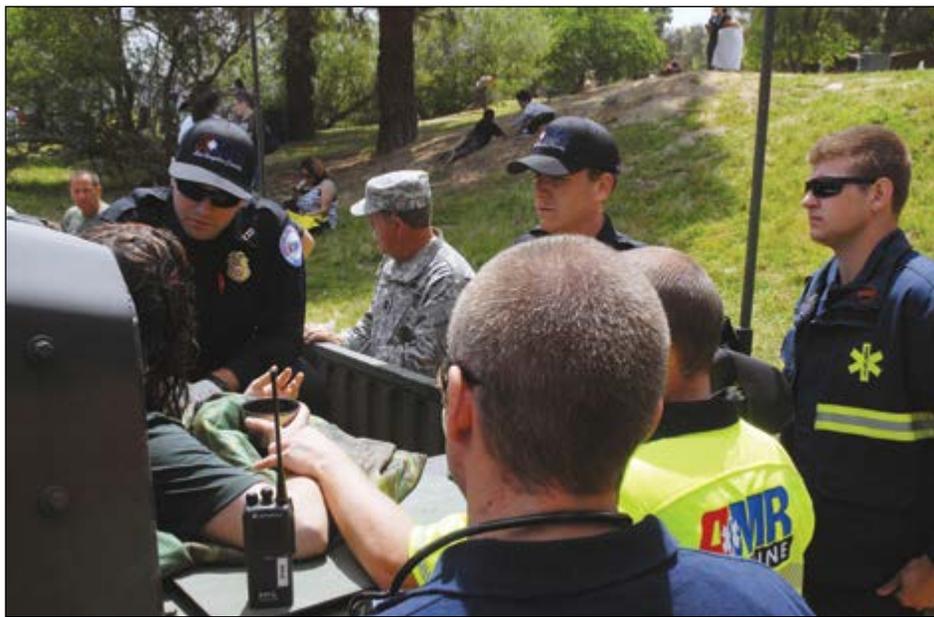


Photo by Staff Sgt. (CA) Gene Arias

**Paramedics tend to a Down & Dirty Mud Run participant who exhibited symptoms of hypothermia near a California State Military Reserve recruiting display April 14 at Castaic Lake. CSMR recruiters had spotted the patient's symptoms and provided first aid until the paramedics arrived.**

many runners were shivering from the car-wash spray they had just received, this particular woman was experiencing violent shivering and teeth-chattering, lack of muscle coordination, slow and labored body movements and mild confusion. She was also pale.

Murphy, a former Army helicopter pilot who recently had taken a Combat Life-

saver course taught by CSMR personnel, knew what to do. He had the runner placed on the rear of one of the team's Humvees, which was facing the sun and was warm to the touch. A poncho liner that had been used as a tablecloth for the CSMR display was then wrapped around the victim to retain her body heat. Team members then brought her a hot beverage and sought help from a nearby paramedic booth.

First Sergeant (CA) Jerry Shultz said hundreds of other runners and passersby had seen the woman experiencing symptoms of hypothermia, but nobody stopped to help until the CSMR stepped in.

"I am sure none of them even considered the possibility that someone could suffer from hypothermia while in the hot sun on a spring day in Southern California when everyone was in shorts and tank tops," he said. "Yes, most of them were shivering, but this lady had other symptoms that went unnoticed to everyone — except for Chief Murphy and then us."

It turns out the woman has thyroid cancer, which affects her body's ability to maintain a constant core temperature. When the paramedics reached the Humvee, they took the woman's vital signs, thanked the CSMR team for their help and took her to their treatment area.

This incident was not the first time CSMR recruiters have unexpectedly jumped into action in recent years. CSMR recruiters have provided first aid at least three other times in the past few years when someone fainted, fell or was seriously hurt in a traffic accident, Schultz said.

"Soldiers always need to be thinking out of the box and be ready. We need to be observant," Shultz said. "We are in uniform and people expect us to take action. It can happen anytime."

# 95th CST supports marathon security

By **CAPT. NATHAN A. SERENA**  
95th Civil Support Team

In the wake of the bombing that killed three and injured more than 260 at the Boston Marathon in April, local, state and federal authorities including the CNG's 95th Civil Support Team stepped up security efforts surrounding the Big Sur International Marathon, which was held April 28, less than two weeks after its East Coast predecessor.

The 95th CST often supports security operations at events like last year's Major League Baseball World Series in San Francisco, NASCAR events at Sonoma Raceway and PGA Tour golf events, but this was the first marathon the 95th CST had supported in years.

"The aftermath of what happened in Boston put our incident command team on high alert," said Brent Sepulvado, one of



Staff Sgt. Joshua Gould of the 95th Civil Support Team, right, discusses the CST's equipment and capabilities with CST member Sgt. Alex Zonio and a representative from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office before the 28th annual Big Sur International Marathon.

Photo by Capt. Nathan A. Serena

the Big Sur International Marathon's event coordinators.

The CST conducted hazardous material

vulnerability assessments along the race course in a coordinated effort with personnel and dogs from the Monterey and San Mateo counties' sheriff's offices, state High-

way Patrol, state Parks Department and the FBI. The interagency coalition formed a joint hazard assessment team, or JHAT.

"The 95th CST has performed JHAT missions in coordination with local responders for years at many different types of high-profile events, and I am confident we will be ready to respond in the event of another attack like the one in Boston," said Lt. Col Michael Sather, commander of the 95th.

The 28th annual Big Sur International Marathon hosted 400 elite runners who also participated in the Boston Marathon. Protecting the runners and spectators along the 26.2-mile route from Big Sur to Carmel required the coordinated efforts of 10 government agencies and 3,000 volunteers.

"This mission makes for long days, but after Boston, our presence here is justified," Staff Sgt. Joshua Gould of the CST said.

## 163rd team runs 11th marathon

By **LT. COL. BRENDA HENDRICKSEN**  
163rd Reconnaissance Wing

Five members of the California National Guard spent St Patrick's Day running from Dodger stadium to the Santa Monica Pier as part of the 28th annual Los Angeles Marathon and the 11th annual participation of the Guard's 163rd Reconnaissance Wing.

Also for the 11th straight year, the Wing's race team acted as a human chain at the starting line, holding back 24,000 runners who were positioned directly behind the elite male marathoners (the elite women started 18 minutes before the men). The CNG group locked arms about five minutes before the starting gun and held their ground against the eager mass of runners.

The race kicked off at 7:25 a.m., which meant the team members needed to be in place at about 6 a.m. They were joined by the Blue Eagles Honor Guard — a team of Airmen from Edwards Air Force Base, Los Angeles Air Station and the 163rd's home, March Air Reserve Base — which presented the U.S. and California flags just prior to the start of the race.

In addition to three Airmen from the 163rd, two members of the California Army National Guard traveled to Los Angeles to participate in the run: Chief Warrant Officer 5 Artavia Edwards and Staff Sgt. Vincent Orosco. Both Soldiers work full-time at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento and are members of the California National Guard Marathon Team.

"I felt great. I actually ran the second half faster than the first," said Edwards, who has run the L.A. Marathon three times and has run more than 50 marathons overall. "Being here as part of the [163rd] team was fun."

First-time marathoner Senior Airman Fabio Silveira, an MQ-1 Predator sensor operator for the 163rd, finished the race in less than four hours, though he had never run more than 10 miles before the race.

"I attribute my success to the crowd," he said. "The positive energy was amazing. I feel blessed to have had the chance to represent the 163rd and I'll be looking forward to improving my time next year."

In addition to the service members, the 163rd team included 18 friends and family members of 163rd Airmen. All 23 team members finished the race, with times ranging from 3.5 hours to 5.5 hours.

Runners interested in joining the team next year should begin preparing themselves mentally and physically and contact the Wing at 951-655-2556.

## CNG youths, Soldiers turn out for SLO races

By **1ST LT. SARAH L. COOLEY**  
223rd Regional Training Institute

In the wee hours of Sunday, April 6, almost 3,000 people descended on the streets of San Luis Obispo (SLO), Calif., to take part in or support the second annual SLO Marathon and Half Marathon, including five National Guard Soldiers and 60 cadets from the Guard's Grizzly Youth Challenge Academy at Camp SLO.

The run started at 6 a.m. for the marathoners and 6:30 for those running the half marathon. As the sun began to rise and cut through the heavy fog of another perfect Central Coast morning, the runners made their way through the scenic hills of the Edna Valley Wine Country and back through downtown San Luis Obispo before crossing the finish line at the Madonna Inn.

Volunteers and supporters lined the course, cheering the runners along, including scores of Grizzly cadets who volunteered to direct traffic and aid runners. Local Reserve, Guard and ROTC units manned water and aid stations.

The SLO Marathon, a qualifier for the Boston Marathon, presents a difficult 26.2-mile course with rolling hills that challenge runners.

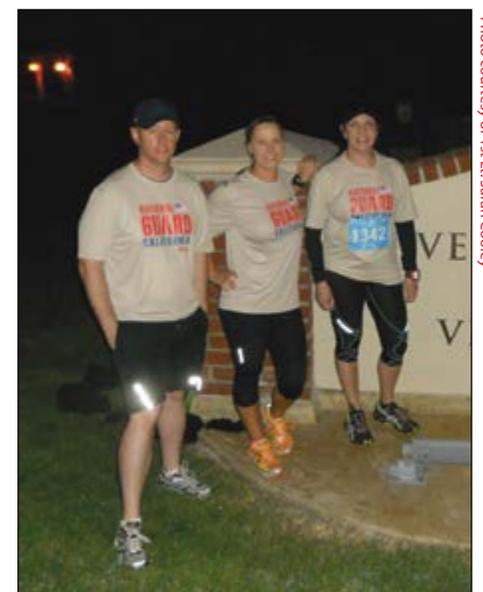
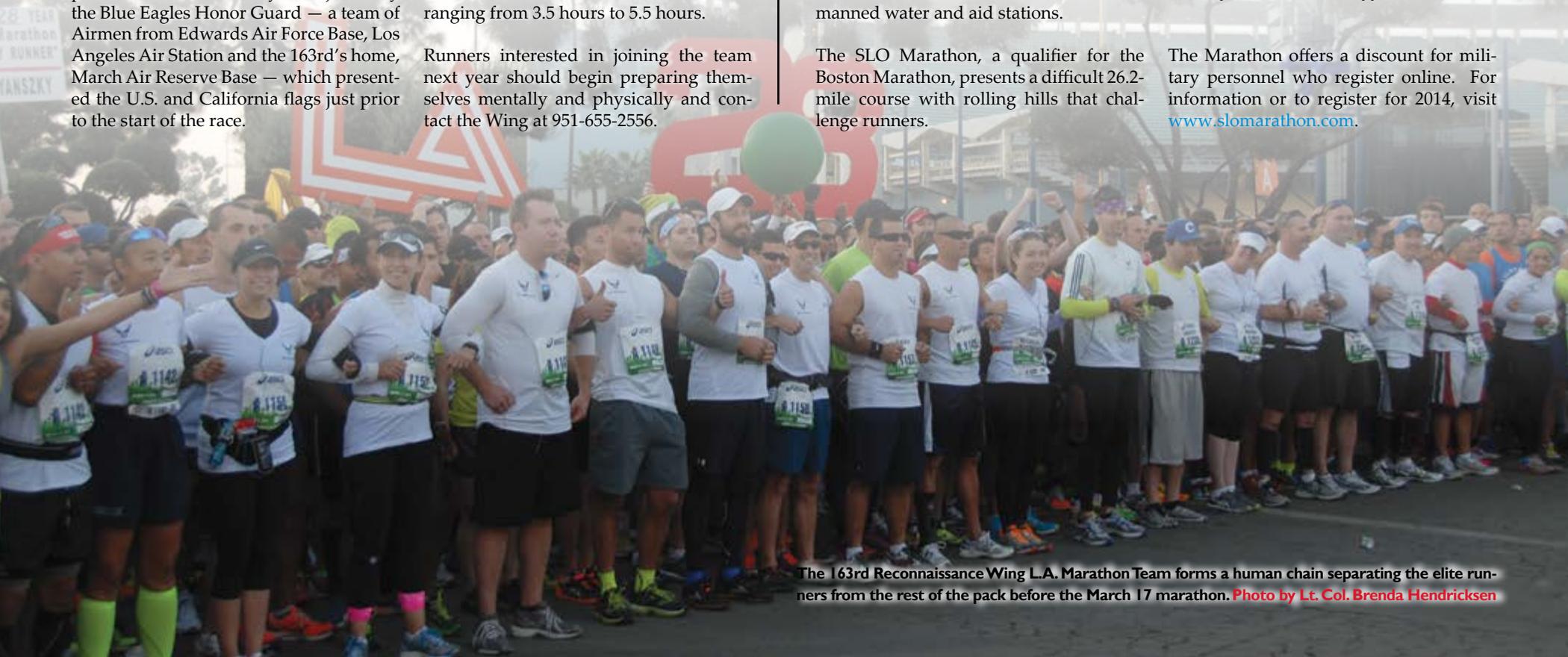


Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Sarah Cooley

Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Brannagan, 1st Lt. Sarah Cooley and Lt. Col. Nicole Balliet shake off the early morning cobwebs April 6 before the San Luis Obispo Marathon and Half Marathon. Five CNG members participated, and 60 cadets from the CNG's Grizzly Youth Challenge Academy volunteered to support the event.

The Marathon offers a discount for military personnel who register online. For information or to register for 2014, visit [www.slomarathon.com](http://www.slomarathon.com).



The 163rd Reconnaissance Wing L.A. Marathon Team forms a human chain separating the elite runners from the rest of the pack before the March 17 marathon. Photo by Lt. Col. Brenda Hendricksen



Senior Master Sgt. Arthur Meinke of the 146th Airlift Wing Control Flight uses night-vision goggles to help land a C-17 Globemaster airplane on an improvised runway March 18 at Fort Hunter-Liggett, Calif., during a joint exercise with active duty Airmen. Photo by Senior Airman Nicholas Carzis

## Pledge to start saving money

The Military Saves program is promoting a National Guard Summer Savings Drive throughout June, encouraging Guard members to take the Military Saves Pledge: "I will help myself by saving money, reducing debt and building wealth over time. I will help my family and my country by encouraging other Americans to build wealth, not debt." Military Saves has been a part of the Department of Defense's Financial Readiness Campaign since 2003. Savers who take the pledge gain access to a range of financial resources that can help them with their debt reduction and savings goals. They also can receive a monthly e-newsletter with military-specific financial information. Since 2007, more than 158,000 Guard members have taken the Pledge at [www.MilitarySaves.org](http://www.MilitarySaves.org).

## CMD supports nursing mothers

The California Military Department earned a Mother Baby Friendly Workplace Award from the Breastfeeding Coalition of Greater Sacramento and State Assemblyman Richard Pan for establishing a private room at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento that nursing mothers can utilize throughout the workday. The Military Department received the award along with six other employers May 13 on the Capitol steps.

"Healthy families make for a healthy Military Department," said Col. Robert Spano, director of the Military Department Joint Staff. "So in service to the military and civilian moms in the Department, it was an easy decision to set up this quiet room for nursing mothers."

## Witham presented Order of California

Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general of the California National Guard, presented the Order of California to Brig. Gen. James C. Witham during an April 23 ceremony at the Pentagon. Witham, who is now deputy director of the Air National Guard, earned the award for exceptionally meritorious service as the commander of the California Air National Guard from Nov. 15, 2011, through Nov. 15, 2012. Baldwin said the Order is the highest award given by the Cal Guard, presented mainly to senior leaders who have made a profound difference in the strategic direction of the force. Witham's leadership instilled a culture that embraced the Air Force's core values, Baldwin said. Furthermore, Witham's strategic perspective, decisiveness, and command and staff experience ensured the California Air National Guard was able to meet operational challenges and implement Total Force Integration initiatives that contributed to the Guard's success.

## Hessheimer new 163rd commander

Col. Dana A. Hessheimer was named commander of the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing, succeeding Col. Randall R. Ball, who now serves as assistant adjutant general, Air, for the California National Guard. Hessheimer began his military career in 1988. He joined the Air National Guard in Nebraska in 1994, then in 2000 transferred to the 163rd Refueling Wing in California, where he flew the KC-135 Stratotanker. In 2007, Hessheimer was among the first 163rd Airmen to qualify on the MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft and was instrumental in the Wing's conversion to the Predator mission. He is a decorated veteran of numerous overseas deployments including Operation Desert Storm.

## DO YOU KNOW...

### how to appeal an evaluation report?

Guard Soldiers who wish to appeal an Officer Evaluation Report (OER) or Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report (NCOER) may seek an initial means of redress through a commander's inquiry; the results may be used in support of an appeal. All appeals for OERs and substantive appeals for NCOERs are sent to the National Guard Bureau. Administrative appeals for NCOERs are addressed to the enlisted personnel manager in the Soldier's home state and then forwarded to the National Guard Bureau. Commanders at all levels are required to ensure Soldiers receive assistance, if requested, in preparing and submitting appeals.

Administrative appeals will be considered regardless of the time that has elapsed. However, substantive appeals must be submitted within three years. The Army Special Review Board will not accept appeals from Soldiers who are no longer on active duty or Guard members. If a Soldier fails to submit an appeal within three years or an appeal is denied, the appellant may seek additional evidence and submit a new appeal, or apply to the Army Board for Correction of Military Records.

An Air Guard members who discovers an administrative error before an evaluation has become a matter of record should bring it to the attention of their Military Personnel Section or the records custodian. For non-minor errors, Airmen are required to submit their appeal within three years; a waiver must be obtained to appeal an evaluation that is more than three years old.

There are two steps in the Air Force redress process. First, submit an appeal to the Evaluation Reports Appeal Board through the Virtual Personnel Center-Guard and Reserve (VPC-GR) website or the Virtual Military Personnel Flight (VMPF) website, which can be accessed through the Air Force Portal, [www.my.af.mil](http://www.my.af.mil), under the "Top Portal Links" section. The Evaluation Reports Appeal Board will assess the request and transmit the results to the Air Reserve Personnel Center, which is the only organization authorized to correct digitally signed evaluations. If an Airman is dissatisfied with the Appeal Board's decision, their final option is to apply for correction through the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records. Retired or separated personnel cannot apply for correction through the Evaluation Reports Appeal Board and therefore must submit Department of Defense Form 149 to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records.

The inspector general is not included in Army or Air Guard redress processes.

References: Army Regulation (AR) 623-3, Chapter 4, Section III; AR 15-185; Department of the Army Pamphlet 623-3; Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2406, Chapter 10; and AFI 36-2603.



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Retired members, email [GrizzlyMag.ngca@ng.army.mil](mailto:GrizzlyMag.ngca@ng.army.mil).



Cadets from the California National Guard's Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy present the colors during a ribbon-cutting ceremony May 22 on Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, to officially open the CNG's second STARBASE science and technology learning facility.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Inigo | For more on STARBASE, see page 13

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