

GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard



**40th CAB
takes to
Iraqi skies** **6**

CNG recognizes Airmen of the Year

www.calguard.ca.gov/publicaffairs

Governor Jerry Brown appoints Col. (P) David Baldwin as adjutant general



On April 9, Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. announced the new leader of the California National Guard by appointing Col. David S. Baldwin as the state's 46th adjutant general. Brown said he chose Baldwin based on his exceptional experience, which includes two combat tours and 29 years of uniformed service.

"Colonel Baldwin has almost three decades of service with the California National Guard and is returning to California following his second combat tour in Afghanistan," Brown said. "David is exceptionally qualified to lead the 22,000 Guardsmen and women who protect and serve our state and nation in times of crisis."

Brown, an avid supporter of National Guard youth programs throughout his public service career, made the announcement while celebrating the 100th year of the California Cadet Corps at Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos.

"It's an honor and a privilege to lead the 22,000 men and women in the California [Army] National Guard and Air National Guard," Baldwin said during his remarks at his swearing-in. "Years ago, when I was a young cadet, I would never in my wildest dreams believe that I [would] become the adjutant general."

Baldwin was called back from a second combat deployment to Afghanistan to serve as adjutant general, testimony to a career that has been marked by combat mobilizations, including a tour in Kuwait in 2001 and subsequent tours to Afghanistan in 2004 and 2011 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Serving by his side will be Col. Matthew Beevers, another veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom, whom Brown appointed as assistant adjutant general.

Aside from their combat tours, both men bring to their posts extensive experience in state-side leadership.

Baldwin commanded the 40th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (now the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team) until 2009 and served as the joint chief of staff at CNG headquarters in Sacramento prior to his most recent deployment. The breadth of his experience will serve him well as he assumes leadership of one of the nation's most dynamic and heavily tasked National Guard forces, having deployed nearly 36,000 Soldiers and Airmen to Afghanistan, Iraq and throughout the world since Sept. 11, 2001.

"David is exceptionally qualified to lead the 22,000 Guardsmen and women who protect and serve our state and nation in times of crisis."

— Gov. Jerry Brown

"The greatest challenge facing us as a Guard force and a headquarters is ensuring we fully support our troops who are down range, prosecuting the War on Terror," Baldwin said. "We, the leadership of the Cal Guard, exist so they might fulfill their mission successfully and come home safely, without concern over whether their families are being cared for in their absence."

"So long as I hold this office, mission readiness and Soldier and Airman care will remain top priorities."

Baldwin, who holds master's degrees from the University of Southern California and the U.S. Army War College, began his service in the enlisted ranks, joining the CNG as a combat medic in 1982. Through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Stanford University, he later earned his commission and began his officer career with the infantry. Alongside his history with combat arms, he carries an understanding of the CNG's stateside mission.

"In addition [to the CNG's commitments overseas]," Baldwin said to media at the April 9 event, "we have to meet our commitments to the governor and the people of California to maintain readiness for state emergency response in the event that we're the next place to get hit with an earthquake or tsunami."

Colonel Beevers has served with the CNG for almost 28 years, including tours in Bosnia and Afghanistan. He previously served as director of the homeland security training and exercise program for the CNG. Like Baldwin, he holds a Master of Science degree from the U.S. Army War College.



Col. David S. Baldwin, left, is sworn in by Gov. Jerry Brown as the 46th adjutant general of the California National Guard during an April 9 ceremony on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos. Along with Baldwin, Col. Matthew Beevers, center, was sworn in as assistant adjutant general, and Col. (CA) James L. Gabrielli was sworn in as commander of California's Youth and Community Programs Task Force.

Photo by Maj. Kimberly Holman

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100
years
shaping
youths
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A gift that
keeps giving 6



7 CST
earns
MUC

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Articles:

- ★ 250-300 words for a half-page story; 600-800 words for a full-page article
- ★ Include first and last names, and verify spelling
- ★ Spell out acronyms, abbreviations and full unit designations on first reference
- ★ If there is a public affairs officer assigned to your unit, ensure he or she reviews it

Photographs:

- ★ Highest resolution possible: MB files, not KB
- ★ No retouched photos
- ★ Caption (what is happening, who is pictured and the date of the photo)
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Cover Shot



Photo by Spc. Darriel Swatts

Two UH-60 Black Hawks from the CNG's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, take off from Camp Taji, Iraq, on March 17. The 40th CAB is responsible for all Army aviation missions in Iraq for the remainder of 2011.

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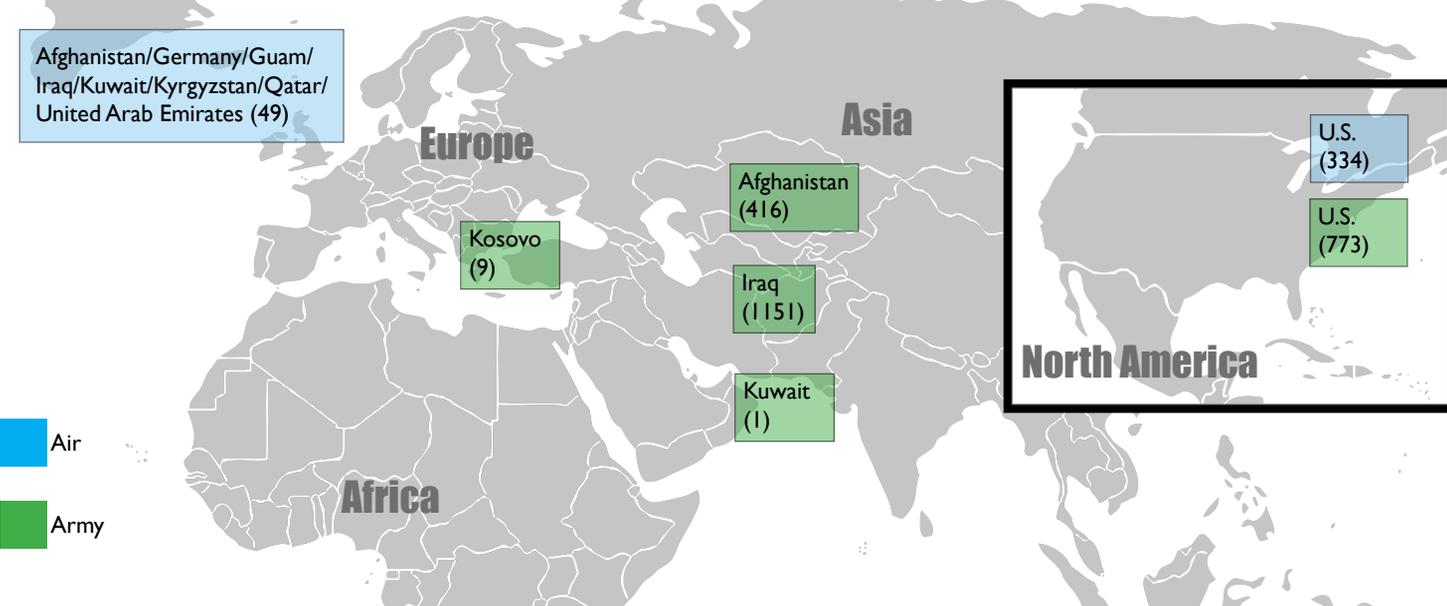
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The California National Guard as of March 2011



AIRMEN OF THE YEAR

Annual awards honor top enlisted members

Senior NCO of the Year



**Senior Master Sgt.
Ronald D. Nester**
146th Airlift Wing

Senior Master Sgt. Ronald D. Nester is an instructor loadmaster for the 115th Airlift Squadron, 146th Operations Group, at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station. Nester joined the active duty Air Force in 1979. After basic training he moved to Lowry Air Force Base, Colo., and attended Aircraft Armament Systems Technical School for the B-52. He then spent nine years at Air Force installations in the United States, Guam and South Korea, and he deployed to Korea and the Philippines. He also earned the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) and the Air Force Commendation Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters (OLC). In 1988, Nester joined the CNG's 146th Maintenance Squadron as a fuel systems repairman. He has served at Channel Islands as a traditional Guardsman and as a civil service employee in various aircraft maintenance and operations capacities. In 1995, Nester became a flight engineer on C130E aircraft. In 2007, Nester attended technical school to become a

C130J loadmaster and was quickly upgraded to instructor. Nester has participated in numerous deployments with the 146th, including tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also has flown on dozens of firefighting missions. Nester is pursuing an associate's degree in aviation operations. As a member of the 146th, Nester has earned an MSM (with one OLC), Air Medal (with two OLC), Aerial Achievement Medal (with three OLC), Meritorious Unit Award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Combat Readiness Medal (with one OLC), Air Reserve Forces MSM (with six OLC), Southwest Asia Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal and NATO Medal.

NCO of the Year



Tech. Sgt. John S. Meyers
146th Airlift Wing

Tech. Sgt. John Stefan Meyers, a guidance and control specialist with the 146th Maintenance Squadron, joined the Air Force in 2002. He started his career at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, where he was the basic training honor graduate. He then moved to Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., attended Missile and Space Facilities Technical School and was a distinguished graduate. He then spent two years as a periodic maintenance technician with the 341st Missile Maintenance Squadron in Montana, where he received the Senior Airman Below the Zone promotion, achieving that rank six months early. He also earned the Air Force (AF) Achievement Medal. Meyers transferred to the CNG in 2004. He was hired by the CNG as a full-time integrated avionics technician the following year, working on the C-130J airframe. In 2006 he deployed to Qatar and supported firefighting missions in California, then deployed to

Ramstein Air Base, Germany, in 2007, and Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, in 2008. In 2009, Meyers left his full-time Guard position to pursue a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He has earned two associate's degrees from the Community College of the Air Force in avionics systems technologies and mechanical and electrical technologies. With the 146th he has earned the AF Commendation Medal, AF Outstanding Unit Award, Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, AF Longevity Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Small Arms Expert Ribbon, AF Training Ribbon and NATO Medal.

First Sergeant of the Year



**Senior Master Sgt.
Ernest T. Williams**
162nd Combat
Communications Group

Senior Master Sgt. Ernest T. Williams enlisted in the Marines in 1980. After an 11-year Marine Corps career as an air traffic control communications technician, he enlisted in the CNG in January 1992, joining the 149th Combat Communications Squadron (CCS) as a ground radio communications technician. Williams was later re-assigned to the 147th Combat Communications Squadron and appointed team chief for the AN/MRC-144 Mobile HF/UHF/VHF Radio System. He has since deployed to Afghanistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Ukraine and many U.S. locations, including responding to California floods in 1997 and California fires in 2008. In June 2001, Williams cross-trained as a satellite wideband and telemetry systems technician and was eventually assigned to be team chief for the AN/TRC-170 Tropospheric Scatter Microwave Radio Terminal. In 2004 he was selected to fill the role of first sergeant for his squadron. In May 2005 he graduated from Southern Illinois University with a bachelor's degree in systems engineering technology.

In February 2008 he was elected president of the California Air National Guard First Sergeants Council. In January 2010, Williams was instrumental in the 147th receiving an excellent rating in its first Air Force Space Command Operational Readiness Inspection. In his civilian career, Williams is employed by the Department of the Navy as an in-service engineering agent and project lead. He supervises 12 government and 30 contractor personnel providing engineering support to air traffic control systems at Navy and Marine Air Stations and aboard Navy, Coast Guard and Military Sealift Command vessels. Williams also donates time and resources to several charities in California, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Airman of the Year



**Senior Airman
Laura Andersen**
162nd Combat
Communications Group

Senior Airman Laura Andersen reported to basic training in August 2005 then completed the Operations Intelligence Apprentice course at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas. In April 2006 she reported to the 614th Space Intelligence Squadron at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., where she was assigned to the intelligence analysis cell and authored more than 30 Space Intelligence Daily articles, a key intelligence source for the commander of Air Force Space Command. She also created and briefed six key intelligence topics to the Central Command director of space forces. In October 2008, Andersen volunteered for a short-notice deployment to Afghanistan in support of the Army. While deployed, she created and presented daily intelligence briefings to the commander of Afghan Regional Security Integration Command-West. She also volunteered for humanitarian assistance missions. Andersen earned an Army Commendation Medal for her work in Afghanistan. She then returned to California

and worked as an intelligence liaison for the 614th, updating the intelligence portion of the weekly Space Operations Directive used by the 14th Air Force commander to direct the use of space and missile assets. She was also a starter on the Vandenberg women's basketball team. At the end of her enlistment, Andersen earned the Air Force Achievement Medal. In August 2009 she joined the 216th Operations Support Squadron, and in June 2010 she earned the unit's Airman of the Year Award. She is also pursuing a bachelor's degree in sociology.

CA Cadet Corps marks 100 years serving youths

Joint program with school districts develops leaders, citizens

By 1st Lt. Kenneth M. Cook-Askins Jr.
Brigade Support Officer, 18th Brigade, California Cadet Corps

Over the last 100 years, more than a million young men and women have been members of the California Cadet Corps, whose motto — “Essayons,” a French word meaning “let us try” — has kept the program active in the state’s high schools and middle schools despite recurring budget woes. Yet the Cadet Corps, the largest and oldest of the California National Guard’s youth programs, remains quite possibly the best-kept secret in California.

The Cadet Corps’ mission is to provide California schools and students with a quality educational and leadership development program that prepares students for success in college and the work force.

The mission, like the organization’s name, has adapted over the decades. Established by the California State Legislature on April 5, 1911, the California High School Cadet Corps was conceived by Brig. Gen. Edwin A. Forbes, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, and was fully supported by Gov. Hiram Johnson as a means to recruit and train National Guard officers to serve during the World War I period.

The California High School Cadet Act created a statewide organization for all sec-



California Cadet Corps members compete in the annual State Drill Championship at Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos on April 10, 2010. The Corps, founded in 1911, is the oldest school-based youth leadership development program of its kind in the United States. It annually serves nearly 6,000 cadets in grades 2 through 12 in more than 60 public and private schools across the state.

ondary schools enrolling 40 or more boys in grades 9-12. The program has existed in nearly every California high school — public, private, parochial and military — at some time since 1911.

In 1935 the program’s name was changed to the California Cadet Corps. By the 1970s, girls and middle school units had been welcomed into the Corps, and the Corps’ emphasis had shifted away from military

recruiting in favor of leadership and character development for the state’s youth.

The program is organized within a military framework to provide maximum leadership training and an environment for learning the essential qualities of citizenship. It also provides an extensive and challenging system of awards which allows each cadet to set goals, acquire knowledge and enjoy the satisfaction of attainment.

The objectives of the Corps are to develop leadership, engender citizenship, encourage patriotism, foster academic excellence, teach basic military knowledge and promote health, fitness and wellness. It is conducted as a joint program between the California National Guard and the local school districts.

Cadet activities include summer encampments, bivouacs, land navigation training, marksmanship training, drill competitions, first aid training and leadership schools.

Currently in more than 60 elementary, middle and high schools across the state, the California Cadet Corps serves approximately 6,000 students annually. For additional information, visit the Corps’ website at www.cadet.org.

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. (CA) RICHARD BERQUIST



YOUTH IN ACTION

Preparing for a better tomorrow

By Cadet Celeste Wladyka
Valedictorian, Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy Class 25

We came to Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy with different backgrounds, from different places and for different reasons. Grizzly was one of the most unique experiences of my life. I came here not knowing much at all. I guess we all came that way, but something drew us to Grizzly for a reason. We had the desire to change and be successful; we just needed that extra push. All of the graduating cadets have done just that and more. I believe I speak for all the cadets when I say that we needed this program to be redirected to the path we had once lost, and now we all see our journeys a lot more clearly than ever before.

I came from a broken home, like a lot of teenagers today. I was not completely out of control, but I did not care about a lot of things like I should have. I was angry at the world and at myself, and my actions reflected how I felt. I did not have respect for myself like I do now. I cared very little about school. When I went to class I was quiet, and the teachers hardly knew I was there. That has all changed, thanks to the teachers and staff at the Academy.

I used to take a lot of things for granted, like my fam-

ily and especially my mom. She was always there when I needed something or when I had a problem. I see now that when I thought she was being unfair to me, she was really just being my mom.

I don’t think any of the Cadets knew what we were going to go through on the first day of the program; I know I sure didn’t. I knew it wasn’t going to be easy but I didn’t know how hard it was going to be either. Missing my home and my freedom was mentally and emotionally draining. Physically I have never done so much exercise in my life. It showed us that exercising and eating a balanced diet are important for our health, especially if you plan on living a long life.

Cadets learned at Grizzly all the tools to be successful and to make our dreams a reality. Life may not wait for you but it will never look away or prevent you from making a positive change in your life. Always keep pushing until you succeed and don’t allow the time spent at Grizzly to be wasted. Cadets are prepared for the journey in life that has just begun, and we can make tomorrow better than yesterday.



Cadet Celeste Wladyka, right, valedictorian of Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy Class 25, relaxes with fellow Grizzly cadets. Grizzly is a live-in, military-style school for students who have dropped out or are at-risk of dropping out. The 5 1/2-month program teaches academics, leadership and good citizenship while improving self-esteem.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GRIZZLY YOUTH ACADEMY

40th CAB commands Iraqi skies

By 1st Lt. Jason Sweeney
40th Combat Aviation Brigade

It's official: The skies of Iraq now belong to the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Under a bright Iraqi sun, a transfer of authority ceremony March 6 formalized the start of the 40th CAB's yearlong mission to provide full-spectrum aviation operations in Iraq. The 40th CAB took over operations from the 1st CAB, which returned home to Fort Riley, Kan., after successfully completing its yearlong tour.

Col. Frank Muth, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Thomson cased the 1st CAB's colors March 6 at a courtyard ceremony in front of the brigade Tactical Operations Center on Camp Taji, Iraq. The 40th CAB's commander, Col. Mitchell Medigovich, and 40th CAB Command Sgt. Maj. David McFerrin then uncased their brigade colors as Soldiers from both brigades as well as several general officers and distinguished Iraqi guests looked on.

"This is a historic time, and the challenges we will face this year will be unlike any other



The command teams for the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade and the 1st CAB salute the colors of the 1st CAB before they are cased, signifying the end of the brigade's mission in Iraq. The 40th CAB, headquartered by a California National Guard unit from Fresno, assumed the mission of providing full-spectrum aviation operations throughout Iraq.

rotation before us," Medigovich said.

The 40th CAB — call sign Task Force Condor — assumes command during a critical

year in Iraq. American forces are drawing down as the government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces take responsibility for security.

PHOTO BY SPC. DARRIEL SWATTS

In November, the 40th CAB traveled to Fort Hood, Texas, for two months of intense pre-deployment training. Its Soldiers arrived in theater in February, taking responsibility for all Army aviation missions in Iraq — from medical evacuations to transportation of high-profile visitors to force protection and more.

The 40th CAB is a collection of five battalions from the National Guard, Army Reserve and active duty Army, with elements from 22 states. The brigade's headquarters company is a California National Guard unit from Fresno.

Medigovich commands an organization of more than 3,000 Soldiers and 200 aircraft, including UH-60 Black Hawk, AH-64 Apache, OH-58 Kiowa and CH-47 Chinook helicopters as well as fixed-wing assets such as the MQ-1C Gray Eagle unmanned aerial system.

"The preparation is over," Medigovich said as he took the reins from Muth in front of the 40th CAB's colors and its blue and gold sunburst crest. "It's time to get to work."

40th ID Soldiers return to school they built in Korea

Story and photo by Spc. David S. Choi
69th Public Affairs Detachment

After wars are fought, memories of such struggles often dissipate with the passing of years, and with them, the passing of the veterans who fought. To prevent the California National Guard's experience in the Korean War from becoming an afterthought, Cal Guard Soldiers recently visited South Korea to help retain the CNG's unique ties with that country's citizens and their heritage.

When the Korean War was raging on, Maj. Gen. Joseph P. Cleland, then the commander of the CNG's 40th Infantry Division, witnessed firsthand the living conditions of the villagers in Gapyeong, Gyeonggi province, Republic of Korea, whose children were being educated in two tents. To assist, Cleland gathered \$2 from each Soldier to build a school. With the help of the CNG's 578th Engineer Battalion, Korean Soldiers and civilians from the community, a 10-classroom school was built in 1952.

In February, Soldiers from 40th ID visited Gapyeong High School to take part in the school's 56th graduation.

"It is an honor to be here with you for the Gapyeong High School graduation," said Maj. Gen. Scott W. Johnson, the current 40th ID commander, during the Feb. 10 commencement. "We from the 40th Infantry Division treasure our wonderful heritage with the Gapyeong High school."

In honor of the 40th ID's first casualty in the Korean War, the school was originally named Kenneth Kaiser High School, after Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Kaiser Jr.

"The 40th Infantry Division was made up of Soldiers like Kaiser, each willing to give their lives for the freedom of the Korean people and understanding that the cause of

freedom, here in Korea, required their service," Johnson said.

The school's principal, Byung-Hun Han, expressed his gratitude for the California Soldiers' efforts, noting, "Without the help of the 40th Division, our school would not be standing here today."

The school has named its dormitories after Cleland, and it created a memorial in remembrance of the 40th ID Soldiers. "We want our alliance with the U.S. to last forever, which is why we erected this museum to honor the 40th Infantry Division," Han said.

A unique aspect of the trip was the inclusion of two Korean War veterans, retired Master Sgt. Duane E. Whaley and retired Private 1st Class Alfred O. Poeppel.

"When we landed at Incheon, there was nothing but devastation," Whaley said. "When I left here I wondered if anything was going to be built. Coming back to Korea 60 years later, I was completely amazed by the transformation of this country and the people. I just couldn't believe how this country had progressed."

"So when I came to Gapyeong to see the graduation, I saw the students and their eyes, bright and smiling like they've accomplished something," he continued. "I fell in love



Retired Private 1st Class Alfred O. Poeppel, a mortarman in the 160th Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division, during the Korean War, greets recent graduates of Gapyeong High School in South Korea. Soldiers of the 40th ID spearheaded the construction of the school in 1952 after seeing students being taught in two tents.

with everything here today."

Command Sgt. Maj. Andres H. Roman, Johnson's top enlisted adviser, said he felt a lot of friendship, kindness and respect from the people in Gapyeong.

"I think that this relationship will continue to flourish with our Soldiers ensuring we continue to support Gapyeong not only financially through scholarships, but also with our fighting spirit," he said.

224th completes yearlong Iraq tour

Sustainment mission was crucial to theater-wide troop drawdown

Story and photo by Spc. Matthew Keeler
103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command

In a crowded Memorial Hall, March 9 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, the 224th Sustainment Brigade colors were wrapped up and covered to signify the end of its mission in Iraq. When the 224th Soldiers arrived in Iraq and cross-trained with the 36th Sustainment Brigade, the unit they replaced, the mission was different from the one they are now handing to the 4th Sustainment Brigade.

"When I came in and transferred authority from the other brigade, I had approximately 3,500 soldiers," said Col. Lisa Costanza, commander of the 224th. "I have less than 1,700 now, and it's all part of the responsible drawdown of forces."

What made the 224th's mission more difficult was that they absorbed the sustainment mission for both the southern and central regions of Iraq, managing supplies, transportation and maintenance support for nearly two-thirds of the coalition's area of operations in Iraq.

"When I came here on my [pre-deployment site survey], there was actually two brigades doing the job," Costanza said. "We have half the resources, and still just as big a mission. So I'm incredibly proud of what my Soldiers have done."

Unlike the 224th's predecessors, its special troops battalion took over the mission of running the garrison.

"The garrison did what is called a partial return," Costanza said. "We have the 70th Iraqi Air Force, which just moved onto COB Adder, so Lt. Col. [Nicole] Balliet and her team actually prepared areas for them to move in, and they are living and working right here beside us."

The 224th also helped build a convoy support center, which will be crucial to convoys across southern and central Iraq.

With their mission coming to a close, it's time for the Soldiers of the 224th to begin looking forward to going home.

"I'm really excited to re-integrate with my family," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sandy Andrade. "This is my second combat tour, and every time you go home it's different."

First Lt. Steve Kim, entry control point officer in charge, said he is excited to kick back with his family. "I'm ... looking forward to the internalization of all that has happened in a year and getting a chance to really relax," he said.

Costanza said a deployment can be dif-



Col. Lisa Costanza, left, commander of the 224th Sustainment Brigade, and Command Sgt. Maj. Vickie Dunlap-Jones, senior enlisted adviser, case the colors of the 224th on March 9, signifying the completion of their yearlong mission on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

ficult on Soldiers' families because of the worrying that comes with long separation. "I'm proud to have served here, because it is an important mission," she said. "But to take my Soldiers home to their families is great."

The 224th's mission at COB Adder has come to close. But the hard work and dedication they contributed will endure beyond their departure, Costanza said. "Iraq will be a better place, and my soldiers will be better for being here."

95th CST earns Adjutant General's MUC

Weapons of mass destruction response team sets the standard nationwide

The 95th Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) earned the Adjutant General's Meritorious Unit Commendation in recognition of its Soldiers and Airmen building one of the most preeminent civil support teams (CST) in the nation.

Brig. Gen. Kevin G. Ellsworth, director of the CNG Joint Staff, presented the award to the unit March 4 in Hayward, Calif.

"The Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice consider the 95th CST as a key and trusted partner within the National Response Plan for all contingencies," Col. Matthew Beevers, director of plans, operations and security for the California National Guard, wrote in a memo nominating the CST for the commendation. "These federal agencies rely upon the 95th CST for establishing emerging doctrine in key gaps of national security through tactical testing and evaluation of techniques and technology."

The 95th CST was authorized by congressional mandate in May 2000 to address a key gap in the National Response Plan for a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive (CBRNE) attack on the United States. The team was established to support civil authorities at a domestic CBRNE incident site by identifying CBRNE agents and substances, assessing current and projected consequences, advising on response measures and assisting with appropriate requests for additional support.



The 95th Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) displays its guidon with a new streamer indicating its receipt of the Adjutant General's Meritorious Unit Commendation in Hayward, Calif., on March 4.

Each of the 95th CST's 22 full-time Soldiers and Airmen completed more than 1,600 hours of technical training by agencies including the National Fire Academy, Department of Defense, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to receive their initial certification as a member of the CST.

CSTs are evaluated through Standardized Evaluation and

PHOTO BY JENNIFER ZUNIGA

Assistance Team (SEAT) Inspections, which involve nine functional areas and 40 individual tasks of nuclear, biological, chemical and radiological operations. On its most recent SEAT Inspection, the 95th CST attained a 99.8 percent exceptional rating, which was the best in the nation.

"SEAT evaluators have been so impressed with the 95th CSTs performance and management systems, that they provided 95th CST management systems and products to all other teams in the nation," Beevers wrote. "Leading the nation on SEAT inspections made the 95th CSTs management systems the standard across the nation."

In addition to its lead role as a Department of Defense weapons of mass destruction response team, the 95th is tasked with a dual role as the lead California National Guard response team for state emergencies.

It has responded to fires, floods and other state and federal emergencies. Most noteworthy was the team's deployment to Maui, Hawaii, in 2008, where the 95th CST worked with the 93rd CST to aid evacuation and communication following the island's worst tropical storm in more than 30 years. The 95th set up and operated the incident command post for the island for two days until local authorities were able to stabilize the disaster recovery.



Members of the California National Guard Honor Guard prepare to carry the remains of active duty Army Sgt. Jason M. Weaver, 22, of Anaheim, Calif., on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos on March 14. Weaver died March 3 in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, after insurgents attacked his unit using an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 504th Military Police Battalion, 42nd Military Police Brigade, based on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. Several hundred people attended the arrival of Weaver's remains on JFTB-Los Alamitos, including California National Guard Soldiers, Army Reserve Soldiers, Marines, local fire and police personnel and Patriot Guard motorcycle riders.
Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

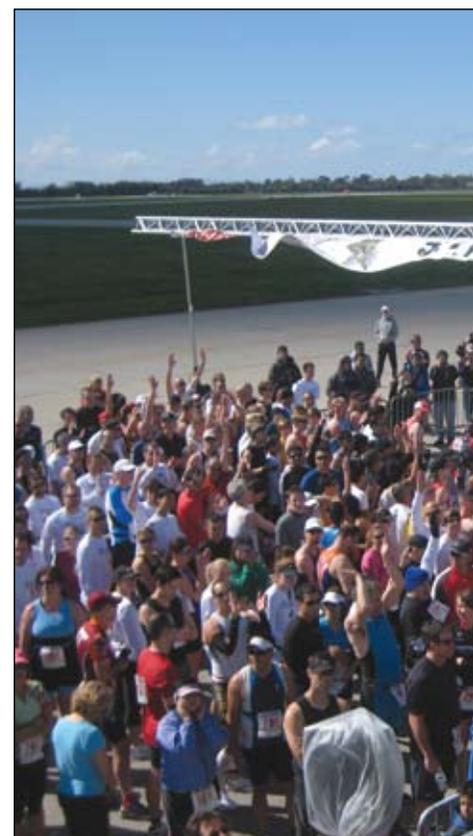
Lt. Col. William Breeze, left, takes command of 3rd Battalion, 1-140th Aviation Regiment, receiving the unit guidon from Col. Robert Spano, commander of the 1106th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group, higher headquarters for the 1-140th. Breeze succeeded Lt. Col. Todd Lewis as commander.
Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela M. Nolan



Staff Sgt. Nicasio O'Neil, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, died in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, on March 12.
Photo by Capt. James O'Neil



Capt. Ruel Fuentes, drug demand reduction (DDR) officer in charge for the southern California region of Joint Task Force Domestic Support-Counterdrug, teaches students to work together while completing a ropes course during an Underage Drinking Town Hall event in Dana Point, Calif. The DDR team provided a drug and alcohol education resource booth, a fatal vision goggles presentation station and a low ropes course in conjunction with an educational presentation about overcoming life challenges and the dangers of drug use. Also in attendance was Mayuko Nakanishi, a narcotics control assistant section chief from the Public Health Bureau in Hyogo, Japan, who traveled to California to learn about DDR programs and resources for youths. She attended three events with Cal Guard personnel Feb. 9-10.
Photo by Capt. Amanda Ellison



Timothy O'Reilly, commander of the training school, arrived at the base by truck March 12 to signal the start of the reverse 5K run for the 30th annual Race on the Base at JFTB-Los Alamitos. The event is sponsored by the Cancer Support Foundation.
Photo by 2nd Lt. Jan Bender

At a Glance



South Korean delegates test their abilities in the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos as 40th Infantry Division Soldiers offer instruction. The delegates were given a detailed tour of the base March 21 as part of a visit coordinated through U.S. Rep. Ed Royce's office, which served to strengthen the already deep ties between the CNG and the South Korean people. For more on the CNG's ties to South Korea, see Page 6. Photo by 2nd Lt. Jan Bender



Soldiers of the 330th Military Police Company await a snack while an Afghan soldier tends to baking bread at the Musa Khel District Center in Khowst province, Afghanistan. Photo by Tech. Sgt. David Chavez

Tech. Sgt. David Chavez, an aircraft maintenance technician for the 129th Maintenance Squadron, inspects an airbag as it raises the right wing of a TF-104G aircraft. Airmen from the 129th Rescue Wing conducted a full-scale airbag lift exercise March 15 using a TF-104G static display at Moffett Federal Airfield, Calif., to simulate a downed aircraft. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ray Aquino



Master Sgt. Shirley Hunter, 163rd Reconnaissance Wing, stands atop a fire hydrant during a triathlon (run then bike then swim), the main event of the 2011 Fire Hydrant Triathlon at Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos. The race was coordinated by the city of Los Alamitos and the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Erika Saunders



Robert Cordova Jr., a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, far right, and William Cordova Sr., a Navy veteran of World War II, enjoy a visit with Airmen from the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing at the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital in Loma Linda, Calif., on Jan. 16. Tech. Sgt. Erika Saunders, far left, Senior Airman Jazmyn Diaz, Master Sgt. Shirley Hunter and Tech. Sgt. Rosa Puente Monagas delivered valentines to many patients in the veterans hospital that day. Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey

Family makes everything better

Several Soldiers of the 640th ASB brought a big touch of home to Iraq

Story and photo by Spc. Matthew Wright
640th Aviation Support Battalion

When Soldiers are deployed, separation from their families and loved ones can be a difficult experience. Even with modern technology such as web cameras and online chatting, being apart isn't easy.

However, in today's Army it isn't uncommon for Soldiers to deploy with family members and loved ones. This holds true for several California Army National Guard members in Iraq today.

One of these Guardsmen is Command Sgt. Maj. David E. McFerrin, who is stationed at Camp Taji, Iraq, with the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade.

McFerrin's son, Sgt. Andrew D. McFerrin, is stationed on the same post, assigned to Company B, 640th Aviation Support Battalion (ASB). Command Sgt. Maj. McFerrin said there are advantages to having a family member on the same deployment. "There is a piece of home with you," he said.

Sgt. McFerrin, who is on his second tour in Taji, sees a different advantage. Following past deployments, he would come home and show photographs of the places he had seen to his family. Now he can show his dad those same places in person, he said.

Camp Taji also has siblings who deployed together, such as the Su brothers of the 640th ASB. Staff Sgt. Alonso Su works in the battalion's headquarters in computer support operations. His brother, Pfc. Juan Su, is in the same battalion, assigned to Company B. Being in the same battalion

gives them the advantage of staying in contact with each other, they said.

"We give each other space," Pfc. Su said, "but we eventually find each other, and if I need to talk to him he is there."

There are also married couples deployed together with the 40th CAB. One such couple is Sgt. Eric N. Fuentes and Spc. Trena Reyes. They recently married and are both working in the 640th's headquarters company.

Despite the advantage of being together during a deployment, there are some concerns when both partners are on the same mission overseas. Worry is a concern, Reyes said.

"They are here with you, but if something happens, you are wondering where they are," she said.

"Your wife hasn't come home and you go looking for her," Fuentes added. "It's not like back home. It's different here."

Anxieties can arise when loved ones are in a dangerous area together. However, the comfort of having a loved one with you in theater can override the fear for their safety,



Newlyweds Sgt. Eric N. Fuentes and Spc. Trena Reyes are two of several 640th Aviation Support Battalion Soldiers in Iraq who are enjoying the benefits of deploying with a family member.

Fuentes and Reyes said.

These Soldiers may miss getting off the plane and having their loved one greet them for the first time in a year, but they can take comfort in knowing what each of them has been through and be happy together at coming home.

Iraqi Airmen learn first aid skills

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Nathan Lavy
224th Sustainment Brigade

Six members of the Iraqi Air Force received first aid training from medics with the 224th Sustainment Brigade on Feb. 23 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

Four fixed-wing warrant officers, one private and the Ali Base Clinic director received the training from 1st Lt. Vijay Soprey, a Baltimore resident and a physician's assistant with the 224th. Soprey was assisted by Spc. Nomar Alvarez, a medic with the 224th and a resident of Los Angeles. The training provided an introduction to first aid skills needed to assist the clinic's two-person staff.

"We gave them a basic overview of what to expect, how to manage [patients] and take care of them in the best man-

ner to avoid complications, further injury or death," Soprey said.

The primary topic of instruction was acute wound management with a focus on lacerations, abrasions and puncture wounds, Soprey said. "We started out [teaching] basic lacerations, how to identify them, what needs to be transferred out, what needs to be moved to a higher level of care, and examples of things that affect the airway, breathing and circulation."

Soprey and Alvarez provided translated slides with medical information and pictures for the Iraqi Airmen. Later they went through hands-on examples of how to treat and stop bleeding, puncture wounds, gunshot wounds and blisters, and how to clean a wound.

"Based on the slides we provided, we made models to associate with the injuries that were taught," Alvarez said. "I thought they would help, given the language difference."

"It went well. Lt. Soprey has lots of medical knowledge. Their facial expressions really showed they enjoyed the training."

Ali Base Clinic Director 1st Lt. Muhammad Ali said the instructor was "awesome" and the Iraqi warrant officers will now be able to help care for patients at the understaffed clinic.

"This is really important for our future operations," he said.



Spc. Nomar Alvarez, a medic with the 224th Sustainment Brigade, assists an Iraqi Air Force warrant officer who is learning to clean a wound.

Iraqi forces acquire 18 buildings on COB Adder

By Private 1st Class Amy Lane
4th Sustainment Brigade

As American troops prepare to withdraw from Iraq, they are passing more responsibilities to Iraqi forces. An important part of this is providing space and facilities for them to expand.

In preparation for the expansion of the Iraqi Air Force (IAF), the 224th Sustainment Brigade turned over part of Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, on March 2, when it signed a tenancy agreement that passed approximately 18 buildings to Squadron 70 of the IAF.

"This is an important milestone," said Capt. Kevin Coe of the 224th Sustainment Brigade. "This is a major part of the process in passing the base over to the Iraqis."

Iraqi forces must pass an inspection by the Ministry of Defense in order to complete the eventual base turnover.

"This tenancy agreement brings us one step closer to assisting the Iraqis in establishing security in their country," said Lt. Col. Nicole Balliet of the 224th Sustainment Brigade, who signed the agreement.

Salute to the Military and their Families 2011



*The Adjutant General's
Symposium on Family Readiness
and
Family Readiness Awards Banquet*

The Adjutant General's Symposium on Family Readiness

Friday, 20 May 2011 – Saturday, 21 May 2011

To register, visit www.calguard.ca.gov/ReadyFamilies

The 2011 Family Readiness Awards Banquet

Saturday, 21 May 2011

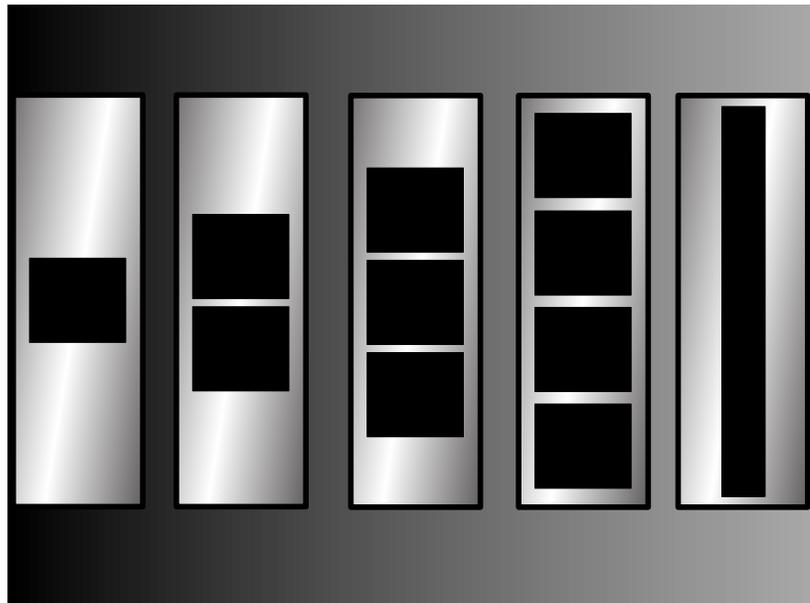
To register, visit www.ngac.org

Both events will be held at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront

'Quiet professional' is leader, trainer, expert

History of the warrant officer reveals evolution of vital position

By Chief Warrant Officer 5 Artavia M. Edwards
State Command Chief Warrant Officer



In the full-spectrum operations of the 21st century, warrant officers lead from the front as strong, visible leaders and expert trainers. For many years the Army labored over the role and contributions of the warrant officer, but ultimately the Army's recognition of the need for warrant officers' technical expertise, skills and knowledge resulted in the retention and expansion of their powers, duties and responsibilities.

The California Army National Guard has 292 warrant officers and is in need of more highly skilled experts and trainers. Warrant officers grow from the ranks of the Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Corps, where the practical and profound wisdom, knowledge and leadership of the NCO can serve as a stepping stone. If an NCO exemplifies outstanding duty performance and is rated among the best of the NCO Corps, he or she is a prime applicant for the Warrant Officer Corps.

Understanding the history of the Army's Warrant Officer Corps can remove the veil of the "quiet professional" and provide insight into the role of today's ready, relevant and operational warrant officers:

1916 – Genesis

The warrant officer dates to the fledgling years of the British Navy, when people of noble birth took command. These officers often had no knowledge of life on a ship and relied on the expertise of a senior sailor. Those sailors were rewarded with a royal warrant, which set them apart from other sailors. Similarly the U.S. Navy has had warrant officers since 1775.

On Aug. 29, 1916, an act of Congress authorized civilian positions of Army field clerks to cope with increasing administrative duties. Some clerks were sent overseas in 1917, and a uniform was required because they were in war zones with troops. The War Department headquarters clerks were transferred out of civil service status and made a part of the Army, but without any designation of rank. Each clerk wore an officer's uniform with no rank insignia, and they were not entitled to salutes from enlisted men. The Judge Advocate General Corps eventually determined these civilian positions held military status.

1918 – Birth of the warrant officer

On July 9, 1918, Congress established the rank and grade of warrant officer. Warrant officers were to receive presidential warrants instead of presidential commissions.

1936 – Uncertainty about utilization

The Army was uncertain about the warrant officer's role and whether there was a place for them in the Army's personnel structure. This was likely due to an initial failure to articulate their qualifications and responsibilities. The Army knew from the outset, however, that there was a need for the warrant officer's technical expertise, skills and knowledge.

1941 – Powers and duties expanded

In 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt increased the number of warrant officers and expanded their powers and duties. Another large growth spurt occurred during the Vietnam War, when thousands of warrant officer pilots and Soldiers with other skills were acquired for the mass introduction of the helicopter.

1942 – Warrant officer defined

The position of warrant officer was defined by the War Department as the rank above all enlisted personnel and below all commissioned officers. By early 1946, Warrant Officers filled 40 different occupational specialties, and by 1951 they filled about 60 specialties.

1944 – Women authorized for appointment as warrant officers

In January 1944, a total of 42 women were appointed as active duty warrant officers. The California Army National Guard now has 41 female warrant officers.

1957 – First published definition of the warrant officer

Army Regulation 611-112 defined the warrant officer as, "a highly skilled technician

who is provided to fill those positions above the enlisted level which are too specialized in scope to permit effective development and continued utilization of broadly trained, branch qualified commissioned officers."

1958 – Air Force discontinues warrant officer program

The Air Force discontinued its warrant officer program following the passage of the Military Pay Act of 1958, which created the enlisted grades of E-8 and E-9. In the eyes of Air Force leadership, loss of their warrant officers cut out an additional management layer and a separate personnel management system. The last active duty Air Force warrant officer retired in 1980 and the last Air Force Reserve warrant officer retired in 1992.

1984 – Direct appointments ceased

Effective Oct. 1, 1984, by direction of the Army vice chief of staff, all direct appointments of warrant officers were ceased. After October 1985, all warrant officer candidates were required to attend the Warrant Office Entry Course (WOEC) prior to appointment.

1984 – Establishment of Warrant Officer Candidate School

A WOEC was established at Fort Sill, Okla., and a course for reserve components was established in the Warrant Officer Training Branch at the Army Reserve Readiness Training Center on Fort McCoy, Wisc. This course evolved into Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS) and was conducted until September 1994, after which all WOCS courses were transferred to the Warrant Officer Career College on Fort Rucker, Ala.

1985 – New definition

The Army developed a clear and concise definition of the warrant officer that encompassed all warrant officer specialties: "An officer appointed by warrant by the Secretary of the Army, based upon a sound level of technical and tactical competence. The Warrant Officer is the highly specialized expert and trainer who, by gaining progressive levels of expertise and leadership, operates, maintains, administers, and manages the Army's equipment, support activities, or technical systems for an entire career."

1995-1999 – Establishment of the state command chief warrant officer

Retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 Russell Brewer, then a member of the California National Guard, began the process of creating a command chief warrant officer position for each state's Army National Guard in collaboration with two other chief warrant officers. The ad hoc committee had the attention of Lt. Gen. Roger C. Schultz, director of the Army National Guard, who cautiously observed their workings as they pored over the details of the value and necessity of the position. In November 1998, they were given a window of opportunity to put their plan to work. Brewer recalled that Schultz said, "I've heard enough; I'll give you one year to make it work and we'll leave it in place if it does." On Feb. 2, 1999, Schultz issued a policy memorandum that added the position in the 54 states and territories as well as the Army National Guard Directorate at the National Guard Bureau. Brewer was subsequently appointed the first command chief warrant officer for California.

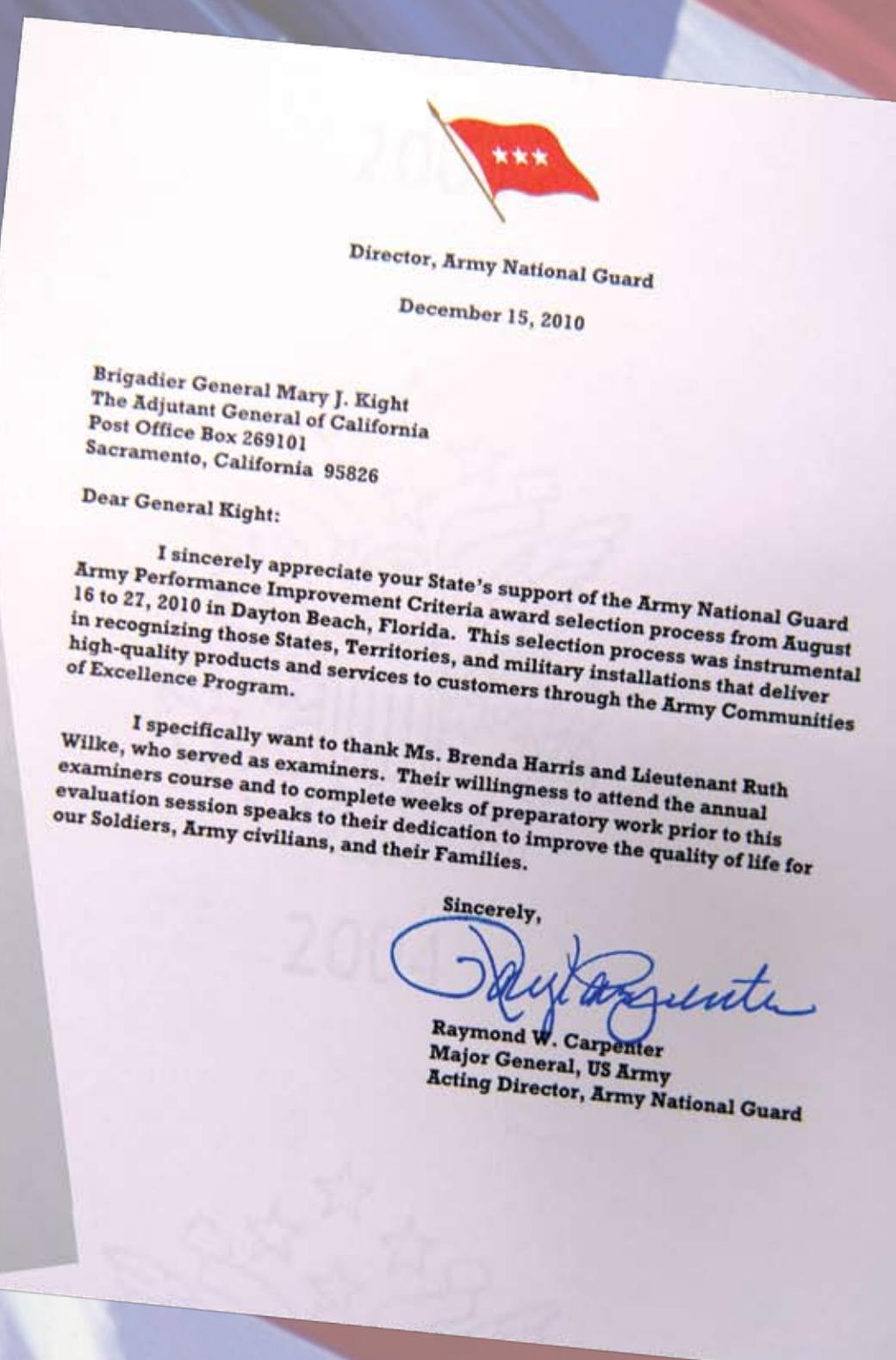
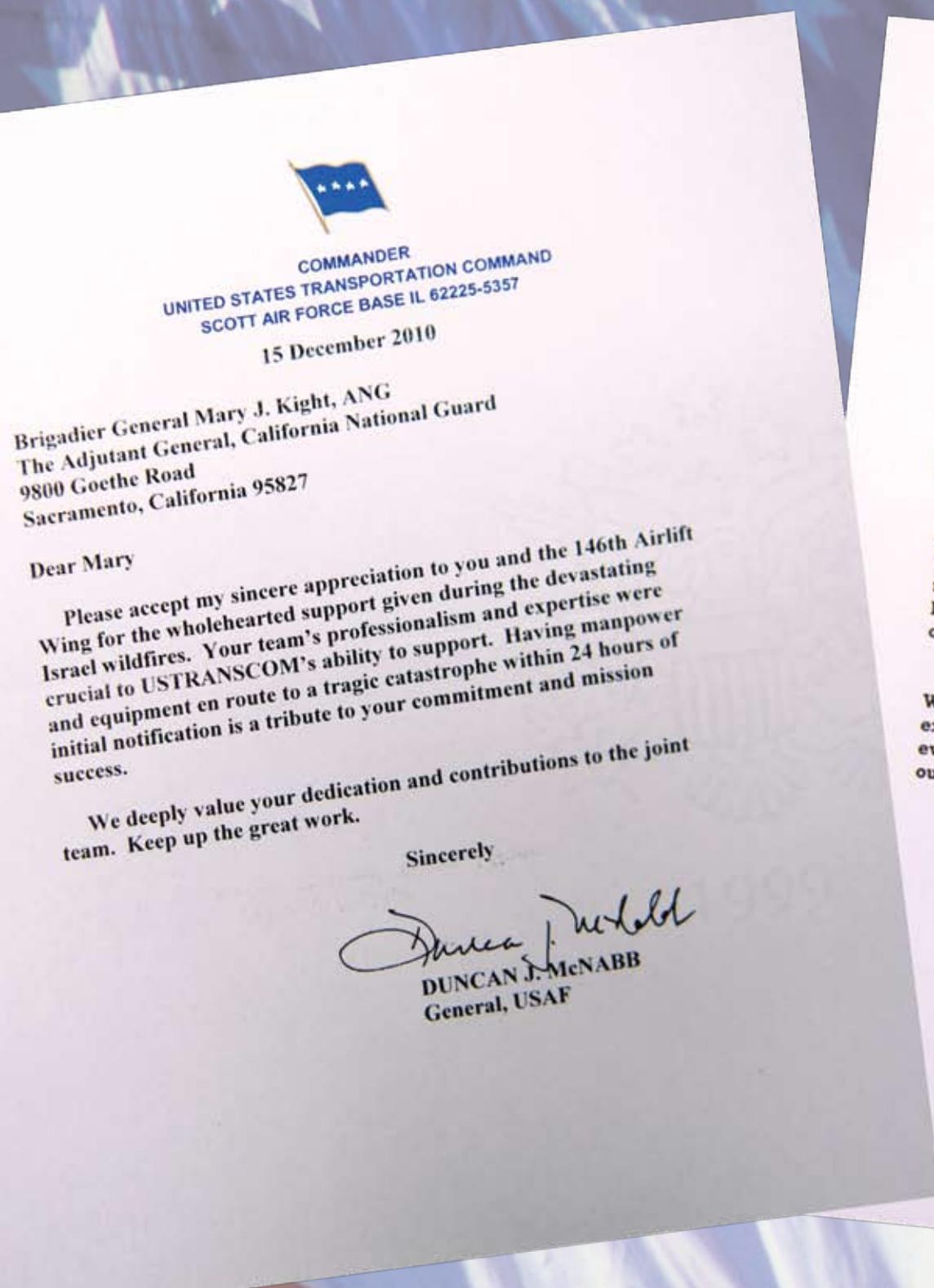
Think you have what it takes?

To join the CNG's ready, relevant, operational warrant officer force, contact:

Northern California: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Helen Nunez at 916-854-1331 or helen.nunez.cruz@us.army.mil

Aviation and Southern California: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tammy Henry at 916-710-2230 or tammy.henry@us.army.mil and Capt. Charles Hill at 916-206-8127 or charles.hill7@us.army.mil

Expressions of gratitude



Fake quake prepares CSMR for disaster response

Story and photo by Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CA) Rick de la Torre
California State Military Reserve

The epic earthquake that devastated Japan in March shows the crucial value of well-coordinated training exercises that realistically test the military's ability to support civil authorities during a state-side disaster.

Valuable lessons were learned by the California State Military Reserve during its participation in the 40th Infantry Division's Defense Support of Civil Authorities Exercise March 3-6 on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos. The field exercise simulated a 7.8-magnitude quake along the central Mississippi River.

As part of its testing of the National

Guard Bureau's domestic all-hazards response team (DART) initiative, the 40th ID conducted a simulated deployment to Arkansas in support of the Arkansas National Guard. At the same time, the 40th ID tested the CSMR's civil-military operations center concept parallel to the DART exercise.

"The center was found to be an effective asset," said Lt. Col. (CA) Frederick Tribble, who directed the CSMR's portion of the exercise. "I am very impressed with how much the [40th ID] was able to accomplish in such a short time."

For the CSMR, the primary objectives were to test and validate the center con-

cept and its internal operations methods. The center, which was structurally set up for classic assignments such as logistics, planning and analysis, was also able to gain effective interoperability with the 40th ID command post and utilize the National Guard Incident Commander's Command, Control and Communications Unit (IC4U). The CSMR Provost Marshal's Office also provided a security force to handle area patrols and related tasks.

As part of specialized emergency management training for its Soldiers, the CSMR conducted an additional exercise that simulated the Arkansas Emergency Operations Center.



Lt. Col. (CA) Frederick Tribble of the California State Military Reserve, left, coordinates with Maj. Gen. Scott W. Johnson, commander of the California National Guard's 40th Infantry Division, during a simulated earthquake exercise in March.



Sexual assault hurts one, affects all

By Bob May, CNG Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

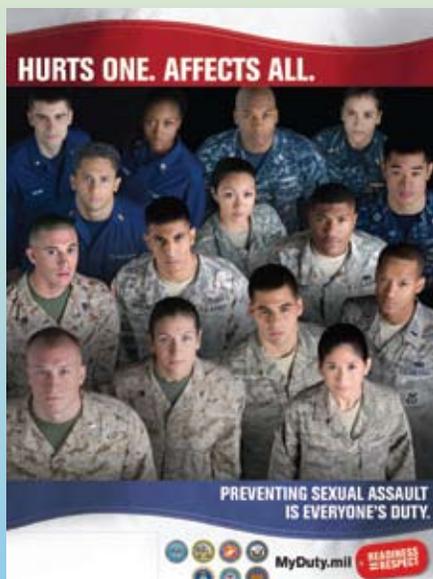
The 2010-2011 theme for Sexual Assault Awareness Month is "Hurts one. Affects all. ... Preventing sexual assault is everyone's duty." The campaign is intended to remind us that sexual assault not only affects the victim but impacts all of us as well. Every service member, starting with senior leadership, must understand the importance of safely intervening and preventing sexual assault.

Our California National Guard members deserve a quality of life that is commensurate with the great service they provide this country and state. They deserve a positive command climate that represents and upholds our Army and Air Force core values. We need to continue to develop a military climate that ensures our Soldiers and Airmen are protected, both at home and when they deploy. They deserve committed leaders who are dedicated to preventing sexual assault.

A person is sexually assaulted in the United States every two minutes, according to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network. By being prepared, alert and assertive, you can reduce your risk of being sexually assaulted. Visit the network's website at www.rainn.org to learn tips that can reduce your risk of being sexually assaulted or becoming a sexual assault offender.

A new, 24-hour, confidential and anonymous sexual assault hotline for the Department of Defense community can be reached at 877-995-5247, and more information can be found at www.SafeHelpline.org.

Robert May, the California National Guard sexual assault response coordinator, is available to address any questions or concerns at 916-854-3448 or robert.may7@us.army.mil.



Sexual assault affects mission readiness

Mission readiness defines a unit's ability to deploy quickly and efficiently. A sexual assault can reverberate throughout a unit and beyond, degrading readiness by harming both the life of the victim and the military's ability to work effectively as a team. Preserving mission readiness can serve, then, as a motivation for acts of bystander intervention.

Experts often describe the negative consequences of sexual assault as having a ripple effect starting with the victim and expanding outward to include families, friends, colleagues, neighbors and larger parts of the population. The same can be said for the military. The crime of sexual assault diminishes the armed forces' ability to function proficiently at the levels of service member, unit and command. Sexual assault may also breed divisiveness between units if an alleged perpetrator is in one unit and the victim is in another. The impact of an assault is both immediate and long-lasting for individuals and for the institution as a whole.

Mission readiness is negatively impacted in three ways:

1. Alleged perpetrators are often placed on administrative hold and cannot deploy.
2. Victims may be unable to fulfill their duties or may otherwise have their ability to perform the mission compromised as a result of the trauma.
3. The attention of the unit leadership shifts from the normal duties involved in maintaining readiness to addressing a victim's needs, investigating the alleged assault and restoring the unit's cohesion and trust.

SOURCE: www.sapr.mil

Cobra Gold brings 24 nations' militaries together

Annual exercise in Thailand helps keep region stable and secure

By Lt. Col. Frank Emanuel
100th Troop Command

The opening ceremony for exercise Cobra Gold 2011 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on Feb. 7 highlighted the multinational nature of the exercise as well as the many benefits that occur when partner nations train together and look for effective solutions to common challenges.

This, the 30th year of Cobra Gold, was the first year Malaysian troops joined the armed forces of Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and the U.S. Including observing nations, troops from 24 countries were brought together for Cobra Gold, the largest multinational exercise in the world.

The U.S. military's partnership with Thailand has helped keep that region of the world secure and stable. Multinational responses to numerous humanitarian crises have been more rapid and efficient because of the strong ties developed through the annual Cobra Gold exercise.

Cobra Gold 2011 included a staff exercise in Chiang Mai, a field training exercise near Bangkok, Thailand, and humanitarian civic assistance exercises in various locations. Members of varying services, backgrounds and experiences were included, and their differences leveraged the collective expertise of the cohesive multinational force team.

The scenario used for Cobra Gold occurred in the fictitious subcontinent of Pacifica located in the central Pacific Ocean. In the scenario, the aggressive nation of Arcadia invaded and occupied portions of the neighboring nation of Kuhistan and occupied a portion of the nation of Free Mojave to protect its flank. In response to the invasion, the United Nations Security Council authorized the forma-



The Thai and U.S. command elements for the Cobra Gold 2011 exercise present arms along with Maj. Gen. Kampanart Ruthdit, the commanding general of the Royal Thai Army's 1st Division, during the exercise's Feb. 17 closing ceremony.

tion of a multinational force to conduct planning to compel Arcadian forces to return to positions inside Arcadia's borders.

The Cobra Gold field training was designed to advance participating nations' interoperability and capacity to plan and execute tactical operations in a multinational environment. It also provided a unique training opportunity for participating military partners, while building relationships between personnel from all nations. These training exercises help to improve the participants' combined read-

iness to respond effectively to a range of crises.

Humanitarian civic assistance exercises ensure the region is adequately prepared for humanitarian disasters such as the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. During Cobra Gold, the multinational forces conducted eight engineering projects and nine medical and dental assistance activities throughout Thailand, which improved the quality of life and health and welfare of residents in those areas.

The staff exercise was the main training event for the National Guard troops. It involved extensive training in the military decision-making process—multinational (MDMP-M). The MDMP-M process provided a common platform for orders development, and all countries used this process to make our collective effort single-focused.

California National Guard troops from the 100th Troop Command, 223rd Military Intelligence (MI) Battalion and 250th MI Battalion predominately teamed up with staff from the Royal Thai Army to form the Combined Army Force (CARFOR). Concurrent with the Multinational Force Combined Staff, the CARFOR planned operations for land power forces from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the U.S.

The exercise was a tremendous opportunity for CNG troops to strengthen their skills as planners. Despite the challenges posed by location and language, the CARFOR truly functioned as a combined staff. All tasks were completed and products were provided to the Combined Staff to continue planning for Cobra Gold 2012.



An entry identification team Soldier with Joint Task Force Sierra uses optics donated by the nonprofit Troops Need You to scan an area near the California-Mexico border. In recognition of the unique support National Guard members provide to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Troops Need You donated advanced optics and money for a holiday party.
Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Inigo

Month of the Military Child and National Volunteer Week

April is the Month of the Military Child, and April 10-16 is National Volunteer Week.

Observance of this important month for our young military family members kicks off April 2 with a Safety Fair at Mather Field near Sacramento. For those in southern California, an outing to the Ronald W. Reagan Presidential Library and Museum is planned for April 30. For more information, contact Jerica Lovett, CNG child and youth coordinator, at 916-854-3713 or jerica.e.lovett.ctr@us.army.mil.

CNG Family Programs WeCare meetings this month will focus on the Month of the Military Child and feature special family events. The Walnut Creek WeCare meeting will double as a Family Fun Day on Saturday, April 16. Other WeCare meetings will include picnics and volunteer events and showcase equipment such as a giant-screen Nintendo Wii game system, outdoor skill action sets and equipment for scooter hockey, bowling and other sports. Such entertainment is available regularly at WeCare meetings, monthly gatherings that offer support and build a sense of military community. The meetings also provide opportunities for families to receive advice, military news and benefit information.

Free special needs camp

Up to 92 special needs military youths are invited to Camp Ronald McDonald at Eagle Lake, near Susanville, Calif., for a free camp Aug. 7-12 that will provide youths aged 8 to 18 with opportunities to explore and discover their physical environment and increase their physical activity. The camp will include confidence-building experiences and programs to support each camper's individuality through outdoor group living and teamwork in a supportive environment. Staff members are equipped to assist youths with speech, language, visual or orthopedic impairment; learning disabilities; deafness or hearing impairment; deaf-blindness; multiple disabilities and autism. The 35-acre, fully accessible camp welcomes nearly 1,000 campers with disabilities and disadvantages each year. For more information, visit www.campronald.org/home.php or contact Crystal O'Hara, 4-H Military Partnership Program representative, at 530-757-8968 or crohara@ucdavis.edu.

Boots in the Sand tells Iraq stories

Boots in the Sand is an effort of U.S. Forces-Iraq to tell the stories of the 50,000 service members now serving in support of Operation New Dawn. Articles, photos and videos can be found at www.facebook.com/boots.in.the.sand, and the initiative has a presence on Flickr, Twitter and YouTube. For more, visit www.usf-iraq.com.

Army NG's new Personnel Gateway

The Army National Guard launched a new website, the G1 Personnel Gateway, to provide Soldiers with human resource information and support every aspect of their readiness and well-being. The Gateway provides information on medical, educational and financial programs and benefits, and it features deployment support and readiness resources. Each page provides a comprehensive overview of Army National Guard programs as well as access to documents, forms, regulations and Guard-specific sites. With resources and updates directly from National Guard Bureau personnel, Soldiers and families can ensure they are informed with the most up-to-date information. Check out the site at <https://g1arnng.army.pentagon.mil>.

DID YOU KNOW...

... excessive unauthorized absences can result in loss of benefits, reduction in rank and separation from the military?

An unauthorized absence is defined as any time a service member is in a duty status but is not at their place of duty and does not have their commander's authorization. Absences are marked by unit training assembly (UTA) periods, which are four-hours blocks of time. So missing a standard weekend drill would result in four unexcused absences. Units are responsible for ensuring service members are notified of unauthorized absences.

An Airman who has six unexcused absences may be recommended for demotion by their commander. The Airman's bonus payment may also be stopped, and the Airman may be required to repay their bonus. After nine unexcused absences, the commander may seek the Airman's discharge.

In the Army National Guard, a commander may reduce a Soldier's rank by one grade and may seek the Soldier's discharge after nine unexcused absences. The Soldier's bonus also may be stopped and recouped.

References: Air National Guard Instruction (ANGI) 32-607 (paragraph 3.6, 3.8), ANGI 36-2503, Air Force Instruction 36-3209, Army Regulation (AR) 135-91 (paragraph 4-14, 4-15), AR 600-8-19 (paragraph 10-17), AR 135-178, AR 140-10



Public Affairs Directorate, California National Guard

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The Blue Eagles Total Force Honor Guard, a combined unit of the Air Force Reserve and the California Air National Guard, presents the colors March 20 during the opening ceremony for the 26th annual Los Angeles Marathon. The CNG's 163rd Reconnaissance Wing fielded a team of 17 runners, continuing a nine-year tradition in the race, which included 25,000 participants this year.

PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. JULIE AVEY

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