

# GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard

## Homeland response

CNG increases its civil support role

# 2



Wounded warriors won't back down

# 4&12

# Commander's Corner

## Improving our domestic response

### Major General Mary Kight



In civil support missions, speed saves lives. When faced with a natural or man-made disaster, our citizens count on the California National Guard to respond quickly and efficiently with all our capabilities. No matter what emergency arises — whether it be a wildfire or a weapon of mass destruction — our Soldiers and Airmen are always ready to assist.

Our service members are also adapting every day to overcome new challenges and to further enhance our ability to protect our citizens. Three new initiatives undertaken by the CNG will enable a faster, stronger, more efficient response to domestic emergencies while improving the unity of effort with our local and federal partners.

The California National Guard has been chosen to stand up a homeland response force, or HRF, to cover all of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region IX. Each of the 10 FEMA regions will stand up a homeland response force by the end of fiscal year 2012, with the first two expected to be fully mission capable in Ohio and Washington in fiscal 2011.

The Fairfield-based 49th Military Police Brigade will have responsibility for deploying the FEMA Region IX Homeland Response Force, which will be fully mission capable in March 2012. Its 556 members will combine a chemical, biological, radiological/nuclear and explosive enhanced response force package (CERFP) with a command-and-control element, a battalion headquarters and a security company.

Each CERFP includes decontamination, search-and-extraction and medical capabilities to respond to any incident involving an airborne pathogen, "dirty" bomb, nuclear detonation or other dangerous contaminant.

The FEMA Region IX Homeland Response Force will be able to integrate multiple CERFPs and civil support teams under its command for a coordinated, robust response to any emergency.

The CNG was also selected to establish one of two domes-

tic all-hazards response teams (DART) nationwide, which the 40th Infantry Division stood up in October. The DART program addresses lessons learned during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

A 23-person DART forms a modular and deployable command-and-control headquarters to synchronize the flow of National Guard forces into and out of a disaster area. The lack of such a capability in 2005 resulted in a slowed response from reserve forces after Hurricane Katrina — a mistake the National Guard does not plan to repeat.

The DART will also provide command and control of joint reception, staging, onward movement and integration for deploying units, managing the tactical flow of forces and equipment.

Further enhancing our ability to coordinate forces, Brig. Gen. Kevin G. Ellsworth now stands ready to serve as a dual-status commander, simultaneously in charge of state and federal military forces responding to a domestic emergency.

Under a new construct being tested in three states, we can employ a dual-status commander when forces in both Title 10 and Title 32 status (active duty and reserve, respectively) are called to respond to a domestic emergency. Establishment of a dual-status command must be authorized by the president of the United States and the governor of California.

In such a case, Brig. Gen. Ellsworth, who is in Title 32 status, would be ordered to federal active duty while retaining his state commission. This dual-status command would improve the unity of effort and application of military capabilities in support of civilian authorities.

Protecting California's citizens has been our priority since 1849, but never before has it required such a varied skill set and such a dedicated force to counter the potential threats facing our state. I am grateful for our hard-working Soldiers and Airmen, who will use these new capabilities to bring a quicker, more robust, coordinated response to civil support missions.



Spc. Ronald Doren, a member of the 235th Engineer Company and the California National Guard Chemical, Biological, Radiological/Nuclear and Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) rappels off a three-story building to extract a victim trapped in a mock parking garage collapse during Vigilant Guard Guam on Aug. 25. The CERFP is a critical component of the new CNG Homeland Response Force, which covers all of Federal Emergency Management Agency Region IX.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Vaughn

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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)
- ★ Credit (who took the photo)

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## Cover Shot

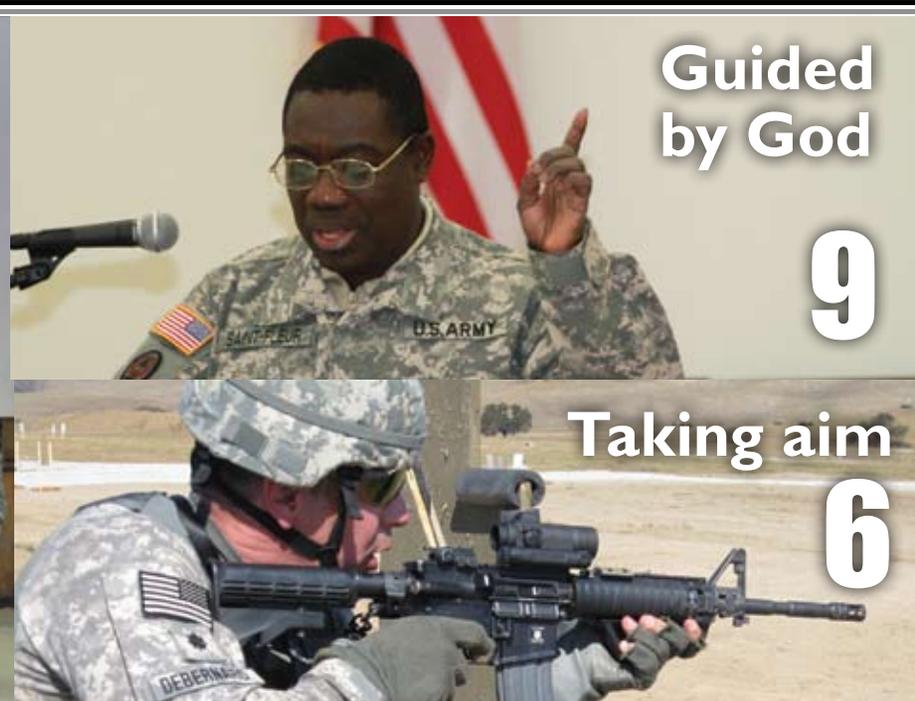


Photo by 2nd Lt. Jan Bender

Staff Sgt. James Brunette, right, and Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Quinn of the 9th Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) demonstrate how to assess a site for the presence of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents Feb. 14 on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos.



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# CNG medics train Afghan National Army Soldiers

Story and photo by Capt. Benito Garcia  
4th Combat Aviation Brigade

Medics in the Afghan National Army (ANA) recently received basic medical training from U.S. Soldiers with medical evacuation detachment Company F, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, which is executing a yearlong medevac mission on Forward Operating Base Victory, Afghanistan.

For the ANA Soldiers, proper training is a critical component to Afghan independence and stability within its borders. This training will afford them the readiness to assume responsibility throughout the battlefield with the goal of paving the way to a future in which a large international presence is not needed.

The training given by the 2-135th covered aircraft awareness and how to prepare patients for medevac transport. The first graduating class had approximately 30 ANA students, and the result exceeded expectations. Despite the language barrier, the trainer medics — Staff Sgt. Steven Freedell, Sgt. Daniel Mast, Sgt. Patrick Modesitt and Sgt. Lisette Piedrasahagun — were able to motivate their students

while expertly teaching their craft.

The ANA medics embraced the training and demonstrated a passion to help others in the surrounding area.

“In assisting with ANA training, the ANA ground troops have been better able to understand aircraft safety and patient packaging, therefore making patient transfer to flight medics easier and safer,” Piedrasahagun said.

Due to the positive results of the first class, the Soldiers of Company F were asked to return to Camp Shindand, Afghanistan, on a monthly basis to train ANA soldiers. To date, the team has trained more than 200 newly graduated soldiers.

“Our presence in Afghanistan will surely have an impact ... allowing them to ‘train as we fight,’” said Modesitt, citing an oft-used Army motto. “This is an exciting opportunity to aid in the development of ANA medics, in which the Afghan population will benefit with skilled personnel responding when called upon.”



Sgt. Patrick Modesitt of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, provides medical instruction to Afghan Soldiers through an interpreter on Camp Shindand, Afghanistan.

## Purple Heart recipient living his dream

Story and photo by 2nd Lt. Jan Bender  
Los Angeles Regional Public Affairs

On the six-month anniversary of his arrival in Iraq, Staff Sgt. John F. Iverson was serving as a gunner on a convoy in southern Baghdad, when his element was hit with a complex ambush. The initial improvised explosive device, or IED, blast impacted Iverson's Humvee directly, killing the driver and severely damaging Iverson's right leg, perforating his right ear drum and sending shrapnel into his right eye.

On instinct Iverson, a signal support systems specialist with Company A, 250th Military Intelligence Battalion, climbed out of the mangled and burning vehicle only to be hit in the leg by the small arms fire that ensued. Fading in and out of consciousness, Iverson was evacuated soon after.

He arrived at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., in June 2005, bloodied, burned and partially blind. During his 11 months there, Iverson endured seemingly countless surgeries and constant therapy to regain mobility of a leg that was nearly amputated upon his arrival, and he struggled with the reality of losing half of the vision in his right eye.

“There were definitely times in the first couple months when I didn't think I'd ever be able to walk again ... but I had two incredibly strong women pushing me through it: my wife and my physical therapist,” Iverson said. “At first I was pushed, and then I began to push myself.”

Iverson joined the National Guard in 2000 at age 36, after a year in the Navy Reserve left him longing for broader training and experience. The events that shook his life in Baghdad might have made some reconsider their path in life, but for Iverson, it only



Staff Sgt. John F. Iverson, center, receives a Purple Heart from then-Brigadier General Scott W. Johnson, commander of the 40th Infantry Division, left, and Lt. Col. Michael Kozak, commander of Iverson's unit, the 250th Military Intelligence Battalion, during a Dec. 23 ceremony on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos. Iverson sustained multiple injuries when an improvised explosive device struck his vehicle in Iraq in 2005.

stiffened his resolve.

“Once I was able to get in the wheelchair and start walking on the parallel bars, it became personal,” he said. “If I wasn't able to walk again ... then those [insurgents] won the war.”

### BACK IN SERVICE

Ten days after his release from Walter Reed, Iverson deployed again, this time to the southern border of California as a member of Joint Task Force Vista in support of Customs and Border Protection.

“I was excited. That was my first opportunity to serve my home state,” said Iverson, a native of Lancaster, Calif. “I wasn't going to be able to return to my job driving a bus due to my vision, and serving on the border was an important mission.”

He served on the border from July 2006 until August 2007 and soon thereafter reported to Fort Huachuca, Ariz., to be re-classed as a human intelligence collector. Iverson graduated in June 2008 and was home for only a matter of days before wildfires ignited across the state. Again Iverson answered

the call, serving in support of Operation Lightning Strike for the length of July.

At that point Iverson had spent less than six months of the past three years at home.

“It's very difficult, but he says this is what he wants to do,” Iverson's wife, Pamela, said. “He's wanted to be a Soldier ever since he was a kid. ... I can't stop him from living his dream.”

Pamela, who has been married to Iverson for 12 years, was surprised he hadn't “had enough” after his injuries. She has relied heavily on support from their children and grandchildren to get her through the separation from the man they adore as “Grandpa John.”

“All she has to do is ask me to stop and I would,” Iverson said. “She doesn't like it ... but she understands it.”

In the winter of 2008, much of the 40th Infantry Division was gearing up to deploy in support of a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. Iverson was intrigued by the mission and volunteered to deploy, utilizing his newly acquired skill set as a part of the unit's intelligence section.

While deployed he served as a liaison between the Lithuanian, Polish and Ukrainian contingents and the U.S. forces on the ground, ensuring an accurate and secure flow of intelligence between organizations during the joint mission.

“It was a great experience to connect on a very human level with Soldiers that 30

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# CNG Soldier earns Volunteer Service Medal

By Tom McLelland  
Rocklin Kiwanis Club

Sgt. 1st Class David Partak received the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal on Dec. 15 in recognition of the See's for Soldiers Program he founded in 2005 as well as other initiatives of service to the greater Sacramento communities.

Several Kiwanis clubs in California sell See's Candies during the holiday season to raise money. Through the See's for Soldiers Program, they also encourage consumers to purchase extra candy, which is then sent to American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This year, 14 Kiwanis clubs participated, collecting and shipping 2,272 pounds of chocolate to troops overseas — twice as much as the program shipped last year.

The state retention manager for the California Army National Guard, Partak initiated the program after he returned from Iraq in 2005.

"As a service member who has served overseas, I know what those who have followed in my footsteps are going through, and if I can bring them a little taste of home with the See's candy, it is a small part I can do to make their lives a little brighter," Partak said.

"It also goes a long way to show our fellow California Army National Guard Soldiers that we support them and are thinking of them," he continued. "I was honored to receive the award but I am just as honored when I get a letter or e-mail from a Soldier I sent some candy to, thanking me."

The award recognizes Partak's demonstration of "selfless service spirit" since 2004, when he and his wife set up a library with thousands of donated CDs and DVDs on Camp Cedar II, Iraq, where Partak was serving.

When Partak returned to California, he and his family continued raising donations to fund the library through events such as auctions of music memorabilia auto-

graphed by celebrities.

The Partaks also raised donations of coloring books, crayons, soccer balls and dolls, which were given to Iraqi children and schools near Camp Cedar II.

"It was nice to give a little holiday cheer to the children that were stuck in a difficult situation that was no fault of their own," Partak said.

"His enthusiasm, dedication, and personal conduct have been a true asset to the Sacramento and Auburn communities while sustaining direct and consequential volunteer support to deployed Soldiers and Airmen in the areas of operation," Partak's award states.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PARTAK FAMILY

Sgt. 1st Class David Partak, retention manager for the California Army National Guard, picks up candies in Rocklin, Calif., to be shipped to troops overseas. Partak, who initiated the See's for Soldiers Program in 2005, was recognized in December with the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.



# YOUTH IN ACTION

## Grizzly Academy instills discipline, motivation

By Cadet Paulina Cardozo  
Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy

As a teen single parent, nothing has come easy for me. Having a baby at a very young age is a challenge, because now it isn't just me — there is another human being who needs me.

I used to have a hard time with family, school and my social life. I never attended school, and my grades were low. But everything has changed since I attended Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy in San Luis Obispo, Calif. My attitude toward life has changed drastically in a positive way.

Grizzly taught me that in order to have a successful life, I need to have an education. Also, being here at Grizzly has taught me the discipline and motivation to keep moving forward no matter what. At Grizzly, I kept good grades and high moral standards.

I look forward to life, and I want to take advantage of what I can accomplish. I want to become an excellent role model for my daughter and achieve my goal of becoming a dentist. Those are my two major goals in life: to become a dentist and to be the best mother I can be.

I plan to attend Oxnard College to earn my associate's degree in science and my certification as a dental hygienist. After that I plan to transfer to the University of California at Santa Barbara to continue my schooling and become a dentist.

I will fight for this goal and hopefully achieve



PHOTO COURTESY OF GRIZZLY YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY

Cadet Paulina Cardozo graduates from the Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy in December. She plans to become a dentist and a great role model for her daughter.

more, because my education will be my daughter's future, and I want the best for her. I want to show my daughter that if I can do it, so can she. I know I can do it; I just needed the opportunity.

I was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from Grizzly Academy to help me out with expenses at college, and I am grateful for having won this scholarship as well as all the things Grizzly Academy has taught me.

## CNG Youth Program names new director

By California National Guard  
Child and Youth Program

Jerica Lovett has taken over as director of the Child and Youth Program for the California National Guard, bringing a wealth of experience both in the military and working with military families.

A former Air Force medic, Lovett is married to a Soldier in the California National Guard who recently returned from a yearlong tour in Afghanistan.

While her husband was deployed, Lovett took care of their 2-year-old daughter while working closely with his unit's Family Readiness Group.

As a former Airman and the wife of a Soldier, Lovett brings deployment knowledge and experience from both sides of the family spectrum.

Lovett previously served the CNG as a Family Assistance Network specialist. She is now focusing on her true passion: helping military

children.

"I know what these parents are going through," Lovett said. "There are a lot of programs available. We just need to get the word out."

With Lovett now located at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento, the Child and Youth Program has representation throughout the state. The program recently created Regional Advisory Teams of volunteers in each part of the state, which are diligently working to plan and execute events for military children throughout the year.

The Child and Youth Program's 2011 calendar is full of events. To view the schedule and learn about the program, please visit [www.calguard.ca.gov/ReadyFamilies](http://www.calguard.ca.gov/ReadyFamilies).

If you are passionate about military children and would like to volunteer, please contact Jerica Lovett at [jerica.e.lovett.ctr@us.army.mil](mailto:jerica.e.lovett.ctr@us.army.mil) or 916-223-5045.

# Combat Match tests marksmanship skills

Five challenging competitions with a variety of weapons showed CNG Soldiers a new level of marksmanship they can achieve

By Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Wall  
223rd Infantry Regiment



The dust has settled, and the Soldiers who produced the California Combat Match and those who fired in it have returned to their normal duties and lives. But all of those Soldiers have been changed by it.

For those who produced the September match, many lessons were learned about the complexity of hosting such a large event. For the Soldiers who competed — as most had never fired in a military combat marksmanship match before — a new world of marksmanship was introduced.

A very small number of CNG Soldiers have been exposed to military marksmanship outside of zeroing their rifles at 25 meters and firing for qualification on the modified record fire range with its maximum distance of 300 meters. The number of Soldiers with anything more than qualification on the pistol is even smaller.

At the California Combat Match, however, 82 competitors zeroed their rifles at 400 yards and competed against each other in the Excellence in Competition (EIC) with the Service Rifle match, firing at a target that is 15 percent shorter than the standard E-silhouette. From there they advanced to 25 yards short of the 300-yard line, loaded their weapons and sprinted on command to their firing points to engage the target with 10 rounds in 60 seconds, changing magazines mid-string. From there they advanced to just short of the 200-yard line, loaded and sprinted to their firing positions to fire 10 rounds from the kneeling position in 50 seconds, followed by several more marksmanship tasks.



**TOP AND BOTTOM:** California National Guard Soldiers compete in the California Combat Match on Camp Roberts, Calif., in September. The two-day event featured five competitions testing Soldiers' skill on a variety of weapons. **ABOVE:** Maj. Gen. John S. Harrel, commander of the California Army National Guard, competed in two events during the Combat Match and spent several hours pulling and scoring targets for other Soldiers despite 107-degree heat.



The rifle EIC match places competitors under great stress. The stress of competition is mental; the EIC match introduces physical stress as well. It requires physical fitness, the ability to remember and execute a complex course of fire, and advanced marksmanship skills, such as being able to judge the wind and apply proper correction.

The competitors learned that with proper training and practice, they can accurately hit a human-sized target well beyond the 300 meters at which they currently qualify. The rifle EIC is the most significant training experience for Soldiers headed to Afghanistan, where many will need to engage Taliban forces at greater than 300 meters.

The rifle EIC is the only rifle match in which Soldiers can win "leg points" toward becoming a Distinguished Marksman. Becoming a Distinguished Marksman or a Distinguished Pistol Shot is the highest award a military marksman can achieve unless selected to compete for the United States in international competition.

The rifle EIC was just one of five matches that weekend.

Maj. Gen. John S. Harrel, commander of the California Army National Guard, competed in the Devil's Playground match, which preceded the rifle EIC. The Devil's Playground tests one's ability to engage targets at short range, mid-range, on the move and from behind cover,

firing off the firing-side shoulder and the support-side shoulder.

After completing the Devil's Playground and observing the rifle EIC, Harrel headed to one of the target litters to pull and score targets for four hours in the 107-degree heat. The following day he competed in the Matrix match, which utilizes the M4/M16, the M9 pistol and M240B machine gun.

The pistol EIC match, like the rifle EIC, is designed to test a shooter in various positions (standing, kneeling and prone), at different ranges (15 to 30 yards) and with different time frames. Like the rifle EIC, the pistol EIC is the only pistol match in which a Soldier can earn leg points.

During the two-day event, two Soldiers were awarded leg points for previous successes: Staff Sgt. Fermin Garcia earned rifle leg points and Sgt. Leif Devemark earned pistol leg points. Additionally, I was presented the Distinguished Pistol Shot Medal.

This was an important event for the California National Guard. The Army has established a standard for marksmanship that is considerably below the capability of our Soldiers and our equipment. The California Combat Match allowed Soldiers to realize how much more lethal they can be with a little more training and resources.

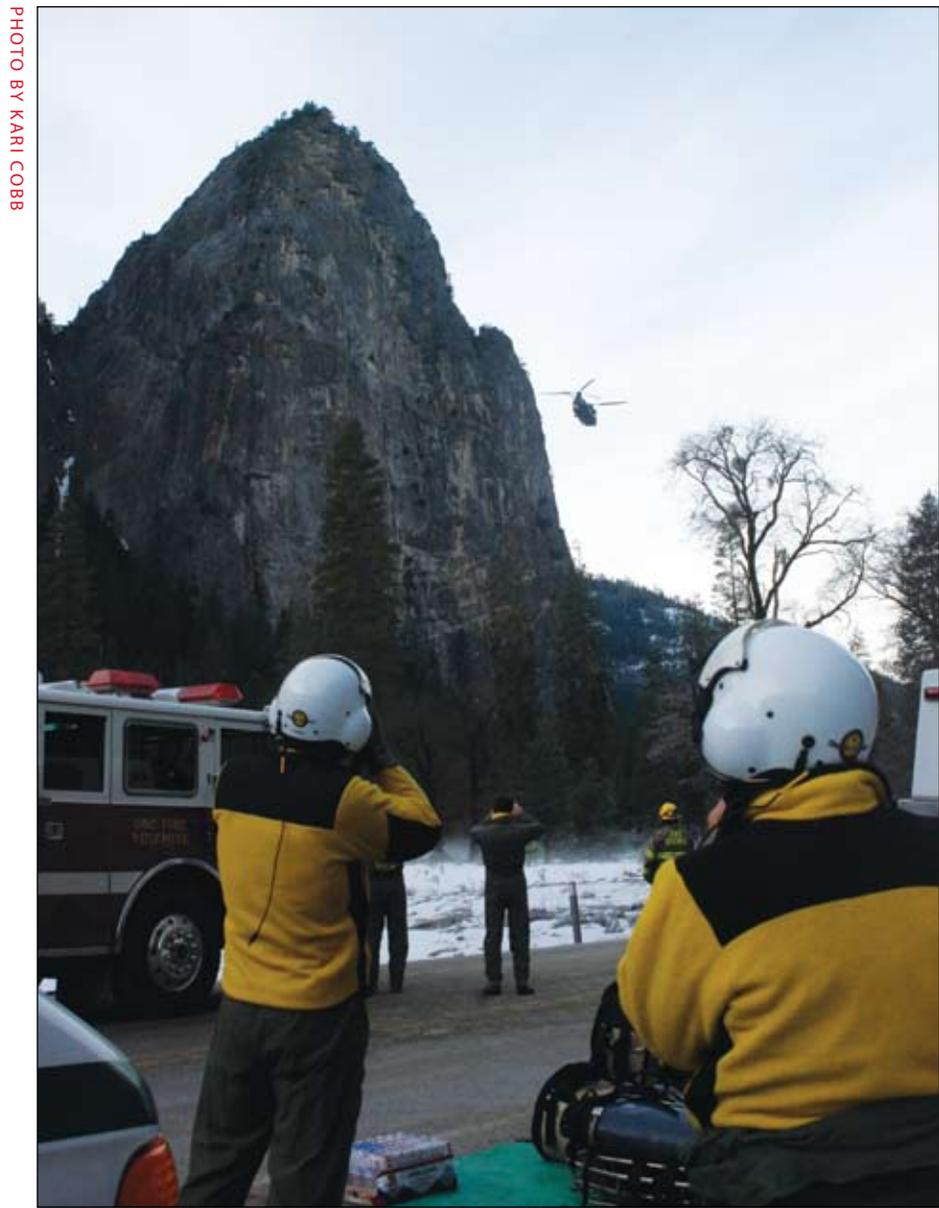


PHOTO BY KARI COBB

A CH-47 Chinook helicopter from Company B, 1-126th Aviation Regiment, flies in Yosemite National Park on Dec. 13 as part of a multi-agency operation to rescue three rock climbers, one of whom had been struck by a falling 200-pound rock.

## CNG Chinook, crew assist in Yosemite park rescue

By National Park Service

Three rock climbers were rescued from the wall of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park, Calif., on Dec. 13, completing a two-day rescue operation.

National Park Service rangers were assisted in the technical rescue effort by a California Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopter and crew from Company B, 1-126th Aviation Regiment, based in Stockton; a California Highway Patrol (CHP) helicopter from Auburn; and a private helicopter from Columbia, Calif.

Sarah Land, 24, from Oakhurst, Calif., and Walker and Rio Mackey, 25 and 23, from Boulder, Colo., were lowered down the wall of the 7,563-foot granite monolith after spending the night on the wall of El Capitan. Land sustained moderate injuries; her companions were not injured.

At 11 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 12, the Yosemite Emergency Communication Center received a call from Land, asking for assistance after a 200-pound rock dislodged and struck her while she was climbing.

The climbers attempted to finish their ascent after the call to the communication center. However, because of Land's injuries, she called back at about 2:30 p.m. and asked park rangers for assistance. With daylight dwindling, rangers were

not able to bring in a helicopter or initiate the rescue, and the trio was forced to spend the night on the wall.

On Monday morning, Yosemite National Park contacted the Law Enforcement Division of the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA), seeking assistance in the rescue effort. CalEMA contacted the Army National Guard, which dispatched a Chinook to Yosemite Valley to assist in the rescue efforts.

The military helicopter transported rescue personnel to the top of El Capitan, where National Park rangers Matt Stark and Chris Bellino were lowered to the injured climbers. Once the rangers were with the climbers, the group was lowered to the base of El Capitan. A CHP helicopter then took Land to El Capitan Meadow, where she was transported out of Yosemite Valley.

Completing the rescue mission on Monday was critical because of worsening weather conditions, including fog covering Yosemite Valley and impending snowfall at higher elevations. More than 30 Yosemite National Park rangers, Yosemite Search and Rescue Team members and others assisted in the complex technical rescue, putting their lives at risk to rescue the climbers.

## 144th Medical Group completes EMEDS course

Story and photos by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler  
144th Fighter Wing

Members of the 144th Medical Group traveled deep into the remote woodlands of northern Michigan to attend Expeditionary Medical Support (EMEDS) training at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Alpena, Mich., in September.

The weeklong course provided the essential training necessary to recertify the 144th Medical Group as EMEDS-compliant. National Guard Medical Groups from throughout the nation are required to attend the EMEDS formal training school once every five years. The EMEDS course emphasizes the integration of the military response into the civilian response for a wide variety of scenarios.

"This is the type of training that might be used during homeland defense, domestic security, domestic operations and overseas operations," said Col. Joe Pascuzzo, 144th Medical Group commander and senior flight surgeon. "We were presented with a mass casualty exercise, which tested our ability to set up a fully operational EMEDS station. It included everything from setting up the tents to transporting treated patients to air evacuation."

"The citizens of California may someday benefit from the valuable training we have received here," Pascuzzo continued. "I am proud of the 144th Medical Group, and this certification proves again the ability of the California Air National Guard to rapidly deploy to anywhere in California, set up the EMEDS and be treating civilian casualties in a matter of hours."

The 144th Medical Group was thrown into a mass casualty scenario that could have easily been a real-world situation in the Golden State: As casualties of a 6.8-magnitude earthquake were transported to the EMEDS site, medical personnel from the 144th took their places and performed seamlessly to provide patient care.

"This is hands-on emergency room-type training for Air National Guard medical



personnel that is meant to support real-world military and civilian casualties," said Lt. Col. Shezam Jahromi, flight doctor and squadron medical element of the 194th Fighter Squadron. "We've set up the EMEDS unit to support the lab, X-rays, intensive care unit, emergency room and dental. We've been tested with fractures, burns, head injuries and many other situations. The members of the 144th Medical Group were tested, and they showed a great sense of urgency and proved their abilities."

The challenges that the members of the medical squadron faced were magnified by long work hours, a torrential downpour of rain and hail, and unfamiliar terrain.

"This training has been excellent and very realistic," said Tech. Sgt. Eliza Villa, an aerospace health technician with the 144th Medical Group. "It comes down to the basics. You have to put up a tent before you can run a hospital, and the hands-on experience lets us know that we need to work together to provide the best medical care that a casualty might require."



TOP: Master Sgt. Angela Perez of the 144th Medical Group practices her suturing technique on a mannequin at the Expeditionary Medical Support (EMEDS) Training Center in Alpena, Mich. ABOVE: Members of the 144th demonstrate the technique for transporting a patient while under enemy fire or in a limited-space area.

# 749th CSSB assumes Iraq sustainment mission

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

During a Jan. 12 transfer of authority ceremony on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, the Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 749th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB), 224th Sustainment Brigade, assumed their mission of providing administrative, logistical, munitions, transportation and maintenance support for all units in the CSSB's area of operations. Authority was transferred from the Georgia National Guard's HHC, 110th CSSB.

"The 749th [CSSB] is prepared to accept and accomplish every mission asked of them," said Lt. Col. David Scheideler, commander of the 110th CSSB. "I know I am leaving the Soldiers and the leadership of our subordinate companies in excellent hands, knowing that Soldier care and mission success are foremost on their list of priorities."

Col. Lisa Costanza, commander of the 224th Sustainment Brigade, told the 794th

CSSB Soldiers that their bar has been set, acknowledging that the race will be long and hard, and will pose many challenges for the incoming unit to overcome.

Lt. Col. David Ceniti, commander of the 749th CSSB, said this is the first deployment in the 63-year history of the "Goldminer Battalion."

"Over the past several days, I have visited each company who serves in various ongoing missions and operations, and have found the Soldiers in these companies doing an outstanding job," he said. "I am equally impressed to see Guard, Reserve, and active duty quartermaster, transportation and ordnance Soldiers working side-by-side as one team of sustainers."

"The 749th will now pick up the torch where the 110th left off and will continue to push forward in order to complete our sustainment mission."



Lt. Col. David Ceniti, commander of the 749th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, unfurls the battalion colors Jan. 12 during a transfer of authority ceremony on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

# Border mission troops assist car crash victims

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Inigo  
Joint Task Force Sierra

During a late Sunday morning on Dec. 5, Border Patrol agents made a widespread call for any emergency medical technicians in the area to respond to a civilian car accident off of Otay Lakes Road, near mile marker 6 in San Diego. The trauma from this head-on collision was enough to warrant help from anyone who could assist.

When two Joint Task Force Sierra Soldiers heard the call come across their radio at their site in the Dulzura, Calif., mountains, they immediately sprang into action. Though not terribly close to the accident site, they knew their skills could be handy.

Prior to joining the California National Guard, Sgt. George Novela was a firefighter in the Los Angeles area in the early 1990s, while Spc. Ron Hesson was an emergency medical technician in the same area. Hesson has also since qualified as an Army medic and used the G.I. Bill to become a paramedic.

When Novela and Hesson reached the site of the accident, Border Patrol agents, California Highway Patrol officers, Chula Vista firefighters, and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection agents were already on the scene. Despite the full force of responders, the two Soldiers' arrival was welcomed and needed.

"There were just bodies lying all over the place," Hesson recalled of the multiple-casualty accident, saying his main concern was to help the people who could still benefit from it.

Hesson focused immediately on a female passenger who was visibly injured and trapped in her vehicle. The indentation from the impact reached more than 30 inches into her vehicle, meaning the possibility of further, internal injuries was high. Hesson directed emergency officials on the scene to airlift the patient because of the nature of the accident, and she was taken to a nearby hospital.

Novela, meanwhile, ensured all information during the accident was gathered appropriately for later reports.

Surrounded by rolling peaks in the area between their lookout point and Mexico, Novela and Hesson said humbly that any of the entry identification team troops working along the Southwest border would have done the same thing in their position. However, not everyone in their position could bring to the table the skills these two possess.

"I was proud of him," said Novela, a member of the 670th Military Police Company out of National City, Calif. "He arrived on the scene and immediately found out who was in charge and asked how we could assist."

The image that has remained with the two Soldiers since the accident is of two children on the scene — a brother and sister. Novela, who has a daughter and two sons, and Hesson, who has a son and daughter, each saw the scene through the eyes of a parent.

"It felt like a quick moment for us, but it's going to be a lifetime for them," Novela said.

"I thought about that when I went home," Hesson agreed. "Seeing that little girl sitting in the ambulance with her brother looking at her with tears in his eyes, and there's just nothing he could do — it gets a hold of your heart."

"At that point we all felt the same as that little boy," he continued. "Anyone there would have given their lives for those children."

Hesson, who keeps a personal medical kit with him at all times "just in case," said everything worked as



PHOTO BY SGT. GEORGE NOVELA

well as it could that day, considering how bad the accident was. He added that he was impressed so many agencies could pull together to manage the seriousness of the incident.

Supervisory Border Patrol Agent John Wallace, who was on the scene, agreed the agencies worked well together and commended the Guard Soldiers. Though these types of calls are not usually handled by service members on the border mission, he said, Novela and Hesson were ready for it.

"The Border Patrol agents and National Guardsmen on-scene did an outstanding job in light of a difficult situation," he wrote in an e-mail message. "The agents and Guardsmen acted quickly to block traffic, provide medical attention and request medical support."

Novela said he felt the other agencies on the scene had confidence in the Guardsmen and showed a great deal of mutual respect.

"It felt like we were in a club," said Hesson, a member of Company B, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, out of Dublin, Calif. "I mean, we were joining up with people who do these types of things every day. So I'm just glad we could help."

"We just happened to be here when the call came through."



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JESSICA INIGO  
ABOVE: Spc. Ron Hesson, left, and Sgt. George Novela survey the California-Mexico border from their lookout point near San Diego. TOP RIGHT: Hesson, a paramedic, treats a patient injured during a multiple-casualty collision Dec. 5.

# A generous heart

Lt. Col. Pierre Saint-Fleur followed God's path from a rough Haitian upbringing to service with the 40th CAB

Story and photo by Spc. Darriel Swatts  
40th Combat Aviation Brigade



Lt. Col. Pierre Saint-Fleur performs a Sunday service Jan. 2 in the chapel on North Fort Hood, Texas, where his unit, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, completed its predeployment training for a yearlong Iraq mission. This tour is the Haiti-born chaplain's third deployment to Iraq.

Growing up is hard enough, but growing up in an impoverished nation without the comforts that most of us take for granted is much harder. Such was the upbringing of Lt. Col. Pierre Saint-Fleur, brigade chaplain for the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), who was born and raised in Haiti.

"Growing up in Haiti was challenging in many ways," he said. "My parents didn't have much, but they were hard workers."

Saint-Fleur's father was a farmer and raised cattle, while his mother was a merchant who bought and sold grain. The youngest in his family, Saint-Fleur was raised with his sister and two brothers.

"When I was born, my sister was already married and had children of her own, and my brothers had already dropped out of school and were working," he said.

Finishing school was not common in Saint-Fleur's community. Most students dropped out because it was too hard, they lost interest or they needed to work to help support their family.

"I got discouraged in primary school because I didn't see a good path to go in life," Saint-Fleur said. "I didn't see why pursuing an education was important. But, by the grace of God, my brother-in-law was a Baptist preacher, and he took me under his wing."

Saint-Fleur's brother-in-law encouraged him to stay in school and gave him hope. Saint-Fleur completed primary and secondary school, and even went on to graduate from college, thanks to the undying support of his brother-in-law.

"Through my brother-in-law's influence, I joined the Baptist church and found even more hope and encouragement," Saint-Fleur said. "I knew that was my path in life. I knew that this was my calling. I even became a Sunday school teacher."

Saint-Fleur didn't stay long at his brother-in-law's church. Shortly after college, he transferred to the Evangelical Church of Haiti, which asked him to go to Florida.

"I moved to Florida to be a pastor for the growing community of Haitians there," Saint-Fleur said. "The church there needed someone who knew the Haitian language and also knew the culture."

praying with his mother.

"Through talking with him and helping that Soldier through the emotional time he was going through, I got to find out more

to have to leave Camp Roberts when I got back."

Upon returning from his tour of duty in late 2006, he was quickly reactivated to go back to Iraq with the 169th Fire Support Brigade (FSB) out of Colorado.

"When I got back from my first tour, the National Guard Bureau asked me if I wanted to go back with another unit," Saint-Fleur said. "Of course I was very happy to oblige, so I repacked my bags and went back."

Though he mobilized with the 169th FSB, Saint-Fleur didn't stay with the brigade for long. Upon Saint-Fleur's arrival in Iraq, the 25th Infantry Division picked him up and made him their division chaplain.

"It was truly a blessing to have served with those Soldiers from both my tours in Iraq," Saint-Fleur said proudly. "I do miss them and wish them the best in everything they do."

Once his second tour was completed, Saint-Fleur went to southern California to support the Joint Task Force Vista troops serving on the Southwest border for eight months.

"Chaplain Saint-Fleur is someone Soldiers can turn to when they need help," said Capt. Diosdado Quinton, chaplain for the 640th Aviation Support Battalion. "He always has an open ear and an open heart."

Upon his return from the border mission, Saint-Fleur transferred to the 40th CAB. He is now serving his third deployment to Iraq, but instead of Operation Iraqi Freedom, this time it is Operation New Dawn.

Saint-Fleur, however, sees every mission the same: "just another opportunity to help support the troops."

"Chaplain Saint-Fleur is the embodiment of selfless service," said Staff Sgt. Donald Dow, 40th CAB chaplain's assistant. "I always see him giving to the Soldiers and their families, and he never asks for anything in return."

Helping that Soldier through the emotional time he was going through, I got to find out more about that Soldier and saw how much he loved his job, and I wanted to be a part of it. I knew this was an opportunity laid in front of me by God.

— Lt. Col. Pierre Saint-Fleur  
Chaplain, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade

While in Florida, Saint-Fleur decided to further his education by attending a local seminary. After graduating, he felt led by the Lord to continue his ministry elsewhere — someplace there was a greater need for his service. So he packed up his bags and moved to Fresno, Calif.

"Upon arriving in Fresno, I started to work as the hospital chaplain at the Fresno Community Hospital as part of a training program called the Clinical Pastoral Education Program," Saint-Fleur said.

He often visited and prayed with sick and dying patients and their families.

"I am grateful that God led me there to help those people," Saint-Fleur said. "I was truly blessed to be of service to those people who needed help."

Although Saint-Fleur was happy where he was, God had more plans for him, he said.

One day when Saint-Fleur was praying at the bedside of a sick woman, her son, an Army recruiter, walked into the room. The man was moved by what he saw and asked to speak with the man who was

about that Soldier and saw how much he loved his job, and I wanted to be a part of it," Saint-Fleur said. "I asked him how I can join, so he put me in contact with a local Army chaplain.

"I knew this was an opportunity laid in front of me by God, so I went for it."

He soon enlisted in the Army Reserve as a chaplain in 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade, based on Fort Ord, Calif. But the Army had more travels in store for him. Saint-Fleur served two other Reserve units before transferring to the California Army National Guard.

His first duty station as a California National Guard Soldier was the 115th Area Support Group in Roseville, Calif. That was followed by two more Army Guard units before Saint-Fleur landed at Camp Roberts, Calif., as the post chaplain, where he stayed for almost seven years.

"While stationed at Camp Roberts, I got activated to go to Iraq in October of 2004 with the 155th Brigade Combat Team," Saint-Fleur said. "While I was there I got promoted to lieutenant colonel. I was extremely happy, but it meant I was going

Capt. James Smith and 1st Sgt. Gary Cooper, right, of the Pittsburg, Calif.-based 870th Military Police Company, case the company colors Dec. 17 as more than 160 Soldiers prepare to depart for Fort Bliss, Texas. The company received six weeks of training on Fort Bliss then traveled to Afghanistan to conduct a yearlong security forces mission.

Photo by Nicole Cooper



Master Sgt. James Marchese, left, and Sgt. 1st Class Jason Langston, right, of the CNG Accession Task Force meet Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta, the first living service member to earn the Medal of Honor in Iraq or Afghanistan, during a Los Angeles luncheon in Giunta's honor. In 2007, while serving as a rifle team leader in Afghanistan, Giunta exposed himself to enemy fire to pull a comrade to cover and later rescued a wounded Soldier who had been captured by enemy forces.

Photo by Staff Sgt. (CA) Gene Arias



Kathy Spencer, far left, Gloria Falcon and Clarita Cortez of the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) pose Nov. 18 with Brig. Gen. Mary Kight, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, after the three CSAC employees received the California Legion of Merit for their hard work and dedication in establishing the CNG Education Assistance Award Program (EAAP).

For more on the EAAP, see Page 17.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Joseph Prouse



Soldiers of the Chico, Calif.-based 649th Engineer Company conduct squad training for a yearlong deployment. More than 150 members of the 649th depart for combat outposts and forward operating bases as well as assisting with construction.

Photo by 1st Lt. Jeffrey Gruidl



Spc. Juan Campos, far right, and Spc. Celerino Penalzoza receive the Purple Heart in Visalia, Calif. Campos and Penalzoza, members of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 10th Cavalry, were awarded the Purple Heart when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device during a convoy.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Richard Vance



Advanced-level movement training Dec. 17 on Fort McCoy, Wis., in preparation for operations in December for Afghanistan, where they are building and expanding infrastructure and construction of roads and buildings.



Brig. Gen. Mary Kight, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, Maj. Gen. Scott W. Johnson, commander of the 40th Infantry Division, and Maj. Gen. John S. Harrel, commander of the California Army National Guard, salute the colors during a ceremony to celebrate Johnson's promotion from brigadier general.

Photo by Laura Herzog



Sgt. Joseph Prouse received the Purple Heart from Maj. Gen. Scott W. Johnson during a Jan. 8 ceremony at Fort McCoy, Wis. Prouse and his brother, Sgt. Joseph Prouse, were injured March 14, 2008, in Iraq during a security mission.



Lt. Col. Anthony Noll, right, takes command of 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, receiving the guidon from Col. Mark Malanka, commander of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, higher headquarters for the I-184th, during a Jan. 7 ceremony at the armory in Visalia, Calif. Noll succeeded Maj. Jeffery Kerns as commander of the I-184th.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Joseph Prouse

RIGHT: Spc. Dawn Starks of the 40th Infantry Division learns the proper way to wear a kimono during the Yama Sakura 59 exercise on Camp Kengun, Japan. The annual exercise features an exchange of military techniques, ideas and culture that strengthens relations between the two nations' militaries. BOTTOM: Spc. Delilah Hill of the 40th Infantry Division plays with a child during a visit to an orphanage in Japan as part of Yama Sakura 59. "I like to experience other cultures, and interacting with the children was good for the soul," Hill said.

Photos by Spc. Denise Durbin-Carlton



# CNG Wounded Warrior earns top DoD honor

By 2nd Lt. Jan Bender  
Los Angeles Regional Public Affairs

On Dec. 7, 2010, as Dr. Clifford L. Stanley, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, presented Master Sgt. Robert T. Walker with the 2010 Department of Defense Outstanding Employee With a Disability Award, the 30-year veteran was humbled and taken aback.

"The feeling I had was that of the day I took my oath of enlistment," Walker said. "I was filled with pride. ... One of the proudest days of my life."

Seventeen other individuals were selected to receive the award from across the country, but Walker was chosen as the National Guard Bureau's sole recipient from among all 54 states and territories.

"One of the main reasons why [Walker] was selected for the award was his top-notch attitude and indomitable spirit," said Staff Sgt. Robert Briley, who serves as the Warrior Transition Unit liaison for the state and was with Walker in Washington, D.C., to see him receive the award. "He's the epitome of a good leader. ... [He's] a senior [non-commissioned officer] that Soldiers want to go to for answers, and he's who you can look to as an example. ... Really just an uplifting individual."

Walker has deployed to Iraq three times for the California Army National Guard and toured much of the country serving as team leader of a specialized aviation maintenance crew tasked with inspecting OH-58, UH-60, AH-64 and CH-47 aircraft to keep those vital airframes mission capable.

During his first 15-month Iraq tour, in 2004 and 2005, Walker survived a mortar attack in Balad, which caused the vehicle he was driving to overturn. He sustained a compressed fracture in his spine, shattered multiple vertebrae and suffered a traumatic brain injury. Unaware of the extent of his injuries, Walker refused treatment and pushed on, volunteering for two more consecutive tours spanning from 2006 through 2008.

Walker has been in the Guard since 1980, yet he described his time in Iraq and the mission he was responsible for as the highlight of his career — a great challenge that offered him much fulfillment.

"[The helicopters we were servicing] were out saving lives every day. I was part of a team, and the mission was that important to me," Walker said. "Our commander and the pilots bragged on me so extensively that I felt that I would let them down. I didn't want to leave them in the midst of the fight."

Late in his third tour, Walker began to experience severe shoulder pain and then episodes of intense vertigo. Soon thereafter, barely able to balance himself, he boarded one of the helicopters he had serviced to be flown out of the country.

Since July 2008, Walker has been at the Warrior Transition Unit on Fort Hood, Texas. In that time he has endured mul-

tiple surgeries, an intense regimen of physical therapy, a full gamut of medications and the strain of being away from his wife and home in Fresno, Calif.

Despite the rigors of his personal journey, Walker remains focused on service and his fellow Soldiers. He serves as an advocate and mentor for his fellow wounded warriors in different phases of their own journey, and he volunteers his time to the USO.

"Being injured and away from home, going through all types of treatment and therapy, a lot of times Soldiers get down on themselves," said Briley, who works daily with wounded warriors across the country. "Going through all that he went through, he's never lost hope, he's kept his energy level high and is constantly out to help others. He's over 60 years old and still a proud Soldier."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTER SGT. ROBERT T. WALKER

Master Sgt. Robert T. Walker earned the 2010 Department of Defense Outstanding Employee With a Disability Award, the only National Guard member to earn the award last year. Walker was injured during a 2004-2005 tour in Iraq when a mortar attack overturned his vehicle. Unaware of the extent of his injuries, Walker refused treatment and volunteered for two more tours.

## WTUs to troops: Healing is your mission

When a Guard member is injured on deployment or during training at home, the Soldier is typically sent to one of 35 installations across the country for treatment and recovery, based on which facility best serves their needs and situates them closest to home. While en route to recovery, the service member is assigned to a warrior transition unit (WTU).

Since the inception of WTUs in 2007, the units have provided critical support for wounded warriors — and their families — who require at least six months of rehabilitative care and complex medical management. The WTUs ensure success with what they call the "triad of care," composed of a squad leader, nurse case manager and primary care physician. Each Soldier is mentored, managed and treated in an interconnected team environment.

To provide Soldiers with clarity of purpose, patients are expected to know the program's mission statement: "I am a Warrior in Transition. My job is to heal as I transition back to duty or continue serving the nation as a veteran in my community. This is not a status, but a mission. I will succeed in this mission because I AM A WARRIOR AND I AM ARMY STRONG."

Once a Soldier reaches a point in their recovery at which a facility in their home state can serve their needs, the Soldier has the option to transition to a community-based warrior transition unit, or CBWTU. California's CBWTU is headquartered at McClellan Park near Sacramento. This brings the Soldier closer to their loved ones and their unit by allowing them to live at home while maintaining their momentum and focus on the path to recovery.

"The mission we've got here is more important than ever," said Maj. Jesse Basher, California's CBWTU commander. "We are providing care for our veterans that is deserving of their service. Be it in uniform or as a civilian, we're dedicated to getting these Soldiers on to the next phase of their lives."

The California National Guard currently has more than 80 Soldiers on the road to recovery in California and 62 more receiving care at 15 facilities across the country.

To learn about opportunities to support California's wounded warriors, contact Maj. Jesse Basher at 916-830-1450.

## Purple Heart, continued from Page 4

years ago would have been considered our enemies," Iverson said. "We shared a lot of laughs about differences in language and our courtesies and customs."

### RESTLESS AND READY

Iverson returned home in December 2009 with the rest of the division. He had his sights set on pursuing a career as a probation officer and began online college courses while serving as a member of the honor guard platoon at Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos.

He enjoyed the down time with his family, but when he caught wind of the need for experienced Soldiers to train Guard members for Iraq and Afghanistan, he felt pulled.

"I just wanted to pass along what knowledge I've gained through my life and my deployments," Iverson said. "My main motivation is to help Soldiers come back alive ... and if intelligence Soldiers do their job well, painting an accurate picture of the battlefield, that can really [improve] the chances of their whole unit making it back alive."

Since May 2010, Iverson has served in support of Operation Warrior Trainer, educating troops from all over the country as mobilizing units cycle through training sites at Camp Shelby, Miss.; Camp Atterbury, Ind.; and Fort Lewis, Wash. Though he's invested in the mission at hand, Iverson hopes to get back in the fight again.

"I've been to Iraq, I've been to Kosovo and I really want to get to Afghanistan, but I'll go where ever the Army needs

me," Iverson said.

As he thought back about how much he's gained from his service over the years, Iverson said the places he has seen and the people he has served with have changed him.

"From the time I joined up, I've had to take orders from people young enough to be my children," Iverson laughed. "It's taught me a lot of humility and patience."

Yet he feels he is right where he is meant to be.

"I've always wanted to serve my country. I don't know why it took me until I was 36 to do it, but I wouldn't change a thing," Iverson said. "Not many people get to live their dreams ... and that's what I'm doing."

# The Adjutant General's Symposium on Family Readiness

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**19-22 May 2011**  
**San Diego, Calif.**

## *California Military Ball*



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**Saturday, 21 May 2011**  
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More information and invitation to come

# 40th CAB excels in aviation training on Fort Hood

The 40th Combat Aviation Brigade will put its skills to use in Iraq through most of 2011

**Story and photos by Spc. Darriel Swatts  
40th Combat Aviation Brigade**

As the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) prepared for deployment to Iraq in early 2011, the CAB Soldiers knew they needed to complete their training on Fort Hood, Texas, to be ready for whatever challenges come their way in support of Operation New Dawn.

"The training that we receive here is vital to our mission in Iraq," said Capt. Ealey Seto, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot and the commander of the 40th CAB Headquarters and Headquarters Company. "Everything from the flight training, weapons qualifications and job-specific training are extremely important to our survival while in country."

Two vital steps in preparing for any deployment are to be proficient with one's assigned weapon system and to know how to defend yourself in a physical altercation.

"Two of my favorite events so far have to be the weapons qualifications and the combatives training," said Spc. Edgar Zamora, a supply specialist with the 40th CAB. "I like to know that, should something ever happen, I know what to do."

Every Soldier also received training in their specific job field. The pilots, for example, went through extensive training that required them to be ready to fly at any

time, day or night. They also received specialized training based on their mission requirements.

"We have to be qualified in multiple different aspects of flying in order to be qualified to deploy," Seto said.

The 40th CAB received some of the best and most realistic training the Army can provide on Fort Hood, and they gave it their all, all the time.

"The 40th CAB is one of the best units to come through here. They have the right mindset and Soldiers for the job," said Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Donnelly, an observer-controller trainer for the 166th Aviation Brigade, which is responsible for all Army Reserve and National Guard aviation mobilization training and validation for deployment.

"I have trained several different units this year alone, and the CAB is one of the few I will remember the most. I am almost sad to see them go; they're a great group of Soldiers."

As the 40th CAB Soldiers departed Fort Hood for Fort Rucker, Ala., and finally the Middle East, its Soldiers took with them the knowledge and strength they need to succeed in their mission and return home safely at the end of the year.



**ABOVE:** Capt. John Boynton, left, of the 40th CAB practices combatives with 1st Lt. Yusef Parker, also of the 40th CAB, during pre-mobilization training on Fort Hood, Texas, where the CAB trained for its yearlong tour in Iraq. **LEFT:** Spc. Charles Young of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) fires a round with his M16 rifle at a range on Fort Hood.

## CNG leaders visit CAB, ASB on North Fort Hood

Command visit focuses on morale, training for deploying aviation troops

**Story and photo by Spc. Matthew A. Wright  
40th Combat Aviation Brigade**

The top command of the California National Guard toured North Fort Hood, Texas, during two days in January to see how the training for the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade's (CAB) deployment to Iraq was progressing.

Brig. Gen. Mary Kight, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, was on hand to meet and greet the Soldiers and to see the operations in person. She visited the headquarters of both the 40th CAB and the 640th Aviation Support Battalion, a subordinate element to the CAB that was also training for deployment to Iraq.

Her visit focused on troop morale and the opportunity to meet the Soldiers who were making the deployment happen.

"I am impressed with the confidence that these Soldiers have for this mission, and to see that the training in California has been beneficial to them," Kight said. "Their morale is extremely high for this upcoming deployment."

She was accompanied by Maj. Gen. John S. Harrel, commander of the California Army National Guard, who was also checking on the progress of the CAB's pre-mobilization training. He engaged with the top command of the brigade and said he felt confident with its outlook for the mission.

"I am most impressed with the focus on the mission. It is more complicated, multi-faceted, and they will have more equipment than they ever trained with before," Harrel

said. "The leadership here has shown they are willing to expand their horizons, from the junior enlisted to the senior staff."

Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark Jr., the senior enlisted adviser to the adjutant general, also attended to see how the training was proceeding. More importantly, however, Clark wanted to meet the Soldiers to check on their health and welfare, make sure morale was high and find out how the enlisted Soldiers were dealing with the training and the chain of command.

"Soldiers should challenge leadership ... to allow them to aspire to be leaders themselves," Clark said.

The leaders from Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento ate lunch with the Soldiers and toured many facets of the operation.

Harrel's tour ended with a visit to the Longhorn airfield to see the helicopters at the heart of

the 40th CAB. He also visited the main offices of each of the 40th CAB's flying battalions for the Iraq mission, and he met with the pilots and mechanics whose expertise resulted in the 40th CAB being chosen to take responsibility for all Army aviation operations in Iraq in 2011.



**Lt. Col. Lou Carmona, commander of the 640th Aviation Support Battalion (ASB), far right, meets with Brig. Gen. Mary Kight, adjutant general of the California National Guard, Maj. Gen. John S. Harrel, commander of the California Army National Guard, and Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark Jr., top enlisted adviser to the adjutant general, Jan. 10 on North Fort Hood, Texas, where the ASB and the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade were training for deployment to Iraq.**

# Rucker ATX readies 40th CAB for Iraq deployment

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

Soldiers from the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) arrived on Fort Rucker, Ala., on Jan. 15 ready for an aviation training exercise (ATX) in preparation for their yearlong deployment to Iraq.

The ATX brought together the brigade headquarters staff and five battalion staff sections for a week of training that enabled them to run through various scenarios the brigade may encounter during its deployment.

The CAB completed the exercise Jan. 21, passing with flying colors and clearing the way for its departure for Iraq, where it will be responsible for full-spectrum aviation operations for much of 2011.

The ATX was held at Ft. Rucker's high-tech Aviation Warfighter Simulation Center, where CAB pilots flew virtual helicopters over a virtual Iraq while the brigade's commander, Col. Mitch Medigovich, put his staff through the paces.

The brigade completed a pre-mobilization ATX at the same location in March 2010. The latest ATX came nearly two months into the CAB's mobilization and a week before its main body departed for Iraq.

"It's fairly complex," Medigovich said of the exercise, explaining that the brigade

had just come off a weeklong mobilization readiness exercise at Fort Hood, Texas, while simultaneously sending advanced parties to Kuwait and undergoing a load-out of equipment and aircraft.

"Everybody's doing well," Medigovich said. "They're battle-focused. They're getting it done."

During the ATX, the brigade staff and the staff sections at the battalion level worked together as they ran through various battle drills, such as running missions with Special Forces, responding to downed aircraft and transporting high-level government officials.

"Think of this exercise as if the brigade commander could take his entire brigade into the field. That is what this replicates," said Lt. Col. Gregory Williams, chief of operations for the Directorate of Simulation, which runs the flight simulators and tactical operations centers that make up the Aviation Warfighter Simulation Center.

The center can simulate up to 18 aircraft in the air at once, allowing the staff sections to rehearse some of the most complex and dangerous situations possible.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Trevor Robinson, a pilot for Company C, 8-229th Avia-

tion Regiment, said flying an AH-64 Apache in the simulator doesn't compare to the real thing; the value comes in practicing operations with other types of aircraft and with the staff sections. Company C, 8-229th, an Army Reserve unit based at Fort Knox, Ky., serves as the attack arm of the CAB.

"The pilots are here to fly missions, to give the staff sections training on everything that happens over there and ... help them develop a battle rhythm," Robinson said. "It's good for collective training. And of course, if an aircraft crashes, there's no loss of life."

The exercise was overseen by First Army Division West's 166th Aviation Brigade from Fort Hood, Texas. The 166th Aviation Brigade is responsible for all Army Reserve and National Guard aviation mobilization training and validation for deployment.

"It's a well-trained unit," Col. Lawrence Madkins, commander of the 166th, said of the 40th CAB. "It's going to go and do the task and mission that our nation has asked it to do in this critical year — the last year of the current security agreement with the government of Iraq. They will represent our nation very well."



PHOTO BY SPC. DARRIEL SWATTS

Spc. Anthony Morales, left, an aviation operations specialist for the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), and Spc. David Nanez, a fire support specialist with the brigade, work through a simulation during an aviation training exercise on Fort Rucker, Ala., in advance of the CAB's yearlong deployment to Iraq.

## 640th mechanics keep CAB in Iraqi skies

The 640th Aviation Support Battalion maintains Apaches, Black Hawks, Chinooks and Kiowas

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

Many people rely on their vehicles for the routines in their lives, but what happens when those vehicles break down? Usually, we take them to a mechanic to get repaired.

But what if your routine involves flying an Army helicopter over Iraq, and you didn't just break down but encountered structural or component damage? Then your mechanic will most likely be from Company B, 640th Aviation Support Battalion (ASB), from Los Alamitos, Calif. The ASB mechanics are ensuring the helicopters of the California National Guard's 40th Combat Aviation Brigade will rule the skies throughout the brigade's yearlong mission in support of Operation New Dawn.

The 640th ASB has multiple functions, but its main purpose is to support and repair aircraft. Company A supplies fuel for the helicopters; Company B is responsible for keeping the helicopters mission-capable when problems go beyond the unit level; Company C is the communications arm of the battalion; and the headquarters ties everything in and handles the logistics.

"We repair aircraft that need minor maintenance to those aircraft that are deadline, which ... cannot perform their mission because they are inoperable," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Lapomardo, a maintenance

supervisor with Company B.

The 640th mechanics mainly work at the intermediate level of aviation maintenance, which includes technical work such as repairing damage from bullets and flak as well as the complete replacement of engines and transmissions. The repairs are validated with test flights completed by the company's maintenance test pilots.

Mechanics from the California National Guard's 1106th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group (TASMG) out of Fresno, Calif., joined the 640th for this deployment and will work as members of the Company B team, assisting with depot-level, or sustainment-level maintenance, which is the highest maintenance level. The mechanics will work on the brigade's CH-47 Chinook, UH-60 Black Hawk, AH-64 Apache and OH-58 Kiowa helicopters.

The 640th's maintenance crews also have the important task of retrieving helicopters from the field that have experienced maintenance failure or attack from enemies in theater. Downed aircraft recovery teams go outside the wire to repair aircraft on the spot or bring them back to the base for repair. This may entail dismantling the aircraft for ground transport or rigging it to be slung under a Chinook helicopter and flown to the Company B repair site.



Chief Warrant Officer 2 James Bryson of Company B, 640th Aviation Support Battalion (ASB), works on the engine and propeller of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter Jan. 10 on North Fort Hood, Texas, where the ASB completed its predeployment training before departing for Iraq.

The Soldiers of Company B have many responsibilities that are vital to the pilots and crews of the 40th CAB, but none is more important than ensuring they return safely after performing their missions in a hostile environment.

"I am inspired by the professionalism, dedication and commitment of Bravo Company's mechanics and Soldiers every day," said Maj. James Chavez, Company B commander. "They are a true model of teamwork within the 40th CAB."

# CNG units prepare active duty troops for Afghan tours

Three engineer units played the part of Afghan Soldiers during annual training in Germany

By 235th Engineer Company (Sapper)

The California Army National Guard's 235th Engineer Company (Sapper) out of Petaluma, Calif., traveled to Hohenfels, Germany, in October for annual training along with members of the CNG's 216th Mobility Augmentation Company from Long Beach and its Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 579th Engineer Battalion (Combat), from Santa Rosa.

In Germany, the CNG units were organized into various role-play battalions of Afghan Border Police, known as Kandaks. Complete with older uniform styles, relaxed grooming standards and the use of interpreters to communicate with English-speaking troops, the Sappers facilitated the training of the 1-84th Field Artillery Regiment, 40th Engineer Battalion and other active duty units prior to their upcoming deployments to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Having returned one year earlier from a successful rotation performing route and area clearance in Afghanistan, the Sappers of the 235th were well-versed in the cultural differences that coalition forces deal with on a daily basis while trying to accomplish missions in Afghanistan.

Because many of the active duty units in Hohenfels had been primarily deployed to Iraq, not Afghanistan, cultural relationship-building was the primary focus of the training. Role-playing scenarios were designed to maximize the understanding of how interpersonal relationships can make or break the hard-earned trust with the Afghan people that is so vital to counterinsurgency operations.

"Regardless of which component the Soldiers are coming from, it is a difficult job that requires attention to detail and



**ABOVE:** Members of the Petaluma, Calif.-based 235th Engineer Company (Sapper) perform route and area clearance in Afghanistan in 2009. During their recent annual training, Soldiers of the 235th used their experience from the 2009 deployment to train active duty units that are preparing for tours in Afghanistan.

patience if you are going to have any measure of success," said Staff Sgt. James Neathery, a platoon sergeant with the 235th. "Of course, doing a little pre-deployment reading on the culture and, specifically, the history of your [area of operation] doesn't hurt either."

On Oct. 13, role-playing Kandaks rolled out with the maneuver elements and performed a variety of joint operations. Tasks included operating a brigade tactical operations center and a battalion tactical operations center, manning a border checkpoint, conducting mounted

and dismounted patrols, and completing ambushes, raids and an air-assault mission.

The training culminated on Oct. 21, when multiple combat outposts and forward operating bases came under attack from role-playing anti-Afghan forces. The Sappers of the 235th stepped up into primary roles, re-taking lost ground and bases, while their active duty counterparts provided support-by-fire positions. It was a perfect example of what motivated Soldiers utilizing small-unit tactics are capable of doing.

All missions were performed with the 235th maintaining that only 12 of their Soldiers could speak English and that their work day was somewhat limited because of cultural reasons. This required the active duty Soldiers to utilize interpreters and become accustomed to the various mission planning problems that may arise when conducting joint operations.

"Even though this was on a different scale than their route clearance missions overseas, I couldn't have asked for better performance and professionalism," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Caddy, a squad leader with the 235th.

"The Sappers of the 235th were tasked with a multi-faceted mission outside their normal operating parameters. As always, the Sappers adapted, improvised and overcame all challenges put in their path, resulting in the overwhelming success of the overall mission."

## Internal audits enhance efficiency

State and federal auditors ensure policies are being followed and recommend improvements

By Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Running an organization with more than 22,000 members and \$1 billion in annual spending is not easy. Ensuring the California National Guard's programs are run efficiently and executed in the manner intended by leadership is a daunting task that falls on the shoulders of the California Military Department (CMD) Internal Review Office and the U.S. Property and Fiscal Office (USPFO) Internal Review Division.

"Internal review is meant to provide a tool for the adjutant general and USPFO to provide oversight and identify shortcomings," said Col. Charles Bourbeau, who heads the California USPFO and its five divisions. "Audits ... help me and the adjutant general identify where we're doing things wrong and confirm that we're doing things right in important areas."

USPFO auditors focus solely on federal funds and programs, while CMD auditors examine state programs and expenditures.

"There are regulations, rules and policies attached to every dollar in the budget," said CMD Internal Review Office Director Debbie Richardson, who posts all state audits to [www.transparency.ca.gov](http://www.transparency.ca.gov). "I review and evaluate programs, policies and practices ... and work to provide meaningful solutions and recommendations."

Richardson delivers those recommendations to Brig. Gen. Mary Kight, the adjutant general of the California National Guard. If Richardson feels the CNG is taking an unnecessary risk in one of its programs or does not want to implement her findings, however, she can bring her concerns to the governor or the legislature of California.

That reporting structure differs from the USPFO's. Bourbeau's direct boss is the chief of the National Guard Bureau.

"The chief is our boss, but his No. 1 mission for us is to provide good support to the adjutant general," Bourbeau said. "The adjutant general is my No. 1 customer."

Each year, USPFO recommends a list of audits to be conducted, which is sent to Kight and other CNG general officers for approval. USPFO's recommendations are based mainly on the size and potential risk associated with each of the programs. In addition to the audits proposed by USPFO or requested by the adjutant general, the chief of the National Guard Bureau may direct USPFO to conduct an audit.

Once an audit is assigned, the auditor will evaluate a sample of transactions in the program that is being assessed. It may be a random sample or a "judgmental sample,"

which looks at a specific type of transaction. For example, an auditor might look at all transactions that exceed \$10,000. The auditor will then use that sample to determine if the program is being administered in accordance with its set processes.

"We look at the internal controls," Bourbeau said. "If a program pays out money to 5,000 people, how do we know it's going to the right people and all the people are eligible? We look into what forms are supposed to be used, who's supposed to approve a transaction, and whether that's really happening."

Neither state nor federal auditors conduct criminal investigations or attempt to determine if an individual is at fault.

"We would say, 'You've got a weakness in this program, because it appears you paid out money you should not have,'" Bourbeau explained. "We would not say 'This



guy should be disciplined."

If an audit turns up suspicion of criminal activity, the auditor would recommend a criminal investigation.

An audit typically takes between one and six months, depending on the size of the program and the level of detail required.

"We're here to protect the adjutant general, protect the [Guard's] resources ... and prevent issues and keep them off the front page," Richardson said.



# Go back to school with the California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program

## Apply by April 14!

As students enter the spring school term, many have already received funding for the 2010-2011 academic year through the California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program. It is not too late for you to benefit as well: Applications will be accepted until April 14.

Students planning to start college in the 2011-2012 academic year at a University of California or California State University institution should have applied for school admission by Nov. 30. Exceptions may apply, however, and cutoff dates may vary by institution. If you plan to attend college this fall, and you have not been notified of your acceptance, you should contact the institution immediately.

### SAT/ACT preparation assistance:

eKnowledge is offering all service members and their families SAT and ACT college test preparation software valued at \$200 for a nominal charge of \$13.84 per standard program (for materials, licensing, registration and support).

The firm's Power Prep™ includes more than 120 lessons and 122 drills as well as electronic note-taking and hundreds of practice questions and progression quizzes.

For more information, visit [www.eknowledge.com/liberty](http://www.eknowledge.com/liberty) or call 951-256-4076.



# Calling all single Guard members!

## Join us for the **PICK** Program March 12-13 in San Diego, Calif.

The Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge (PICK) program, also known as "How to Avoid Marrying a Jerk(ette)," is a research-based program designed to equip singles to ask the right questions, look for the right (and wrong) characteristics in a potential spouse and keep relationships at a proper pace. While other seminars focus on married couples and deal with issues such as communication, intimacy, trust and problem-solving, the PICK program helps you find the right person in the first place!

The PICK program is a casual weekend seminar taught by instructors who have a wealth of experience helping male and female service members work through relationship decisions. Jerks come in both genders, and after this weekend, you will have greater confidence in your ability to recognize potential relationship problems — and problematic people — before they happen. In addition you may come to a greater understanding of what kind of spouse you will be.



### Register online:

[www.calguard.ca.gov/ReadyFamilies](http://www.calguard.ca.gov/ReadyFamilies)

#### Schedule

Registration is Saturday, March 12, at 8:30 a.m. Class will start at 9 a.m. that day and conclude at 5 p.m. On March 13, class will run from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

#### Hotel

Rooms have been reserved at the Doubletree Hotel San Diego for participants in the PICK Program. The cost of the room is covered by the Chaplain's Program.

#### Invitational travel orders

Invitational travel orders are the responsibility of the attendee's unit.

#### Contact

For questions regarding registration, invitational travel orders or hotel reservations, contact June Sato at 916-361-4957. For program information, contact Maj. Christopher Guadiz, chaplain, at 916-854-3398.

# Survivor Outreach Services provides long-term help

**By Master Sgt. Julie Avey  
San Diego Regional Public Affairs**

When Cpl. Sean Langevin of the active duty Army died in Afghanistan in 2007, his wife faced problems with faulty contractor work, failed inspections of property and the loss of a business license. It was a difficult time, but she found the resources she needed, thanks to Survivor Outreach Services (SOS).

“SOS made such a difference,” Jessica Langevin said. “At the time of the funeral, everything is a blur and coming at you so fast. Three years out, when you need some help and don’t know the resources that are there to help, things can get rough.”

SOS coordinators have a broad range of expertise on local, state and federal benefits for military personnel. They help surviving families apply for benefits and provide long-term support, facilitating support groups and connecting survivors with appropriate counseling as requested.

“SOS is a wonderful nonprofit that does amazing things for families and is there for them no matter how long after,” Langevin said.

She is now learning about grants she is entitled to as a survivor and is receiving help through her community, as dozens of volunteers have shown their support for the wife of a fallen hero. Local contractors banded together to provide free labor and gathered free materials through local businesses to repair and complete the Langevins’ building project. The Northern California Blue Star Moms and the Warrior Watch Riders also held a pancake breakfast for the Langevin family and raised \$4,200.

“My job is to keep the survivors connected to the Army family by reaching out and providing support in the most difficult times anyone can experience, long after the initial shock,” said Dawn Leslie, SOS coordinator.

Patricia Dahl, whose son Sgt. Michael Dahl of the active duty Army died in 2007 in Iraq, said her son would be



PHOTO COURTESY OF JESSICA LANGEVIN

Jessica Langevin, center, received free labor and materials to repair faulty contractor work after her husband, Cpl. Sean Langevin, died in Afghanistan in 2007. Survivor Outreach Services connects survivors such as Langevin with community members who are willing to help and with the benefits to which they are entitled.

happy to know the Army is taking care of his mother.

“Blanca Trevino, Los Angeles SOS coordinator, talked to the right people and made the transition smooth,” Dahl said. “She was there to hold my hand long after the casu-

alty assistance officer wrapped things up. She was someone I could talk to that knew the military and was there for my benefit.”

For more information visit [www.calguard.ca.gov/g1/SOS](http://www.calguard.ca.gov/g1/SOS).

## Join a military association, reap the benefits

**Col. (CA) Kelly Fisher and retired Master Sgt. Lorie Clayton  
Sergeants Major Association of California**

No matter what your military branch or occupational specialty, as a military professional, you want to remain in the mainstream of your National Guard service. There are numerous ways you can accomplish this. However, one great way is by joining a professional organization.

Military organizations provide access to journals, newsletters and websites with valuable information on current issues, networking opportunities and developments that are specific to your leadership level or military occupational specialty (MOS).

The Sergeants Major Association of California has realized the importance of professional organizations since its inception in 1968. The Sergeants Major Association is committed to improving the status and image of the National Guard and promoting the well-being, welfare and qualifications of the enlisted members of the National Guard. It also provides a forum for senior noncommissioned officers (NCO) to meet and share ideas and experiences to improve and maintain the professionalism of the NCO Corps. Information on the Sergeants Major Association can be found at [www.smaofcalifornia.org](http://www.smaofcalifornia.org).

Other professional military organizations are available for almost any branch of service or specialty. A variety of organizations are part of The Military Coalition, which consists of 33 associations that represent the interests of the entire uniformed services community, including service members’ families. For more on The Military Coal-

ition, visit [www.themilitarycoalition.org](http://www.themilitarycoalition.org).

For many senior NCOs in California, the most important military organizations are the Sergeants Major Association, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) and Cal-EANGUS, which can be found at [www.eangus.org](http://www.eangus.org) and [www.caleangus.org](http://www.caleangus.org). These organizations focus on improving readiness, quality of life and benefits for National Guard members through state and federal legislation. If you join one of these state or federal associations, you will add your voice to a network that is working for your benefit.

Additionally, employers seek individuals whose field knowledge is not solely dependent on college studies. Association memberships are therefore excellent items for your resume, as they convey to an employer that you are dedicated to your field of study.

Membership can also open doors of opportunity, as members receive greater exposure to the job market while attending conferences sponsored by corporations that work with the Department of Defense and National Guard.

Therefore, whether you are looking to become part of a community within your chosen branch of service or occupational specialty or are seeking professional development to enhance your career opportunities, professional military organizations may have what you’re looking for.





A California Army National Guard color guard and competitors in the 27th annual Kick-Off Tournament held by the Sacramento Valley Rugby Foundation and the Sacramento Valley High School Rugby Conference pause for the national anthem, sung by Sgt. Eric J. Seiler of the 59th Army Band, on Jan. 29 at Granite Regional Park in Sacramento. The California Army National Guard partnered with the two rugby associations to present the tournament, which included 96 teams and more than 2,000 high school and middle school players from three states. A match between California State University Sacramento and the University of California at Davis kicked off the festivities.

Photo by Brandon Honig

## Antiterrorism Force Protection Awareness Week in February

The California National Guard will conduct its first Antiterrorism Force Protection (ATFP) Awareness Week from Feb. 22-25.

The week is dedicated to awareness training and education on antiterrorism and force protection for service members and employees. The training will enhance and promote ATFP awareness throughout the California National Guard and meet Department of Defense compliance standards.

Commands are encouraged to pause and consider their force protection and anti-terrorism efforts and identify opportunities to make appropriate improvements. Level 1 ATFP training is an annual requirement for military service members, contractors and department employees and will be offered throughout the week at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento. It is also available online. For more information, contact Capt. Bryan Williams, CNG Antiterrorism Program manager, at [bryan.williams8@us.army.mil](mailto:bryan.williams8@us.army.mil) or 916-854-3644.

## Coggan to speak about California laws at national JAG conference

Capt. (CA) Jay M. Coggan, assistant staff judge advocate for the 40th Infantry Division Support Brigade, will present a program next month at the National Guard Judge Advocate All-Hands Conference in Orlando, Fla., about using state legislation to enhance federal benefits under the Servicemember's Civil Relief Act. More than 400 Army and Air National Guard judge advocates and paralegals are expected to attend.

Coggan, a member of the California State Military Reserve (CSMR), will focus on unique California legislation and the use of state law to provide legal assistance to service members on state active duty orders. He will also speak about using state laws to integrate a robust state defense force with a state's National Guard Judge Advocate General Corps, providing greater access to state and federal benefits.

## Free dog training for NG members

Raymond Willis, a retired Marine Corps captain, is offering free dog-training services for National Guard members in the Orange County area. He will train any dog experiencing any behavioral issue, including very aggressive dogs. Barking, digging, urinating and other behavioral problems will be addressed; teaching your dog to shake hands, roll over, etc., will not be covered.

For more information, call 949-421-5362 or visit [www.PoochPal.net](http://www.PoochPal.net).

## VA will stop paper checks in 2013

The Department of Veterans Affairs is encouraging veterans to sign up for electronic payment of their benefits, as the department will stop issuing paper checks March 1, 2013.

Veterans can receive their payments by direct deposit to a bank or credit union account or can receive a prepaid debit card.

To learn more or to sign up for electronic payment, visit [www.GoDirect.org](http://www.GoDirect.org).

## DID YOU KNOW...

### ... recent changes have been made to the conditional release process for the California Army National Guard?

A conditional release, once approved, releases a Soldier from the National Guard or Army Reserve for the remainder of their commitment in order to join another service or Army component. The Soldier seeking a conditional release must provide his or her unit with a completed Department of Defense (DD) Form 368 and a release request letter explaining the reasons for requesting a conditional release.

In the Army National Guard, the Soldier's unit will compile a packet consisting of a Department of the Army Form 4187 (Personnel Action), DD Form 368 and the release request letter. California Army National Guard Personnel Policy Bulletin 10-19 requires the conditional release process be completed within 30 days from the date the Soldier submits a DD Form 368 and release request letter. Unit commanders recommend approval or disapproval, then forward the packet through the chain of command to the first general officer in the Soldier's chain of command for approval or disapproval.

Soldiers must clear all supply actions before the conditional release can be completed. For more information contact your chain of command, unit retention noncommissioned officer or recruiter.

References: Army Regulation (AR) 135-91, AR 601-210, National Guard Regulation 600-200, U.S. Army Recruiting Command Message 10-074, California Army National Guard Personnel Policy 10-19 (Electronic Edition)



Public Affairs Directorate, California National Guard

9800 Goethe Road, Sacramento, CA 95827-3561

### Grizzly Newsmagazine

is published by the Directorate of Communications, California National Guard, 9800 Goethe Road, Sacramento, CA 95827. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army, the Department of the Air Force or the California State Military Department.

Grizzly is an official publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1 and AFI 35-101.

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Sgt. Michael Graumann of the 250th Military Intelligence Battalion assesses his materials during a Jan. 21 class in the art of Japanese flower arrangement on Camp Kengun, Japan, where he was participating in the annual Yama Sakura 59 exercise. The bilateral event focuses on the exchange of military techniques, ideas and culture to bolster the U.S. military's relationship with the Japan Ground Self Defense Force.

For more on Yama Sakura 59, see Page 11.

Photo by Sgt. Christopher M. Gaylord