

GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard



'That others may live'

129th saves 600th life,
earns 7th Outstanding
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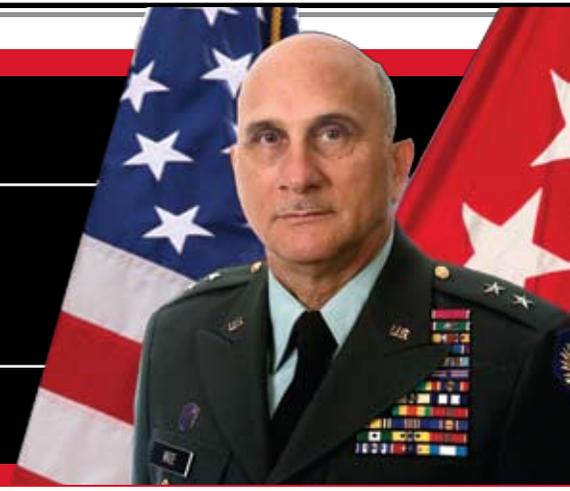
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Commander's corner

Mighty proud of Old Glory

Major General William H. Wade II



Since the discovery of America, numerous flags have flown over the land of the free and the home of the brave, including those of Spain, France, Holland, Sweden and England. However, it is only the stars and stripes that we honor on Flag Day — June 14th — and on every

other day of the year that Old Glory is flown, displayed or paraded.

Flag Day was first observed in 1877 during the centennial anniversary of America's official adoption of Old Glory as its national colors. However, it wasn't until almost 40 years later,

in 1916, that President Woodrow Wilson established Flag Day as an official annual celebration. Congress officially recognized Flag Day in 1949 when it passed a National Flag Day bill.

As we celebrate the greatness of our

nation, its spirit, its veterans and the symbol of all that America stands for, let me share a poem with you that captures the essence of Old Glory and what those stars and stripes mean to each and every veteran who ever served the armed forces of the United States:

*I walked through a county courthouse square,
On a park bench an old man was sitting there.
I said, "Your old courthouse is kinda run down,"
And he replied, "Naw, it'll do for our little town."
I said, "Your flagpole has leaned a little bit,"
And that's a ragged old flag you got hanging on it."*

*He said, "Have a seat," and I sat down,
"Is this the first time you've been to our little town?"
I said, "I think it is," and he said, "Well, I don't like to brag,
But we're kinda proud of that ragged old flag."*

*"You see, we got a little hole in that flag there,
When Washington took it across the Delaware.
And it got powder-burned the night Francis Scott Key,
Sat watching it and writing, 'Oh say can you see.'
And it got a bad rip in New Orleans,
With Peckingham and Jackson tuggin' at its seams."*

*"And it almost fell at the Alamo,
Beside the Texas flag; but she waved on through.
She got cut with a sword at Chancellorsville,
And she got cut again at Shiloh Hill.
There was Lee, Beauregard and Bragg,
And the south wind blew hard on that ragged old flag."*

*"On Flanders Field in World War I,
She got a big hole from a Bertha gun.
She turned blood red in World War II,
And she hung limp and low by the time it was through.
She was in Korea and Vietnam,
She went where she was sent by her Uncle Sam."*

*"She waved from our ships upon the briny foam,
And now they've about quit waving her back here at home.
In her own good land she's been abused —
She's been burned, dishonored, denied and refused."*

*"And the government for which she stands,
is scandalized throughout the land.
She's getting threadbare and wearing thin,
But she's in good shape, for the shape she's in.
'Cause she's been through the fire before,
And I believe she can take a whole lot more."*

*"So, we raise her up every morning,
And take her down every night.
We don't let her touch the ground,
And we fold her up right.
On second thought, I DO like to brag,
'Cause I'm mighty proud of that ragged old flag."*

PHOTO BY SPC. DARRIEL SWATTS



Although performed by its author numerous times over the years prior to his death, this is believed to be the only poem ever written by The Man in Black — Johnny Cash — that was not intended to be sung.

As we continue into the eighth year of the global war on terrorism, "I'm mighty proud of that ragged old flag."

In front of Old Glory, Vice President Joe Biden speaks to California National Guard and other Kosovo Force Soldiers at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, on May 21.

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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
- ★ 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 Tech. Sgt. Ray Aquino

Staff Sgt. Joseph Kenney, an HH-60G Pave Hawk flight engineer from the 129th Rescue Wing, looks out on the Farallon Islands on Feb. 17. Kenney and other Airmen from the 129th were transporting photovoltaic batteries to power a lighthouse and workshop at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service research facility in the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge.



BRIDGE BOATS RETURN

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FROM THE EDITOR

The 129th Rescue Wing appears on our cover this month, having received the Air Force's 2008 Outstanding Unit Award for actions like its recent rescue of two Afghan National Army fighters injured in a battle with Taliban forces, which drove the wing's recorded number of lives saved to 601 (page 6).

Rescuing allies is only one way California National Guard troops are making a difference around the world. They are also helping improve the militaries of friendly countries (page 4), building free societies from the ground up (pages 4 and 9) and volunteering to aid citizens of partner nations (page 5). Musical Airmen from the California National Guard are also traveling the world to raise deployed servicemembers' morale and improve relationships with citizens of foreign countries (page 16).

At home, the work continues, as California National Guard members take time to honor fallen Soldiers denied a proper burial more than 100 years ago (page 15), inform servicemembers about available education benefits (page 22) and ensure troops' families receive the support they deserve (pages 10 and 20).

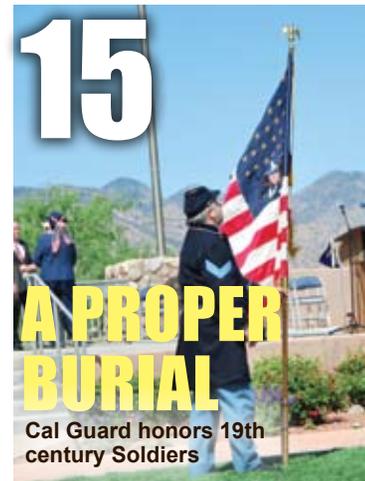
Around the clock and around the world, Soldiers and Airmen are working to make a difference in the lives of all members of the California National Guard family.



HIGH-TECH FIREFIGHTING

146th trains with new MAFFS system

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A PROPER BURIAL

Cal Guard honors 19th century Soldiers



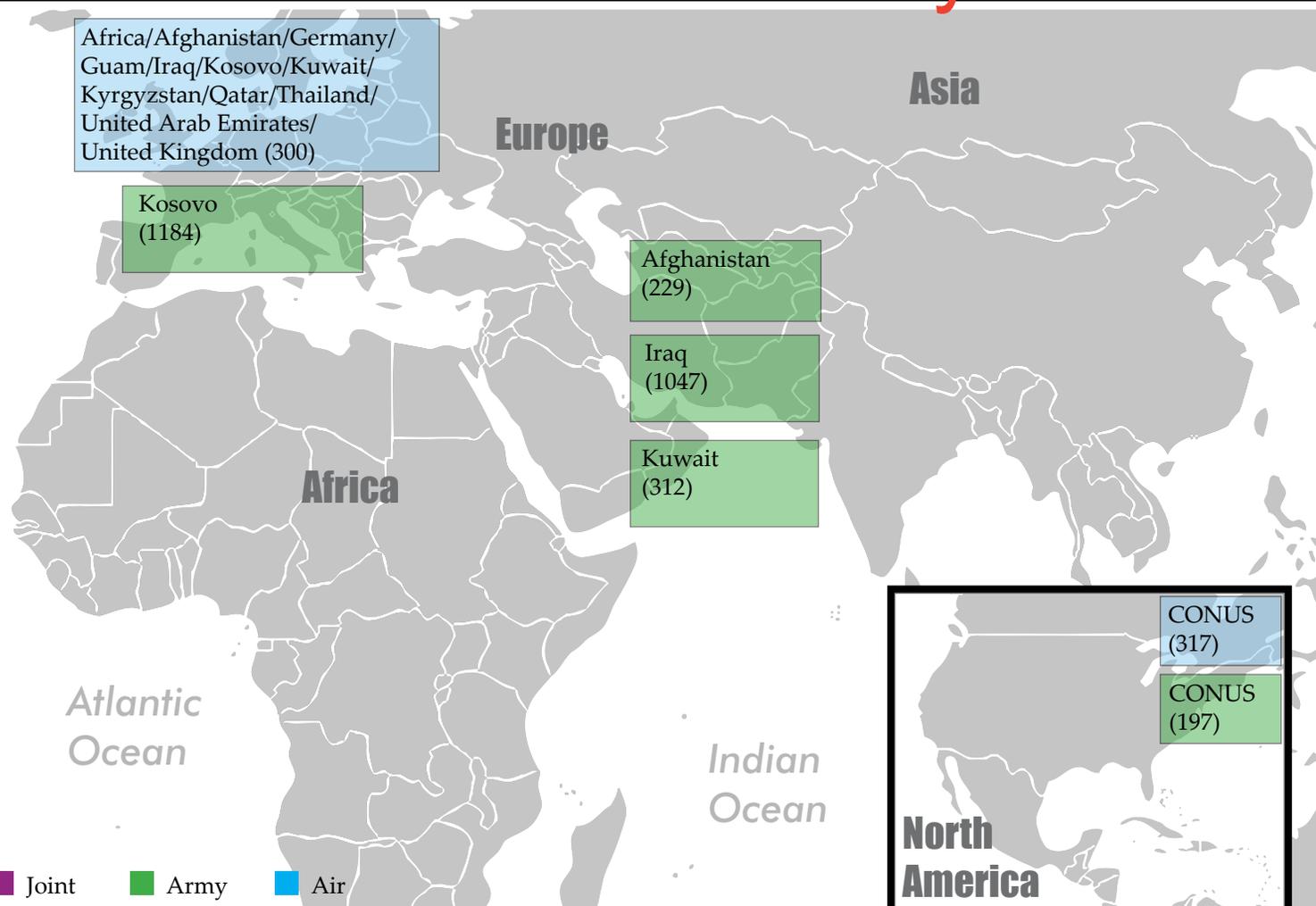
ROCK ON

Airman bands tour overseas

The California National Guard as of

May

2009



KFOR breaks barriers

**Story and photo by Pfc. Nevada J. Smith
69th Public Affairs Detachment**

Imagine living in fear of bombs falling from the sky and mines littering the ground. You would constantly worry about your safety, your home and your family. The people of Kosovo knew those worries all too well a decade ago, which is why Kosovo Force 11 (KFOR) Soldiers placed barriers at the Kamenica Cultural Center in Kamenica, Kosovo, to protect it from bombs and air attacks.

Throughout Kosovo, barriers can be seen around public buildings. Now, with a safer and more secure environment, KFOR Soldiers are working to remove the barriers.

In late April, Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, also known as Task Force Nightstalker, and a California National Guard liaison monitoring team (LMT) based out of Sacramento teamed with Kosovars to clean up the Kamenica Cultural Center.

"The fact that we are taking [the barriers] down is a step in the right direction," said 1st Lt. Jonathan Key, officer-in-charge for the LMT. "It's showing the community that things are much safer than they were 10 years ago."

Removing the barriers and cleaning up the community reinforces that KFOR Soldiers care about the country and its citizens, he added. KFOR Soldiers also cleaned up Kamenica for Earth Day and are planning another clean-up in the summer. In addition, Soldiers are always striving to organize events that attract diverse members of the community, Key said.

"A main goal for us is creating events to bring Serbian, Albanian, Roma and others together," he said. "It's important for us, especially if we can get the kids together."

Key added that the cultural center is a good place to host such events. And without the bulky barriers, the citizens of Kamenica can now use the center with greater ease and comfort.

"After 10 years, it's a nice feeling for the Kamenica citizens to see the barriers go," Key said. "To the local citizens, the ... barriers can serve as a symbol of the NATO air war and a constant reminder of those dangerous times. Now with the removal of the barriers, it shows the people the developing safety of the region."



Kosovo Force Soldiers and Kamenica, Kosovo, residents teamed up to remove protective barriers around the Kamenica Cultural Center on April 28. The barriers, which protected the center from bombs and air attacks during the 1990s, are no longer needed.

Nigerian officers learn Cal Guard techniques

**By Rick Scavetta
U.S. Army Africa Public Affairs**

The California National Guard hosted three Nigerian officers in April to offer guidance on instructor training. The officers flew to California for a week of interaction with Soldiers at Camp San Luis Obispo.

The Nigerian officers were exposed to the U.S. Army's 80-hour instructor certification course, which teaches Soldiers to prepare and present training. The event gave the officers a firsthand look at how U.S. Army Soldiers conduct training, how instructors are selected and qualified, and how they develop training programs.

"We offered an overview of our instructor training doctrine and discussed future partnership events," said Capt. Clayton Smith, a California National Guard Soldier assigned to the international affairs office.

U.S. Soldiers have participated in the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) for more than 15 years.

"In recent years, partnerships have shifted to emerging nations, to include new programs in Africa," said Capt. Michael Smith, who coordinates SPP events for U.S.

Africa Command. "The recent event in California represents another step forward in their state's partnership with Nigeria."

There are seven state partnerships with African nations. In addition to California and Nigeria, there is New York with South Africa, North Carolina with Botswana, Utah with Morocco, Vermont with Senegal, Wyoming with Tunisia and North Dakota with Ghana.

The recent program was coordinated through the 223rd Regional Training Institute (RTI), the California Army National Guard's international affairs office, U.S. Africa Command and the U.S. military liaison to the U.S. Embassy in Abuja, Nigeria.

Much of the program was coordinated by Sgt. 1st Class William Wilson of the 233rd RTI, who was recognized by the Guard for his efforts in supporting the Nigerian delegation.

"He and his briefing team — most who are fellow [noncommissioned officers] — did an outstanding job addressing the Nigerian delegation's questions," Clayton Smith said.

One morning, the Nigerian officers observed instructor candidates



Two Nigerian officers discuss instructor training with a member of the California Army National Guard at Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., in April. Three officers studied training methods at Camp SLO for a week in April.

in formal classroom settings and informal outdoor discussions about hands-on learning. The Nigerian delegation also had opportunities to confer with student instructors between classes.

Nigeria uses a British model for instructor development, the visiting officers said. Some of Nigeria's methods are similar to U.S. methods, they added, but Nigeria lacks a centralized training program for officers of all branches to receive standardized instruction.

In the future, Nigeria may send instructors who are responsible for recruiting new instructors to California to attend the Army Basic Instructor Course. In September, a team of California National Guard Soldiers will visit Nigeria to provide a follow-up program on instructor development.

"Our Nigerian partners left with more than they expected. Each offered positive feedback," Clayton Smith said. "We're looking forward to our next interaction."

PHOTO COURTESY OF CNG INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

A stove, some paint and a little love

**By Master Sgt. Charles Wade
376th Air Expeditionary Wing**

Ten Airmen from Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, took some time from their busy schedules last month to make a difference at the Umut-Nadjeshda Children's Rehabilitation Center in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

The off-duty Airmen knew they were going to have a good time May 9 when they were greeted with smiling faces and friendly waves. One child came up and started shaking hands with the Airmen and inquired what was in the big box they had brought.

Before arriving, the Airmen had stopped at a local store and picked up some paint and a new stove. The May 9 visit was the Airmen's fourth trip to the center this year. Master Sgt. Mike Cantos, the rehabilitation center volunteer committee leader, had requested funds from the base to pay for a new stove that was badly needed.

"The old stove was in bad shape, and only two burners worked. They have a lot of kids to cook for, and this will cut their time in half," Cantos said. "The playground equipment is also deteriorating and was in need of some new paint."

Work started immediately after the volunteers arrived on a beautiful Saturday morning. Three Airmen went to work tearing out the old stove and installing the new one, while the others pulled out brushes, cracked cans of paint and started work on the faded playground equipment.

"It's good to help out an organization that is in need," said Master Sgt. Ken McCullough. "We are so blessed to be able to share our skills, love and good fortune with our Kyrgyz neighbors. You can tell right away that we are making a great difference."

Before installing the new stove, Master Sgt. John Pahukoa noticed there was no "neutral" in the original configuration of the stove circuit.

"I reconfigured the wiring in the receptacle to match the stove and bonded the neutral and ground in the main panel," explained Pahukoa, who serves as the 376th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron electrical and fire alarm systems quality assurance evaluator. "If we would have just plugged the new stove in without reconfiguring the circuit, it would have posed a shock hazard."

"Children here are no different from anywhere else. The children at Nadjeshda are orphans — some of them disabled — and they still deserve to smile, laugh and experience love."

Master Sgt. Roland Talon

The time the children spend on the playground is often therapeutic, helping them improve motor and social skills. The Airmen noticed the equipment was faded and peeling and saw an opportunity to improve a small part of the children's lives.

"We only saw a few of the children that attend or live at the school [May 9], but we know that what we did today helps benefit them all," said Master Sgt. Richard Gower Jr.

After nearly three hours of work, the staff and children at the school invited the Airmen to sit with them for chai tea and cookies. The room erupted in laughter as the children and Airmen tossed around a balloon.

"Children here are no different from anywhere else," said Master Sgt. Roland Talon. "The children at Nadjeshda are orphans — some of them disabled — and they still deserve to smile, laugh and experience love."

The children didn't speak English, and the Airmen didn't speak Kyrgyz or Russian, but what the Airmen did that day spoke volumes to the residents and staff of the center.

"The kids here do not have very many positive things in their lives," said Master Sgt. Robert Sychalski. "This was just one small opportunity to bring some happiness and support to kids in need."



▲ Master Sgt. Bob Atchley of the Fresno, Calif.-based 144th Security Forces Squadron paints a swing at Umut-Nadjeshda Children's Rehabilitation Center in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on May 9. Atchley is deployed to the 376th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron.

▼ Master Sgt. Roland Rendon of the 144th Security Forces Squadron shares a laugh with a child from Umut-Nadjeshda Children's Rehabilitation Center in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The two filled the room with laughter May 9 despite having no language in common. Rendon is deployed to the 376th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron.



PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. CHARLES WADE

129th records 600th save

**By Capt. Alyson M. Teeter
129th Rescue Wing**

Airmen from the 129th Rescue Wing rescued two Afghan National Army Soldiers in the Afghan province Oruzgan on May 15, raising the number of lives saved by the unit to 601.

Two HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters were scrambled without delay to recover the Afghan Soldiers, who were critically injured with gunshot wounds during battle with Taliban forces. Suppression from U.S. Air Force fighter aircraft was required to permit the HH-60Gs, with pararescue forces onboard, to successfully perform the combat recovery.

While en route to the nearest medical facility, pararescuemen (also known as PJs) performed lifesaving trauma care to stabilize the two Afghans. PJs have specialized training in advanced cardiac life support. The patients were successfully transferred to a field surgical team, which administered advanced care for their injuries.

"It was a very challenging mission, recovering two critically wounded Soldiers from a highly contested area, utilizing various tactical close air support assets," said Lt. Col. Daniel Lapostole, 129th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron (ERQS) commander. "[It was] a very difficult lifesaving mission."

Lapostole, also the 129th Rescue Squadron commander with the 129th Rescue Wing, assumed command of the 129th ERQS on May 5. The 129th is the lead combat search-and-rescue unit in Afghanistan.

"On behalf of the citizens of California, I commend the men and women of the 129th Rescue Wing on their 600th and



PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. BROCK WOODWARD

Pararescuemen from Joint Task Force 129, which included Airmen from the 129th Rescue Wing, assist a Galveston, Texas, resident affected by Hurricane Ike on Sept. 13. Pararescuemen from the 129th Rescue Wing saved 34 people and 11 dogs affected by hurricanes Ike and Gustav in the Gulf Coast region last year.

601st saves, which demonstrate their continued dedication to saving lives," said Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. "From fires and hurricanes to combat operations, no challenge is too great for these Guardsmen."

More than 65 Airmen from the San Francisco Bay area deployed to Afghanistan in early May for two to four months to provide support for Operation Enduring Freedom. About 100 servicemembers and three of the unit's

HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters will deploy to Afghanistan during the four-month tour.

"Our professional lifesaving Airmen never cease to risk their lives for others, whether it is a fellow citizen here in California or a foreign national in Afghanistan," said Col. Amos Bagdasarian, commander of the 129th Rescue Wing. "Their brave combat actions typify our motto, 'These things we do, that others may live.'"

"Our professional lifesaving Airmen never cease to risk their lives for others, whether it is a fellow citizen here in California or a foreign national in Afghanistan."

**Col. Amos Bagdasarian,
Commander,
129th Rescue Wing**



PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. DAN KACIR

Staff Sgt. Clayton E. Kramer of the 129th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron removes an Airman's plastic boot cover, which protects the Airman from chemical agents, prior to the aircrew member boarding an MC-130P aircraft Oct. 14, 2006.



A 129th Rescue Wing pararescueman is inserted into a former marijuana garden to assist the California National Guard Counterdrug Task Force.

129TH RECEIVES OUTSTANDING UNIT AWARD

By Capt. Alyson M. Teeter
129th Rescue Wing

The 129th Rescue Wing has been recognized with the 2008 Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, marking the seventh time the 129th has earned the award.

"This is a great achievement and directly reflects on the professionalism and dedication of all our members," said Col. Amos Bagdasarian, 129th Rescue Wing commander.

The award was granted for meritorious service from December 2006 through November 2008. During that period, the 129th was credited with saving 40 lives under extreme conditions. From the high desert mountains of Afghanistan to remote areas more than 500 miles off the Pacific Coast, the safe and successful conduct of each operation was a testament to the unit's experience and leadership.

"The competition was extremely keen, and each winner is commended for having been selected from an outstanding group of nominees," said Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, director of the Air National Guard. "The dedication and commitment of the members of these organizations enable the Air National Guard to fulfill its commitment to the missions of peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, domestic improvement and — most important of all — defense of America."

Examples of the unit's outstanding performance between December 2006 and November 2008 include:

- The wing received an overall "Excellent" rating during a Phase II operational readiness inspection in December 2006. With 14 areas rated "Outstanding" and 38 areas rated "Excellent," the 129th received the highest point score ever awarded to a combat search-and-rescue unit.

- More than 70 Airmen and three HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters deployed for 120 days to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, in April 2007

to perform combat search-and-rescue and joint personnel recovery operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

- In May 2007 more than 50 Airmen, along with two MC-130P Combat Shadow aircraft, deployed to Djibouti to support Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

- During Operation Lightning Strike, the 2008 northern California firestorm, two HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters and aircrews were certified to perform water-bucket drops for the first time in unit history. Overall, the crews dropped more than 150,000 gallons of water on the fires.

- Crews stationed in Redding, Calif., during Operation Lightning Strike landed in rugged northern California terrain to evacuate injured firefighters.

- Pararescuemen assisted residents of the U.S. Gulf Coast region in 2008 during hurricanes Gustav and Ike, saving 34 people and 11 dogs.

- Rescue crews performed two long-range over-water missions in June and July 2008: In June, wing members rescued a critically ill crew member aboard a cargo vessel 550 miles off the coast of California. In July, while still involved in firefighting operations, crews saved a Canadian fisherman aboard a boat 600 miles off the California coast. Both patients were transported to the Regional Medical Center of San Jose.

Equipped with MC-130P Combat Shadow aircraft and HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters, the primary mission of the 129th Rescue Wing is to perform combat search and rescue anywhere in the world. In addition, the 129th performs a wide variety of civilian search-and-rescue missions.

The 129th Rescue Wing previously won the Outstanding Unit Award in 1986, 1991, 1997, 2000, 2002 and 2008.



Lt. Col. Daniel Lapostole, 129th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron commander, receives the unit guidon from Col. Richard E. Donnelly, 451st Air Expeditionary Group deputy commander, during an assumption of command ceremony at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan, on May 5.



Staff Sgt. Joseph Kenney, an HH-60G Pave Hawk flight engineer from the 129th Rescue Squadron, carries a simulated injured Airman during the Advance Operator Course near Las Vegas, in March. The five-day program was designed to help aircrews achieve a higher skill level with their assigned weapons.

PHOTO BY MAJ. MAT WENTHE

PHOTO COURTESY OF COUNTERDRUG TASK FORCE

PHOTO BY GUILLERMO RIVERA



A new era in firefighting begins

A C-130J aircraft from the 146th Airlift Wing, during May training near Tucson, Ariz., displays the MAFFS technology that allows pilots to disperse up to 3,000 gallons of fire retardant.

**By Capt. Kimberly Holman
San Diego Regional Public Affairs**

A new era in firefighting for the National Guard and Air Force Reserve began in May in Tucson, Ariz., during the annual certification and training for Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems, or MAFFS.

The next time the MAFFS program is called upon to assist the U.S. Forest Service when wildfires break out, there will be new tools at its disposal. The Forest Service recently purchased the newest MAFFS technology, MAFFS II, and for the first time the system is being integrated into the annual training alongside the earlier MAFFS system.

“With these firefighting assets, we now have the most modern fleet of military firefighting aircraft in the world and are ready to respond when needed this fire season,” said Col. Paul Hargrove, 146th Air Expeditionary Group (AEG) commander and 146th Airlift Wing (AW) commander.

Forest Service spokesman Lynn Ballard noted that the MAFFS II has an on-board compressor system that saves time and money by eliminating the need for ground-support compressors, adding flexibility to where an aircraft can land to reload fire retardant before its next drop. In addition, new designs have reduced the amount of retardant splashed on the exterior of the plane during aerial drops.

In development since 2000, a prototype model of the new system was used in firefighting missions around California last summer. Since then the Forest Service has purchased nine MAFFS II units, and both the 146th AW

in Channel Islands, Calif., and the 302nd AW in Colorado Springs, Colo., have full complements of MAFFS II-qualified aircrews.

The MAFFS II units are designed to roll into and out of C-130 aircraft, including the latest J-model. The units include a tank that holds up to 3,000 gallons of retardant, and an air compressor that enables the retardant to spray out of a nozzle on the left side of the plane.

The certification and training ran May 4-9 and involved more than 300 military and 100 civilian personnel, including representatives of the Forest Service; California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; Coronado National Forest; and Aero Union Corp., the manufacturer of the MAFFS units.

“Aerial firefighting is a serious and unforgiving endeavor,” said Lt. Col. Bryan Allen, MAFFS pilot and 146th AEG deputy commander. “Being able to practice and hone our skills each year alongside all the agencies we activate with sharpens our proficiency so we are ready and able to execute the mission safely.”

MAFFS is a partnership between federal land management agencies and the military to provide supplemental air tankers to assist in fire suppression efforts nationwide during times of high fire activity. There are two units assigned to each of four military wings, with a total of eight aircraft available to support civilian agencies when needed. Since 1974, National Guard and Reserve pilots have flown 6,500 firefighting missions, dropping 167 million pounds of fire retardant in the western United States.



PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. DAVE BUTTNER

Loadmasters Master Sgt. Phil Poulsen and Master Sgt. Ricky Kinnan of the 146th Airlift Wing prepare for a water drop during training with a new Mobile Airborne Fire Fighting System II unit on a C-130J aircraft on Jan 26.



PHOTO BY SPC. DARRIEL SWATTS

Pilot nabs 5 UPT honors

**By Lt. Col. John Cotter
144th Fighter Wing**

Second Lieutenant Corbett “Cory” Sambol, a pilot from the 144th Fighter Wing in Fresno, Calif., graduated from Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT) at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, on April 12, taking home five of the six top awards for pilot training.

“His performance at pilot training was exceptional. One of Cory’s instructors told me that he flew the T-38 like a 1,000-hour instructor pilot, (and) his (UPT) wing commander said, ‘I wish he was an active-duty guy,’” said Lt. Col. Ray Lynott, a pilot for the 144th Fighter Wing.

Sambol earned the Academic Excellence Award, the Flying Excellence Award, the Distinguished Graduate, the Top Formation Pilot and the Wing Commander’s Trophy.

“It’s obvious Cory did some great work at Sheppard Air Force Base. His extra effort and accomplishments put our wing (and) squadron in a favorable light. He also set the bar extraordinarily high for 2nd Lt. Rob Spencer, 2nd Lt. Trevor Haagenson and 2nd Lt. Drew Arney, also from Fresno, who follow him at Euro NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training,” Lynott said.

The Undergraduate Pilot Training program is a yearlong course. Student pilots first fly the T-6, mastering contact, instrument, low-level and formation flying. Next they fly the T-38C and continue building the skills necessary to become a fighter pilot. After graduating from UPT, pilots pin on the Air Force’s coveted silver wings and move on to train in their newly assigned aircraft.



PHOTO BY LT. COL. RAYMOND LYNOTT

Second Lieutenant Cory Sambol completed his Undergraduate Pilot Training on April 12, earning five of six awards presented to his class: the Academic Excellence Award, the Flying Excellence Award, the Distinguished Graduate, the Top Formation Pilot and the Wing Commander’s Trophy.

Vice President Joe Biden appears well-protected as Kosovo Force Soldiers surround him after a speech at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, on May 21.

Vice president boosts KFOR Soldiers’ morale

**By Pfc. Nevada J. Smith
69th Public Affairs Detachment**

Vice President Joe Biden offered heartfelt thanks to the troops at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, on May 21, noting that their service gives them a rare opportunity to tell future generations what it was like when the Balkans became part of a free Europe.

Biden’s visit with the Kosovo Force 11 (KFOR) Soldiers was the last stop on a three-day trip to the Balkans during which he visited three countries. The KFOR Soldiers mostly hail from California, with support elements from Texas, Maryland and Alaska.

“You’re the most visible, most vital symbol of our sense of justice and compassion that could possibly be demonstrated to the rest of the world. You’re the embodiment of our deep-seated ethic of selflessness and sacrifice,” Biden told the troops at Camp Bondsteel.

“You’re serving shoulder-to-shoulder with our NATO forces that are here: partners from Armenia and Greece, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania and Ukraine,” he continued. “You show the world, and you continue to show the world, what happens when nations resolve to stand together to defeat tyranny and to build free societies.”

As a proud father of a National Guard Soldier serving in Iraq, Biden remarked on the importance of the National Guard and its relevance in today’s military.

“Without the National Guard we would not be able to conduct the war in Iraq, we would not be able to conduct the war in Afghanistan, and we would most certainly not be able to conduct the efforts being made here,”

Biden said. “[The Guard is] an integral part of every Army operation.”

The vice president’s visit highlighted the importance of the Kosovo Force mission and the changes that have taken place in the region.

“I look at the progress made since my first visit, and much of it has been attained, first and foremost, by American leadership, backed up by the courage and hard work of NATO military forces like all those standing with you here today,” Biden said.

Biden also said each Soldier has a chance to tell future generations about Kosovo’s historic transition.

“We dreamed of a Europe whole, free and at peace. But the one missing piece of that puzzle remains the Balkans,” Biden said. “You’re providing Kosovars the security they need and the space they need to build an independent, democratic and most importantly multi-ethnic state that has never existed in this part of the world. ... You’re literally building a free, vibrant, productive society from the ground up.”

Biden noted that Soldiers’ are working with nongovernmental organizations and international donor organizations to complete local improvement projects that change the lives of Kosovo’s people.

“It’s an honor to see the [Obama] administration take time to visit us to show their appreciation,” said Spc. David Noriega, a California National Guard Soldier. “[It] was very nice to hear that they appreciate our sacrifices and our families — that they are sacrificing as well.”

The Sisterhood of the Traveling BDUs

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Julie Avey
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

Battle Dress Uniforms (BDUs) travel with National Guard Members to temporary duty stations, deployments and drill weekends. Military members often pack up their BDUs, say goodbye to their families and travel to accomplish a mission. Now two young girls from the California National Guard family are packing up their things and traveling for their mission, called The Sisterhood of the Traveling BDUs.

The Sisterhood of the Traveling BDUs is a project to bring military daughters together from across California to share their experiences as military dependents. Moranda Hern, 17, daughter of Lt. Col. Rick Hern of the 144th Fighter Wing, and Kaylei Deakin, 16, daughter of Maj. Lorren Deakin of the 578th Engineer Battalion, plan to host a Military Girls Conference in Clovis, Calif., next spring, March 12-14. They hope 400 teen dependents and 100 female servicemembers will attend the two-day event. Hotel rooms will be shared by four teen participants and one servicemember.

"The conference will bring dependent girls from all [military] units in California together and link them with a common ground to share all of their experiences," Kaylei said.

The project is in honor of parents who have had to pack up their BDUs and travel to overseas locations or natural disasters at home to serve their country.

Moranda and Kaylei hope to help other servicemembers' daughters by sharing their own experiences. The girls grew up differently but connected as friends with common experiences; that is what they want to show others through the Sisterhood of the Traveling BDUs project.

"At the conference, we want to connect on a deep level with our sisters by removing the mask and being a teenage girl," Moranda said.

Moranda grew up around the Air Guard, and Kaylei grew up with the Army Guard. Moranda is an only child, and Kaylei is the oldest of three daughters. Moranda has a harder shell, and Kaylei is a bit more sensitive. The girls met at a National Guard Bureau symposium in St. Louis last year, and together they realized they had similar experiences as Guard children. For instance, they did not live on a base like other military children, but they still dealt with their fathers



Top: Moranda Hern, 17, and Kaylei Deakin, 16, discuss their experiences as daughters of California National Guardsmen during The Adjutant General's Symposium on Family Readiness in Burlingame, Calif., in April. Left: Hern and Deakin are congratulated by Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, after their inspirational presentation.

leaving on deployments or for natural disasters.

The girls put their thoughts and feelings together and started realizing that they could make a difference in each other's lives and that they were feeling real emotions. They helped each other grow, get better grades and build each other's self-esteem.

Once they focused their energy toward building positive experiences as daughters of servicemembers, they found opportunities. Last fall, Moranda and Kaylei were able to brief their Military Girls Conference ideas to Brig. Gen. Mary J. Kight, assistant adjutant general of the California National Guard, and Leslie Wade, wife of Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II, adjutant general of the California Guard.

In April, at The Adjutant General's Symposium on Family Readiness in Burlingame, Calif., Moranda and Kaylei tugged the audience's heart strings as they briefed their plans for next year's conference. As a part of the brief, they shared their childhood experiences as dependents. The girls know all too well how family separation can affect youths. They have struggled in the past with grades and self-image, and they say their experiences were sometimes troubling but also positive and full of opportunity.

Kaylei has already been awarded the National Teen Leadership Award by the National Teen Leadership Program for spearheading an after-school club for military children at her high school, and Moranda was honored with the Air National Guard Youth of the Year award.

Now they want to continue making a difference by sharing how being a military child has opened up opportunities for them.

Moranda and Kaylei have many ideas for next year's Sisterhood of the Traveling BDUs conference. Topics for discussion will include college applications, self-defense, making decisions and setting goals.

After the conference, Moranda and Kaylei plan to use social networking tools such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to maintain the bonds they expect to grow at the conference. They also plan to travel throughout California to interview military daughters for a video production, and they would like to create public service announcements about military children.

Guard unit ready to build bridges

Story and photos by 1st Lt. Michael A. Rodriguez
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

As early morning fog lifts over the water, a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) uses its crane to drop a Mark II "bridge boat" into the water. The boat belongs to the 132nd Multi-Role Bridge Company, which is displaying the skills its Soldiers received during annual training at Whiskeytown Lake, just outside Redding, Calif.

After a 12-year absence, bridge boats have returned to the California Army National Guard. First Lieutenant Adam Rix, commander of the 132nd, was upbeat about the training and the new tools his unit has received.

"These boats allow us to do a lot for the state of

California in regards to natural disasters such as floods and personnel rescue," he said.

The Mark II is specially designed to place, fit and retrieve bridge components. Once placed, the bridges are rated to carry M1A1 Abrams Tanks.

The 204-Soldier company, with detachments in Eureka and Mount Shasta, Calif., is well-positioned to come to the aid of Californians if a river rescue is necessary.

Through the bridge-boat training, the unit gained confidence with the boats and the technical skills needed to place a bridge. It also gave the Soldiers practical experience driving the HEMTT on the open road and using its crane.

Whether called in to assist during a flood, fire or search-and-extraction mission, the 132nd Multi-Role Bridge Company is ready to roll out its trucks and build bridges.



A bridge component opens after being dropped from a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck. First Lieutenant Adam Rix and 1st Sgt. Paul Thomsen wait in a nearby boat to retrieve the component.



PHOTO BY SPC. DAVID S. CHOI

Capt. Curtis Reese conducts a mock interview during a Unit Public Affairs Representative Training Conference on May 3.

UPARs tell the story

By Spc. David S. Choi
69th Public Affairs Detachment

Appearing before cameras and reporters can be unnerving, and Guard members are no exception. To prepare Soldiers and Airmen to tell the Guard story in a time when information can be immediately distributed worldwide, several units participated in the Unit Public Affairs Representative (UPAR) Training Conference in Mather, Calif., in May.

"The purpose of the training conference is to educate and inform the designated UPARs on their basic roles and responsibilities," said Lt. Col. Robert A. Stern, a public affairs officer at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento. "UPARs play an important role in exposing ... all the great work California Army and Air National Guard units' Soldiers and Airmen are doing."

Due to conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as natural disasters at home, Cal Guard members not only appear on the front lines, but also on the front pages of newspapers and in other media outlets.

"This media exposure aids in building public trust and good will towards the California National Guard," Stern said. "It also benefits family support programs and recruitment and retention efforts."

UPAR trainers with cameras and microphones held mock interviews with trainees at the conference to simulate real-world scenarios.

"Speaking in front of people and cameras was very beneficial," said Spc. Miriam Garcia of the 223rd Infantry Regiment. "The training ... helped with the process of trying to get unit exposure out there."

The conference honed skills for speaking on-camera as well as for publicizing the Guard by writing articles and taking photos without compromising professionalism.

"In today's mass media environment, every Soldier becomes a unit public affairs representative and should partake in the class," said Capt. Curtis R. Reese, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 49th Military Police Brigade Rear Detachment.

The next UPAR Training Conference will be Aug. 1-2 at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos. New and current UPARs are welcome. Contact Lt. Col. Bob Stern at robert.a.stern@us.army.mil to register.



▲ Sgt. William Woodley of Company D, 1st Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment, drives an armored security vehicle on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, on March 31.
Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr



▲ Capt. Patrick Slavin, a C-130 pilot with the 130th Rescue Squadron, 129th Rescue Wing, says goodbye to his family April 21 before deploying to Djibouti for 40 days with 29 Airmen from his unit.
Photo by Sagar Pathak, www.horizontalrain.com



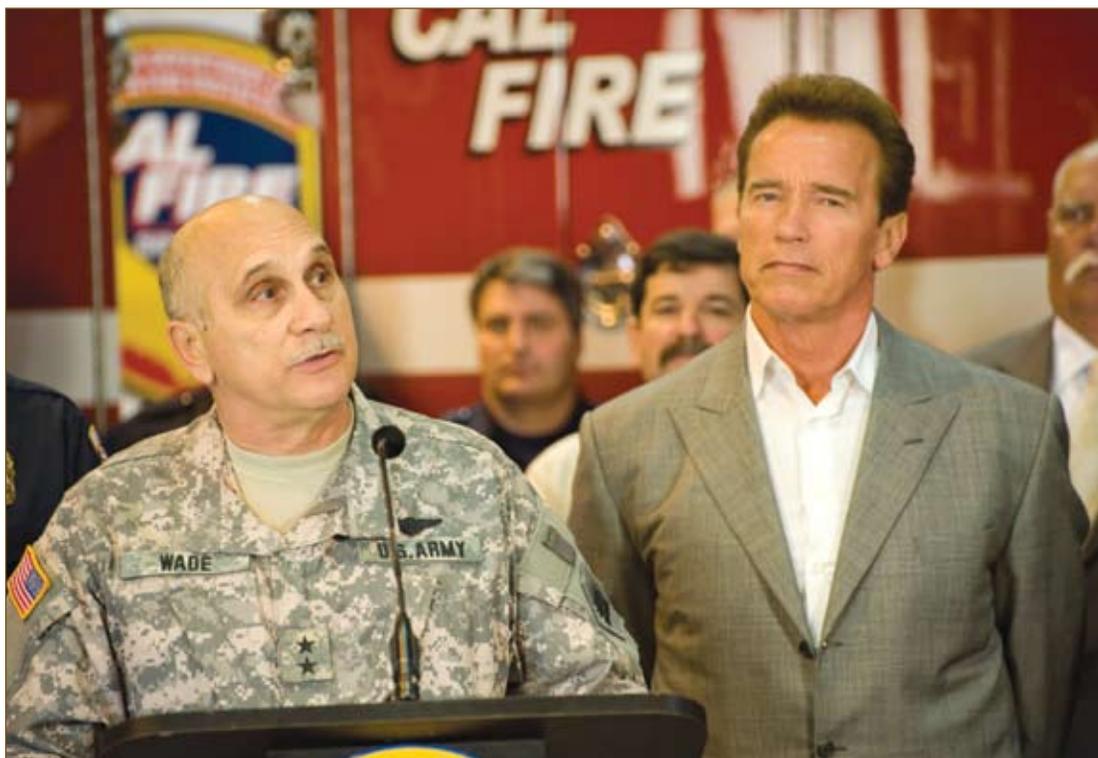
▲ Sgt. Danielle Dumas of Company C, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, sorts clothes on Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, to donate to local hospitals.
Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela M. Nolan



▲ Sgt. Ruben Higgins of Company C, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, transports a patient in need of medical attention.
Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela M. Nolan



▶ Pfc. Brandon Templeton, left, and Spc. Daniel Krulee of 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, maneuver a remote control device during training on Contingency Operating Base Qayyarah West, Iraq, on March 27.
Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr



◀ Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II, adjutant general of the California National Guard, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and representatives of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) gathered at the Cal Fire Mobile Equipment Facility in Davis, Calif., on May 5 to see Schwarzenegger sign an executive order directing Cal Fire to mobilize additional resources and personnel to protect California from wildfires. As part of the order, Schwarzenegger directed the California National Guard to coordinate its actions with federal and local agencies to maximize California's firefighting capabilities.

Photo by
Tech. Sgt. David Loeffler

▶ Maj. Gen. John Harrel, commander of the 40th Infantry Division (ID), Col. Linda Harrel of the California State Military Reserve and Command Sgt. Maj. Andres Roman of the 40th ID participate in the 50th Armed Forces Day Parade in Torrance, Calif., on May 16.

Photo by
Kenneth Hawes



▼ Master Sgt. Ernest Williams waves to the San Diego crowd before a Padres game against the Los Angeles Dodgers on April 8. Williams was honored for his military service along with (from left) Senior Airman William Taylor-Bocock, Tech. Sgt. Leona Lamadrid and Senior Master Sgt. Clyde Harshbarger of the 147th Combat Communications Squadron as well as Sgt. 1st Class Robert Guerrero and Sgt. 1st Class Azariah Smith of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Photo by
Master Sgt. Julie Avey



▲ Spc. David Olson of Company B, 1st Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment, performs vehicle maintenance on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, on March 31.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr

Samoan warrior carries on royal tradition

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Inigo
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

While standing at attention may seem sufficient enough when standing before Maj. Jason Palepoi Mauga, it may be more appropriate to bow: The field artillery officer descends from royalty.

Having grown up in American Samoa, Mauga is a great-grandson of Paramount Chief Palepoi Mauga and a grandson of Princess Tulimalefoi Mauga. And, keeping in line with tradition, his father instilled in him the ways of royal warriors at a very young age. This meant learning heritage-rich Polynesian traditions.

In Samoa, it is customary for men to do the cooking, so their chores include harvesting fruits and roots and then preparing, chopping and creating a marinade with them. Then men must master the fire.

Mauga boasts that he can make a mean pig, and he has prepared a traditional roast for military functions in the traditional Samoan way, using a fire pit with stones. Col. David S. Baldwin, Mauga's former commander, long-time family friend and fellow surfer, attested to Mauga's cooking skills. He said Mauga's barbecue is the best he has tasted — ever.

"The neat thing about [Mauga] is that he can really use any heat source, and his meat comes out cooked to perfection each time," Baldwin said.

The Luau pig that Mauga cooked at the Oakdale National Guard Armory when he and Baldwin were part of the 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, was the first Baldwin had ever tasted. "It was great — really tender," he said.

That being said, Mauga's non-culinary skills are just as remarkable. Since he was 3 years old, Mauga has studied the martial art form Limalama, which originated in American Samoa in the 1930s. This form of martial arts is considered sacred and is only passed to descendants of American Samoa's royal families by their fathers or other relatives.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAJ. JASON PALEPOI MAUGA

In traditional warrior stance, Maj. Jason Palepoi Mauga, executive officer of the 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, displays his American Samoan roots, while also displaying pride in his commitment to serve (inset). Mauga said his traditional Samoan build can cause challenges for an officer, though he maintains high fitness, and he needs to go through body-measurement taping to pass the Army's height and weight limits each time he takes a physical fitness test.

Now a fifth-degree black belt and 20-year instructor, Mauga has instilled in his children the importance of the self-defense art form as well as other traditional Samoan skills. His 11-year-old twins, son Kai and daughter Kili, are versed in many art forms from the islands: Kai has mastered barbecuing, Kili has conquered song and dance, and both are mastering waves on their surf boards.

Mauga's wife, Julie, who is of Native American descent, adds another dimension to Kai and Kili's heritage. Cherokee and American Samoan, the children have a dual outlook on life, much like their father did growing up.

Mauga, who is also a product of two cultures — American-German and American Samoan — learned how to integrate the best of both worlds as a child. He learned his American heritage while spending half of his time with his mother in San Diego as well as during his years attending Chula Vista High School in Chula Vista, Calif. He was a good student there and played football, a sport in which many Samoans thrive.

Mauga went on to participate in the Reserve Officer Training Corps in college before enlisting in the Army Reserve. After completing his undergraduate studies at the University of Redlands in Redlands, Calif., Mauga earned a master's degree in human resources development from Webster University.

On the flip side, Mauga's time on the American Samoan islands taught him a work-hard, play-even-harder mentality. While living on the islands, normal life stressed the importance of hard physical labor, traditional community living and maintaining cultural beliefs.

"When you wanted fish, you went

out and spear-fished to get it," Mauga said, reminiscing about island life. "We only had TV for three hours a day — [the American Samoan government] regulated it so we would still get everything done we needed to throughout the day."

Though his parents separated when he was 3, Mauga took good from both sides of his heritage.

"My father stressed the importance of an education and provided me a role model for military and government service and an attainment of a higher-level education," said Mauga, whose father was in the Air Force. Other family members on his father's side are veterans of World War II and the Vietnam War.

Mauga said he gained military leadership skills from his family members' examples, and he uses those skills today, both as part of 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, during drill weekends, and during his full-time job with the Guard's Counterdrug Task Force in Sacramento.

"My great-grandfather, as the Paramount Chief of Pago Pago, American Samoa, and my grandmother, Princess Tulimalefoi Mauga, had a responsibility greater than anyone could imagine," Mauga said, explaining how his family has inspired him throughout his military career.

"They were responsible and in charge of a family and community with social responsibilities to the public at-large," he continued. "This was the beginning of a spiritual lineage of public service throughout my family. They were leaders, like I am today, for an institution that is greater than the individual. They dedicated their lives to public service, much like I have done for 20 years."

Now, after two combat tours — serving both as an enlisted Soldier and an officer — Mauga is planning to separate from the military, giving him more time to do the things he loves: spending time with his family (especially since he has another child on the way) and rooting around in his Samoan heritage.

First on his to-do list is to get a traditional royal tattoo, which bands across one leg of the body and continues all the way up to the torso. This feat takes two men working for two days, eight hours per day, and can take up to six months to heal.

Until then, this modern-day warrior will continue serving his country and paying homage to his ancestors.

"My father stressed the importance of an education and provided me a role model for military and government service and an attainment of a higher-level education."

Maj. Jason Palepoi Mauga

"For love of country, they accepted death ..."

James A. Garfield, 20th U.S. president and Civil War general

A PROPER BURIAL

CAL GUARD HONORS 19TH CENTURY SOLDIERS

**By 1st Lt. Michael Anthony Rodriguez
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs**

As cannons sounded and plumes of smoke lifted into the sky, 120 Honor Guard Soldiers from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines began a flag-folding ceremony for 60 Soldiers who died during the Civil and Apache wars.

In a solemn ceremony next to historic Fort Huachuca, Ariz., a memorial service was held for Soldiers who had recently been moved to their final resting place. The caskets were draped with the 34-star flag that flew over the United States at the time of their deaths. For many, that story began nearly 150 years ago.

In 1862, during the Civil War, more than 2,300 Soldiers marched out of California with a mission to force the Confederate Soldiers out of Arizona and New Mexico. The "California Column" was unique in that it was the largest desert expedition ever attempted by the U.S. Army. The column included 1,500 Soldiers from the California National Guard, with units from the First California Infantry, First California Cavalry, Second California Cavalry and the Fifth California.

As they traveled in column formation, so that they wouldn't overwhelm the grasses and springs of water, the Soldiers endured the desert heat, which was compounded by their wool uniforms.

At Picacho Pass in Arizona, a Union contingent faced off



Sixty Soldiers, including almost 30 members of the California National Guard who died during the Civil War and Apache Wars, were laid to rest at a veterans cemetery near Fort Huachuca, Ariz., on May 16. Their remains were discovered at a Tucson, Ariz., construction site in 2007.

against Confederate Soldiers in what would become recognized as the westernmost battle of the Civil War. Three Union soldiers lost their lives, and three Confederate Soldiers were captured. Over the next few years, the Union Soldiers stationed in the Southwest pushed back the Confederates to Texas and fought intense battles against the feared Apache Indians.

In 2007, at a construction site in Tucson, Ariz., the remains of almost 30 California Guard members who died in the Civil War or the Apache Wars were discovered at a long-forgotten cemetery along with other servicemembers. Excavation experts were brought in, and many remains were identified.

In May 2009, the remains were brought to Fort Huachuca to be

laid in their final resting place at the neighboring veterans memorial cemetery.

This ceremony was a testament to the fact that U.S. Soldiers hold true to their warrior ethos that no fallen comrade will be left behind. By giving the Soldiers a proper burial after so many decades, that commitment and promise has been fulfilled.

BY THE NUMBERS

5,000

The number of U.S. troops sent to capture Apache warrior Geronimo and his band of 24 followers. If not for Apache scouts aiding the U.S. Soldiers, Geronimo would have continued his war of attrition. Facing overwhelming odds, he surrendered in 1886 and ended the Indian Wars. The Apache was the last tribe to fall to the U.S. government.

FUN FACT

Although several regiments of black Soldiers were raised during the Civil War to fight alongside Union Army Soldiers, the "Buffalo Soldiers" were established by Congress in 1866 as the first peacetime all-black regiment in the regular U.S. Army. They were given that nickname by the Native-American warriors they fought.

PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. DAN KACIR



The Band of the West Coast, California Air National Guard, performs to raise morale at military installations where other morale-tour organizations like the United Services Organization and Armed Forces Entertainment may not be able to go. The band also plays in remote villages and at foreign dignitary events to bolster U.S. military and foreign community relationships and promote the U.S. Armed Forces.

Air Guard bands rock out overseas

**Story by Tech. Sgt. Jon LaDue
Wisconsin Air National Guard**

Collectively they are armed with everything from bass guitars and drumsticks to keyboards and microphones. They are Airmen. ... Better yet, they are rock band Airmen.

Their mission is to inspire, motivate and raise morale through music. They play the same rock, pop and country music heard on the radio today. And now they are not only capable musicians, but capable warriors as well.

Three Air National Guard bands, totaling 30 Airmen, received pre-deployment training April 14-18 at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center (CTRC), Wis., in preparation for deployment in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. The bands were the Band of the West Coast, from California; the Band of the Northwest, from Washington; and The Band of the Great Lakes, from Ohio.

"These guys have little or no training. ... They play instruments on the weekends. But now they're deploying overseas and traveling in convoys," said Capt. Mickey Kirshenbaum, a mobility trainer at Volk. "We're giving them the training they need to be able to deploy with confidence in their own skills as well as the skills of their wingmen."

The first band will travel overseas early this month to become part of the Air Force's Expeditionary Band in Central Command. Each of the three bands will serve a 30-day rotation overseas. The primary mission of the bands is to raise morale in places where other morale-tour organizations like the United Services Organization and Armed Forces Entertainment may not be able to go.

In the past few years, big-name artists like Toby Keith, Aerosmith, Drowning Pool and Carrie

Underwood have volunteered to tour overseas. Those artists, however, usually only appear at installations that are relatively safe and can hold large crowds, leaving out many servicemembers at forward operating bases and smaller installations. But the Air National Guard bands appear almost anywhere.

"We go to the most remote and dangerous locations where we have American forces. Our job is to bring a little bit of home to our warriors overseas," said Air National Guard Band Command Chief Master Sgt. Roger Mason.

The bands also play in remote villages and at foreign dignitary events to boost morale, bolster military and foreign community relationships and promote the U.S. Armed Forces.

"It can be an isolated forward operating base in Afghanistan or a remote village in Somalia. We're not dropping bombs, we're going out and changing people's opinions about our country," Mason said. "We bring the bond of friendship through music."

The commander of Air National Guard bands couldn't agree more.

"ANG bands are helping to create a positive impression of the United States by performing in communities for people who have perhaps never met an American before or whose only impressions of America and Americans are from movies and the media," said Col. Patrick Jones, chief of Air National Guard bands.

Since the bands' morale mission began in 2006, they have visited 12 countries. Although escorted by trained U.S. servicemembers, the bands hadn't previously received extensive pre-deployment training. Until last year, they hadn't even seen

a real Humvee during training; instead, they had done all their Humvee and convoy training through an online training module.

"The training our bandsmen receive at Volk Field CRTC is tailored to their needs," Jones said. "Bands spend a lot of time in transit and they need to know convoy operations and how to respond in a contingency while in transit."

The band members' five days at Volk began at 6 a.m. and ran through 9 p.m. Training ended at 5 p.m., followed by a practice concert at the all-ranks club.

"My goal is that they never have to use this training, but we want them to be prepared in case something does go wrong," said Lt. Col. Eugene Essex of the Volk CRTC. "Not only will they be able to save their own lives but the lives of other servicemembers as well."

While at Volk, band members enhanced their Ability to Survive and Operate skills, Combat Buddy Care skills, field navigation, convoy operations, urban warfare and tactical M-9 skills. At the end of the training, they tested their skills during a two-mile convoy exercise, which included an ambush at a mock village where the band was expecting to play a concert.

Having received the training, many band members said they felt more confident and secure about deploying overseas, which will allow them to focus on that next Metallica guitar solo or Kelly Clarkson-like high note.

"They came in here as band members, and yes, they play music. But they wear the uniform and they are Airmen," Essex said. "They are outstanding individuals and I would be happy to deploy with these folks anywhere."

CSMR puts WOCs, OCs to the test

**Story by Staff Sgt. James Lamb
California State Military Reserve**

In 2008 the California State Military Reserve (CSMR) graduated its first ever combined Officer Candidate School and Warrant Officer Candidate (WOC) class. Eleven candidates completed the rigorous 10-month program designed to test and qualify an individual for assignment as an officer or warrant officer.

The scheduling, planning and implementation of the course were carried out by CSMR volunteers who worked thousands of hours to make the training course the best in the nation and to convert students into the next generation of CSMR leaders.

“The program transformed us into leaders with strong Army values and was a challenge like no other,” Warrant Officer Ralph Cansimbe said.

Each student was expected to keep up with the program, which is described as “high-speed/low-drag,” with no room for thin skins. The standards were set high, with individuals put on academic probation for any class that was not passed; dismissal was possible after a second academic probation. Candidates were taught to expect the unexpected and to be ready at a moment’s notice to follow or lead.

“With each phase we learned more about ourselves [and] about each other, and that leadership does not come easy,” said Warrant Officer Spiro Mitsanas.

The school was modeled on the U.S. Army and Army National Guard officer candidate programs, 2nd Lt. Mark Outland said.

“The program is like a mirror you hold up in front of yourself, revealing strengths you never knew you had and weaknesses you had never been forced to confront,” he said

The typical training day started at 5 a.m. and ran to 10 p.m. Throughout the day the students attended lectures, which were followed by brief question-and-answer sessions and then tests on the subject matters.

The class also participated in various activities designed to make the candidates think on their feet, make rapid decisions, take charge and lead. These included a Leadership Reaction Course, land navigation and station training.

“The candidates are tested and reviewed not only on their



abilities as leaders but also on their performance as members of a team,” said 1st Lt. Anthony Martin. “These scenarios place pressure on the candidates to think and act quickly, take charge and accomplish the mission.”

The class of 2008 comprised individuals from varied backgrounds and walks of life. Some had no prior military background, one was a naturalized foreign-born citizen and some were military veterans, like Warrant Officer David Coronado, who spent 20 years in the Marine Corps before retiring as a gunnery sergeant.

“The experience brought a greater insight of command and leadership,” Coronado said. “I may have been a good [noncommissioned officer], but I had a lot to learn to become an officer.”



Top: Warrant officer candidates (WOC) and officer candidates work together during the California State Military Reserve’s combined officer candidate and WOC training last year. Middle: Then-WOCs Bradley S. Cochrane, left, and Randal E. Davis, right, check their map during a training exercise. Bottom: Then-WOC Michael Margulies, left, then-Officer Candidates Johan Lai and Mark C. Outland and then-WOC Daniel A. Hansel, far right, complete land-navigation training.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CALIFORNIA STATE MILITARY RESERVE

Former track standout wins Army bodybuilding competition

PHOTO COURTESY OF 1ST BATTALION, 185TH ARMOR REGIMENT



**By Sgt. Samuel Curameng
1st Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment**

From a high school and college track star to a Soldier and now a competitive bodybuilder, Sgt. Erica Rinard has ventured into new experiences not many have attempted nor accomplished.

Rinard achieved a personal goal when she won "best overall" in a bodybuilding contest judged by Billy Blanks, creator of the Tae Bo training system, held at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, on April 25.

"It was a personal accomplishment; I was out to beat myself and no one else," Rinard said.

On her current and second deployment to Iraq, Rinard mobilized with Company C, 1st Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment, based in Palmdale, Calif. She grew up in Myrtle Creek, Ore., but now lives in Victorville, Calif., and works as a wheel and track mechanic. In Oregon, Rinard led her South Umpqua High School 4x400-meter-relay team to the state championship and broke Southern Oregon University's 200-meter-dash record.

She began training for the Army's bodybuilding competition in December. With a petite build at

119 pounds, Rinard had to stack on massive slabs of muscle in a short time. She began training twice a day, five days a week, including a pre-work session early in the morning.

She would spend two hours throwing around weights in the morning and then eat a big breakfast before starting her work day. At the end of the day, she would head to the gym for three more hours.

On the day of the competition, Rinard's nerves began to kick in. With last-minute words of motivation from a workout partner, she stepped onto the stage. Music played as Rinard performed her routine, but the sound was muffled by loud cheers from the crowd.

Rinard, at 127 pounds and 7 percent body fat, placed first in her weight class and first overall.

"Some chances only come once in a lifetime, so I took this chance to step out of my comfort zone and overcome my fear of standing before a large crowd," Rinard said. "I guess that's the true reason why I took on this challenge: to prove to myself that I could do it."

C-23 Sherpa unit returns from Iraq

**By Sgt. First Class David Coss
40th Combat Aviation Brigade**

Three Soldiers arrived to cheers, hugs and kisses of friends and families at their home stations in Fresno and Bakersfield, Calif., on May 9.

Lt. Col. Mark Vandyke, Lt. Col. Bruce Balzano and 1st Sgt. Reginald Jones represented the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade commander at Fresno Yosemite International Airport and were the first to greet the two Soldiers who arrived there. Both Soldiers had just completed their second tours of duty in Iraq.

Chief Warrant Officer Sean O'Neill and Command Sgt. Maj. David McFerrin greeted Sgt. Hale Bailey, who arrived at Meadows Field in Bakersfield.

"[There were] moments of sheer terror followed by days of great excitement," said Bailey, who had completed his first tour of duty. "Yet [it was] overwhelming in that service to the nation is what makes citizen-Soldiers outstanding in every capacity."

The other members of Detachment 1, Company I, 185th Theater Aviation Command, returned from their seven-month Iraq deployments at different times in May.

"It feels really good to be back," said Sgt. Corbin Bohner, a C-23 Sherpa flight engineer. "Getting back never gets old."

The C-23 detachment is responsible for critical resupply missions throughout the Iraq theater of operations. The C-23 is the only fixed wing cargo aircraft in the Army inventory and is flown solely by members of the Army National Guard.

"[It is] great to see the team coming back home," Vandyke said. "They achieved amazing things over there, and we are all very proud of them."



Top and bottom right: Staff Sgt. Todd Piper of the 185th Theater Aviation Command is greeted by his two sons upon return from a seven-month deployment to Iraq. Bottom left: C-23 Sherpa flight engineer Sgt. Corbin Bohner hugs his wife, Maggie, upon his return May 9 from Iraq.

PHOTOS BY KATHERINE TAKAHASHI-COSS

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National Guard Child and Youth Program

presents

Northern CA Military Kids Lock-In

Join us at the Roseville Armory,
850 All American City Blvd., Roseville, CA 95678
July 18 at 3 p.m. — July 19 at 9 a.m.
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This event is for military youths entering the 7th — 10th grades.

Volunteers!

We are seeking volunteers 25 years and older, or 18 years and older for military personnel, to help with this event. Volunteers are required to complete a Live Scan background check and be approved by the Northern California Regional Youth Advisory Team. Contact Staff Sgt. Christina Colby, (916) 854-3433 or christina.colby@us.army.mil.

For more information, contact
Staff Sgt. Jneen Rice
(916) 206-0549
jneen.rice@us.army.mil

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www.teenleader.org

Yellow Ribbon program prepares Soldiers, families for deployment

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey
San Diego Regional Public Affairs

The first time Staff Sgt. Hector Marruja of the 670th Military Police Company deployed, he was called on a Thursday and alerted he was going to deploy Sunday. "There were no family support pre-deployment briefings and certainly no family was invited to hear about the benefits for both the Soldiers and family," Marruja said.

In the past, some Soldiers deployed with little family support information, but the California Army National Guard has initiated a program that officials expect to ease the transition. Through a network of partnerships, the California Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program provides information, services, referrals and outreach opportunities for Soldiers, families, employers and youths. It aims to prepare servicemembers and families for mobilization, sustain families during mobilization and reintegrate Soldiers with their families, communities and employers upon redeployment.

"We already feel a huge difference from the first deployment we experienced as a married couple," said Staff Sgt. Jorge Navarro of the 670th, with his wife, Maribel. "The new Yellow Ribbon program communicates with families and involves them."

Family members and friends joined Soldiers of the 670th at one of the first Yellow Ribbon pre-deployment briefings in California, at a hotel in San Diego. Participants' travel and hotel expenses were covered, and meals and child care were provided for the 246 people who attended.

"The coordinators of the Yellow Ribbon program ensured a nice family atmosphere and gave the event a warm, fuzzy feeling that welcomed

the family to participate in what was happening in their Soldier's life," said Lee Anne Meinhold-Keese, mother of Pvt. Gareth Griswold.

Attendees heard from support groups like the Department of Veterans Affairs, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, the Judge Advocate General's office and the Family Readiness Group. Among other topics, presentations focused on education, housing and medical benefits; Soldiers' rights; camps and grants for Guard children; credit card interest rates; and foreclosure protection.

"The major difference between Yellow Ribbon and [earlier] pre- and post-deployment briefs is the resourcing and standardization of the briefs so that all Soldiers and families are getting the information in a similar manner," said Brig. Gen. Louis J. Antonetti, commander of the



Sgt. Laurence Williams of the 670th Military Police Company, with son Lawson Alexander, gained valuable pre-deployment information during a Yellow Ribbon event in San Diego on April 29.

California Army National Guard.

The Yellow Ribbon program also provides health screenings after Soldiers return home, information about resources to help with the transition back to civilian life and activities to reconnect servicemembers with their families, employers and communities.

To learn more about the Yellow Ribbon program, visit <https://portal.ca.ngb.army.mil/sites/G1/mdp>.

Red Cross event brings military children together

By Sgt. Kara M. Greene
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Community organizations and support groups gathered to celebrate military children April 25 at B.T. Collins Reserve Center in Sacramento.

The event, which was sponsored by the American Red Cross, Sacramento Sierra Chapter, and Military OneSource, brought more than 95 military families together.

"Many children with a parent in the military deal with separation anxiety, frequent moves and school changes," said Phillip Garcia, California National Guard family assistance manager.

In 1986 the Department of Defense named April the Month of the Military Child. Since then, each branch of the military has taken time in April to recognize the sacrifices made by military children.

Children of Reserve and National Guard members can face especially difficult challenges, said Trisha Johnson of the American Red Cross, Sacramento Sierra Chapter. Children of Guard and Reserve members usually don't attend school on a military post and therefore may not have regular contact with other military children.

"Unfortunately, Guard and Reserve components don't have the facilities that active components have," Johnson

said. "[This event is] bringing resources to the servicemember. It's one-stop shopping for the entire family."

The event included a barbecue, free games and train rides.

Families learned about programs such as the Blue Star Moms' quarterly care package program, in which family members sign up for their servicemember to receive packages overseas. Other organizations at the event included the Family Assistance Network, Military Family Life, the Sacramento County Veterans Service Office, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and The Home Depot.

"People want to help," Johnson said. "They just don't know how."

Trent Sunahara, a representative of Rep. Doris Matsui's office, attended to show support for the event.

"It is our duty to ensure that our country's veterans have access to the best services and support possible," Matsui said later.

Left: Gomez helps a young girl with her golf swing during the April 25 event at B.T. Collins Reserve Center in Sacramento. Right: Tanner Stone, 3, son of Capt. Charles Stone of the 49th Military Police Brigade, enjoys cotton candy during the Sacramento event.



Command Sgt. Maj. Jose J. Gomez Jr. of the California National Guard Joint Staff, left, speaks with Trent Sunahara, center, a representative of Rep. Doris Matsui's office, and Jack Blanks, CEO of the American Red Cross, Sacramento Sierra Chapter, during a Red Cross-sponsored family event April 25.



PHOTO BY 1ST LT. THERESA CRYSTAL

Are you spill proof?

By Capt. Marc L. Anderson and Susan L. Oakley
California National Guard Environmental Programs Directorate

We all have good days and bad days, but if your bad day involves an accidental spill of hazardous chemicals, what are you going to do?

We may not all be environmentalists, but we all want to see the Earth preserved in the best possible condition for future generations to enjoy. Sustainability is the key to making that happen. By using the best possible management practices, we can ensure that current training grounds will continue to be available for training the next generation of Soldiers and Airmen.

On Feb. 25, a float valve malfunction on an electrical generator at the Stockton Combined Support Maintenance Shop caused a spill of about 40 gallons of diesel fuel onto unpaved ground. The unit's environmental compliance officer responded immediately, with hand crews placing contaminated soil onto plastic sheeting to contain the spill.

When the spill was largely contained, it was promptly reported through the proper channels, where it was determined that the required level of cleanup was greater than could be accomplished by the Soldiers equipped with hand tools. The Environmental Programs Directorate contracted with a commercial cleanup company, which deployed heavy equipment and a hazardous waste cleanup team to the site. Approximately 20 cubic yards of contaminated soil was removed from the site. Digital monitoring equipment was used to assist the team in removing the contaminated soil, and soil samples were sent to a laboratory for testing. When it was determined that all contamination had been removed, fresh soil was used to backfill the excavation.

The contaminated soil was transported to a Treatment Storage Disposal Facility for a small fee. Any toxic chemicals remaining in the soil were allowed to naturally attenuate, meaning they will break down naturally over time in a controlled environment.

In spite of our best efforts, spills occasionally happen, and when they do, here are some simple guidelines to follow:

- Identify the spilled material and evaluate the existing hazards at the site.
- Call 911 if a spill poses a significant threat to human health or the environment.
- Protect personnel. Safety is the first priority.
- Stay upwind and upstream from the spilled chemical.
- Secure the area. Set up a perimeter to limit the access of unauthorized personnel.
- Prohibit smoking. The use of lighters, matches or sparking devices could make a bad day into a catastrophic one.
- Contain the spill if it can be done without exposing personnel to chemical or physical hazards. Use spill kits and personal protective equipment such as rubber gloves and dust masks.
- If possible, prevent spills from flowing into ditches, storm drains and bodies of water by using readily available material such as an earthen berm, or dirt barrier.
- Clean up all spills, no matter how small. If the spill is beyond your capability and training, call for help.
- Call 911 if the spill is more than you can safely handle or if the spill has entered a storm drain or waterway.
- If the spill occurs after regular duty hours, call the Joint Operations Center at (916) 854-3440.
- All spills larger than 1 gallon should be recorded on-site and reported to the Environmental Programs Directorate at (916) 361-4338.

If you ever find that you are not spill proof, just follow these simple rules, and you will find that you can make the best out of a bad situation. For more information, please visit: https://portal.ca.ngb.army.mil/sites/caev/env_programs/haz_mat_waste/default.aspx.

Senior Airman Tim Hill, right, of the 152nd Civil Engineer Squadron, Nevada Air National Guard, uses sand to divert and contain a simulated chemical spill during training at a North Dakota Air National Guard readiness training site in Fargo, N.D., on June 6, 2007.



Time to reconsider higher education?

By Horst Laube
California National Guard Transition Assistance Adviser



Many California National Guard veterans have just returned from an active-duty deployment and are finding themselves unemployed or underemployed, or perhaps they are receiving a discharge for a service-related disability. Either way, now may be the time to consider taking advantage of The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008.

Servicemembers are eligible for educational assistance under the act if they have served 90 aggregate days on active duty since Sept. 10, 2001, and were honorably discharged from active duty; were released from active duty and placed on the retired list or temporary disability retired list; were released from active duty and transferred to the Fleet Reserve

or Fleet Marine Corps Reserve; or were released from active duty for further service in a reserve component of the Armed Forces. To receive the maximum benefit, veterans must have served 36 months on active duty; those who have served 90 days are eligible for 40 percent of the maximum benefit, and the benefit increases with longer service.

Servicemembers who served 30 continuous days and were honorably discharged from active duty because of a service-related disability are eligible for the maximum benefit.

Under the new benefit, a veteran is entitled to receive assistance with tuition and fees, not to exceed the most expensive in-state undergradu-

ate tuition at a public institution of higher education (in California, the limit is \$6,586 per term). That money is paid directly to the school. Beneficiaries are also due a monthly housing allowance equal to the basic allowance for housing payable to an E-5 with dependents in the same zip code as the school. The housing allowance is paid to the veteran. Beneficiaries are also entitled to a yearly stipend of \$1,000 for books and supplies. A one-time benefit of \$500 may also be paid to individuals who relocate from rural areas.

Many veterans are eligible for the Montgomery G.I. Bill or the Reserve Education Assistance Program. Veterans who have not already exceeded 36 months of educational assistance

through those programs may make an irrevocable election to receive benefits under the Post-9/11 bill. A veteran who is considering this election must carefully research both benefits and understand the limitations of each program before making a decision (for example, the Post-9/11 bill will not pay for online programs).

A veteran can only use one VA educational program at a time, cannot use more than two in total, and can draw a maximum benefit of 48 months. Veterans remain eligible up to 15 years after their last active-duty period of at least 90 days. Veterans discharged for service-related disabilities have 15 years from their last period of active duty. For more information, call 1-888-GI-BILL.

Post-9/11 G.I. Bill opens doors for Soldiers

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Inigo
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

The juggling act Sgt. Andrew B. West has been playing for the past several years is one common to Soldier-students.

In the past eight years, West was on active duty, deployed to the Middle East, then became a part-time Soldier in the California National Guard and, finally, became a full-time student while maintaining a part-time civilian job as a server at a restaurant. Though he is still one foreign-language requirement shy of a degree, West walked with the spring 2009 class of California State University-San Marcos to receive his bachelor's degree in history.

Eight years to get a bachelor's degree is actually fast for a Soldier, and West said it took planning to get where he is today. He laid out his plans while deployed to Iraq, and he saved money from that deployment to fund his school aspirations.

Now West's future school goals can be met much easier. The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 is opening the door for West to begin working immediately on a master's degree program at CSU-San Marcos' college of business administration.

"I think it's awesome," said West of the San Diego-based Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. "I just wish it would have been implemented faster so I could have used it during the past two years while going to school full-time."

To remain a full-time student/part-time Soldier/

part-time server, West saved \$12,000 while deployed to ensure he would finish his degree.

"It would have been cool to have more money from the G.I. Bill," he said. "I could have bought a new car."

However, Soldiers should weigh the pros and cons of swapping their current benefits for the Post-9/11 bill, since once they sign them away, they can never get them back.

"Normally, your months of entitlement under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill will be equal to the number of months of entitlement you have remaining under the [Montgomery G.I. Bill]-Active Duty. However, if you use all of your [Montgomery G.I. Bill-Active Duty] benefits, then you may be entitled to a maximum of 12 additional months of benefits under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill," according to the Department of Veterans Affairs' Web site.

West has 18 months left that he is willing to swap for the newer, Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, he said. However, that might not be the best route for everyone. Soldiers need to figure out if exhausting their current benefits before using their new benefits would be better than just going for the new version. Money is generally the driving force behind going for the newer G.I. Bill, since the program directly pays school fees and provides a monthly stipend while the student is in school.

Spc. Jason Chokbengboun, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion,

out of San Diego, is faced with this decision now.

Currently, Chokbengboun is using education benefits under the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP), but since he deployed to Iraq, he now qualifies for the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill.

"I'll have to do some personal research and probably go talk to a counselor," Chokbengboun said of making the decision to change over. Currently Chokbengboun is taking online courses at the Colorado Technical University and plans to eventually earn a master's degree in counterterrorism studies.

Chokbengboun will need to change his school plan if he wants to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill, because it doesn't pay for online classes. He would need to start attending a traditional school to receive benefits under the new bill.

All servicemembers must research their options before deciding if they should switch to the newer bill; it's a lasting decision that directly affects Airmen and Soldiers' lives, depending on where the servicemember is in school and in life.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is accepting applications for the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill. The application requires that individuals currently eligible for benefits under the Montgomery G.I. BILL-Active Duty, Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve or REAP make an irrevocable election to change from their existing program to the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill.



PHOTO BY JESSICA WINBLAD

Wounded Warriors Family Support offers free fun

Wounded Warriors Family Support (WWFS) provides free vacations in family-friendly resort condominiums to help families of wounded, injured or fallen servicemembers find peace and solace.

WWFS also offers one-week vacations for qualified military families in Orlando, Fla., and family passes to Orlando's Walt Disney World or The Victorian Resort and Conference Center in Galveston, Texas. Tickets to baseball and football games in California and Washington, D.C., are also available, and children may be able to meet players before the games.

Beneficiaries must be dependent families, with children, of servicemembers who were wounded, injured or killed in direct combat operations. For more information, visit www.woundedwarriorsfamilysupport.org.

WWFS, founded in 2003 by Col. John Folsom, Marine Corps Reserves, is a non-profit based in Nebraska.

DOD expands housing assistance

Vice President Joe Biden said May 14 that the Department of Defense plans to expand its housing assistance program with \$555 million devoted to servicemembers who sold their homes at a loss since 2006.

The financial support, from President Barack Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will provide benefits to military and civilian employees, according to a specific priority order. The Pentagon has provided similar financial assistance to military and civilian employees for more than 40 years, but until recently, the program had focused on servicemembers who lost money on homes near military installations that were closed or closing.

Now the Pentagon can also provide partial reimbursement for home-sale losses to wounded servicemembers relocating for treatment or medical retirement, families of servicemembers who died on deployment, employees affected by base closures and realignment, and people affected by permanent change-of-station moves between July 1, 2006, and Dec. 31, 2009.

For more information, visit hap.usace.army.mil.

DID YOU KNOW...

giving gifts worth more than \$300 to a retiring Soldier or Airman may be in violation of Defense Department policy?

As much as we like to give individuals proper send-offs when they leave units for reassignment or retirement, it's important to stay within Department of Defense (DOD) guidelines; otherwise the retiree may be forced to return the gift. For special or infrequent gifts, a DOD employee can accept items that do not exceed a market value of \$300 (there may be exceptions, so check with your staff judge advocate if in doubt).

Additionally a DOD employee may solicit no more than \$10 for a voluntary donation; however, individuals may choose to give more. Reference: DODI 5500.7-R, paragraph 2-205, 21 November 2003.

Vets find work through VA

The Department of Veterans Affairs has established a new Veterans Employment Coordination Service (VECS).

VECS is intended to attract, recruit and hire veterans into the Department of Veterans Affairs, especially veterans of operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom who suffered severe injuries. Services include placement assistance, case management, training, development counseling, skills and qualifications assessments, resume assistance and federal application tips.

For more information, visit www.va.gov/VECS.

Family readiness course in June

The California National Guard Operation Ready Families Program will host a family readiness course June 27-28 in Fresno, Calif.

The course will cover how to establish and maintain a viable Family Readiness system in California National Guard units.

To register, visit www.prestoregister.com/cgi-bin/order.pl?ref=Readyfamilies&fm=1.



Public Affairs Directorate, California National Guard

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Cavalry in Civil War-era wool uniforms draw their sabers in respect to 60 Soldiers who were laid to rest at a veterans cemetery near Fort Huachuca, Ariz., on May 16. Almost 30 of the Soldiers were California National Guardsmen who died during the Civil War and Apache Wars. Their remains were discovered at a Tucson, Ariz., construction site in 2007.

Photo by 1st Lt. Michael A. Rodriguez

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