

GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard

Pilot for a Day

Air Guard honors 11-year-old hero

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6 Valorous Unit Award
1-184th receives Army's second-highest decoration

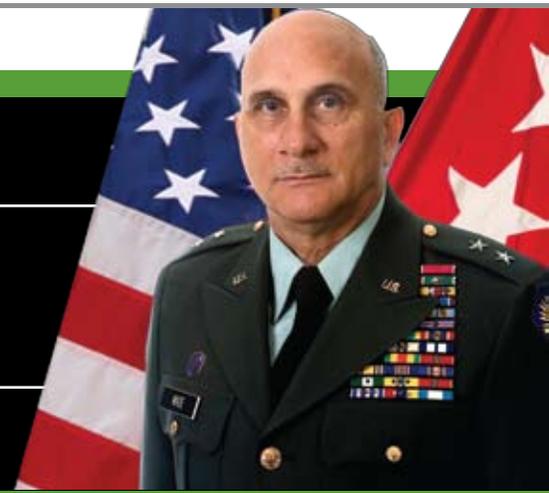
129th Rescue Wing nets 599th save

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Commander's corner

A legacy of conflict resolution

Major General William H. Wade II



Things that shape the historical legacy of countries all over the globe are usually centered on significant events. These events are often political, economic, religious, cultural, or military in nature – or – involve a combination of these factors. All too often, the first four combine to influence the fifth (military) in creating an event that places an indelible mark on the timeline of history.

The United States, with its numerous major conflicts, is no exception. From the birth of our nation, our legacy is one of martial conflict resolution, and March 2003 will take its place with many other key events in the roadmap that is America's march to Democracy and the rule of law for everyone. So, where has history taken the United States?

As a result of the Intolerable Acts, from 1764 to 1775, pre-America colonial forces joined in battle with the British on April 19, 1775, in the Battles of Lexington and Concord, to start the Revolutionary War.

On July 21, 1861, in response to the challenges of the economy, states' rights, and the politics of abolition and slavery, the Civil War started with the Battle of Bull Run (the First Battle of Manassas). Following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, by a Bosnian Serb and retaliation by Austria-Hungary, Europe was overwhelmed by open warfare and the stage was set for the entrance of the United States into World War I ("the war to end all wars") in April 1917 as part of an alliance with France, the United Kingdom, and Russia.

World War I did not end all wars and Europe (and the United States included) was soon to be embroiled in another war. With an alliance between Japan and Germany, and the concomitant requirements to establish and protect Japan's greater co-prosperity sphere, while simultaneously keeping the United States looking both ways and out of Europe, Japan attacked American forces at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, forc-

ing them into World War II.

After the war, peace did not last long. In just five short years following the division of countries between Democracy and Communism, border conflicts along the 38th parallel, and failed attempts to negotiate elections for the entire Korean peninsula, war once again broke out on June 25, 1950, this time between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of South Korea (an American Ally), once again dragging the United States into conflict.

However, Communist insurgency was not limited to Korea. Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam were all subjected to guerilla warfare. After years of failure at colonization by the French, the United States sent Special Forces advisors to Vietnam in an attempt to quell the insurgency. When that failed, the United States sent 3,500 Marines to South Vietnam on March 8, 1965, to combat the efforts of an insurgent North Vietnamese Army and a guerilla Viet Cong.

In the following years, despite many short-lived combat operations – Grenada, 1983; Panama, 1989, and Kuwait, 1990 – the United States remained relatively "conflict-free" for nearly 30 years, until the events of 9-11-01. Following those events and the invasion of Afghanistan, numerous things culminated in March 2003 to set the stage for the latest conflict that now engulfs the United States.

With the arrest of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, alleged mastermind of 9-11, and increasing tensions over Saddam Hussein's purported chemical arsenal, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Bahrain called for Hussein to step down to avoid war with the United States and a coalition of other countries. The United States continued to dismiss Iraq's slow process of destroying Al-Samoud 2 missiles as a "game of deception."

France, Germany, and Russia indicated they would oppose any

United Nations Security Council proposal that would authorize war with Iraq; however, because there was no consensus reached in the Security Council, U.N. leaders believed war was all but inevitable. A meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference failed to produce a statement opposing war in Iraq, and Saudi Arabia deployed 3,300 troops to Kuwait in preparation for a potential conflict.

The United States, Britain, and Spain proposed a draft resolution setting March 17 as the date for Iraq to voluntarily disarm or face the prospect of war; however, French president Jacques Chirac and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov declared that France and Russia would veto any resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq. On March 8, 2003, the United Nations ordered all U.N. support workers out of the demilitarized zone.

Two days later, U.S. diplomat John Brown resigned over the "Bush administration's Iraq policy" that "was fomenting a massive rise in anti-U.S. sentiment around the world" that he "could not support." On March 14, 2003, key documents used by the administration to "prove" their case of large uranium purchases by Iraq were revealed as forgeries. On March 16, 2003, the Department of State ordered all non-essential diplomats and dependents out of Kuwait, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Damascus.

The next day, March 17, 2003, President George W. Bush announced in a televised address that Hussein and his sons had 48 hours to leave Iraq or the United States would initiate pre-emptive military action. Finally, on March 19, 2003, a date that will live in the annals of American war and politics, along with April 19, 1775, July 21, 1861, June 29, 1914, December 7, 1941, June 25, 1950, and March 8, 1965, America went to war with Iraq.

And, the rest, as they say, is now history.



George W. Bush, then president of the United States, and Iraq President Jalal Talabani listen to the U.S. national anthem Dec. 14 in Baghdad. Talabani was elected president April 6, 2005, about two years after Saddam Hussein was deposed.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Airmen and Soldiers of the California National Guard perform a wide array of duties and services to protect and improve the lives of Californians.

They bravely carry out combat missions, prepared to sacrifice their lives for our national security, as exemplified by the 1-184th Infantry, which recently was notified it had received one of the military's highest awards for its valorous service in Iraq (story on page 6). They protect Californians from wildfires at home, using some of the most advanced equipment available (page 5). They save lives when people are in need of rescue (page 4). And they make a difference in the community, reaching out to youths to enrich lives and build values (page 8).

This issue also highlights a Soldier's participation in President Barack Obama's inaugural festivities (page 14), a retired Guard member's humanitarian efforts to benefit children in Iraq (page 13) and the Army's 2009 initiative to honor the "backbone of the Army," its non-commissioned officers (pages 16 and 17).

Around the globe and at all levels of command, California National Guard members continue to show their dedication to the people they serve.

FIRE-READY

New technology improves
Guard's firefighting capability



'RED AIR'



144th Airmen assist in F-22
and F-15 pilot training

MORE THAN A DUTY

Honor Guard shows nation's respect for veterans



Submissions

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*
- ★ If there is a public affairs officer assigned to your unit, ensure he or she reviews it.

Photographs:

- ★ Highest resolution possible, minimum 300 dpi
- ★ Credits (who took photograph)
- ★ Outline (what action is taking place in the photograph and identify individuals in photograph)

Email story submissions by the 15th of every month to:

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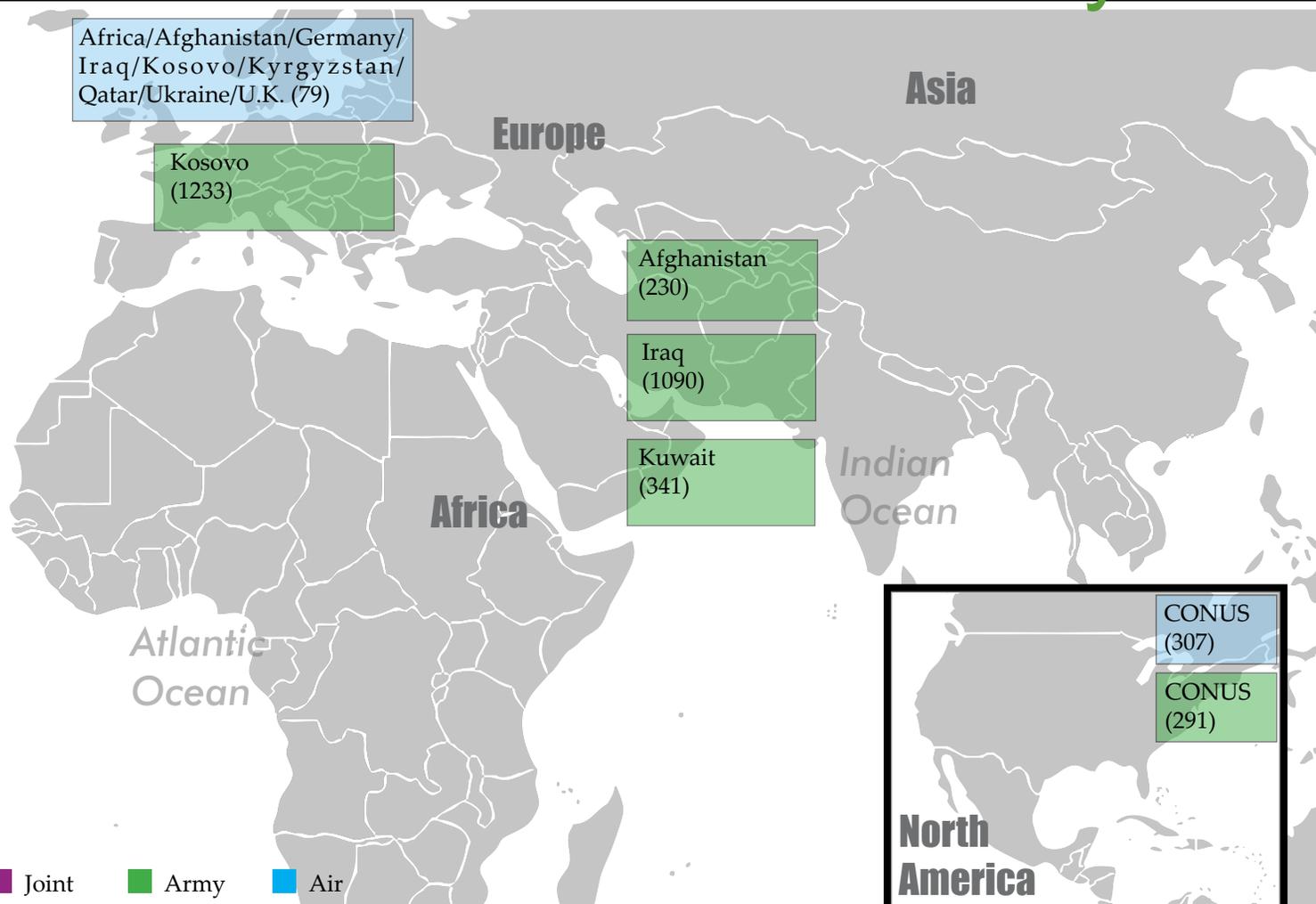
Photo by

Senior Master Sgt. Chris Drudge

Haley Michelle Collins gives a thumbs-up while she sits in the cockpit of an F-16. The 144th Fighter Wing hosted 11-year-old Haley, a recent recipient of the Air National Guard's Young Heroes Award, to experience being a Fighter Pilot for a Day on Feb. 9 on the Fresno Air National Guard Base.

The California National Guard as of

February 2009



Airmen, Coast Guardsmen train then save together

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

After wrapping up a day of training with Coast Guardsmen on Jan. 29, the aircrew of Jolly 91, an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter, was ready to head to Moffett Airfield, home to the 129th Rescue Wing (RQW).

The Jolly 91 Airmen were dropping off their rescue brethren, members of the U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team 91105, at U.S. Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco. Using the Pave Hawk as a platform, Team 91105 had been conducting vertical insertion training — a fast-paced technique used to effectively deploy law enforcement teams to a high-risk situation — onto Coast Guard Island in nearby Alameda, and onto the Coast Guard cutter Tern in the San Francisco Bay.

Unbeknownst to the crews from the 129th RQW and the Coast Guard, they also would be saving a life together that day.

"We got a call from cutter Tern right after we dropped the Coast Guard crew off at the Air Station San Francisco," said Capt. Nathan Nowaski, the Jolly 91 aircraft commander. "A Coast Guard C-130 [Hercules] received a mayday call from a pilot who crashed his plane

in the ocean near Pillar Point."

Crewmembers on the Tern, the boat that Jolly 91 had recently hovered over during the training mission, requested the helicopter crew fly out to the crash scene.

"On our way out to the crash, crews from the Tern said that the pilot was sitting on top of the airplane. I then assumed that the pilot would be alert, so we thought we could drop a rescue strop to the downed pilot," Nowaski said.

A rescue strop is a strap used to hoist people during operations.

While Jolly 91 headed to Pillar Point, the Coast Guard C-130 aircrew dropped a life raft, survival suit and flares to the pilot. The pilot managed to swim 50 feet from his sinking aircraft and lift himself into the life raft.

"When we saw the pilot in the raft, we decided to send down the rescue strop," Nowaski said.

The pilot managed to put himself in the strop even with the frigid temperatures and was safely hoisted up into Jolly 91.

The crew headed back to Air Sta-



PHOTO BY LT. J.G. RYAN HAWK

U.S. Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco personnel, emergency medical technicians and San Francisco Police officers help the survivor of a plane crash into a survival suit Jan. 29. The survival suit was used to help raise his body temperature after the onset of hypothermia. The pilot lost power to his single-engine plane about 10 miles west of Pillar Point and was rescued by a 129th Rescue Wing HH-60G Pave Hawk crew.

tion San Francisco, where the man was treated for hypothermia before being transported by ambulance to San Francisco General Hospital. Approximately 30 minutes after being notified about the crash, Jolly 91 was heading back home to Moffett.

"It's very rare to get a notification like this and have things fall into place so quickly," Nowaski said. "It was pretty cool to be in the right place at the right time and know that you have just saved a life."

The 129th RQW and Coast Guard District 11 have worked together in

the past on over-water rescue missions, and the day's training mission, coupled with the ability to immediately respond and rescue the downed pilot, defined teamwork.

"The 129th Rescue Wing remains vigilant to serve when lives are on the line," said Lt. Col. Steve Butow, 129th Operations Group deputy commander. "This latest rescue illustrates our responsiveness and interoperability with other agencies."

This lifesaving mission brought the total number of people saved by the 129th RQW to 599.



Members of U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team 91105 descend from an HH-60G Pave Hawk from the 129th Rescue Wing onto the Coast Guard cutter Tern during a training exercise in the San Francisco Bay on Jan. 28.

PHOTO BY PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS MELISSA HAUCK

California National Guard adds state-of-the-art firefighting equipment

By Brandon Honig
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

From the air and on the ground, the California National Guard is equipped with some of the most advanced technology available to combat fires during the upcoming wildfire season, which once again could be full of action.

The Guard rolled out two new Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems II (MAFFS), three Tactical Fire Fighting Trucks (TFFT) and two High-Mobility Water Tenders during an event at McClellan Air Park near Sacramento on Jan. 30. The Guard already had one TFFT.

"These new firefighting assets will greatly enhance the capability of the National Guard to support first responders and protect Californians in natural disasters," said Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II, adjutant general of the California National Guard. "[They] will change the way the California National Guard responds to forest fires."

The receipt of this equipment marks the success of a multi-year process by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and other elected officials as well as the U.S. Forest Service, the Department of Defense, civilian contractors and other emergency management agencies.

"We asked the federal government to partner with us in supporting our firefighters and were answered with six firefighting trucks and the most modern military firefighting aircraft in the world – all of which will be based here in California permanently," Schwarzenegger said. "We are lucky to have the best and bravest firefighters and National Guard troops in the world, and they are even more prepared with this new equipment."

Last year, California Army National Guard aircraft dropped 5.5 million gallons of water on California fires, while Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units from other states used MAFFS technology to drop 12 million pounds of fire retardant on California fires. The military's contributions were greatly needed, as 2,100 lightning strikes ignited more than 1,800 simultaneous fires that charred nearly 1.3 million acres of land.

A MAFFS unit loaded onto a C-130J aircraft can hold 3,000 gallons of water or retardant. The MAFFS equipment is owned by the U.S. For-

est Service and flown on Air Guard and Air Force Reserve aircraft. Maj. Bryan K. Allen, a MAFFS pilot with the 146th Airlift Wing, said it takes about five seconds to disperse 3,000 gallons.

"We believe this is the most advanced fixed-wing aerial firefighting system available, with the high technology in the aircraft combined with the high technology of the MAFFS," Allen said. "Others can drop more retardant or can [drop much less retardant] more precisely, but not many can drop this much retardant with this much precision."

Pilots in the C-130J can keep their eyes on the lead plane and on the fire without ever needing to look down to check their displays. The flight plan, performance indicators and terrain-avoidance and aircraft-collision warnings are projected on a holographic heads-up display – a piece of glass that places information within the pilot's field of vision, no matter where the pilot looks in the sky. The C-130J also integrates redundant mission computer systems that continuously monitor – and, in some cases, even self-heal – the aircraft's various systems.

Allen added that he has been amazed by the performance of the aircraft, which can fly at 350 knots, carrying 30,000 pounds of retardant. Allen formerly flew a C-130E aircraft, which traveled at 280 knots.

"It can haul more retardant faster, farther and more safely ... and it's [like] a spaceship inside," said Allen, who has flown C-130s for 18 years. "It's the C-130 I've always wanted."

The TFFTs acquired by the Guard are also state-of-the-art equipment, which Lt. Col. Allen Johnson of Army Material Command referred to as a "Swiss Army knife of firefighting." The eight-wheel drive, 445-horsepower trucks with four-foot fording clearance each include a 1,000-gallon tank that can be carried up a 60 percent incline or along a 30 percent side slope. In addition, the Guard added two High-Mobility Water Tenders, which feature 2,500-gallon tanks, all-wheel drive, 445 horsepower, 60 percent gradability and three-foot clearance.

"With the TFFT and the [High-Mobility Water Tenders], we'll be able to run up the Sierra Nevadas, [and]



A C-130J from the 146th Airlift Wing displays the MAFFS technology that allows California Air National Guard pilots to disperse 3,000 gallons of fire retardant.

PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. DAVID BUTTNER



Major General William H. Wade II, adjutant general of the California National Guard, discusses firefighting with Cal Fire Executive Officer Del Walters on Jan. 30 at McClellan Air Park near Sacramento.

PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. JULIE L. AVEY



Firemen and National Guardsmen stood side-by-side Jan. 30 at McClellan Air Park, as they did on the fire line during the 2008 wildfire season.

PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. JULIE L. AVEY

we'll be able to take those 2,500 gallons," said John Stoddart, executive vice president of Oshkosh Corp., the vehicles' manufacturer.

The new equipment could be called into action later this year. U.S. Forest Service Deputy Regional Forester Richard Cook said Jan. 30 that

snow pack and rainfall in northern California were well below normal for the third consecutive year, meaning Guard personnel and equipment may again be needed. About 2,400 Guard members were called up last year to fight fires, including 900 who were trained as hand crews and put on the fire line.



Captain Guillermo Adame and 1st Sgt. Rodney Plamondon of Company A, 1-184th Infantry, hold a memorial to the Soldiers lost on the 1-184th's last mission to Iraq.

1-184th IN bestowed Valorous Unit Award

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Paul W. McKenna Jr. 1-184th Infantry Regiment

The Nightstalkers of the 1st Battalion-184th Infantry Regiment were prepared to simply continue to march, prepared to return to Iraq for what would be the third tour in the region for some Soldiers, when word of the Valorous Unit Award filtered down in early November. Amid the commotion of making the move from Kuwait to Iraq, Soldiers were advised that, yes, in March of that year, their parent unit, the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, had been awarded the distinguished citation, and the 1-184th was included.

The Valorous Unit Award is the second-highest unit decoration given by the Army, following only the Presidential Unit Citation, and is considered the unit equivalent of the Silver Star.

"Looking back at our tour of duty in Baghdad in '05, all we wanted to do was complete our mission," said Capt. Guillermo Adame, current commander of Company A, 1-184th. "Every inch of ground we held was very expensive – not with money but by the blood our brothers-in-arms shed. We regret the price that some of our brothers had to pay – the ultimate sacrifice, the real price of freedom – but we are proud their sacrifice will be remembered forever."

From Jan. 15, 2005, to Jan. 14, 2006, the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and its subordinate units displayed "extraordinary heroism" against an armed enemy during Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to the award announcement. It further states that the unit's dedication and professionalism went beyond

the call of duty and contributed greatly to the advancement of political, economic and security objectives in the region.

The 1-184th lost 17 Soldiers, including seven active duty Army personnel who were attached to the unit, and saw more than 100 wounded while serving side-by-side with 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers, attached as brothers in arms. Of note, the commander of the 1-184th, "Stalker 6," Col. William W. Wood, was one of the highest-ranking officers killed in Iraq to date. Wood responded to an improvised explosive device (IED) and was killed by a secondary IED.

For many of the 1-184th, the current deployment is their second or third since the start of the Global War on Terrorism. Company A Soldiers watched the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks while in pre-deployment processing at Camp Roberts on their way to provide security for Patriot Missile sites in Kuwait, and Company B relieved them in July of 2002. Today, 1-184th Infantry are back in the fight, as companies A and B have again answered the call, augmenting the 185th Combined Arms Battalion and the 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, and providing convoy security spanning the 82,000 square miles that represent the northern sector of Iraq.

Many of these Soldiers were part of the Hurricane Katrina relief effort in 2005 and the Southern California fire mission in 2008, and then just a year later, they are back in Iraq. There is no call they won't answer, serving the citizens of our state and our nation with honor, selfless service and valor.

THE VALOROUS UNIT AWARD RIBBON



To receive the Valorous Unit Award, a unit must perform with marked distinction under difficult and hazardous conditions in accomplishing its mission so as to set it apart from the other units participating in the same conflict. The degree of heroism required is the same as that which would warrant award of the Silver Star to an individual. Extended periods of combat duty or participation in a large number of operational missions is not sufficient.

1ST BATTALION 184TH INFANTRY REGIMENT



The 1-184th IN mobilized Aug. 15, 2004, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and attached to the 4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Stewart, Ga.

During its 12 months in Iraq, the 1-184th had the largest area of responsibility in the 4th Brigade and was often the 3rd Infantry Division's main effort for executing combat operations.

Soldiers cleared routes, operated checkpoints, improved civic infrastructure, trained Iraqi security forces, provided humanitarian assistance and critical site security, and performed cordon-and-search operations and air assault raids.

The battalion's stability and security operations enabled Iraq to hold elections that established the country's first democratic government in decades.

During the Iraqi constitutional referendum in October 2005, the 1-184th conducted its largest combat operation, Operation Clean Sweep, which was recognized by then-President George W. Bush in his Veterans Day 2005 address.

During the two weeks leading up to the referendum, the 1-184th, along with three Iraqi battalions, conducted more than 500 combat patrols and captured 125 suspected enemy insurgents.

Throughout its 12-month tour, the 1-184th conducted more than 6,800 combat patrols and captured hundreds of insurgents.

Private First Class Michael McGrath, 21, who is originally from Guam, practices at the Frisbie-Warren & Carroll Mortuary in Stockton, Calif., Feb. 13, just before a funeral service.

HONOR GUARD

SHOWS REVERENCE FOR THOSE WHO SERVED

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. JESSICA INIGO
JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Under a graying sky that seems to mourn the loss of a veteran Soldier's life, two members of the California National Guard's Veterans Honor Guard walk into a chapel in Stockton, Calif., just as it begins to drizzle.

Across the state, Honor Guard members of the same team stand stoically on cemetery grounds in Nevada City as rain steadily falls, soaking their uniforms but not wavering their composure.

Bad weather cannot stop these Soldiers from honoring those who served.

With precise pageantry and attention to detail, the Honor Guard pays respects to the deceased and their family and friends. In one fluid motion, the Honor Guard members move in clear-cut steps, folding an American flag to be presented to the service member's family.

The flag serves as a reminder of the service and duty that a veteran provided throughout their life, said Sgt. Priscilla Sepulveda, team leader for Sacramento's Team 1, while the Honor Guard shows the military's respect. Twelve teams across the state play out these same honors, showing respect to veterans who died throughout the year.

"Sometimes when I tell people what I do, they say, 'You're crazy. How can you do that?' But then I think, if I don't, who will?" Pfc. Michael McGrath, 21, said during the Stockton ceremony Feb. 13.

McGrath, who is an ammunition operations specialist in the Guard, volunteers his off time to Sacramento's Team 1 mainly because he comes from a large military family

and wants to give back.

During the previous month, the 12 teams of the California Honor Guard had conducted more than 1,000 funeral ceremonies for qualified veterans, according to Richard Lee McDuff, administrative assistant for Region 7 of the Army National Guard Honor Guard and former command sergeant major of the program.

Any veteran who has honorably completed at least one enlistment or other obligated military service is eligible for military funeral honors, he said. However, veterans with longer terms of service, who retired in the military or were killed in action are entitled to enhanced or full honors including a firing squad.

Besides delivering funeral honors, the California Honor Guard also performs planeside services to transfer Soldiers' bodies from the airport and serves during state ceremonial events. However, many Honor Guard members agree that representing the military's respect to families is the best reward.

"Some Soldiers realize after the first couple of ceremonies that this is not for them - seeing the grieving is just too much," said Sepulveda, 23, who is originally from Los Angeles but moved to Sacramento with her daughter to take the team leader position. "But for those who stick around, it becomes more of an honor. It becomes well worth it after a service. It becomes a reward to us, seeing the expression on their faces."

Sepulveda has served in more than 300 funerals in the 1 1/2 years she has been with the Honor Guard. She began volunteering after attending a friend's funeral in southern California. She now works full time at Joint

Force Headquarters in Sacramento under Active Duty Special Work orders.

Sepulveda said that doing a planeside service is the most difficult for her, because many of the Soldiers were killed in action.

"They're usually young Soldiers, and the family is very emotional," she explained. "It's very difficult to hold back emotion, to give the dignity of the service. But we have to. Inside it just kills you, though."

The California National Guard's Veterans Honor Guard began conducting funeral services for qualified Army veterans in 2000 when the Department of Defense asked for support. Since then, the program has evolved to include services for veterans of all branches, according to Ed Grundel, the contract coordinator and Region 7 regional director.

The Honor Guard works throughout holidays and weekends, making themselves available whenever a military veteran requires funeral honors.

"The saddest part is that many veterans do not know they deserve this honor, that it comes for free because of their service," McGrath said. "This is something I'm honored to give to any veteran. I'll volunteer for their service."



TOP: Representing the California National Guard Honor Guard, Sgt. Priscilla Sepulveda gives Jimmy Johnson, the brother of a deceased veteran, a U.S. flag during a funeral ceremony at the Frisbie-Warren & Carroll Mortuary in Stockton, Calif., Feb. 13.

BOTTOM: Sepulveda, the team leader for Sacramento's Team 1, leads friends and family members of the deceased in honoring the veteran during the Feb. 13 funeral service in Stockton.

Young hero becomes honorary Fighter Pilot for a Day

By Grizzly and 144th Fighter Wing staff

Haley Michelle Collins suited up, trained and stepped into the cockpit of an F-16 on Feb. 9, as the 144th Fighter Wing honored the 11-year-old for her courageous battle with heart defects.

Haley has had holes and other major structural problems in her heart, which prompted three surgeries before her fourth birthday and a fourth surgery last June. After the most recent surgery, she was recognized with the Air National Guard's Young Heroes Award.

"She's not one who shows surprise very much, but she was kind of speechless," Haley's mother, Bonnie Collins, said. "She asked, 'How come I got picked?' And I said, 'You've been through a lot more than most people ... and you're very courageous for facing that head-on.'"

On Feb. 9, the 144th FW gave Haley another tribute, making her an honorary Fighter Pilot for a Day. She was presented with a tailored flight suit complete with a name tag and patches, then was greeted by Col. Ryan Orian, the 144th Fighter Wing Vice Commander; Lt. Col. Doug Weskamp, maintenance commander; and Chief Master Sgt. Michael McNiff, Command Chief Master Sgt., who presented her a plaque that includes all the challenge coins from the unit.



Airman First Class Devin Davis, left, and Capt. Luke Campagne connect Haley Collins to the virtual parachute trainer.

PHOTO BY SENIOR MASTER SGT. CHRIS DRUDGE

Haley then had an opportunity to sit in the cockpit of an F-16, pilot an F-16 simulator and try out the virtual parachute jump. In the virtual parachute jump, Haley hung from a harness, wore virtual reality goggles and guided a post-ejection canopy to the ground.

"You could see on her face that she was having a great time," Capt. Luke Campagne said. "She was grinning ear-to-ear, especially when she was in the [flight simulator]."

Haley ended her day by taking photos with some of the pilots, maintainers and other wing members.

"I got a tour of the base and got to do two simulators – the parachute and flying the plane," Haley recalled. "I think it was really awesome. I feel honored that I get to be a part of that."

The Young Heroes Award is presented to children who demonstrate courage in the face of life-threatening

illness or injury. The Pilot for a Day program brings children with serious or chronic medical conditions to an installation to tour the facilities and help raise their spirits, letting them know they are not alone in their healing and recovery process.

"This is just one way to put a smile on a girl's face that probably had some difficulties smiling in the past," Campagne said. "Seeing her smile made it all worth it."

Camp Goalz builds values in young athletes

By Capt. Kimberly Holman
San Diego Regional Public Affairs Office

Young athletes and military mentors come together to examine life's values at Camp Goalz, which was initiated by Tech. Sgt. Mike Muller of the 146th Airlift Wing.

Muller and a friend created Camp Goalz to provide leadership and motivational training for young athletes. They stressed the importance of goals and the core values embraced by those who serve their country.

Enlisting the help of others along the way, the idea became reality as about 20 high school-aged boys donned rucksacks and marched down a beach near Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Station with mentors from the Air Guard, Marine Corps and Army. Tents were set up, and the group stayed out in the field on the beach for two nights.

The value of teamwork was put to the test and strengthened through military-style training and physical challenges. Sharing a common goal, the group learned that loyalty unites and bonds teammates toward a common purpose.

Accountability, responsibility and trusting in your teammates were among the many values discussed throughout the weekend.

"The kids went home with a newfound sense of camaraderie, self worth and a respect for America and the people who serve to protect her," Muller said.

"This was a great experience for the team," one of the camp participants said. "I would like to make the camp longer next time."



Technical Sergeant Mike Muller shows young campers how to correctly pack their rucksacks before their weekend in the field.

PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. JULIE AVEY

Gen. McKinley: California-Ukraine partnership model for future

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GEORGE C. MARSHALL EUROPEAN CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES

General Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, speaks to about 50 international civilian and military leaders attending a seminar on transatlantic security at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies on Feb. 5 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

The development of international, military-to-military relationships built through the National Guard's State Partnership Program, such as California's partnership with Ukraine, will become vitally important in preventing future world calamities, a senior National Guard official said Feb. 5.

General Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, speaking to students at the George C. Marshall European Center for European Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, said the Guard now has 60 state partnerships throughout the 50 states, three territories and Washington, D.C.

"Their governors and their adjutants general, who run their militaries, have all formed working partnerships with nations in the various corners of the world," he said. Because it's easier to prevent calamities than to respond to them, "you start by preventing the things that can go wrong, and you start preventing by meeting and sharing ideas with people."

The partnership between California and Ukraine, which started more than 15 years ago, is a perfect example, McKinley said. In an effort to bolster its disaster readiness and response, Ukraine sent representatives to the state in November to partici-

pate in Vigilant Guard, a weeklong emergency-response training exercise hosted by the California National Guard.

The Ukrainian delegation exchanged ideas and techniques with their American counterparts on how to deal with flooding, which occurs each year in western Ukraine. Last July, especially heavy rains brought a record deluge there, causing the worst damage financially in more than 100 years.

"We are living in complex and challenging times," McKinley told the group of nearly 50 international civilian and military leaders attending a seminar on transatlantic security.

He encouraged those in the audience to use their free time to forge new relationships with each other, which could serve them in the future. Partnerships are an effective tool to handle future natural and man-made calamities, which some officials predict will be larger in their scope and size and in the challenges they will pose to governments, he said.

"We certainly prepare for that major disaster," McKinley said. "How we as a world community respond to it will be vitally important. The integrated efforts between our governments will be critically important to all of us."

Army Guard exceeds end-strength goal; recruiting slows

By Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke
National Guard Bureau

The Army National Guard remains slightly over its Congressionally mandated end strength of 358,200 after recruiting slowed in January.

About 366,000 Soldiers were assigned to the Army Guard as of Feb. 10, putting the force at 102 percent of its end-strength goal for this fiscal year. Congress allows the Guard to exceed its end-strength goal by 3 percent.

"We're paying a success dividend," said Army Lt. Col. Ron Walls, chief of recruiting and retention for the Army National Guard.

"Our numbers (for January) are off the program goal, but that's OK because of where we are with our end strength," he continued. "We have never been more whole than we are right now from a readiness perspective."

According to a Department of Defense statement, the Army Guard signed 4,913 new Soldiers in January, 88 percent of its goal of 5,577 enlistees. The

Air National Guard signed 896 new Airmen, 127 percent of its goal of 703 enlistees.

Walls said the Army Guard has been able to drive up end strength through innovative recruiting programs, and re-enlistment rates have remained steady despite an increasing operations tempo.

"We will focus on where we are," he said. "And right now we are above in end strength and our quality marks are stronger than ever, and we will use that to our advantage."

Walls added that the Army Guard's quality marks have not been this high since 2003. For that reason, the focus in January was to increase quality.

"We are now fine-tuning what we have," he said.

While going after this quality market, Walls said the Army Guard will continue to "shape our incentives, based

National Guard recruiting

In fiscal year 2008, which ended in September, the Army National Guard achieved 103 percent of its goal, with 65,912 accessions.

The Air National Guard reached 126 percent of its 2008 goal, with 10,749 accessions.

The Army exceeded its goal by 16 percent in October, by 13 percent in November and by 43 percent in December, before dipping below goal in January.

The Air Force exceeded its goal by 20 percent, 10 percent, 11 percent and 27 percent in the four months through January.

on funding availability, and focus heavily on Soldiers in formations already."

"They pay the price," he said. "They are part of team already, and there are dollars associated with them from a training perspective."

Keeping trained Soldiers helps with readiness, and "there is goodness in that as well," Walls said.

Walls predicted that the Army

Guard will continue to provide incentives to a variety of populations in the future, from high schoolers to 40-year-olds.

"We're looking at that now as far as innovative measures to reach those populations and give them the opportunity to serve in our formations," he said.

With the nation's focus shifting to the economy, Walls said the Army National Guard will need to come up with new non-monetary incentive programs to gain accessions.

Children enjoy one of the attractions in the Fan Zone at Petco Park in San Diego during the USA Sevens Rugby tournament sponsored by the National Guard on Feb. 14 and 15 Photo by Tech. Sgt. Julie Avey

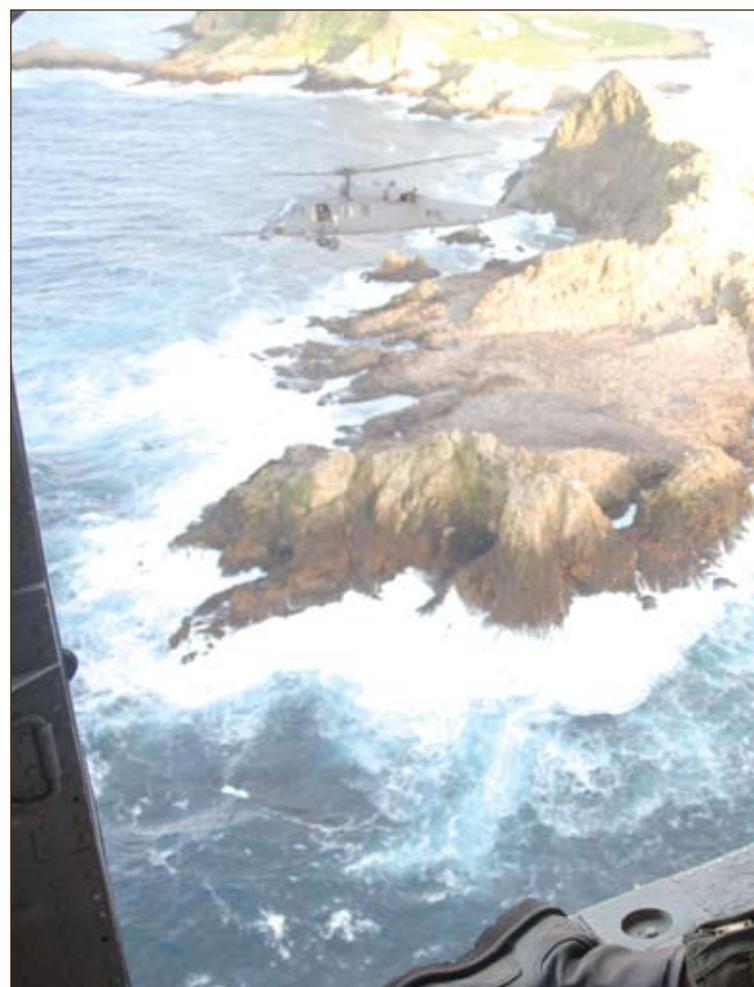


▲ The USO provides entertainment and snacks for Soldiers of the 1-185th Armor Battalion during a break in training at Fort McCoy, Wisc. Photo by Capt. Arnold Andersen



▲ Soldiers of the 1-185th Armor Battalion train at Fort McCoy, Wisc., late last year. The Soldiers are now serving a yearlong deployment in Iraq. Photo by Capt. Arnold Andersen

Staff Sergeant Andrew Hedin, an HH-60G Pave Hawk flight engineer from the 129th Rescue Wing at Moffett Federal Airfield, observes another Pave Hawk as it flies over the Farallon Islands. The unit supported the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by helping transport 48 new photovoltaic batteries to power a lighthouse and workshop at the Fish and Wildlife Service research facility in the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge Feb. 17. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ray Aquino





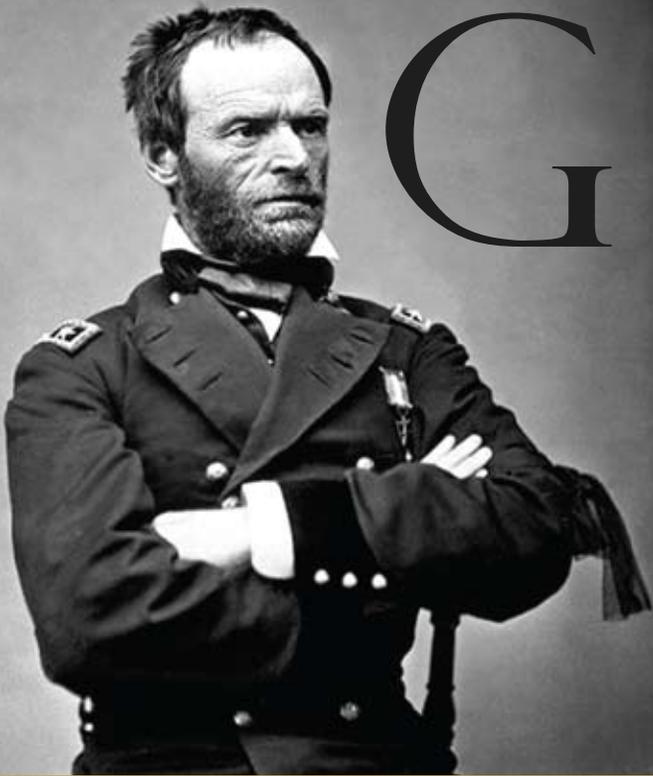
◀ The California National Guard adjutant general, Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II, was recognized with the ChalleNGe Champions Award during the fourth annual National Guard Youth Foundation ChalleNGe Champions Gala in Washington on Feb. 24. He received the award for his efforts to establish Sunburst Youth Academy, the state's second Youth ChalleNGe academy, which provides a live-in, military-style school for teens who have dropped out or been expelled from high school because of discipline, academic or personal problems. **Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Inigo**



◀ Staff Sergeant Rashie Burnett, left, and Senior Airman Shade Hughes, crew chiefs with the 144th Fighter Wing of the California Air National Guard, work on an F-16C Fighting Falcon aircraft at Fresno Yosemite International Airport on Feb. 8. **Photo by Master Sgt. Matthew Millson**



▲ Master Sergeant Joe Jeffreys of the 163rd Maintenance Group, Quality Assurance Office, visits with Tuskegee Airman Oliver Goodall, who was a guest speaker for the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing on Feb. 8 in honor of Black History Month. **Photo by Tech. Sgt. Julie Avey**



GENERAL SHERMAN

served California during tumultuous times

By 2nd Lt. Michael Anthony Rodriguez

General William Tecumseh Sherman was the nation's first "modern general" in his use of the "total war" strategy. He was convinced that a lasting peace would be possible only if the Union was restored, and he was prepared to do all he could to bring the Confederacy to an end. When Atlanta fell in 1864, he ordered the city evacuated, including women, children and the elderly. Defending his strategy to bring the full brunt of the war to the people, he wrote, "You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it; and those who brought war into our country deserve all the curses and maledictions a people can pour out. ... When peace does come, you may call on me for anything. Then will I share with you the last cracker, and watch with you to shield your homes and families against danger from every quarter."

California's military history includes several characters who distinguished themselves during the Civil War on both sides, Union and Confederate. A figure that stands out from the North, Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, (Feb. 8, 1820, to Feb. 14, 1891), has ties not only to California, but also the California National Guard. Many years before Sherman began his "March to the Sea," ultimately leading to the burning of Atlanta and the downfall of Confederate resistance, Sherman witnessed California history.

After graduating from West Point Military Academy in 1840 and serving as an artillery officer, then-Lieutenant Sherman first arrived in Monterey, Calif., in 1847, and was instantly struck by the beauty and brightness of the land. Coincidentally, he arrived two days before the city of Yerba Buena was renamed San Francisco.

In 1848, while working for the military governor of California, Col. R. B. Mason, Sherman was present when two workers from Sutter's Fort (in present-day Sacramento) came to deliver the news that gold had been discovered. He would later write in his memoirs, "That gold was the first discovered in the Sierra Nevada, which soon revolutionized the whole country, and actually moved the whole civilized world." Sherman's Soldiers began deserting upon hearing the tales that many were striking it rich and seeing people caught up in the gold fever that had infected so many.

Throughout the duration of the Mexican-American war, which lasted from 1846 to 1848, Sherman's military responsibilities were administrative duties. Interestingly, Sherman would become one of the relatively few high-ranking officers in the Civil War who had not fought in Mexico. The war with Mexico ended in the middle of 1848, and by that same time the next year, gold-seekers were arriving in California from all over the world.

Sherman left California shortly thereafter and served as an officer in the commissary department of the Army, resigning in 1853 to return to California. He began a second career as a banker but would ultimately fail. The financial climate was cutthroat, and later in life, Sherman recalled, "I can handle 100,000 men in battle, and take the City of the Sun, but am afraid to manage a lot in the swamp of San Francisco."

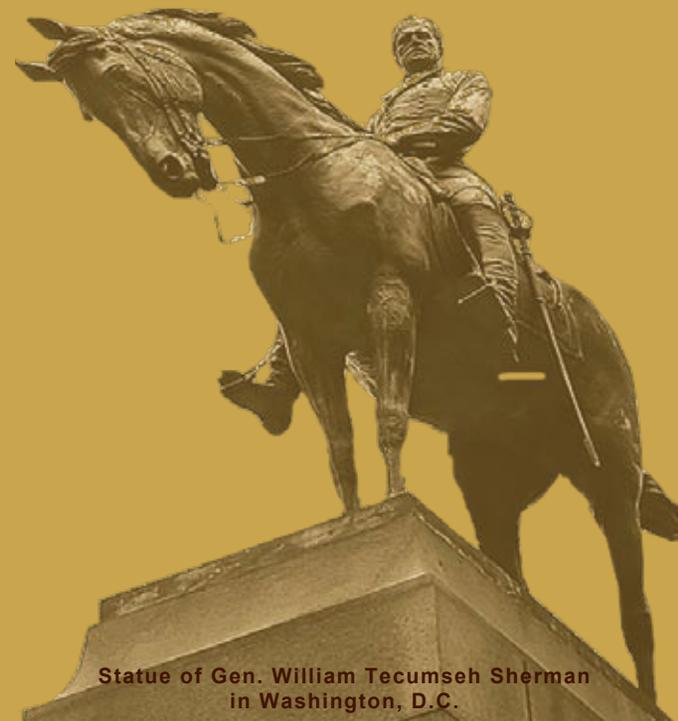
In 1856, Sherman served as a major general of the California militia after being appointed by Gov. William Neely Johnson. Armed members of a group called the Vigilance Committee had marched on the city and usurped civilian authority, claiming widespread corruption. The governor said he might need to call up the militia to restore law and order in San Francisco, and after ordering Sherman to call up San Francisco members of the California Militia, the governor declared San Francisco to be in a state of insurrection.

Sherman and Johnson visited Gen. John Wool, who was commanding the Military Division of the Pacific at Benicia Barracks, to obtain arms for hastily organized militia units. The general procrastinated, then refused. With no firearms or ammunition to restore law and order, the angered Sherman submitted his resignation. The Vigilance Committee remained in control in San Francisco for several months before disbanding, claiming to have cleaned up the city.

Fortunately, this was not the end of Sherman's military career. Despite the setbacks of depression and mental breakdown, Sherman became the nation's first "modern general" through his command of logistics and "total war" strategy. In 1875 he published his "Memoirs," one of the best-known firsthand accounts of the Civil War, and breathed his last on Valentine's Day, 1891.

"The hoarse and indistinguishable orders of commanding officers, the screaming and bursting of shells, canister and shrapnel as they tore through the struggling masses of humanity, the death screams of wounded animals, the groans of their human companions, wounded and dying and trampled underfoot by hurrying batteries, riderless horses and the moving lines of battle; a perfect Hell on earth. ... It has never been effaced from my memory, day or night, for 50 years."

- Massachusetts private, Union Army, reflecting on the Civil War



Statue of Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman in Washington, D.C.

By the Numbers

The number of sons of Sen. John J. Crittendon of Kentucky who became major generals during the Civil War – one for the North, one for the South.

Fun Fact

Confederate Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest had 30 horses shot from under him, and he personally killed 31 men in hand-to-hand combat. "I was a horse ahead at the end," he said. He is remembered as an innovator of mobile warfare and was one of the very few in either army to enlist as a private and end the war at the rank of general. After the Civil War, Forrest opposed Reconstruction policies and federal occupation of the South and was a figure in the postwar establishment of the Ku Klux Klan.

Soldier finds happiness through adoption

By Sgt. Emily Suhr
81st Brigade Combat Team

Each morning before she goes to school, 4-year-old Nayeli talks to her dad, Sgt. Samuel Curameng, through the webcam on her computer. As she begins her day at a children's hospital in Los Angeles County, her father is settling in for the evening at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

The hospital is caring for Curameng's daughter during his 12-month mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Nayeli suffers from an underdeveloped respiratory tract and requires a tracheostomy to breathe; therefore, she has spent much of her life in the hospital, though her condition does not require her to be in the hospital now.

"They've done so much to help me out because they know how the military situation is. They offered

to take her in," said Curameng, who is on his second deployment with Company C, 1-185th Armor, 81st Brigade Combat Team. "She's used to the kids and the other girls [in the hospital], so it's like nothing's ever changed, except Daddy's not there every day."

While Nayeli may not be a typical youngster, her dad is not a typical father either. The 25-year-old, single Curameng adopted Nayeli after meeting her at the hospital while training to become a licensed vocational nurse.

"When I was going through school, [the children's hospital] was one of my clinical sites, and I just fell in love with the girl," Curameng said. "She would follow me around and everything, and I made it my absolute duty to try and get hired by that place."

After starting work in the children's hospital, a special bond was formed between Curameng and Nayeli, and he soon began the eight-month process of legally adopting her.

"I had to prove that I actually had the means to support her, and the time," Curameng said. "People would look at a 25-year-old, single male as partying and this and that. Really, I work six days a week."

Curameng said he has found success and comfort in Iraq, but he is looking forward to returning to his Mission Hills, Calif., home to begin work on his registered nursing degree and eventually his masters degree in nursing. But mostly, he's looking forward to enjoying some quality time with his little girl, who will be turning 5 shortly after his return.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SGT. SAMUEL CURAMENG

Sergeant Samuel Curameng, who is on his second deployment with Company C, 1-185th Armor, 81st Brigade Combat Team, holds his daughter, Nayeli, shortly before leaving for mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Retired Soldier, local nonprofit send Basra hospital \$1.5 million in aid

By Brandon Honig
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

When Sgt. Richard Campos completed his tour in Iraq in 2003 as a member of the 3-140th Helicopter Battalion out of Stockton, Calif., he didn't expect to be returning to the country five years later as a civilian. Gaining entrance to Iraq can be difficult, and traveling in the country can be dangerous, but Campos had a delivery to make, and he was determined to complete his mission.

"I wanted them to see who it's coming from, instead of just seeing a container come with a bunch of stuff," Campos said of the people at Bab Al Zubair children's hospital in Basra.

The stuff Campos delivered included about \$379,000 worth of medical supplies and \$1.1 million worth of pharmaceuticals donated by manufacturers, distributors and other organizations that partner with Giving Children Hope, a nonprofit based in Buena Park, Calif. Campos sought the materials and paid to ship them as a tribute to fallen Soldier Lt. Col. Mark Taylor, a surgeon who was killed in 2004 in Fallujah, Iraq, where he was deployed as part of the 782nd Main Support Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, from

Fort Bragg, N.C. Though Campos did not know the 41-year-old Taylor, he had served in the California National Guard with Taylor's father, Col. Doug Taylor, and also worked with Doug Taylor in the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department. Campos served in the Marine Corps from 1969 to 1971 before joining the Guard in 1981 for a 23-year career.

"Doug and I always talked about his kid during lunch period or whatever," said Campos, who has a son in the Navy and a daughter in the Air Force Reserve. "Doug was very proud of his son."

Only 18 months after Mark Taylor was killed in action, Doug Taylor died at age 74.

"I think he passed away from a broken heart," Campos said.

To honor the Taylors, Campos sought donations of medical supplies to be sent to Iraq in the Taylors' names – a fitting tribute to a fallen surgeon and his father.

"I wanted to give a purpose to it – a meaning behind what they did, honoring their memory," Campos said.

After finding Giving Children Hope on the Internet, Campos collaborated with the nonprofit, which last year sent \$3.9 million worth of supplies to Iraq and \$30.6 million of supplies to children worldwide. Campos paid about \$5,000 for shipping, while Giving Children Hope provided the expertise, labor and supplies.

Spokeswoman Harmony Trevino said Giving Children Hope is often contacted by groups or organizations that wish to send medical supplies to needy children, but sometimes individuals undertake projects by themselves.

"It's much easier for a group to raise money than an individual," she said. "But sometimes motivated individuals that have a cause close to their heart do fundraising on their own ... and Richard's such a motivated individual and wanted to do a good thing for the kids over there."

Campos' desire to put an American face on the gift complicated its delivery, as Campos was delayed in Kuwait for more than two days while he sought paperwork that would enable him to leave Kuwait and enter Iraq. He



PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. DAVID LOEFFLER

Richard Campos funded shipping of \$1.5 million in medical supplies to a Basra children's hospital in honor of fallen surgeon Lt. Col. Mark Taylor.

finally arrived in Basra at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 11, and reluctantly left only 22 hours later to catch his flight home. But during that 22 hours, Campos accomplished his goal.

"I wish it could have been longer, but I'm glad I [went]," he said. "I wanted to let them know this came from America and from me, in support of all the guys who tried to do the right thing over there."

Inaugural duties 'an honor' for young Soldier

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Inigo
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

When Spc. Dea McKee cast her presidential vote in November, she never thought she would be working in the 56th inauguration, seeing that man become president.

However, the California Army National Guard Soldier left her military personnel job at Joint Force Headquarters in her state's capital for another joint force position in her nation's capital.

"As a young Soldier, it was an honor and a privilege to be there," said the 22-year-old who is originally from Woodland, Calif.

McKee worked for the parade division of the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee (AFIC), helping to assemble all military ceremonial personnel for the presidential inaugural parade. The joint service committee included members from all branches of the armed forces, which McKee said was refreshing and enjoyable.

"People always say that military members from different services never get along, but that wasn't true in this case," said McKee, who has been in the California Army National Guard for just under three years. "We worked well together. The only problem I had was learning the lingo of other services."

Because she applied for and was selected to be part of the AFIC parade division, McKee experienced many firsts. During her 36-day activation, highlights included the inaugural concert at the Lincoln Memorial, a tour inside the Washington Monument, a sobering visit to the Holocaust Museum, a swing through the American History Museum and a visit to the Arlington Memorial. She also learned to ride the city's public transportation system, the Metro,



PHOTO COURTESY OF DEFENSEIMAGERY.MIL

Parade participants ready for the 2009 presidential inaugural parade in Washington, Jan. 20. More than 5,000 men and women provided military ceremonial support for the presidential inauguration.

which was a feat in itself, she said.

By chance, McKee witnessed, from afar, then-President-elect Barack Obama lay a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This was definitely something she had to tell her family about, since this was as close as she came to her new commander-in-chief.

"My dad called me every day. He had to have been the most proud," McKee said, adding that family members swore they saw her on television, even though she maintains

she was far from the camera lens preparing for the parade.

Now McKee is part of the nation's history, not only helping to inaugurate the first black president, but also joining a long heritage. Military troops have participated in presidential inaugurations since April 30, 1789, when members of the U.S. Army, local militia units and Revolutionary War veterans escorted George Washington to his first inauguration ceremony at Federal Hall in New York City, according to the AFIC.

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JESSICA INIGO



Specialist Dea McKee helped assemble military ceremonial personnel for the presidential inaugural parade.

144th provides 'red air' for F-22 and F-15 pilots

Story and photo by Senior Airman Christian Jadot

F-22 pilots and F-15 pilots at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., were tested by members of the 144th Fighter Wing in February, as more than 90 Airmen and tons of equipment filling three C-130 Hercules and five F-16 aircraft deployed for two weeks of air combat training.

"We performed 'red air' for the F-22 and F-15 training squadrons," said 1st Lt. Charlie Scharmman, an F-16 pilot for the 144th FW, which is based in Fresno. "A typical mission is four F-16s and two T-38s against two F-22s. In most cases, the F-22s made six kills, and the F-16s and T-38s made zero."

Chief Master Sgt. Robert Hanes, the 144th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Superintendent, said the pilots at Tyndall were in the Dissimilar Aircraft Combat Training phase of their training, and the 144th was providing support.

"There have been a few maintenance issues, but it has not had an effect on our ability to perform the mission," he said.

For 15 days, men and women of the 144th kept the F-16s airborne and mission-ready. Maintenance issues were overcome with teamwork and professionalism and, according to Scharmman, the maintenance crews performed well and didn't miss a sortie.

"We are having an excellent deployment and a great time," said Master Sgt. Brent Lake, an aircraft electrician from the wing's electrical environmental shop. "The standby generator failed the first morning - after that, everything has been great due to the quality of maintenance."

A standby generator is an emergency backup that supplies power if the main generator fails. It can be crucial



Senior Airman Jason Rameriz and Staff Sgt. Matthew Hernandez, weapons systems specialists with the 144th Maintenance Squadron, load an AIM-120 missile on the wing of an F-16C Fighting Falcon from the 144th Fighter Wing at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., on Jan. 29.

in allowing a pilot to return to the base.

"We fixed it by removing and replacing it," Lake said. "We had great support from other shops. Good teamwork got it done in about 30 minutes," he said.

The few maintenance issues were overcome and spirits remained high

throughout the deployment. For some Airmen, like Staff Sgt. Richard Chavez, this was their first time working on an active flight line.

"I am having a blast," Chavez said. "On active duty, I never got to work on the flight line - this is the first time. One of the most exciting things for me was saluting the pilots and sending them off."

Soldiers loosen up with therapy dog

Story and Photo by 1st Lt. Caleb Christians
1-185th Armor Battalion

Canis Familiaris, Fido, dog. Whatever you may call them, man's best friend is undeniably as much a part of Americana as football, cheeseburgers and the Fourth of July.

They are an irreplaceable part of many American families. They go with us on our vacations, hunting trips, long days at the beach and short walks around the neighborhood. We take them everywhere we go, even to war.

Dogs have been a part of the U.S. military since World War I. They have been on countless missions spanning the globe, and many toil daily in harm's way, providing support that technology cannot.

In Iraq, dogs perform a number of roles. Some military working dogs sniff out explosives and look for people. Other dogs perform less tactical but equally important jobs.

Boe is a 4-year-old English Labrador Retriever who was donated to the Army by the Guide Dog Foundation through the America's Vet Dogs program. She lives on Contingency Operating Base Speicher and works as a therapy dog.

She accompanies Capt. Cecelia Najera, who is



Specialist Patricia Lara of Company D, 1-185th Armor Battalion shares a moment with Boe.

an occupational therapist with the 528th Medical Detachment at Speicher. Boe, who also holds the honorary rank of sergeant first class, makes the rounds visiting the different units that reside on the base.

"Her purpose is to bring Soldiers a reminder of home and offer a sense of comfort and well-

being," Najera said.

The U.S. military began pushing for the use of therapy dogs in 1919 after success with "shell-shocked" Soldiers. Today, therapy dogs fall under the category of animal-assisted therapy. Such animals are used for both physical and psychological therapy.

Psychological benefits include the reduction of stress and anxiety and the overall improvement of morale. On the physical side, animal-assisted therapy increases range of motion, strength and balance, and it minimizes the need for preoperative medication.

For the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 185th Armor, Boe provides a warm distraction from everyday life at Speicher.

"It's fun to have her around," said Pfc. Stephen Driedger.

Corporal Matt Brown, ammunition non-commissioned officer in charge, Company D, 1st Battalion, 185th Armor, said that spending time with Boe helps him unwind.

"Petting Boe is very relaxing," he said. "And it's nice throwing her dog treats."

Guardisman jumps back into service after near-fatal accident

By Pfc. Benjamin Watson
49th Public Affairs Detachment

How soon after a traumatic accident would you put yourself back in the circumstances that nearly ended your life? For one jumpmaster closing in on his fourth consecutive year serving in Iraq, the answer was, "Right away."

Then-Army-Sergeant Ronald L. Cox experienced what every paratrooper fears. For a brief, terrifying time in July 1978, Cox was a towed parachutist, entangled mid-air in his static line after exiting a C-130 aircraft.

"I must have banged into the side of the plane 10 or 15 times, and I was just hanging there, watching the bottom of the plane fly," he wrote in a 1978 article in The Fayetteville Observer.

The accident gave him a concussion and cost him his helmet, and once pulled into the plane with a winch, he was without a boot. Still, in less than a week, Cox was at the door and out it again.

"While I was in the hospital," Cox

said at the time, "I was thinking of quitting." But, he said, it was his duty and family that kept him in.

"My father jumped in World War II, my brother was with the 82nd [Airborne Division] from 1970 to 1973," and with an uncle in the Special Forces, he decided to strap on his chute again. He spent another six years with the 82nd Airborne before retiring as a master jumpmaster in 1984.

Today, Cox serves in the California National Guard as a staff sergeant with the 425th Civil Affairs Battalion. He works with the State and Justice departments on a provincial reconstruction team in Iraq's Salahuddin province. He came out of retirement to join the Guard in 2004, at 48 years old, and has been deployed to the region ever since.

"I've done everything from patrolling Baghdad, to running gun trucks up and down Route Tampa on convoy escort missions, to route security missions," the El Monte, Calif., native said.

Cox said he came to Iraq because of the mission's cost to young American Soldiers, which he wanted to help stop.

"Bouncing back" is one way to describe Cox's history with the armed forces during the last 30 years. It also comes painfully close to describing his own life after the final jump he ever made. He was at Fort Riley, Kan., when the dangers of the airborne life again became terrifyingly real. This time, it happened on a free-fall jump.

"I crash-landed on a hardtop road, fractured my tailbone, and when I pulled my chute in, it was on the front of a car."

Despite the trauma, he couldn't be held back from an opportunity to serve his country.

"I volunteered to come to Iraq after serving a year on Operation Enduring Freedom," the 52-year-old said.

Since arriving in Iraq, he has earned the Combat Infantryman Badge,

Combat Action Badge, Bronze Star with Valor and Army Commendation Medal with Valor, among other awards and decorations.

And he does not hesitate to state his plans: "I hear Afghanistan calling, so that [is] where I'll be heading next."



Staff Sergeant Ronald L. Cox of the 425th Civil Affairs Battalion is coming up on his fourth consecutive year serving in Iraq. A native of El Monte, Calif., Cox returned from a 20-year retirement to join the Guard in 2004.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STAFF SGT. RONALD L. COX



Army designates 2009

THE YEAR OF THE NCO

By Command Sgt. Maj. Kurt Muchow
223rd Regiment Accession Task Force



On Oct. 6, 2008, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren announced that the Army will recognize the value of its enlisted leaders at all levels of command as it observes "The Year of the Noncommissioned Officer" in 2009.



What an honor to be an NCO during this time in our history! I am grateful to Secretary Geren for his recognition of the NCO Corps, for it shows that our actions are being observed and recognized as worthy. We have much to be proud of: multiple mobilizations throughout the world; numerous state active duty responses; and taking care of the daily business of the California Army National Guard. I want to stop, take a breath, and reflect on our accomplishments; however, I do not believe that we can afford to pause for a moment – for there is much to do.



The purpose of the Year of the NCO initiative is to enhance NCOs' education, fitness, leadership development and pride in service through the implementation of programs and policies that support the sustainment and growth of the NCO Corps. With this in mind, Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston has charged the NCO Corps with the following three initiatives:



- Enhance NCOs' education, fitness, leadership development and pride in service through implementation of programs and policies that sustain and grow our NCO Corps.
- Recognize the leadership, professionalism, commitment, courage and dedication of the NCO Corps.
- Inform and educate the American people, Congress and government institutions of the roles, responsibilities and quality service of our NCO Corps.



I believe that NCOs must assess, plan and execute our individual and team plans to achieve Sergeant Major of the Army Preston's initiatives. The first step is to begin with a current self- and team-assessment that will then be used to develop a well-thought-out plan for focusing on areas requiring sustainment or improvement.



A successful plan must then be communicated with passion and measured at all levels of the organization. Anything worth doing is worth measuring in order to determine whether the goal has been accomplished. Put your plan in writing with timelines and quantifiable, realistic objectives. Then, bite off daily and weekly tasks to march towards your goal.



Finally, share your plan with fellow NCOs and family members to establish partners in accountability. I have encouraged my fellow NCOs to routinely ask for progress reports as a way to hold me accountable for achieving my goals. I welcome their feedback and return the favor, knowing that accountability is a two-way street.



I encourage you to accept Sergeant Major of the Army Preston's initiatives wholeheartedly, for it will ensure the continued success and viability of our NCO Corps.

For detailed information regarding SMA Preston's initiatives and to view his blog, visit

www4.army.mil/yearofthenco/home.php

THE NCO CREED

No one is more professional than I. I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of Soldiers. As a Noncommissioned Officer, I realize that I am a member of a time-honored corps, which is known as "The Backbone of the Army." I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Military Service and my country regardless of the situation in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit, or personal safety.

Competence is my watchword. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind -- accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers. I will strive to remain technically and tactically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Noncommissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All Soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my Soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my Soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment.

Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my Soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers, and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals,

Noncommissioned Officers, leaders!

"At the front of every Army mission in the United States or overseas, you'll find a noncommissioned officer. They know their mission, they know their equipment, but most importantly, they know their Soldiers."

-Secretary of the Army Pete Geren



Grizzly will feature an exemplary noncommissioned officer each month in 2009 to commemorate The Year of the NCO.

STAFF SERGEANT LIVES ARMY VALUES

By Sgt. 1st Class Charles J. Brown II
185th Quartermaster Battalion

Many people know what the words Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage mean. Soldiers learn these values in detail during basic combat training, and from then on, they live them every day in everything they do — whether they're on or off duty. In short, the Seven Core Army Values are what being a Soldier is about. But how often do you see someone actually live up to them?

Staff Sergeant Derrick T. Boutte, a Supply Sergeant for the 185th Quartermaster Battalion, lives the Army Values and epitomizes what every Soldier should be, know and do. Ask anybody who knows Boutte, and they will tell you, "he's got heart," and "he is a Soldier's Soldier."

While serving on the firefighting mission Task Force Shovel, Boutte saved one civilian and one Soldier's life on two separate occasions, prompting his command to submit him for a California Military Cross. These and other phenomenal acts of courage and selfless service that Boutte has given to others are almost too good to be true.

Countless times, he has gone out of his way to help other Soldiers. He has picked up Soldiers or offered his home to those who live too far away. He has turned around on a run during a physical fitness test to help another Soldier, and he still passed. When Soldiers are in need, Boutte is always there and willing to help. It is no surprise that he received a Bronze Star and an Army Achievement Medal for selfless service and courage while deployed with the 1072nd Transportation Company during Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

On an average drill weekend, you will find Boutte guiding and mentoring Soldiers. He is by the book. His loyalty to the command team and the California Army National Guard is unquestionable. His integrity is solid. He respects his peers and gets respect from his Soldiers. He has exceptional candor, honesty and drive to always do his best.

Boutte is a Soldier by day and a husband and dad by night. His duty is to his "military family" and to his "off-duty family," as he says. He is the type of NCO that we all strive to be. He is the type of Soldier who always says "Let's make it happen," rather than, "It can't be done." Boutte leads from the front and will never back down on a task given to him. He is strong with his words and always gives others his credit. He is the first person to tell you that he's not perfect and has made a lot of mistakes, but he has learned from them and continues to learn from them.

Boutte often asks me, "How far up the promotion ladder do you want to go?" And I always tell him, "I will be a sergeant major someday." His response is, "That's good thinking, and don't forget me when you become one." He also says, "If you can do it, then I can do it." Little does he know that if the board was held tomorrow, and it was based strictly on Army Values, Boutte would be promoted above everyone else in this fine state.



Boutte with part of his "off-duty family" and his "military family." Above: Boutte with his son, Derrick Jr., who is now 16, and his daughter, Chantel, who is 14. Below: Boutte with Staff Sgt. Martinez, Sgt. Sullivan and Sgt. Durante in Iraq.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF STAFF SERGEANT DERRICK T. BOUTTE

Former contender becomes National Guardsman

Story and photo by Spc. Darriel Swatts
69th Public Affairs Detachment

It's 1976 and a 13-year-old boy walks down a dark alley on his way to visit a friend after school. As he's walking, he hears a trash can lid fall and hit the ground. He clenches his fists and turns to face his opponent, just to find out it was a local stray dog searching for a meal. Relieved, the boy turns and continues on his journey, for his neighborhood in Newark, N.J., is full of gangs, and fights are common.

Sergeant Gilbert Baptist of Troop B, 1st Squadron, 18th Cavalry, based in Escondido, Calif., lived such a life. As a California Army National Guardsman, his life is now on track, but it wasn't always that way.

As a kid, what started out as a need for self-defense turned into a passion for boxing. At the age of 9, he received his first pair of boxing gloves from his mother for Christmas.

"I was always interested in boxing," Baptist said. "That gift is what got me on my way."

His daily routine growing up was a quick prayer in the morning followed by a run, school, homework and finally going to the local gym or YMCA to train. Although street fights were common, they were mainly for defense or for gaining respect.

"Back in my day, we didn't do all this gun stuff like nowadays," Baptist said. "We used our fists. When you got into a fight and lost, you did one of two things: You stayed away from each other out of respect or you became good friends."

Although Baptist's mother was a pastor at the local Baptist church, problems always had a way of finding him. In fact, street life got him in so much trouble that he was given the choice of joining the military or going to jail.

"It wasn't that hard of a choice to make," Baptist joked. "I chose the military, of course."

Upon arriving at Camp Pendleton, Calif., for Marine Corps boot camp, he stumbled upon the Marines boxing team. He tried out and made the team with ease, thus getting him stationed in Okinawa, Japan. Throughout that time, he boxed opponents from other services and civilians alike, becoming a well-known Marine Corps boxer.



Former professional boxer Sgt. Gilbert "Sweet Sensation" Baptist, Troop B, 1st Squadron, 18th Cavalry, throws a punch for the camera at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, a subinstallation of Camp Atterbury, Ind.

"I traveled all over the world with the Corps," Baptist recalled. "I've boxed in Poland, Germany, Italy, France and all over the United States, just to name a couple of places."

Once his service was completed in the Marine Corps, he stayed in the ring and boxed in the amateur circuit, then quickly advanced into the professional ranks, where he gained the nickname Gilbert "Sweet Sensation" Baptist. During his career as a professional fighter, he won 28 matches with 12 knockouts and lost 17 matches, being knocked out twice. He once went 12 rounds with United States Boxing Association Middleweight Champion Bernard Hopkins in a title fight.

"It's not how many times you get knocked down, it's how many times you get back up," Baptist stated proudly.

Misfortune found him, however, as his career abruptly ended when his boxing manager chose drugs over

him. That knockout blow left him homeless for two days until an old friend found him and helped him back on his feet.

"My friend gave me some money and a place to sleep for a little while," Baptist said, wincing at the memory. "When he wasn't looking, his wife slipped me an additional 20 bucks."

He got back on his feet to continue the fight of life. Eventually he moved to California and tried to find a steady job there. He looked everywhere and continually slipped in and out of employment. Then one night while watching TV, he saw a commercial for the Department of Corrections.

"I knew this was my last chance and had to go for it," Baptist remembered.

Baptist was told by a friend to talk to the department chief for an interview and finally caught the break he needed. He was hired.

"I had to start from the bottom and work my way up," Baptist said. "I got my work ethic from boxing and used it to my advantage."

He started working with troubled teens, trying to get them on the right track.

"I get torn apart by watching a kid go down the wrong path," said an emotional Baptist.

He would spend one-on-one time with them, helping them get over their issues by using the lessons he learned growing up and those he learned throughout his life.

"[Baptist] tries to guide you the right way," said Spc. Pedro Cortes, a fellow squad member. "He gives you advice on how to progress yourself, making you a better person."

Baptist would reward the locked-up teens for their progress by giving them extra food or more time in the common area or by extending lights-out by a couple of minutes.

"The kids loved me. I would never do them wrong," Baptist said. "But I also never spared them punishment when they deserved it."

Even though he was doing what he loved, Baptist remained patriotic. After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, Baptist felt the "call to duty" and enlisted in the National Guard. After being out of the military for 17 years, he joined a Southern California unit as a mortar man. Since joining, he has lent a hand to citizens recovering from Hurricane Katrina and helped secure the California-Mexico border.

Now he is preparing for a peace-keeping mission to Kosovo. He plans to continue to mentor young troops, and sometime during the deployment, he wants to buy a computer so the troops can teach him how to use it.

"I'm very proud to have him as part of my team," said 1st Sgt. Douglas Woellhof, the top non-commissioned officer in charge of Troop B.

Baptist is no stranger to being knocked down in life. However, he always gets back up and continues on, teaching and caring along the way.



THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S SYMPOSIUM ON FAMILY READINESS

The Adjutant General's Symposium on Family Readiness is an annual event that brings together military leadership, spouses, Family Readiness Group volunteer leaders and state Family Program staff to discuss primary Family Readiness issues. The symposium allows attendees to work with their respective leadership on developing a solid chain of concern throughout the California National Guard

- Steven H. Read, Director, Family Readiness

**18-19 April 2009
Burlingame, CA**

For more information about the Operation Ready Families Program, visit its Web site

www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies

To register online for the symposium, visit the site of the California National Guard

www.calguard.ca.gov

EQCC keeps Guard focused on environment

By Lt. Col. Reuben R. Sendejas

How do the adjutant general and the California National Guard track and manage all of the different environmental-compliance requirements, and oversee proactive environmental stewardship?

Involvement, that's how!

Every member of the National Guard needs to be aware of the potential environmental impacts of their missions and actions, from the most senior officer to the newest recruit just beginning their career. At the executive level, the Environmental Quality Control Committee (EQCC) meets quarterly to review the status of programs, cross-talk issues between commands, branches and directorates, and provide vision and leadership to our environmental stewardship initiatives.

The EQCC co-chairs are Maj. Gen. Dennis G. Lucas, Commander of the California Air National Guard, and Brig. Gen. Louis J. Antonetti, Commander of the California Army National Guard. Through their oversight and guidance, key elements of the environmental management system (eMS) are accomplished as the California National Guard performs a cycle of continuous evaluation and improvement.

The EQCC reviews and tracks

results from facility environmental audits; oversees large projects such as building armories that require significant National Guard resources or policy guidance; and discusses and reviews the environmental impacts of large projects, down to seemingly small yet significant issues, like recycling.

The EQCC also reviews new missions and equipment and their potential effects on Guard training lands and neighboring communities.

Preserving current operations can also be a challenge as neighboring communities grow and evolve around training ranges. Such encroachment, or competition of land use, is also part of the review and planning done by the EQCC.

The California National Guard has made a strong commitment to the environment under the leadership of the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II. With his support, the California National Guard Strategic Plan was updated to include 48 objectives focused on environmental sustainability. As part of the regular EQCC agenda, those objectives are reviewed and tracked so senior leadership stays informed and involved.

The eMS is the primary tool used by the EQCC and the California National Guard to achieve our "Tri-



PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. DAVID LOEFFLER

EQCC co-chairs Maj. Gen. Dennis G. Lucas and Brig. Gen. Louis J. Antonetti listen to a report on the Guard's environmental management system during a Dec. 17 meeting at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento.

ple Bottom Line" of Mission, Community and Environment. All California National Guard members and employees are required to have, at a minimum, an awareness level of

training in eMS. Success requires everyone in the California National Guard be informed and involved.

Are you?

If you would like to know more about eMS, visit our portal site at:
https://portal.ca.ngb.army.mil/sites/caev/env_programs/training/default.aspx.
If you would like to know more about the California National Guard Strategic Plan, visit J-5 Strategic Plans & Policy:
portal.ca.ngb.army.mil/sites/j5/Strategic%20Plans%20%20Policies/Forms/AllItems.aspx.

National Guard, USA Rugby team up for 16-nation tourney

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

The USA Sevens Rugby Tournament is the largest rugby event in North America and the fastest-growing rugby event in the world. As a primary sponsor of the Sevens Tournament on Feb. 14 and 15, the National Guard was prominently featured for its second year at San Diego's Petco Park.

The National Guard and USA Rugby partnered two years ago to ensure educational and athletic benefits are afforded to young people interested in pursuing the core values shared by USA Rugby and the National Guard.

"It seemed like a very natural partnership," said Kyle Judah, National Guard account manager for USA Rugby. "Our core values are parallel – camaraderie, leadership on and off the field, quick decisions, selflessness, working toward a common goal as a team – these are foundational values of both organizations. Rugby players love to get dirty and they have courage and fortitude."

The National Guard commanded a strong visible presence at the two-day tournament, which included teams from 16 countries competing in a total of 44 matches.



Australia and Canada were among 16 countries competing in the USA Sevens Rugby tournament sponsored by the National Guard at Petco Park in San Diego on Feb. 14 and 15.

California National Guard and USA Rugby tents were side-by-side in the Fan Zone within Petco Park and included a rock climbing wall, a padded jousting arena and other physical challenges. Rugby fans learned about National Guard opportunities while visiting the attractions and

talking with Guardsmen at the event. The National Guard logo was embossed prominently on the end zone turf and on the goalpost padding.

As the tournament officially began, the California governor and adjutant general's own Color Guard

presented the Colors, and Tech. Sgt. Dan Plaster of the Air National Guard's Band of the Southwest sang the national anthem. F-18s roared overhead just as the National Anthem concluded.

Recruiters introduce the opportunities of the National Guard to young rugby players while they are still in high school and form what often matures into an eight-year one-on-one relationship between recruiter and rugby player. Rugby is not a varsity or collegiate sport, and therefore no scholarships exist. The National Guard offers rugby players options to help pay for college and allows them to continue in their rugby careers, while receiving personal and professional training through ROTC programs.

"These athletes are highly motivated leaders who possess a selfless and team-oriented mentality that is perfectly suited for the National Guard," said Joanna Hoffman, 2009 Guard Rugby Program campaign manager. "Our players are extremely physically fit as well as mentally prepared to make split-second decisions in the heat of battle."

PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. JULIE AVEY

40th IBCT renamed 79th IBCT

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

The largest brigade in California, located at the Kearny Mesa Armory in San Diego, has a new title. Commander Col. David Baldwin of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, formerly known as the 40th IBCT, initiated the name change due to confusion that had been arising for years between other units with the same numbers.

"We chose the 79th IBCT because of its significance in California's history, going all the way back to World War I," said Lt. Col. Keith Lochner, the 79th IBCT's executive officer. "The 79th originally belonged to the 40th Infantry Division, and at this stage in the process we are still waiting for the Institute of Heraldry at the National Guard Bureau to

release to us the official lineage and honors."

Second Lieutenant Michael Anthony Rodriquez, California National Guard command historian, said the Center for Military History in Washington, D.C., will provide the unit with the information it needs to define its background and lineage.

"The process for requesting a redesignation or name change is a lengthy one, and rightfully so," Rodriquez said. "It is so important that we preserve the accuracy and historical relevance of our heritage; understanding our unit's role in history contributes greatly to our Soldiers' morale and esprit de corps."

PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS LEO BOECHE





California Military Ball 2009

APRIL 18, 2009
SATURDAY

MARRIOTT SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT
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NO-HOST COCKTAIL HOUR AT SIX O'CLOCK
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CALL FOR ROOM RESERVATIONS BY APRIL 8, 2009
MENTION THE GROUP CODE "FSM"
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CIVILIAN: BLACK TIE

NAME AND RANK _____ PHONE _____

GUEST(S) NAME _____

DETERMINE :

- CHAR-GRILLED HANGAR STEAK WITH MASHED POTATOES
- BREAST OF CHICKEN WITH FETTUCCHINE
- MUSHROOM STRUDEL WITH TOMATOES FONDUE

COST - \$65 PER PERSON.

PLEASE ACCEPT MY DONATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ _____ TO SPONSOR A
MILITARY SERVICEMEMBER'S ATTENDANCE AT THE MILITARY BALL

SEND THIS RSVP WITH PAYMENT BY APRIL 8, 2009 (MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO MILITARY DEPARTMENT MWR)

MAIL TO: JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS
ATTN: MRS. IRMA GARRETT
CHIEF OF PROTOCOL
9800 GOETHE ROAD (BOX 58)
SACRAMENTO, CA 95826-9101
PHONE : (916) 870-3133
EMAIL : IRMA.GARRETT@US.ARMY.MIL

To register online go to https://www.ca.ang.af.mil/symposium_ball/

Health care benefits: You are covered

By Lt. Col. Susan Pangelinan
Joint Staff Medical Advisor



Incredibly affordable health care is a benefit now available for attracting and retaining Guard members nationwide, but particularly in California, where the cost of everything (gas, food, real estate) seems higher than the national average. Amazingly, for less than \$60 dollars a month, a drilling Guard member can have full medical and dental coverage (\$47.51 a month for health, \$12.12 for dental).

A dramatic reduction in the premium for the previously launched TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) health plan makes using this comprehensive health care benefit much more of a reason to enter and/or stay in the California National Guard.

On Jan.1, 2009, health care premium coverage dropped 42 percent to \$47.51 a month for a drilling Guard member. Family coverage dropped 29 percent to a premium of \$180.17 a month. These are the lowest comprehensive premium rates available in the health care industry – and being a Guard or Reserve member is the only way you can get this great rate.

Ensuring all Guard members have health care coverage cannot be stressed enough. As the Joint Forces Medical Advisor and Administrator at the 129th Medical Group at Moffett Federal Airfield, I have observed at Soldier Readiness Processing (SRP), at Medical Processing for State Emergencies and at routine Periodic Health Assessments (PHAs) the results of Guard members not having civilian medical and dental care. With this newly affordable health and dental benefit, we in medical services hope no California Guard member should have to cut health care from their budget.

What is TRICARE Reserve Select?

As defined by its Web site, “TRICARE Reserve Select is the premium-based TRICARE health plan qualified (drilling) National Guard and Reserve members may purchase. The plan offers comprehensive health coverage similar to TRICARE Standard and TRICARE extra. TRICARE Reserve Select members and their covered family members may access

care from any TRICARE-authorized provider, hospital or pharmacy, as well as from a military clinic or hospital on a space-available basis.”

Please note that if you receive activation orders for 31 consecutive days or more in the future, the Pre-activation Benefit for National Guard and Reserve members can provide some services prior to deployment at the TRICARE Prime level or active duty level of coverage.

If you are a commander, senior non-commissioned officer or leader at any level of the California National Guard, I encourage you to promote this program for your drilling members regularly. Even if you briefed the plan once before, it bears repeating periodically. Often a member who had a good health care plan from their civilian employer last year, for example, may not have focused on this benefit when it was first introduced. With the downturn in our economy, many Guard members find themselves changing employment, underemployed or even unemployed. TRS could now be a saving option for an otherwise cash-strapped family that might have a more expensive plan or no plan at all.

Although this program has been available since 2005, it became easier and more accessible in 2007 after The National Defense Authorization Act of 2007 mandated the elimination of the previous three-tier system. After the change, Guard member sign-ups doubled. Starting Oct. 1, 2007, the TRS program benefits were administered through its Web site on the Guard and Reserve Web Portal.

How to enroll in TRS

The TRICARE Reserve Select Web application allows members to purchase coverage for themselves and their family members and to subsequently enroll or disenroll family members. You can log on from home with a CAC or a myPay PIN (DFAS pin). Verifying officers with full access can also perform these application functions on behalf of others.

Enrollment is ongoing, so you may

sign up for TRS any month. If you have questions regarding your TRS eligibility, please contact your Guard/Reserve Representative at www.tricare.mil/reserve/reserveselect/TRS-Poc.cfm. You may also directly contact our regional contractor for TRICARE, TriWest Alliance, at 1-888-TRIWEST.

For General questions on eligibility and enrollment, the Army Guard point of contact is:

Sgt. 1st Class Leslie Case
leslie.case@us.army.mil
916-854-4491

The Air Guard point of contact is your servicing Military Personnel Flight.

Dental benefits for Guard members

When activated, National Guard and Reserve members are eligible for active-duty dental benefits. When not activated, and on drilling status, they are eligible for the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP), a voluntary, premium-based dental insurance plan administered by United Concordia. With the TDP, members have access to a nationwide network of more than 57,000 participating dentists. Family members are eligible for the TRICARE Dental Program regardless of the sponsor's military status (activated or drilling). However, premium amounts are reduced when the sponsor is activated.

Poor dental health has been a cause of many non-qualifications. This plan was specifically constructed to provide a low-cost means of keeping Guard and Reserve members dentally healthy throughout their careers and allow for the sound dental health of their families as well. The dental premium costs range from \$12.12 a month for a Guard or Reserve member to \$87.85 a month for the member and their family.

For information, visit TRICAREdentalprogram.com or call:

Stateside: 1-800-866-8499
Overseas: 1-888-418-0466
1-717-975-5017.

Guard your health

Too often we cut corners and make sacrifices in challenging times. But by ensuring we guard our health and productivity continuously through use of a comprehensive health care plan, we can make certain we are around for our families and our nation. The quality of life we enjoy in our later years is directly affected by the decisions we make today.

If you or members of your unit do not have affordable health care, remind them of TRICARE Reserve Select, as it may be a better and less expensive option than what they currently have. For less than \$60 a month (or less than \$48 a month without the dental plan), they are “covered.”



PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN CHRISTIAN THOMAS



Photo credit: www.firsttimeorangecounty.com/laguna.shtml

Child care subsidies available during deployments

National Guard families are eligible to receive help with the costs of child care during deployments through the National Guard's Child Care Subsidy Program.

The amount of the subsidy is based on a variety of factors, including income, number of children and type of child care needed. The minimum amount paid through the program is \$100 per child per month. For more information on the program, visit the National Guard Family Program's Web site at www.guardfamily.org or call 1-888-642-2799.

Military children eligible for scholarships

Homefront America is accepting essays and applications from service members' dependent children aged 17 to 21 for its American Patriot Freedom Scholarship program. Twenty-five \$1,000 scholarships are available for students pursuing a postsecondary degree at a fully accredited college, university, technical school or vocational institution.

Applications must be postmarked by April 24. For program application, eligibility requirements and guidelines, visit www.oohrah-usa.org or www.homefrontamerica.org.

Air Guard schedules Teen Leadership Summits

Applications are being accepted through April 6 for the 2009 Air Force Reserve/Air National Guard Teen Leadership Summits, which will be held in July. The summits are open to all 15- to 18-year-old dependents of current Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard members.

Activities during the summit in Dahlonaga, Ga., from July 13 through July 17 will include a ropes course, rock climbing, whitewater rafting, environmental education and leadership classes. The summit on Jekyll Island, Ga., from July 27 through July 31 will include programs focused on local history, ocean and marsh life as well as kayaking, canoeing, dolphin tours, biking and leadership training.

For application and information, visit www.georgia4h.org/AFRANGTeenSummit/

DID YOU KNOW...

there is no such term as "medical flag" in the Army?

Personnel who do not meet Army medical requirements will be coded Non-Deployable for Medical Reasons by their respective medical branches. The use of the term "medical flag" is improper as it implies a suspension of favorable personnel actions for medical reasons. For more information on Medically Non Deployable (MND) status, refer to AR 40-501 or contact Medical Services Branch at Joint Force Headquarters.

Favorable personnel actions in the Army can be suspended, or "flagged," in the personnel database under certain conditions, but they are not related to medical status. Examples of unfavorable actions can include, but are not limited to, investigations, absence without leave, court martials and non-judicial punishments. These types of flags are not transferable.

Transferable flags for the Army include Army physical fitness test failure, entry into the Weight Control Program and command referral into the Army Substance Abuse Program. For further information, refer to AR 600-8-2, Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (Flags), and PPB 09-03.

Free online course offered for some caregivers

Veterans' caregivers and veterans who serve as caregivers are eligible to enroll in a free six-week online workshop for people who care for patients with traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, dementia or doctor-diagnosed memory impairment.

Stanford School of Medicine and the Department of Veterans Affairs are testing the new workshop, which is designed to provide tools that make the caregiving experience less stressful and more rewarding. Caregivers are asked to commit two hours a week for six weeks, but they can participate in the workshop at any time during each week. For more information, visit <https://caregivers.stanford.edu> or call 1-800-366-2624.

VA enhances Web site for OEF/OIF veterans benefits

Service members returning from deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) or Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) can find a wide range of benefit information on a newly enhanced Department of Veterans Affairs Web site for OEF/OIF veterans: www.oefoif.va.gov.



Specialist Roger Jongewaard and Spc. Vadim Shafir paint the California state flag on the protective wall surrounding their unit, Company E, 185th Armor Battalion, Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq. "I'm just proud to be from California," Jongewaard said.

Photo by Sgt. Keith Anderson

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