

GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard

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Leadership Corner

Serving our state and nation

Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin



The National Guard has been protecting Americans for nearly four centuries. Long before the citizens of this land established a nation, they organized militias to defend their communities. The National Guard traces its roots to the first of these militias, created in 1636 in Massachusetts to defend against attack. When the time came, militias in each colony played a significant role in defeating the British and gaining independence for the United States.

After the war, the U.S. Constitution ensured those militias would stay intact, relegating the appointment of officers and training of militia to each of the states instead of the federal government. That tradition continues to this day, with each state's militia, or National Guard, complementing our active duty and Reserve components.

In California, Gov. Jerry Brown is our commander in chief. As the adjutant general, I am the governor's appointee to head the California Military Department. I report directly to the office of the governor and exercise command of the CNG's military forces on his behalf.

Gov. Brown and his predecessors have activated our forces to fight fires (as seen on page 8), assist in areas affected by floods or hurricanes, maintain order in cities and airports, keep drugs off our streets, man our borders and rescue citizens in need. In short, our members are tasked to march toward danger and stand firm while advising others to evacuate. Under Gov. Brown's direction, Guard members also instill values in young Californians through our renowned Community and Youth Programs Task Force (as seen on pages 8 and 14).

When activated for a state emergency, or State Active Duty, CNG members serve under Gov. Brown's command. Members activated for federal service also remain under Gov. Brown's command for many other domestic missions, under Title 32 of the U.S. Code. CNG forces supporting Southwest border security or Joint Task Force Domestic

Support-Counterdrug, for instance, serve in Title 32 status under Gov. Brown's command. Title 32 also covers out-of-state missions such as the CNG's post-hurricane recovery efforts in recent years. Disciplinary proceedings for Soldiers and Airmen on Title 32 incorporate the California Military Veterans Code, whereas Title 10 federal active duty proceedings follow the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Each of us in the National Guard also serves within either the Army or the Air Force, and President Barack Obama is our commander in chief when called to Title 10 federal active duty. The Guard has provided nearly half of the military force deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan during the past decade under the president's direction.

The citizen-Soldiers of the National Guard bring a unique and varied blend of civilian skills to the fight, enabling us to field an operational force with a wide range of capabilities at a fraction of the cost of our active duty counterparts. Through the past 10 years of war, our service members have distinguished themselves as brave, skilled warriors. They have also gained valuable experience and training, and they have grown and matured as a fighting force, learning new capabilities and putting them to the test in real-world situations.

We are working hard to ensure the California National Guard maintains the momentum built during the past 10 years. We are as strong as we have ever been, and we plan to not only keep our force structure in place, but grow and enhance our ability to serve this nation and this state.

It is our privilege in the National Guard to serve both our governor and our president — our state and our country. Our relationship with our governor is unique among all U.S. military components and distinguishes the National Guard from the Reserves. We will never lose sight of that dual mission and the millions of people who depend on us.

Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler



Sgt. Carl Trujillo, left, and then-Sergeant Richard Aller of the CNG State Honor Guard perform a Memorial Day ceremony in Fair Oaks, Calif., in 2008 in front of the two flags the California National Guard represents.

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Photographs:

- ★ Highest resolution possible: MB files, not KB
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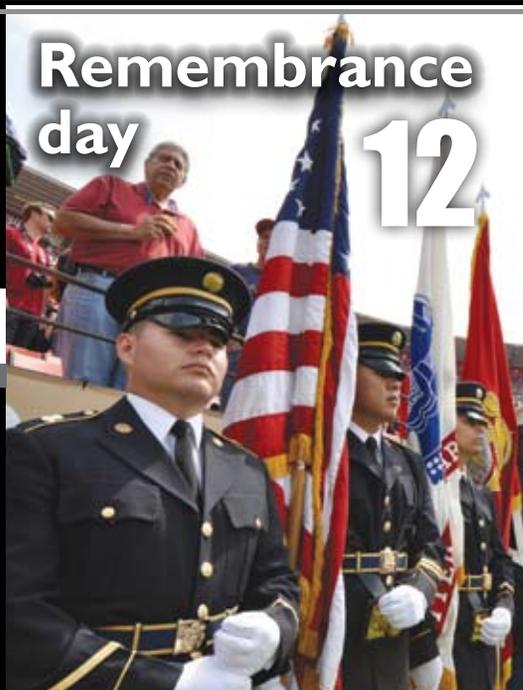
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Cover Shot



Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr

Sgt. Joshua Gould of the 95th Civil Support Team flies through the agility sprint portion of the new Army Combat Readiness Test on Sept. 14 during the California National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Camp San Luis Obispo. One of many events during the weeklong contest, the ACRT will soon replace the Army Physical Fitness Test. The CNG's Best Warriors will be named Oct. 23 on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos.



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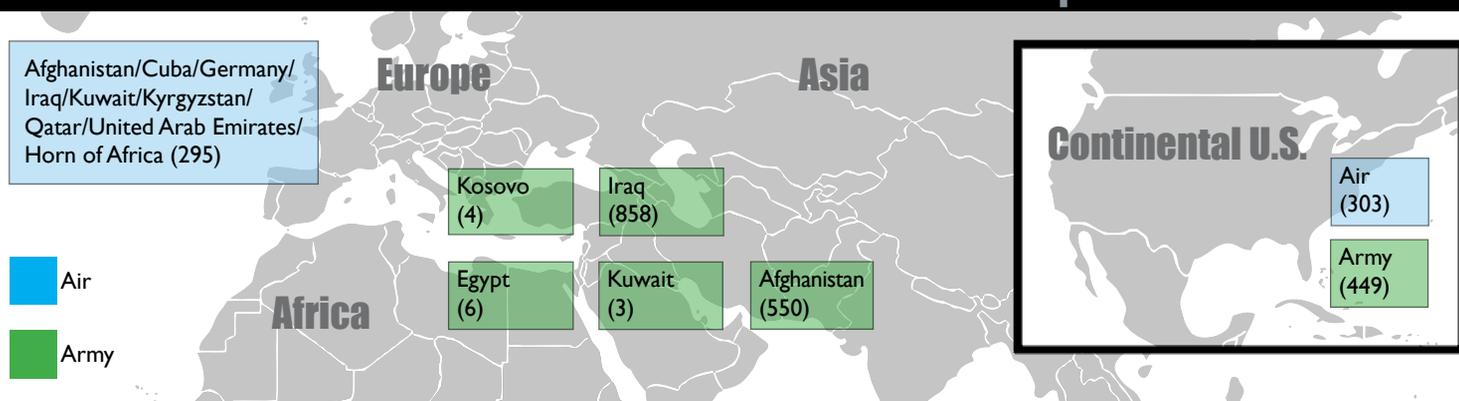
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California National Guard mobilizations as of September 2011



CNG advises Afghan officers on combat ops

By California Military Department
Public Affairs

The last three of five California Army National Guard combat advisers to the Afghan National Army's (ANA) 201st Infantry Corps have completed their mission in Regional Command East and returned home. The three officers were the "Iron Majors" of Tactical Command Post I (TACI) for Coalition Joint Task Force-101 and then CJTF-1.

The majors were responsible for advising senior ANA officers in planning and conducting combat operations in close coordination with the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in eastern Afghanistan. Maj. John Griffis was the personnel adviser, Maj. Daren Runion was most recently the operations plans adviser and Maj. Daniel Markert was the chief of operations adviser.

Arriving in Afghanistan last fall at the crest of the United States' 30,000-troop surge, the combat advisers were charged with transitioning the 201st Corps from largely an administrative and logistical "force provider" headquarters garrisoned in the nation's capital of Kabul to a forward-deployed field headquarters prepared to assume responsibilities for full-spectrum counterinsurgency and security operations.

"The previous team of advisers had worked hard to improve the 201st Corps administrative and logistical processes and improve the professionalism of the ANA staff," Griffis said. "It was time for the 201st Corps to step out and own their destiny."

Own it they did, warts and all. Most of the 201st headquarters staff were residents of Kabul, and "none of them were excited about moving to eastern Laghman," Runion said. "There is no PCS [permanent change of station] move in the ANA!"

With the assistance of the TAC1 senior officers and noncommissioned officers, the 201st Corps commander and his staff planned and executed the movements of two brigade headquarters, four infantry kandaks (battalions), two support kandaks and the corps headquarters.

"We really pushed them in the winter to get momentum so the moves would be complete before the spring offensive," said Runion, who was on his second deployment to Afghanistan in three years.

"Daren's previous tour as an embedded training team chief with a kandak in Paktia province really helped bring perspective to the TAC on advising the senior ANA offi-



Photos by Abdul Mansoor

cers," Markert said. "It helped us call them out a few times on what was really feasible for their forces in the field and encourage them to be more aggressive."

The TAC1 team helped the 201st Corps plan its largest operation, a two-brigade clearing operation to establish the Bad Pakh district in western Laghman province. The ANA partnered with the Iowa National Guard's 2-34th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and conducted the largest air assault operation in Regional Command-East. This was the opening stage for the successful establishment of a new district center and the future transition of Laghman province to full Afghan control.

Farther east in the remote Hindu Kush mountains of Nuristan province, a challenge and opportunity arose for the 201st Corps and their TAC1 advisers. ISAF had been reducing its presence during the past few years as part of a change in operational strategy. The 201st Corps and the Afghan National Police and Border Police were operating independently after ISAF forces withdrew, and insurgent activities had been increasing in the remote mountain valleys.

Runion and Markert assisted the 201st Corps and its National Police and Border Police counterparts in developing a summer campaign plan that conserved forces for major operations with ISAF in key terrain and yet disrupted insurgent activities in the remote mountain districts. In a series of independent and combined actions, Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) drove a wedge between the insurgents and the populace and capitalized on insurgent in-fighting.

Soldiers from the 201st Corps and Iowa's 2-34th IBCT delivered a serious blow to the Taliban in Doab District, Nuristan. That was followed by clearing operations in the Pech Valley of Kunar province with the active duty 3-25th IBCT, which allowed an ANSF-led humanitarian relief convoy to drive deep into Parun, the provincial capital of Nuristan.

"Seeing the tide shift against the insurgents



TOP: Maj. Daniel Markert, left, and an officer from Task Force Bastogne evaluate Afghan National Security Forces' (ANSF) defensive positions in Barg e Matal District Center, Nuristan province, Afghanistan. **ABOVE:** Markert advises members of the Afghan National Army's 201st Infantry Corps about operations in Regional Command East at Forward Operating Base Gamberi in Laghman province, Afghanistan.

in Nuristan over the spring and early summer was very gratifying," Markert said, "especially when you read in the news about the Afghans you were advising stepping up and accomplishing a mission that months ago both Afghans and ISAF were classifying as 'too hard to do.' It feels like we made a difference."

Runion cautioned, "Let's not kid ourselves: They have a long way to go to operate independently with indirect fires and casualty evacuation. But the ANSF are moving in the right direction."

Part of continuing that momentum is making sure the institutional processes of the ANA are supportable and enforceable by Afghan leadership. For instance, Griffis led an advisory team that improved personnel and payroll accountability.

"This was one of those 'great ideas' that needed a lot of push at the ground level," he said. "We had to get a team of Afghan Army personnel specialists and Afghan Ministry of Defense-contracted civilians to each kandak headquarters and company

combat outpost to conduct pay and personnel record audits and do electronic biometric enrollment."

Those efforts improved accountability and reduced payroll skimming and the number of "ghost Soldiers" who did not perform their duties.

"Our big contribution was arranging the aviation transportation to these remote outposts and encouraging the Corps [personnel] staff to personally audit the records and conduct administrative training in the field. The deputy [personnel director] himself conducted [officer professional development] with each rifle company executive officer," Griffis said. "Once word got out how successful we were, other Corps staff sections got jealous and wanted their advisers to take them out to visit their units."

All three California National Guard officers said the mission was a long grind but very gratifying. "Having high-quality teammates and earning the respect and gratitude of the Afghan officers is what made this deployment," Runion said.

146th Airlift Wing sends 250 to Afghanistan

Aeromedical Evacuation, Air Terminal Operations and Civil Engineering squadrons deploy for three months

By MAJ. KIMBERLY HOLMAN
146th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

More than 250 members of the 146th Airlift Wing have deployed over the last few months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Most recently, five of the wing's C-130J aircraft flew to Afghanistan with a full complement of aircrew and maintenance crew from the 146th's Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Air Terminal Operations Squadron and Civil Engineering Squadron. The squadrons will be deployed for three months and provide airlift and airdrop capabilities to forward operating bases, many within Afghanistan.

One group of maintenance and aircrew personnel departed Sept. 8 from the 146th's base at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station in Port Hueneme, Calif. A crowd of family and friends stood near a massive C-130J on the flightline to say farewell to their loved ones, and some of the Airmen and family members shared their thoughts with local media members who attended.

Birthdays, holidays, the first day of school — all of these occasions and more will be missed. Many at the deployment ceremony shared why saying goodbye was so hard for them.

"My daughter starts 1st grade in two weeks," said Staff Sgt. Michael E. Reyes, who has been to the Middle East as a Navy Seabee but is deploying with the 146th for



Photo by Senior Airman Nicholas Carzis
Staff Sgt. Curtis Byrd of the 146th Airlift Wing hugs his family Aug. 25 at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station in Port Hueneme, Calif., moments before departing for Afghanistan.

the first time. "I'm sad that I'll miss it, but we all know it's a part of the sacrifice we make."

Reyes works on the electrical systems of the C-130J, an aircraft with highly advanced systems that eliminate the need for a human navigator or flight engineer onboard. The need for maintainers of these complex

systems is critical. "We have to go," Reyes said. "Our roles are important."

The 146th operations and maintenance crews are working alongside members of the Rhode Island National Guard's 143rd Airlift Wing, another C-130J unit. Together, upon arrival at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, the units became the 774th Expedi-

tionary Airlift Squadron (EAS).

"The primary way the forward operating bases get supplies is by airlift or airdrop. We are their lifeline of sustainment," said Lt. Col. Bill Willson, 774th EAS commander. These operations reduce the number of dangerous supply convoys crisscrossing Afghan roads.

In its first month alone, the 774th EAS flew more than 900 sorties with a 99.9 percent sortie effectiveness rate, completing approximately 40 airdrops and delivering more than 3,100 tons of cargo.

The wing's C-130J aircraft boast numerous technological upgrades that allow them to cruise faster for longer distances, climb to greater altitudes more quickly, and take off and land in shorter distances than preceding C-130 models. They also have a greater hauling capacity and can perform airdrops from higher altitudes more accurately, which makes missions in a combat area of operations much safer for the aircrew.

The 146th and 143rd airlift wings have been deploying together since 2004. They also deployed together prior to Sept. 11, 2001, when both units flew the older C-130E model. The units consider themselves one big family, according to leadership.

"We complement each other very well," Willson said. "One of the nice things about the Guard is you stay with the same people for sometimes decades. Most of the pilots here, I have flown with for 20 years."

315th restoring Camp Bob to former glory

By 2ND LT. JAMES WOLF
315th Vertical Construction Company

It's 100 degrees out and you have a sunburn on your neck. You've been working since before the sun was up and won't call it a day until after it has set. This is just another training weekend as an engineer in the 315th Vertical Construction Company, 578th Engineer Battalion, working to improve Camp Roberts, Calif.

Camp Roberts was opened in 1941 as a training center in support of World War II. At the time it was one of the world's largest military training facilities, and to this day it still has the largest parade ground of any military facility, the length of 14 football fields. However, time and environmental conditions have taken a toll on the post, and many buildings require repairs while others need modernization.

Over the last year and a half, the engineers of the 315th have taken up their tools and put them to work restoring Camp Roberts to its former glory. The unit has completed a series of projects, including improvements to the post's combatives "fight house" and some of the barracks.

One of the unit's ongoing projects is Building 5302, a barracks building that often serves as housing for Soldiers preparing to mobilize and deploy. The renovations to the building include upgraded electrical work, new insulation, installation of a subfloor and new drywall.

The 315th also has been making its mark in other parts of California, including Camp San Luis Obispo and the 578th Engineer Battalion's Armory in Manhattan Beach.

Capt. Justin M. Goldman, who took command of the 315th

in May 2010, sees Camp Roberts and the surrounding posts as perfect opportunities to train his Soldiers.

"Our goal is to find real-world training to better prepare the 315th for overseas deployment while simultaneously improving our training facilities," Goldman said. "[The Directorate of Public Works] has been extremely supportive and provided us the necessary expertise and specialty tools to complete our mission here."

The 315th has made construction projects like those at Camp Roberts part of their normal battle rhythm for training for more than a year.

"The opportunity to work on California National Guard facilities has been very rewarding for the Soldiers, and in the end is a great retention tool," Goldman said. "Most of our Soldiers are relatively inexperienced, and this is the best way for them to become proficient. Fortunately, many of our [noncommissioned officers] have a strong background in construction and are able to coach and mentor our troops through the steps."

The Soldiers perform on a tight schedule, with sometimes only a day to complete a project during monthly training. Careful planning and staging of resources and personnel is vital to achieve their goals.

"We have managed our [multiple unit-training assemblies] effectively to provide the necessary time to resource the projects," Goldman said. "Plans, materials and specialty equipment must be staged for us so we can maximize the available training time. There is little room for delays during a drill weekend if we are going to be successful."

Lt. Col. Richard Rabe, 578th commander, applauded the



Photo by Staff Sgt. Dennis Cavallera
Soldiers of the 315th Vertical Construction Company make repairs to a building on Camp Roberts, Calif.

initiative of the 315th: "The excellent construction work that the 315th VCC and the 578th Engineers are doing shines a positive light on the future of Camp Roberts. With most of our battalion preparing to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, it feels good to be able to say that we are both serving our country overseas and at home."

The 315th has several projects scheduled throughout the state for fiscal year 2012, Goldman said.

Warriors prove their mettle

By SGT. SALLI CURCHIN

Detachment 1, Operations Company, 40th Infantry Division

All the participants in this year's Best Warrior Competition had already been named the top Soldier or noncommissioned officer (NCO) of their company, battalion and brigade, an impressive accomplishment. For some, however, the road to the competition was uncommon and extra challenging.

One competitor suffered the death of a close family member just two weeks prior to the competition. Another competitor, a combat medic, revived a civilian bicyclist who had been injured behind his armory and had no pulse right before the medic traveled to the competition.

The competitors' experience ranged from roughly two to 17 years in the military and multiple deployments for a few. Their military jobs include military dispatcher, law enforcement and everything in between.

With the support of their NCO sponsors, the nine competitors participated in a seven-day journey filled with physically grueling and mentally exhausting challenges.



For more on the Best Warrior, scan this QR code.

"I've seen the improvements [in the competition] each year. It's getting harder on the competitors," said Staff Sgt. Michael East, a survey team chief for the 95th Civil Support Team who won the state and regional Best Warrior competitions in 2009.

"I had it easy in comparison, in the sense that we had a whole week and it wasn't quite as strenuous as far as timeline," he said. "I think that by making it harder on the guys here, whoever does come out in the end as the winner is definitely proving his merit."

After a day of orientation, day two started with the Army Physical Fitness Test and closed with a three-hour combatatives training session, which concluded their first 16-hour day. The remainder of the week's schedule allowed little time to rest.

The events change each year, and this year's events incorporated more real-life scenarios than past competitions. "What we're trying to do is not just meet the needs of the Army, but test what's going to make these Soldiers successful in combat, in combat roles and also in a state emergency environment," said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Whittle of the 223rd Regional Training Institute (RTI) on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif., which hosts the annual contest.

The Best Warrior Competition has a four-year history that evolved from a previous annual event, the Soldier of the Year challenge.

"What differentiates Best Warrior from Soldier of the Year is that SOY was a two-day event," said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Winstead, command sergeant major of the California Army National Guard. "It had some very simple tasks that the Soldier had to perform. It didn't test their endurance, their stamina or anything, and then there was [an appearance] board. ... Four years ago we decided to make it a competition that tested everything — that tested their skills, but not just in a sterile setting."

The competition requires 110 percent dedication, not only physically but also mentally, said competitor Staff Sgt. Craig Tomlinson of 1st Battalion, 223rd RTI.

"There are very few Soldiers that actually meld the two together and come out with a perfect product," said Tomlin-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhre



Photo by Sgt. Salli Curchin



Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhre

TOP: Spc. Brian Quinonez, an information technology specialist with Signal Company, 224th Sustainment Brigade, high crawls Sept. 14 during the Army Combat Readiness Test portion of the Best Warrior Competition on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif. **LEFT:** Staff Sgt. Demetrius McCowan, a sheet metal aircraft structural mechanic for the 1106th Theater Aviation Support Maintenance Group, attempts a choke hold Sept. 16 during the Best Warrior Competition combatives tournament. **RIGHT:** McCowan radios in his start point while conducting a lanes evaluation Sept. 12 during the Best Warrior Competition. The lanes evaluation tests a Soldier's ability to quickly and accurately call in reports, react to direct and indirect fire, perform first aid, engage the enemy, clear a building and call in a medical evacuation.

son, a 17-year Guardsman and veteran of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. "That's what this competition really focuses on and brings out. I've seen it with the other eight competitors throughout the week."

One popular change this year was in the weapons qualification event, which shifted from an individual weapons qualification environment to a weapons course that required Soldiers to switch from an M-4 rifle to an M-9 pistol and shoot around obstacles.

"The events are actually pretty real-world, except the fact that we don't have bullets flying at them," said Tomlinson's sponsor, Staff Sgt. Dain Miskimen of 1st Battalion, 223rd RTI. "For the most part, all of the events have been very realistic, and so [the competitors] are actually getting good training out of it as well as the competition."

Competitor Sgt. Jose Alves of Riverbank, Calif., a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 143 Field Artillery Regiment, said a competition of this nature is especially important for National Guard members.

"I've never been active duty, except when I've been mobilized with the National Guard, so for me it's important because this is extra training time," said Alves, an 11-year Guardsman who has deployed twice. "[The competition] is more time behind the rifle, more time with a 9 millimeter in

my hands and more time going over Army Warrior Tasks."

Each annual competition includes a mystery event. This year, after completing a timed 5.2-mile ruck march, the competitors were challenged to a slightly abbreviated version of the new Army Combat Readiness Test (ACRT). The ACRT will soon replace the Army Physical Fitness Test. Instead of push-ups, sit-ups and a timed 2-mile run, Soldiers will be challenged in events designed to more accurately test for the strength, endurance and mobility needed for warrior tasks and battle drills.

After proving themselves in the ACRT and myriad other events, the top Soldier and NCO from the Best Warrior Competition will be announced Sunday, Oct. 23, during the annual Wings, Wheels and Rotors event at Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos.

California's winners will then move on to compete in the regional Best Warrior Competition on Camp San Luis Obispo against winners from Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Guam. The regional winners then advance to the national Best Warrior Competition to face National Guard, Reserve and active duty Soldiers.

"Our Soldiers in California do so much, that we are the Best Warriors, and we need to show that on the national stage," Winstead said.

Best Warrior Competition

A grueling schedule

Best Warriors are highly skilled Soldiers and noncommissioned officers who possess the stamina to excel in a wide range of events.

Sept. 11: Travel, processing and briefs

Sept. 12: Take the Army Physical Fitness Test; receive, interpret and act on a five-paragraph operations order; assemble a radio; perform a communications check; react to direct fire; react to indirect fire; evaluate a casualty; administer first aid; and receive combatives training

Sept. 13: Complete a weapons course with the M-4 rifle and M-9 pistol; lay out personal equipment for inspection; and complete day and night land-navigation courses

Sept. 14: Perform a 10-kilometer ruck march, Army Combat Readiness Test, combatives training and essay writing test

Sept. 15: Complete a combat obstacle course, climb a rock wall, pass a written exam and finish combatives training

Sept. 16: Compete in a dual-elimination combatives tournament

Sept. 17: Appearance board

Oct. 23: Winners to be honored at 11:30 a.m. during Wings, Wheels and Rotors event on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos



Photo by Sgt. Saif Curchin

Staff Sgt. Dain Miskimen of 1st Battalion, 223rd Regional Training Institute, left, assists Best Warrior competitor Staff Sgt. Craig Tomlinson with his equipment Sept. 13 on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif. Each of the nine Best Warrior participants brought a sponsor — a noncommissioned officer from their unit who helped train the competitor, take care of the competitor's daily tasks outside the competition and provide encouragement and motivation.

Sponsors push Soldiers to perform their best

By STAFF SGT. EMILY SUHR
224th Sustainment Brigade

For six grueling days in September, nine Soldiers competing for the title of Best Warrior navigated their way across the hills of San Luis Obispo, Calif., climbed up ropes, under barbed wire and over walls, took down enemies and racked their brains for answers, all with little time to rest. But these competitors didn't go it alone. Behind each warrior was a dedicated sponsor ensuring all their needs were taken care of and cheering them on from the sidelines.

A sponsor is a noncommissioned officer (NCO) from the same unit as the competitor who volunteers to help prepare the warrior, as well as to walk every step of the competition with them.

"My biggest role as a sponsor," said Staff Sgt. Dain Miskimen, a military police instructor with 1st Battalion, 223rd Regional Training Institute, "is making sure everything is run properly for [my competitor]. Making sure we have all the questions asked — how are we doing this, the proper placement, where he has to be at what time — I'm basically the manager of that."

Miskimen's competitor, Staff Sgt. Craig Tomlinson of Oceano, Calif., who is also an MP instructor with 1st Battalion, 223rd RTI, said Miskimen's biggest role was to provide Tomlinson with moral support by continually encouraging him, supporting him and making sure he was focused and on the right track mentally.

"He's coached me all the way through," Tomlinson said. "He's given me that extra bit of inspiration to go that extra mile when I felt that my tank of gas was empty and I was done."

The job of the sponsor starts well before the competition. Sponsors meet regularly with their competitors in the months and weeks leading up to the competition to help them prepare for each event.

Between full-time jobs and long distances, finding time to train can be a challenge, so

when late nights, weekends and phone calls didn't cut it, some of the sponsors found innovative ways to keep their competitors on track.

Sgt. 1st Class James Palleres of Clovis, Calif., the 1106th Theater Aviation Support Maintenance Group operations NCO, had his competitor, Staff Sgt. Demetrius McCowan of Fresno, come to his office and practice combatives with him while juggling conference calls at the same time.

Staff Sgt. Pablo Alvarez of Lakewood, Calif., a network operator with Signal Company, 224th Sustainment Brigade, created a CD complete with Army Warrior Tasks and study guides and told his competitor, Spc. Brian Quinonez, "This is your job from now until September 11th. This going to be your life — to study."

Many of the sponsors created study guides and flash cards, which they used to regularly quiz their competitors, not just ahead of time, but during the competition as well. Sponsors also tracked down units with different weapons so their competitors could get hands-on training; set up land navigation courses; and went over the events again and again.

While the participants competed in each event, the sponsors ran around doing everything from getting their Soldiers chow to doing their laundry and checking their equipment.

"[We give] them that clear sense of mind so they don't have to worry about little things like, 'When am I going to do my laundry?' and 'When am I going to be able to eat? Do I have everything I need?'" said Staff Sgt. Michael Moverly from Pleasant Hill, Calif., a battle NCO for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 143 Field Artillery Regiment. "If he has something to worry about, then I haven't done my job."

The most important job, however, is for a sponsor to keep their competitor focused and motivated. "If he needs anything, I just want him to know that I'm here, and just be there for him for support," Alvarez said. "If he starts to get down, I'll just be there for him. I'll encourage him to do the best he can."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr

Sgt. Ryan Williams of the 40th Military Police Company carries kettle balls Sept. 14 during the Army Combat Readiness Test portion of the Best Warrior Competition at Camp San Luis Obispo.

Guard firefighters help turn tide in Kern Co.

Guard plane and helicopters drop 169,000 gallons of water and retardant on wildfires

By MAJ. KIMBERLY HOLMAN
146th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

September training weekend for many California National Guard members took place on the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. While ceremonies to honor the fallen were taking place across the state, members of the California National Guard were scrambling to respond to a request from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) due to fires raging across Kern County near Bakersfield, Calif.

By 3 p.m. on Sept. 11, 2011, the first launch orders had been received and the California National Guard had mobilized one C-130J aircraft from the 146th Airlift Wing as well as three CH-47 Chinook and two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from the Sacramento/Stockton area. Also assisting in the effort were two CNG Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Trucks, which are capable of carrying up to 2,500 gallons of fuel and were used to refuel the helicopters.

"This is a testament to the preparation and dedication of the Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard," said Maj.

Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general of the CNG. "Their rapid mobilization on 9/11 is a poignant reminder of the effort put forth on a daily basis to keep our nation safe."

The CNG's C-130J aircraft are equipped with the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System II (MAFFS II) which is capable of dropping up to 3,000 gallons of water or retardant on a fire. The Chinooks are equipped with water buckets that can drop up to 2,200 gallons of water on a fire, and the Black Hawks' buckets carry up to 660 gallons. The helicopters also provide personnel transport to and from dangerous and hard-to-reach locations.

Over the course of the five-day activation, the CH-47s dropped 58 buckets of water on the fires and the UH-60s dropped 116, for a combined total of nearly 160,000 gallons of water. The C130J flew three sorties and dropped nearly 9,000 gallons of fire retardant.

"The pilots who flew that first day reported they could see the flames licking at the back porches of homes," said Mission Commander Maj. Chad Lunbeck of the 146th

Airlift Wing. "This mission means a lot to us, knowing we are performing a real and valuable service to California citizens."

Lt. Col. Scott Pemberton, who was the senior pilot flying the C-130J, said it was rewarding to help during an emergency. His crew released retardant in V-shaped patterns to protect several groups of homes. "It's good to know that we can do something to help keep people safe and out of harm's way," he said.

Lightning strikes in the Kern County area prompted Cal Fire to contact the CNG several days before the activation with notification that CNG assistance might be requested. CNG leadership said this was very helpful in assuring the crews and equipment were fully staged and ready to go.

Cal Fire Battalion Chief John Richardson said the CNG drops were effective and marked a turning point in the battle against the fires. The aircraft flew primarily over the Comanche Fire Complex and the Breckenridge complex in the mountains outside Bakersfield. The fires burned nearly 55,000 acres and threatened 2,300 homes, but no homes or other structures were destroyed.



A CH-47D Chinook helicopter from the CNG's Company B, I-126th General Support Aviation Battalion, lifts off Sept. 13 with a "Bambi Bucket," which can carry up to 2,200 gallons of water for dispersal on a fire. The Chinook was one of six CNG aircraft used to fight wildfires during a five-day activation in Kern County in September.

Photo by Bob Martinez, Cal Fire

CNG youths share night at the aquarium

Youth Programs' first statewide event brings record turnout to Monterey Bay sleepover

By BRANDON HONIG
California Military Department Public Affairs

Children of California National Guard members learned about otters, sharks and seahorses at Monterey Bay Aquarium in August, but it was the lessons they learned from each other that may have been most valuable.

Chartered buses from Northern, Southern and Central California brought 100 children and about 20 chaperones to the world-renowned aquarium Aug. 13 for an overnight adventure the campers are sure not to forget.

"I had lots of fun seeing the exhibits," said 12-year-old Corrina Frattalone. "We got to pet the bat rays. We were the only ones petting them, so we got to pet them a lot."

Corrina added that she enjoyed being with the other campers and made a host of new friends. Her mother, Lt. Col. Tamara Frattalone, accompanied Corrina as one of the chaperones for the trip.

"These types of events are wonderful opportunities for children to see a different perspective and let them interact with other children of military parents," said Lt. Col. Frattalone, who also brought her 10-year-old son, Bryson. "The kids naturally seek you out and talk to [each other] about, 'What's it like at your house? What's it like when your mom's gone for training or on deployment?'"

"It validates them that they're normal," she said, "because when they're at school, other kids are like, 'What do you mean your mom leaves for annual training? No way!'"

The CNG contingent shared the aquarium with about 200 campers from other groups, but the facility was still much less crowded than during normal business hours, creating a "private, intimate setting," said Jerica Lovett, CNG Youth

Programs coordinator.

Youth Programs hosts quarterly events in different parts of the state, such as a recent trip to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Library for children in Southern California. The Monterey Bay Aquarium sleepover, however, was Youth Programs' first statewide event.

"Having 100 kids for the overnight sleepover was awesome," she said, noting that a typical turnout for a regional event is about 30. "Kids from Southern California got to connect with kids from Northern California ... whose parents are deployed and who are going through the same things they are."

The CNG group checked in at the aquarium at 8 p.m., two hours after it closed, and received an orientation presentation from aquarium staff, which included information on which exhibits would be open at night, when the kids could feed the sea otters, what movie would be shown and which exhibits are appropriate locations for sleeping.

"I had my group vote on where to sleep, and we ended up in front of the kelp forest," Lt. Col. Frattalone said. "In the soft lights, you could see the kelp waving. It was beautiful."

Each chaperone passed a screening requirement and stressed the importance of safety precautions.

"My mom was really about safety but made it fun," Corrina Frattalone said.

The campers rose at 6 a.m. to participate in a chat about sea otters and eat a breakfast provided by the aquarium. Then, at 7 a.m., it was time to head home.

"It was a long trip for [the kids], but the bus trip, with them bonding, was just as important as the aquarium trip itself," Lovett said. "There were a lot of people adding Facebook friends on the bus ride. This will not be the last time they talk to each other."

For more on CNG Child and Youth Programs, search for Operation Ready Families on www.facebook.com.

Kids from Southern California got to connect with kids from Northern California ... whose parents are deployed and who are going through the same things they are.

—Jerica Lovett, CNG Youth Programs



Children of California National Guard members enjoy a trip to the Monterey Bay Aquarium for a sleepover in August.

Photo by Lt. Col. Tamara Frattalone

Chaplains prepare reintegration programs

40th CAB brings together chaplains from throughout Iraq to discuss the stresses of going home

By **SPC. MATTHEW WRIGHT**
640th Aviation Support Battalion

Lt. Col. Pierre Saint-Fleur, chaplain for the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, hosted an all-day chaplains seminar Sept. 1 at the Tigris River Chapel in Iraq to discuss techniques for supporting Soldier reintegration following their return home from deployment.

Chaplains attended from units throughout Iraq, including 40th CAB units at Camp Taji. Participants discussed programs to help Soldiers integrate back into their civilian lives and to help their families adjust to their return.

Capt. Andrew Parker, chaplain for Florida's 1st General Support Aviation Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment, briefed the group on problems that could be expected for returning Soldiers. "The big thing about reintegration is expectations," Parker said. "In our minds, we take a snapshot of what it was like when we left and

we are anticipating it to be like that when we get back."

He talked about three areas of concern that Soldiers need to cope with: family, friends and work. "First thing, with the family ... I encourage Soldiers to ease back into it slowly," he said. The families, Parker continued, have learned to pay bills, take the kids to school and live without their Soldier, and it takes time for families to adjust to the Soldier's return. He suggested Soldiers take a few months to slowly pick up where they left off.

Parker said Soldiers should resume communication with their children to let them know things have changed, but gradually ease back into the parental role. If a Soldier jumps in and take the reins as if he or she never left, it could cause additional family stress.

"Having time to reconnect with each of them individually over the course of time — that's a help-

ful way to reacclimate with each one of your children," Parker said. "And it is certainly true as well for your spouse."

He recommended the same thing for relationships with friends: to slowly reintegrate with friends and gradually re-establish communication with them.

The chaplains next discussed problems that could arise with Soldiers returning to their civilian jobs. They discussed ways troops could ease back into the work routine, because the change from military to civilian employment could be a shock to Soldiers.

Chaplains also felt after-action reviews of deployments could aid readjustment to civilian life: If Soldiers evaluate their time overseas and review the positives and negatives after a few months at home, it could help them gain perspective on their reintegration.

Hammond suggested a reintegra-



Chaplains from the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade and other units in Iraq hold a seminar on reintegration Sept. 1 at the Tigris River Chapel. The seminar was hosted by 40th CAB Chaplain Lt. Col. Pierre Saint-Fleur.

tion course be presented to Soldiers in small groups to make it more personal. "I just bring people into my office, even if they outrank me, because they don't feel intimidated," he said.

Reconnecting with families and

friends, jobs, churches and communities can be a challenging experience. With deployments to Iraq winding down for most Soldiers, these chaplains will continue working to ensure troops' reintegration into the civilian world is as smooth as possible.

EXECUTIVE PERSONNEL COUNCIL RESULTS, Q4 2011

Command:

LTC Mark Kampa, Soldiers Services Division Chief, JFHQ, transferred to Army Airfield Commander, Los Alamitos, effective upon REFRAD.

LTC Barbara McPhail, PRCC Director, OPNS CO, 40th ID transferred to Commander, 1st Bn (MP), 223rd Regt, effective 1 Jan 12.

LTC Howard Zimmerman, Provost Marshall, JFHQ, transferred to Commander, 185th MP Battalion, effective 1 Apr 12.

MAJ (P) Charles Hancock, Executive Officer, Headquarters 250th MI Battalion, transferred to Commander, Headquarters 250th MI Battalion, effective 31 Aug 11.

Staff:

COL John Lathrop, Chief of Staff, California Army National Guard transferred to J5, JFHQ effective NLT 1 March 12.

COL Tom Loomis, J1, JFHQ, transferred to J6, JFHQ effective 1 Oct 11.

LTC(P) Lou Carmona, J6, JFHQ, transferred to J1, Joint Force HQ effective 1 Oct 11.

LTC Harry Hudick, Commander, 1st Battalion (MP), 223rd Regt, transferred to Chief, AMD Operations, I&S CO, 40th ID, effective 1 Jan 12.

LTC Todd Lewis, Aviation Operations and Standards Branch Chief, State Aviation Office, HQs, California Army National Guard, transferred to Executive Officer, 40th CAB, effective 1 Mar 2012.

LTC Bruce Malarky, Airspace Management Officer, I & S CO 40TH ID, transferred to S2-3, HHD, 1106th TASM, effective 1 Jul 11.

LTC John McBrearty, Deputy Commander, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, transferred to Chief KM, OPNS CO, 40th ID, effective NLT 1 Nov 2011.

LTC Rene MacDonald, Deputy Commander, Headquarters and Special Troops Battalion, 224th SB Main, transferred to IG, Joint Forces HQs, effective 1 March 11.

LTC Belinda May, new accession, is appointed as Defense Movement Coordinator, G4, HQs California Army National Guard, effective upon Federal Recognition.

LTC Jeffrey Newman, Executive Officer, Joint Staff, JFHQ, transferred to Operations Branch Chief, G3, HQs, CA Army National Guard, effective 1 Oct 11.

LTC Kurt Schlichter, Deputy J3, JFHQ, Transferred to Executive Officer, 100th Troop Command, effective 1 Oct 11.

LTC Dave Schmith, Chief Family Programs, J1, JFHQ, transferred to PRCC Director, OPs CO, 40th ID effective 1 Oct 11.

LTC Jon Siepmann, Data Processing Branch Chief, USPFO transferred to Executive Officer, Joint Staff, JFHQ, effective 1 Oct 11.

LTC Steve Weigel, S2-3, HHD, 1106th TASM, transferred to Executive Officer, HHD, 1106th TASM, effective 1 Jul 11.

MAJ (P) William Mayhue, Transportation Officer, Headquarters Service Company (HSC), 40th ID, transferred to Liaison Officer, OPNS CO, 40th ID, effective NET 1 Apr 2012.

MAJ Gary Ogle, New Accession is assigned to Aviation Operations and Standards Branch Chief, State Aviation Office, HQs, California Army National Guard, effective upon Federal Recognition. Promote when eligible.

MAJ (P) Greg Robillard, S2, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, transferred to Aviation Officer, Operations Company (HSC), 40th ID, promote effective immediately.

MAJ (P) Daniel Williamson, Operations Officer, 49th MP Brigade, transferred to MP, LR Plans Officer, 49th MP Brigade, effective 1 OCT 11.

MAJ Tiffany Buethe, S1, 40th CAB transferred to Network Operations Branch Chief, J6, JFHQ effective REFRAD+120. Promote when eligible.

Warrant Officer Actions

CW4 Anthony Montano, Maintenance Officer, HHD, 1106th TASM transferred to Section Chief, W5, CO 1, 1106th TASM, effective 1 Jan 12.

AGR Control Grades (CG)

A. 06/COL CG Status: REQ: 6. AUTH (FY11): 7. Temp CG:2. Total: 9. Assigned: 9 Available: 0. Pending Losses: (FY11) 1 and (FY 12) 1.

LTC Jeff Smiley (Unit Vacancy), as J3, JFHQ effective upon DA selection has been placed on the officer management list

(OML) for the first available 06/COL CG.

B. 05/LTC CG Status: REQ: 29. AUTH (FY11): 29. Temp CG: 1 Total: 30. Assigned: 34, Available: 0. Pending Losses (FY11): 11.

Officer Management List for 05/LTC control grades:

- (1) MAJ(P) Nathan Barto (DA-Select) – Command
- (2) MAJ(P) Bill Mayhue (DA-Select) – Staff
- (3) MAJ(P) Daniel Hakala (DA-Select) – Staff
- (4) MAJ Daniel Williamson (DA-Select) – Staff

C. 04/MAJ CG Status: REQ: 91. AUTH (FY11): 69. Temp CG: 0 Total: 69. Assigned: 58. Available: 11. Pending Losses (FY11): 4. The EPC allocated 04/MAJ CGs to:

- (1) CPT(P) Douglas R. Chace
- (2) CPT(P) Michael Christensen
- (3) CPT(P) Alvarez Cobos
- (4) CPT(P) Lucion Gyax
- (5) CPT(P) Robert Mariotti
- (6) CPT(P) Eric S Jackson
- (7) CPT(P) Connie Lundin

1st Quarter FY12 EPC

The date for the next Executive Personnel Council (EPC) is to be determined. The following positions are projected to be vacant and will be considered:

A. 06/COL

Chief of Staff, (01A), JFHQs
Deputy USPFO-CA (01A)
Chief of Staff, (01A), HQs, CAARNG
Chief of Staff, (02A), HQs, 40th ID

B. 05/LTC

Field Surgeon, CA Med Det (62B)
Surgeon, 224th SB (60A)
Mental Health Officer, JFHQ (60W)
Family Program Manager (01A)
EO Manager (42H)
Deputy J3 (01A)
Provost Marshall (31A)
Executive Officer CAARNG (01A)
Soldier Services Division Chief (01A)
CDR, Pre-Mob Training (01A)
Aviation Systems Branch Chief (15B)
SJA, Camp Roberts (27A)



ABOVE: A Soldier with the California Army National Guard scans the forests of southern Trinity County during a search-and-rescue mission Oct. 11. National Guard aviators from the Sacramento area assisted the Trinity County Sheriff's Department in their search for Joe Quen Sr., a 66-year-old hunter who was reported missing by family members.

Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler

TOP RIGHT: Senior Airman Nathan Rucker of the 146th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron prepares to apply an intravenous line to a training mannequin Aug. 10 on the flight line at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station in Port Hueneme, Calif.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Nicholas Carzis

CENTER: Sgt. Orlando Aburto of the 1113th Transportation Company receives a Hometown Hero award from JR Hildebrand, driver of the National Guard-sponsored IndyCar, at Infineon Raceway in Sonoma on Aug. 28 before the Indy Grand Prix of Sonoma race.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Hovey

BOTTOM RIGHT: Tech. Sgt. Brandon Sheldon, a maintenance production scheduler with the 129th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, works on "unfolding" a rotor blade of an HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopter after two helicopters and more than 90 Airmen from the 129th Rescue Wing were unloaded from a C-17 Globemaster cargo plane. The Airmen had been activated to support relief efforts on the East Coast in the wake of Hurricane Irene but did not leave the wing's base at Moffett Federal Airfield, Calif., as the Airmen were notified their capabilities were no longer needed.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Wang



The Blue Eagle on Joint Force The crash killed

At a Glance



ABOVE: Pfc. Raul Aguilar from Covina, Calif., and Spc. Susana Lopez from San Jose prepare to pump fuel into an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter Sept. 7 on Camp Taji, Iraq, where they are deployed with Company A, 640th Aviation Support Battalion. Company A has pumped 1 million gallons of helicopter fuel since deploying to Iraq in January.

Photo by Spc. Matthew A. Wright

LEFT: Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment, perform a two-man carry Aug. 10 at Camp Roberts, Calif., while being observed by Cpl. Balreet Kaur of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and civilian radio journalist Catherine Borgeson of American Public Media. **Photo by Sgt. Aaron Ricca**



es Total Force Honor Guard — a combined unit of the California Air National Guard, active duty Air Force and Air Force Reserve — transport the remains of Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrew Harvell Training Base-Los Alamitos on Sept. 6. Harvell was one of 30 Americans killed Aug. 6 when a CH-47 Chinook helicopter crashed in Wardak province, Afghanistan, after being hit with enemy fire. d 38 people, including 30 Americans. Harvell's body was accompanied to Los Alamitos by his brother, Air Force Tech. Sgt. Sean Harvell (not pictured). **Photo by Master Sgt. Julie Avey**

9/11: We will never forget

CNG joins state agencies, citizens in memorial service for victims of terror attacks, fallen troops

By SPC. DAVID S. CHOI
69th Public Affairs Detachment

A decade after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard gathered on the west steps of the Capitol in Sacramento at 5:46 a.m. to pay tribute to those who perished during the terrorist assault and the subsequent operations in the war on terrorism.

"I can't tell you what a great privilege it is to have the op-



Photo by Spc. Eddie Siguenza

portunity ... to pay tribute to those that lost their lives in the vicious attack 10 years ago this morning," Brig. Gen. Matthew P. Beevers, assistant adjutant general of the California National Guard, told Guard members, first responders, government officials and members of the public who assembled to remember the deceased. Beevers also reminded those in attendance of the sacrifices made by the more than 600 California service members who have died overseas since 9/11, and the thousands who continue to serve in Afghanistan and Iraq today.

"Ten years ago, our nation witnessed unthinkable acts of evil," Beevers said. "Today we publicly and freely reconfirm that [the victims] did not die in vain."

Also paying homage to the victims and fallen service members were California Attorney General Kamala D. Harris and members of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA), California Emergency Management Agency and California Highway Patrol.

"The Guardsmen in California couldn't be more critical in enforcing public safety and keeping California safe," Harris said. "We need the California National Guard to be a part of the law enforcement family and to do their work, the work of great sacrifice and courage."

After the remarks, each department that was represented at the ceremony marched toward one of three memorials in Capitol Park to read aloud the names of those who died in the attacks, including firefighters, service members and law enforcement and emergency management personnel.

"Coming out here today, I did not want the sacrifice of the individuals or their families to go in vain," said 2nd Lt. Alejandro L. Strawn of the Sacramento-based 49th Human Resources Company. "As they're saying the names, while I repeat them in my head, if I can remember them for as long as I can, it really means something to me."

The need to remain vigilant seems engraved in the minds of California National Guard members, even with the passing of time. "Even though it's been a decade, this is the beginning of the timeline. No longer do we [have] a 'weekend warrior' mentality; we now train as we fight," Strawn said. "I've seen amazing things done by the Soldiers and Airmen of this organization, and there's a lot more to come."



Photo by Spc. Brianna M. Roudeshush

TOP: Air Force Sgt. Elvis Maese, left, and Army Spc. William B. Wade of the California National Guard carry a wreath to the California Veterans Memorial during a Sept. 11 ceremony at Capitol Park in Sacramento. Maese is with the California National Guard's 149th Combat Communications Squadron in North Highlands and Wade is with the CNG's Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment in Sacramento. **ABOVE:** Donovan Gray, a paramedic for the South Placer Fire Department, places a flag next to the name of a 9/11 victim on a Sacramento memorial on the Capitol grounds. **LEFT:** A California National Guard color guard marches to a stage in Sacramento where Tech. Sgt. Erin McPherson of the CNG's Air National Guard Band of the Southwest would sing the national anthem during a memorial Sept. 11.



Photo by Spc. Brianna M. Roudeshush

144th Fighter Wing pays tribute to the fallen

By **STAFF SGT. CHRISTIAN JADOT**
144th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The California Air National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing in Fresno, Calif., remembered the victims of the 9/11 attacks and those who have since lost their lives in the fight against terrorism with a memorial ceremony on the 10th anniversary of the events.

"We wanted to take time out of our day to remember the tragedy," Col. Sami Said, commander of the 144th Fighter Wing, said Sept. 11. "The significance of today is that America lost almost 3,000 of its citizens. It is not just about the military lives lost but the civilians."

About 1,100 Airmen lined up shoulder-to-shoulder to commemorate 9/11 at 9 a.m.

"It was moving to have almost all the base personnel saluting the flag as it traveled down the road," said Chaplain Capt. Donny Crandell. "It is a reminder that we need to defend freedom. We cannot let our guard down for one day."

The ceremony opened with the national anthem and ended with a moment of silence to remember the victims.

"I thought the ceremony was very beautiful," Senior Airman Leticia Holguin said.

Before and after the ceremony, Crandell and many others shared their memories of that fateful day 10 years ago.

"We all remember where we were on 9/11," Crandell said. "I was in my living room, getting ready to go teach at school that day. It made me more aware that an enemy is out there."

The ceremony struck a chord with many wing members.

"I was getting ready for school that morning," Holguin said. "My sister called me to her room to show me the TV. I did not want to believe it. It was like a movie preview. ... It really happened. It is the kind of thing that opened my eyes to the world."

The 144th ceremony was dedicated to the victims of 9/11 as



Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler

The 144 Fighter Wing Honor Guard marches Sept. 11 on the wing's base in Fresno to honor the victims of the 2001 terrorist attacks and those who have since served in the fight against terrorism.

well as those who have fought in the wars that followed.

"It is not just about 9/11, but the events and actions taken after the tragedy that have led to where we are today," Said said.

Patriotism kicks off season

CNG Airmen, NFL fans join in 9/11 remembrance

By **AIRMAN 1ST CLASS JOHN PHARR III**
129th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

Thousands of American flags flooded Candlestick Park, home of the San Francisco 49ers, as more than 69,000 fans clad in red, white and blue filled their seats for the season opener against the Seattle Seahawks on Sept. 11.

On the 10th anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks, enthusiastic fans took a moment before kickoff to show extreme patriotism for their country, cheering on a contingent of service members from the CNG's 129th Rescue Wing, based at Moffett Federal Airfield, and from Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

Airmen lined the field holding a massive American flag. Before unfurling it, heads were bowed in remembrance while the somber tune of taps echoed throughout the stadium. At the first note of the national anthem, chests swelled with pride as the enormous flag turned the green playing field red, white and blue and boisterous cheers of "U-S-A!, U-S-A!" resonated through the crowd.

From the fans in the nosebleed seats to the players on the field, the scene at that moment made it apparent that America has come a long way in the healing process since Sept. 11, 2001. It was an unforgettable day filled with pride, honor and loyalty as Americans paid their respects, and the armed forces were a big part of the healing that day.

Throughout the afternoon, thousands of fans in the stadium were seen clutching American flags. And flag-waving fans ambushed Airmen at seemingly every turn for handshakes, hugs and pictures, or just to give their personal thanks.



Photo by Airman 1st Class John Pharr III

Tech. Sgt. Douglas Brock of the 129th Logistics Readiness Squadron participates in a 9/11 memorial ceremony at Candlestick Park in San Francisco before the 49ers home opener Sept. 11 against the Seattle Seahawks.

Soldier's 575-mile trek honors 9/11 victims

By **MAJ. JONATHAN SHIROMA**
California Military Department Public Affairs

For many, the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks meant attending a memorial service to pay their respects to the thousands who lost their lives at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in a grassy field in Pennsylvania. For one California National Guard Soldier, however, it meant jumping on his bike with nearly 350 others and cycling 575 miles.

Lt. Col. David Schmith and others with the nonprofit Ride 2 Recovery began their ride at Liberty State Park, N.J., (in view of the World Trade Center) on Sept. 11 of this year and continued through Shanksville, Penn., and finally the Pentagon Memorial a week later.

Ride 2 Recovery is dedicated to raising funds through bike rides for service members who have been injured in Iraq or Afghanistan. This ride was different, though, as it was organized to honor the victims of the 9/11 attacks.

"This is my first visit to New York City since the attacks," Schmith said. "The great loss of life of those who were just going through their daily activities as well as those who ran to their aid left me with an empty feeling in my heart."

A blog entry Schmith posted as the group rode through Shanksville was especially emotional. One of the hijacked planes crashed there after passengers stormed the cockpit to prevent the terrorists from reaching their target in Washington, D.C.

"There are many heroes from 9/11 who were not in the military," Schmith wrote, "and there is a difference between the two. Those of us in the military volunteered knowing what may be asked of us. The passengers on Flight 93 were just going about their daily activities, but when faced with unfore-



Photo by Lt. Col. David Schmith

Cyclists with the nonprofit Ride 2 Recovery pedal through New Jersey on Sept. 11 on the first leg of their journey to honor the 9/11 victims. They later reached Shanksville, Penn., and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

seen events, they stepped forward and became heroes."

On Sept. 18th, Schmith and the other bikers wrapped up their trek at the Pentagon Memorial.

"I have seen this memorial on previous visits, but this his was my first opportunity to walk [the memorial] and see it up close," he said. "The benches indicate where each victim was during the attack, and if you look at the name on the end of the bench and look up and see the Pentagon, that was the person in the Pentagon."

As Schmith wrapped up his incredible journey, one of the last statements he wrote on his blog during the trip clearly summed up the experience and his sentiments of reflection:

"The memorial is a wonderful tribute to those we lost on 9/11."

Teen turn-around

High schoolers find guidance, second chances at CNG's Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy

BY SPC EDDIE SIGUENZA
69th Public Affairs Detachment

Photo by Spc. Eddie Siguenza



There's no hospital for miles. There are no resident surgeons either. What is found at Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy are ropes, canteens, books and plenty of attitude, and those are more than enough to make this out-of-the-way campus a unique place that saves lives.

At Grizzly Academy, miracles happen. It's where Army and Air Force cadre convert troubled teenagers into respectable young adults. It's where 16- to 18-year-olds reclaim life's values, previously lost in the jungle of growing up.

"These kids, they already recognize some issues that keep them from being successful. They just want some help," said Maj. (CA) John C. Oberg, Grizzly director. "Where we're located, it takes them away from the distractions [preventing them from] being successful. Every student who wants help should take a look at this as an option."

More than 3,000 teenagers — cadets upon entry — have graduated from the Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe program since its inception in August 1998. The National Guard Bureau initiated the Youth ChalleNGe Program in 1993 to respond to America's growing rate of high school dropouts. Five years later, the Golden State stepped forward to help its own youth.

Every year since, more than 300 Grizzly cadets have graduated and become community assets. Class 27, with more than 160 teenagers, began in July.

Grizzly staff mentor tough kids

"Our students succeed because the citizenry outside of [Grizzly] embrace their efforts to change. [They] supply them with additional occupational opportunities."

**Paul Piette
Grizzly principal**

with tough pasts. A significant number of participants are dropouts or at risk of dropping out of high school. Some come with domestic problems. Others enter with legal issues.

"Thirty to 40 percent have conflicts with the law," Oberg said. "But this is really not just for kids who are struggling. We have some kids who are ready for college but created their own problems."

The California State Military Reserve provides the majority of the Army and Air Force cadre at Grizzly Academy. They present students a "quasi-military" program that focuses on eight main areas: leadership and followership, community service, academic excellence, responsible citizenship, life-coping skills, health and hygiene, job skills, and physical fitness.

A fully chartered public high school staffed with more than two dozen instructors, Grizzly guides participants toward earning high school diplomas or gaining enough credits to return to their original school and graduate there.

Paul Piette, Grizzly principal, said about 75 percent of the cadets who have earned their diplomas through Grizzly Academy then enrolled in a California community college.

"Our students succeed because the citizenry outside of [Grizzly] embrace their efforts to change," Piette said. "[They] supply them with additional occupational opportunities."

In addition to Grizzly, the California National Guard opened Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy in 2007 on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos, near Los Angeles. The Grizzly and Sunburst programs are free for all participants.

Teens are given a second chance to correct a wrong at the Youth ChalleNGe academies. They start with a two-week pre-challenge phase. Those who pass and elect to continue then go through a five-month residential phase.

Graduates are then activated into a 12-month post-residential phase, in which volunteer sponsors monitor the graduates' performance and mentor them.

"Twelve percent of graduates go into the military, but we're not a recruiting method," Oberg said. "The majority of students go back into the community."

Throughout the program, there are incentives; cadets who perform well earn perks. Last year a group of cadets earned a trip to Infineon Raceway in Sonoma, Calif. Some graduates have also earned scholarships to higher academic institutions.

It takes roughly \$20,000 to fund each participant, Oberg said. Seventy-five percent is funded by the federal government; the remaining 25 percent comes from statesources. Private donors make

see **TURNAROUND**, page 15



Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler

TOP: A Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy candidate works his way through an obstacle course July 20 during the two-week pre-challenge phase of the program. **ABOVE:** Cadets at the California National Guard's Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy stand in formation Sept. 21 before walking to class on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Graduates return, share success stories

BY SPC. EDDIE SIGUENZA
69th Public Affairs Detachment

Truthfully, there are those who could be dead right now had they not stepped forward to give Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy a chance.

Ask Tyler Carrington. A teenager in 2006, the Chico, Calif., resident verged on dropping out of school and “lacked respect for any authority.” He admitted abusing alcohol and marijuana, leading to a strained relationship with his parents.

Ask Mac Miller. He dropped out of high school last year. He began “hanging out with the wrong people” and eventually strayed from loved ones. Ahead of him, says Miller, was nothing but trouble.

Ask Adriana Gonzales. Just 16 and the middle of three siblings, the Paso Robles, Calif., resident was disconnected with those at home — father, brother, sister and especially her mom. What happened at home, according to Gonzales, paved the way to troubles elsewhere.

“The biggest thing for me was I wanted to get away from the environment at home,” she said.

Awaiting her was the destructive road that millions of teens travel each year. Carrington, Miller and Gonzales seemed likely to add to the ranks of uneducated teens without jobs or careers. Within sight were more potential problems: troubles with the law, incarceration, even death.

But something positive happened: a change for the better. Each has a different story of how they were introduced to the California National Guard’s heralded youth program. And each credits Grizzly Academy for a life-turning step.

“I just didn’t want to go down that road. I had to change,” said Miller, 19, a Simi Valley, Calif., resident and graduate of Grizzly Class 26. “Did this change my life? Most definitely. This showed me I can be successful.”

Miller and Gonzales are participants in the Graduate Recognition and Internship Program (GRIP), in which graduates come back to the Academy to mentor cadets. They share their experiences and guide others through the process.

“They teach you a lot here. It’s just a matter of putting [it] to use,” Gonzales said. “There are all types of opportunities you get with this program. You learn to cooperate with others. You’ll do things here you’ll never do at home.”

Sergeant First Class (CA) Manuel Razo, a Grizzly Academy platoon sergeant, initiated GRIP to enhance the program. For years he had seen cadets transform from troublesome, at-risk students to respectable leaders. But to impact the already successful Grizzly program even further, Razo implemented an additional type of leadership.

“It’s by invitation only. Those whom we feel will be leaders to the next class will be asked to return,” Razo said. “If you want to make a change in someone’s life, this is the spot. I’ve



Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler

Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy cadets research their classwork Sept. 21 on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.

been in the [Federal Bureau of Prisons] system for 25 years, but this is it. The Grizzly program is the elite.”

The GRIP participants don special uniforms, identifying them as GRIP mentors. To earn the uniform, Gonzales and Miller distinguished themselves as top graduates when their program ended in June 2011.

“Everyone here really cares about your success. I do my best to let these guys know that,” Miller said. “The physical part isn’t the hardest. The hardest is mental. In the first two weeks, they try to break you down to see if you can make it the next 20 weeks.”

Former cadets have gone on to succeed in a wide variety of careers. As for Gonzales, she earned high school credits at Grizzly Academy and will soon head to San Luis Obispo’s Cuesta College.

She ultimately hopes to become a nurse. Grizzly Academy put her on a positive career path, she said, but there was something even more important that she earned at Grizzly.

“My mom,” she said, glowing with each word. “We finally connected. We talk now. We’re bonded. We turned a new leaf. The past is past. We started a new direction.”

TURNAROUND, from page 14

significant contributions as well.

Last year, Oberg said, Grizzly’s budget exceeded \$7.5 million, but the cost of running the program is much lower than the cost of neglecting troubled youths.

“Helping these kids to get a GED or high school diploma and get back on track far outweighs anything else,” he said.

First Sergeant (CA) Fermin Barbosa, Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy commandant, agreed. “It’s definitely worth the investment in our youth,” he said.

First and foremost, every cadet must come to terms with themselves, officials said. They must admit the need for help.

Class 27 Cadet Taylor Spencer, a 16-year old Elk Grove, Calif., resident, said it was hard to admit she had personal flaws but even harder to see her life slipping away. So she inquired about Grizzly Academy and is honored to participate.



For more on Grizzly Academy, scan this QR code.

“I wasn’t just low on high school credits. I was being disrespectful to my family,” Spencer said during the two-week pre-challenge phase in July. “I felt [my family couldn’t] be telling me what to do. I joined this program to help with that.

“I just feel there will be something I can learn about myself,” she continued. “I made the right decision to be here. If I can stick through this, I know when I walk the [graduation] stage, it’ll be my proudest moment.”

Same goes for Woodland, Calif., resident Jose H. Ruiz. The 17-year-old “just had to change my gang-banging ways,” he said, so he sought Grizzly’s help. He is currently a Class 27 cadet.

“I’m really tired of that life, and it’s so hard to get out of it,” Ruiz explained. “That life is just all colors and numbers. I saw a lot of friends get beat up. I told myself I don’t want to see my own kids like that.

“Right now, this is everything to me. I just want to change.”

There are medals, trophies and certificates gracing the Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy halls, garnered from more than a decade of successes. None were earned easily and all are well-deserved, because here, they change lives. Better yet, they save lives.

Youth at risk

The National Guard Bureau established its Youth ChalleNGe program in 1993 in response to the nation’s growing dropout rate. Despite the program’s successes, Bureau statistics continue to show a strong need for youth development programs such as those at the California National Guard’s Grizzly and Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe academies:

- 7,000 U.S. high schoolers drop out each day, on average
- 16 percent of U.S. residents ages 16 to 24 were high school dropouts in 2007
- High school absenteeism is as high as 30 percent in some U.S. cities
- Dropouts are more likely to smoke cigarettes and use illicit drugs than enrolled students
- 68 percent of state prison inmates do not have a high school diploma
- A high school graduate’s lifetime income averages \$400,000-\$485,000 more than that of a dropout
- High school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than graduates to be arrested during their lifetime



Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler

Students at the Grizzly Youth ChalleNGe Academy stand in formation before marching to class Sept. 21 on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Arruda adds 3rd command: 49th MP Brigade

Colonel also commands CNG border mission and Joint Task Force Domestic Support–Counterdrug

By **SGT. KENNETH BINCE**
49th Military Police Brigade

On a crisp blue morning a day before the 10th anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania, the 49th Military Police Brigade's Headquarters and Headquarters Company executed a change-of-command ceremony at the Sgt. 1st Class Isaac Lawson Armory in Fairfield, Calif.

Following military history and tradition, the brigade colors were passed from the outgoing commander, Brig. Gen. Donald J. Currier, to California National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin and then to the incoming commander, Col. William T. Arruda Jr. Currier is now the commander of the California Army National Guard.

Little more than a year since Arruda returned from a yearlong Iraq deployment, where he served as deputy commander in charge of Iraqi police service training and operations for the 49th MP Brigade, he assumed his third concurrent command: In addition to the 49th, Arruda is also the current commander of the CNG's Joint Task Force Domestic Sup-

port–Counterdrug and the CNG's Southwest border mission, Joint Task Force Sierra.

Arruda, a Yreka, Calif., native, has been a member of the California National Guard for more than 25 years, with the majority of his service in the Army Corps of Engineers. He has also served the California Department of Fish and Game for more than 22 years, most recently as a patrol captain in the enforcement division.

"Colonel Arruda comes to you well qualified to lead this brigade," Baldwin said. "He's a proven leader [who has] deployed overseas. He's led our troops on the border and leads the full-time Counterdrug effort. I know that you are going to do a great job in making this brigade the best MP brigade in the U.S. Army and the best [Homeland Response Force], in the National Guard nationwide."

Even though the 49th MP Brigade is one of the most tasked units in the National Guard, the brigade has additional work to do to prepare for its new Homeland Response Force mission and certifications early next year. Two units

of the 49th MP Brigade — the 40th and 270th MP companies — are now part of a Federal Emergency Management Agency network that will respond to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive incidents throughout FEMA Region IX. There are 10 FEMA regions nationwide.

Currier, who has been an MP since 1982, thanked the Soldiers and his friends and family for their support over the last three decades.

"Soldiers of the 49th MP Brigade, I just cannot describe the measure of respect that I have for you," he said. "I've seen you laugh, and I've seen you cry. I've seen you fight and win, and I've seen you lay down your life for your country. Mostly I've seen you for the professionals that you are."

Arruda said he deeply appreciates the entrustment of the 49th MP Brigade, which Baldwin praised for its history of fine service.

"This brigade over the past 10 years has done a tremendous job in fighting overseas, serving our country and helping the citizens here in the state of California," Baldwin said.



Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Bince

Col. William T. Arruda Jr., right, the new 49th Military Police Brigade commander, receives the brigade guidon from Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general of the California National Guard, during a change-of-command ceremony in Fairfield, Calif., on Sept. 10. Arruda succeeded Brig. Gen. Donald J. Currier, who is now commander of the California Army National Guard.

Dutch Soldiers visit I 46th AW, 40th ID

By **LT. COL. MIKE DUGAS**
I 46th Airlift Wing

Twenty-four members of the Royal Netherlands Army visited the California Air National Guard's 146th Airlift Wing and the California Army National Guard's 40th Infantry Division (ID) this summer as part of a Land Warfare Course for Soldiers planning to attend the Dutch Command and General Staff College.

The Dutch Soldiers met with senior officers of the 146th to learn about the wing and its mission, and they received a tour of the base and a brief on the wing's equipment, including the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System II. At Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos, where the 40th ID is headquartered, the Dutch Soldiers learned about engagement skills training and the Guard's Domestic All-Hazard Response Team.

The primary purpose of the visit to the U.S. was for the Dutch Soldiers to learn about current issues and future developments in the U.S. armed forces. The secondary aim was to learn about military issues and future developments that will influence land operations.

The visitors were students in a six-month Land Warfare Course, which focuses on



Photo by Master Sgt. Dave Buttner

Lt. Col. Mike Dugas, second from left, shares information about the C-130J aircraft with members of the Royal Netherlands Army during a base tour July 8.

broadening and deepening the students' knowledge of brigade-level up to corps- and land-component-level operations.

Subjects addressed during the course include Military Decision Making Processes, current military affairs and developments, national doctrine and the doctrines of prominent partner countries.

Cal Guard medics help save bicyclist on Sept. 11 ride

I-143rd Field Artillery training weekend brings potentially deadly situation to Walnut Creek armory

By **MAJ. JONATHAN MASAKI SHIROMA**
California Military Department Public Affairs

While the nation took time to remember the lives lost during the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, three Soldiers jumped into action to help save the life of a civilian near their armory in Walnut Creek, Calif.

Staff Sgt. Ricardo Alonso, Sgt. Jose Alves Jr. and Spc. Rene Zamora of the California National Guard's 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, were performing their monthly training when someone approached their armory's fence line and asked for a medic. The three Soldiers, who are all qualified medics, ran onto the bike trail that borders the armory and found a bicyclist, who was on the ground and unresponsive.

"This is what we are trained to do, so we began an initial assessment of the individual on the ground," Alonso said.

The cyclist was not breathing and had no pulse. Alves and Zamora performed CPR while another Soldier called 911. The two continued CPR until civilian paramedics arrived and successfully restored the cyclist's pulse. The three Soldiers then helped the paramedics place the cyclist on a litter and carry him to an ambulance.

All three Soldiers downplayed their actions, saying they were just doing their job: "In the Army, we train over and over again to become competent in our jobs," Alves said. "That's what I did and I am glad I was there to help."

"For me, it's kind of surreal, considering that today we are remembering those who died 10 years ago," Alonso said. "This is a clear reminder about how fragile life is, and it feels good that we were able to help save the life of a civilian in his time of need."

Iron Squads compete to find best 'Killers'

Company A, 1-160th Infantry Battalion, builds morale through competition

By **SGT. AARON RICCA**
Task Force Warrior Public Affairs

Numerous Army activities incite trash talking among a unit's Soldiers, and the recent Iron Squad Competition (ISC) on Camp Roberts, Calif., was a prime example. About 60 of the "Killers" from the California Army National Guard's Company A, 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment, participated in five events that composed the company's first annual ISC on Aug. 19.

"It's a good opportunity to build morale and esprit de corps within the unit and it gives Soldiers the opportunity to cultivate competitiveness amongst themselves," said 1st Lt. Vincent Castillo, Company A commander.

The competition started at 5 a.m. with a six-mile ruck run in full battle gear. The course wound through the hilly Camp Roberts back country and eventually along the roads of the garrison. Squads were required to cross the finish line with no more than 25 meters between the first and last squad member. All teams completed the course, with 2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon, clocking the fastest time: 1 hour, 36 minutes.

"After the ruck [run] everybody was smoked," Pfc. Brandon Martinez said while preparing for a later event. "But we got to calm down since then."

The Soldiers then moved to treating a ca-



Photo by Sgt. Aaron Ricca

A squad from Company A, 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment, pulls an up-armored Humvee down a 200-meter course Aug. 19 during the company's Iron Squad Competition at Camp Roberts, Calif., on the Soldiers' last day of annual training.

sualty, delivering a medical evacuation report and performing a casualty evacuation, which involved carrying a litter with a Soldier in full battle gear. Medics evalu-

ated competitors' technique and penalized teams 10 points for each violation. The Soldiers of 2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon, again posted the best time: 8 minutes, 30 seconds.

Squads then used a thick rope to pull a three-ton, up-armored M1165 Humvee across a 100-meter course, then around a road cone and back to the starting point. Bolstering their trash-talking credentials, 2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon again came out on top, with a time of 2 minutes, 6 seconds.

"It was pretty hard initially until we hit the turn," Pfc. Joshua Jones said while trying to catch his breath. "Then we got some momentum, dug our heels in and gutted it out the last stretch. The adrenaline is still going, and we have one more competition."

Immediately after pulling the Humvee to the finish line, teams had a few seconds to pick three Soldiers to reassemble an M-4 machine gun, M-249 squad assault weapon and M-240B heavy machine gun from a box where the individual parts had been mixed together. This time 1st Squad, 3rd Platoon, got a taste of victory, completing the task in 1 minute, 43 seconds.

Finally the squads faced off in a tug-of-war, which would determine the ISC winner, regardless of the results of the earlier events. The three-man team from 1st Squad, 2nd Platoon, won the tug-of-war and the ISC.

"They did an outstanding job," said Castillo, who organized the ISC during a gap in the unit's schedule on the final day of its two-week annual training. "They've been working hard all day, they're doing an outstanding job and the morale is still high."

Half-Ironman, all Guardsman

Inspired by late Guardsman Lt. Col. Chuck Lyda, Soldier completes triathlon on re-enlistment day

By **SPC. MATTHEW A. WRIGHT**
40th Combat Aviation Brigade

After swimming 29 laps in the pool on Camp Taji, Iraq, Master Sgt. David A. Eckert dried himself off and smiled as he walked to the gym across the street.

Eckert, the 640th Aviation Support Battalion's operations section noncommissioned officer (NCO) in charge from Chester, Calif., was smiling because he was about to be sworn in for a six-year re-enlistment by his commander, Lt. Col. Lou Carmona. As a precursor to the ceremony, Eckert had gotten up early to complete a half-Ironman triathlon.

"This has to do with a Soldier I knew from my last deployment," Eckert said. "When he passed away, I promised myself I was going to improve my physical readiness."

Lt. Col. Chuck Lyda, who worked at Joint Force Headquarters, Eckert's previous unit, died of cancer in June 2010, and it made a big impact on Eckert's personal life.

Lyda served the California National Guard from 1983 until his death at age 57. He was also a two-time Olympian and two-time world champion in the sport of canoe/kayak. He was twice a member of the Olympic Biathlon Team coaching staff and was a member of a U.S. national team in biathlon

or canoe/kayak 28 times.

Eckert's personal half-Ironman on Camp Taji, where the 640th is deployed, consisted of a 29-lap swim in the base pool, equaling 1.18 miles; followed by a stationary bike ride for 55.92 miles; and a 13.11-mile run on a treadmill. Eckert completed the three events in 6 hours, 56 minutes.

"While at Colonel Lyda's memorial, I was reminded that we only have so much time to accomplish our goals in life," Eckert said, "so I got busy."

He accomplished his first goal by earning a perfect score on his Army Physical Fitness Test during pre-mobilization training last year on Fort Hood, Texas. He wasn't finished there, though.

"I achieved that goal and set a new goal for this deployment," Eckert said, referring to the half-Ironman.

He plans to raise the bar even further by running a full Ironman, possibly next summer, after he returns to California.

In addition to working to achieve his physical goals, Eckert also has been working toward a bachelor's degree.

His physical fitness accomplishments and work ethic in the operations shop have been noticed by leaders in his command.



Photo by SPC. Matthew A. Wright

Master Sgt. David A. Eckert of the 640th Aviation Support Battalion, left, recites the Oath of Enlistment on Camp Taji, Iraq, committing to another six years of service Aug. 8. Eckert was sworn in by 640th Commander Lt. Col. Lou Carmona moments after Eckert completed a half-Ironman triathlon in honor of late athlete and California National Guard Soldier Lt. Col. Chuck Lyda.

"He works a 12-hour shift [and] he works out two to three hours a day," said 640th Aviation Support Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Bryon Robinson of Phelan, Calif. "Plus he has homework, trying to achieve his B.A. He exemplifies what an NCO should be."

Eckert, who has served almost two decades in the military, both active duty and National Guard, said he is inspired by words from his late role model Lyda: "There are talkers and there are doers."

Eckert intends to be a doer.

163rd ramps up Predator training mission

By **TECH. SGT. DIANE DUCAT** and
STAFF SGT. PAUL DUQUETTE
163rd Reconnaissance Wing Public Affairs

The 163rd Reconnaissance Wing's Formal Training Unit for Predator remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) pilots and operators has almost doubled its class size to keep up with an increase in Defense Department demand.

The unit graduated its 13th class Aug. 31, and 28 students were deemed qualified aircrew members, opposed to the normal 16 students.

"The reason for the increase in class size is because the Air Force wants more mission capability before the troop drawdown [in Iraq] is complete," said Lt. Col. Matthew Dutkiewicz, commander of the Formal Training Unit. "So [Air Combat Command] requested we increase our class size to produce more mission-ready personnel in a shorter period of time."

Col. Randall Ball, commander of the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing, said the wing volunteered early to meet the Air Combat Command surge training requirements.

"We have the most experienced RPA instructors in the Total Force, nearly unlimited airspace, new aircraft and equipment, and excellent facilities designed for this mission," he said. "As the only Air National Guard unit flying RPAs in

U.S. airspace, we were the common sense solution to meet the increased demand for trained Predator crews."

In addition to increasing class size, the 163rd has increased the number of contractor instructors.

"Before the increase, we had 10 weeks to get the students through the course," Dutkiewicz said. "Now we have eight weeks, but we aren't compromising quality for quantity."

The Air Force will need robust MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper aircrew training through 2020, Ball said. "As MQ-9 production continues and the MQ-1s are retired, we hope to share in Reaper aircrew training."

The 163rd runs one of two Predator schoolhouses. The other is on Holloman Air Force Base, N.M.

Senior Master Sgt. James Blucher, operations group superintendent for the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing, said the wing's FTU plans to further increase class size to 32 students per class.

"With this increase in RPA production, the FTU student schedule is full for the next year," Blucher said.

The 163rd also trains maintainers for the Predator through its Field Training Detachment 26. In 2010, the detachment-produced more than 75 percent of the Predator maintain-



Photo by U.S. Air Force

The MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft provides intelligence, search and reconnaissance-gathering features and munitions capability to support ground troops and base defense. The 163rd Reconnaissance Wing is one of two units in the country that trains Predator pilots and sensor operators.

ers for the Air Force, said Detachment 26 production superintendent Master Sgt. Jennifer Oberg.

"There was a lot of work involved to make this increase in student production happen," Dutkiewicz said. "But in true Grizzly fashion, our team pulled together to make this RPA surge a huge success."

Butow commands 129th Rescue Wing

Two new group commanders step up as well

Col. Steven J. Butow assumed command of the 129th Rescue Wing on Sept. 10, succeeding Col. Amos Bagdasarian.

Also on Sept. 10, Lt. Col. Jeffery Richard took over as commander of the 129th Mission Support Group, succeeding Col. Charles Ingalls, and Lt.

Col. Daniel Lapostole became the commander of 129th Maintenance Group. Lapostole, who formerly served as the 129th Rescue Squadron commander, succeeded 129th Rescue Wing Vice Commander Col. Jeffrey W. Magram as the Maintenance Group commander. Maj. Mathew Wenthe is now commander of the 129th Rescue Squadron.

Butow enlisted in the California Air National Guard in 1986 and joined the 129th Rescue Wing, which he served as an administrative specialist. He earned his commission as an officer in 1989 as a distinguished graduate of the Academy of Military Science at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, Tenn., and completed his undergraduate pilot training at Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, in 1990.

Butow participated in multiple deployments in the 1990s in support of operations Desert Storm, Southern Watch, Provide Comfort and Northern Watch. In 2005, he served as deputy director of U.S. Central Command's Joint Search and Rescue Center, where he coordinated more than 500 lifesaving missions in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa.

Butow became the 129th Operations Group deputy commander in 2008 and contributed to more than 300 combat and peacetime saves there, including during the 2008 response to California wildfires. He served as vice commander of the 129th Rescue Wing prior to assuming command during a ceremony at Moffett Federal Airfield, Calif.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Kim Ramirez

Col. Steven J. Butow receives the 129th Rescue Wing guidon from Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, signifying Butow's assumption of command Sept. 10 at Moffett Federal Airfield, Calif.

144th FW welcomes 3 new commanders

The 144th Fighter Wing introduced the new leaders of its Maintenance Group, Mission Support Group and Aircraft Maintenance Squadron in August and September.

Col. Mark Favetti assumed command of the 144th Maintenance Group on Aug. 7, succeeding Col. Clay Garrison. Garrison is the new 144th Fighter Wing vice commander.

For Favetti, assuming command of the Maintenance Group brings a new set of challenges as the unit prepares to convert from the F-16C Fighting Falcon aircraft to the F-15 Eagle.

"I am eager to work with all of you ... as we take on the challenges of this aircraft conversion together," he said. "Together I know we will continue the great heritage and tradition of the maintainers that have come before us as we add another chapter to the proud history of the 144th Maintenance Group."

Favetti came to the 144th Fighter Wing from

the Oregon National Guard's 173rd Fighter Wing, where he served as maintenance group commander, responsible for a fleet of twenty-five F-15 fighters. Favetti served in the active duty Air Force for 13 years before joining the Oregon National Guard in 2000.

On Aug. 8, Maj. Robert Gellner received command of the 144th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, taking over for Maj. John Lundholm.

Finally, on Sept. 11, the Mission Support Group welcomed Lt. Col. Gary Kellogg as he succeeded Col. David Bandini.

Kellogg began his military career in the Marine Corps as an aerial navigator in 1976. In June 1981, he joined the California Air National Guard as a firefighter. He received his commission in 1990 as a distinguished graduate of the Academy of Military Science in Tennessee. On the civilian side, Kellogg works for NASA at the Dryden Flight Research Center on Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

Photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler



Airmen of the 144th Mission Support Group salute during a change of command ceremony Sept. 11 in which Lt. Col. Gary Kellogg succeeded Col. David Bandini as commander.



A UH-60L Black Hawk from Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, returns to Lebec Helipoint in Kern County after dropping water on the Comanche Fire on Sept. 13. During a five-day activation, California National Guard members dropped 169,000 gallons of water and fire retardant on Kern County fires. For more on CNG firefighting in Kern County, see Page 8. Photo by Bob Martinez, Cal Fire

Baldwin: Historic policy change will strengthen California National Guard

The Department of Defense officially repealed the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy Sept. 20, a move CNG Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin said will benefit the Guard and its members.

“Today’s repeal of the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy will allow the California National Guard to not only reflect the diversity of the state in which we live and serve, but to honor the sacrifice of all Soldiers and Airmen who have fought and bled for our nation’s freedoms,” he said in a press release Sept. 20. “The repeal will strengthen us as a force. The progress inherent with this change will not only improve our unit cohesion, but grant greater dignity to all our Soldiers and Airmen.

“We will continue to treat each Soldier and Airman with the dignity and respect they are owed, regardless of their sexual orientation,” he continued. “We will also continue to expect each service member to remain committed to the professionalism, integrity and selflessness that define us as a National Guard force.”

Baldwin noted that the CNG has spent several months training its members in preparation for the repeal.

“The mission will remain paramount, as will the well-being of our Soldiers and Airmen and that of their families,” he concluded.

Southwest border mission extended

National Guard troops in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas will remain on the U.S.-Mexico border in support of Customs and Border Protection through the end of 2011. About 1,200 Guard members, including 260 California Soldiers and Airmen, deployed to the border in August 2010. They had been scheduled to withdraw at the end of September 2011.

The CNG troops provide additional eyes and ears to deter drug-, weapon- and human-trafficking along a 60-mile land border and 114 miles of coastline. Additionally, CNG criminal analysts support Immigration and Customs Enforcement. As of Sept. 20, the CNG contingent on the border, known as Joint Task Force Sierra, had assisted Border Patrol in capturing more than 5,200 people attempting to enter the U.S. illegally and seizing more 2,500 pounds of narcotics. Nearly 1,000 additional people turned back to Mexico to avert apprehension.

Guard spouses needed for TV show

The TV game show “Wheel of Fortune” is seeking spouses of National Guard members who live in the Los Angeles area to participate in “Military Spouses Week” in January. To audition, call 310-244-5353 and leave your name, spouse’s branch of service, nearest major city and e-mail address.

CLARIFICATION: The photo on page 2 of the August issue should have been attributed to Spc. Grant Larson.

VA makes retroactive injury payments

The Department of Veterans Affairs is extending traumatic injury benefits to service members injured between Oct. 7, 2001, and Nov. 30, 2005, regardless of the geographic location of the incident. The benefit is payable whether or not the military member had Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (SGLI) Traumatic Injury Protection coverage at the time. Previously, injuries during that time period were only covered if incurred in operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom. The benefit provides \$25,000 to \$100,000 to certain injured members.

National Guard and Reserve members who were injured during the retroactive period are eligible for a payment even if the injury was not related to military service. Retired Guard members can apply as long as their injury occurred while in service. For more information or to apply for a payment, visit www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/TSGLI/TSGLI.htm.

Nov. 1 deadline for scholarship app’s

The Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) is offering five \$1,000 scholarships for service members and five for spouses of service members working toward a degree.

Applicants must be enrolled with 12 or more hours at an accredited educational institution that is a member of CCME and have a minimum grade point average of 2.0 for undergraduates or 3.0 for graduate students. Two letters of recommendation and a personal essay of 300 or fewer words are required. To apply, visit www.ccmeonline.org/scholarships.aspx.

DID YOU KNOW...

it is your right and your duty to report wrongdoing — without fear of reprisal?

If you see or are aware of wrongdoing, it is your responsibility to report it so corrective action can be taken without fear of reprisal. Reprisal is defined as taking, or threatening to take, an unfavorable personnel action on a military member for making or preparing to make a protected communication. It also applies to withholding, or threatening to withhold, a favorable personnel action.

Title 10 U.S. Code 1034 provides for lawful protected communications by military personnel to members of Congress, inspectors general and members of their chain of command. It also prohibits retaliatory personnel actions in reprisal for those protected communications.

References: Air Force Instruction 90-301, Army Regulation 20-1



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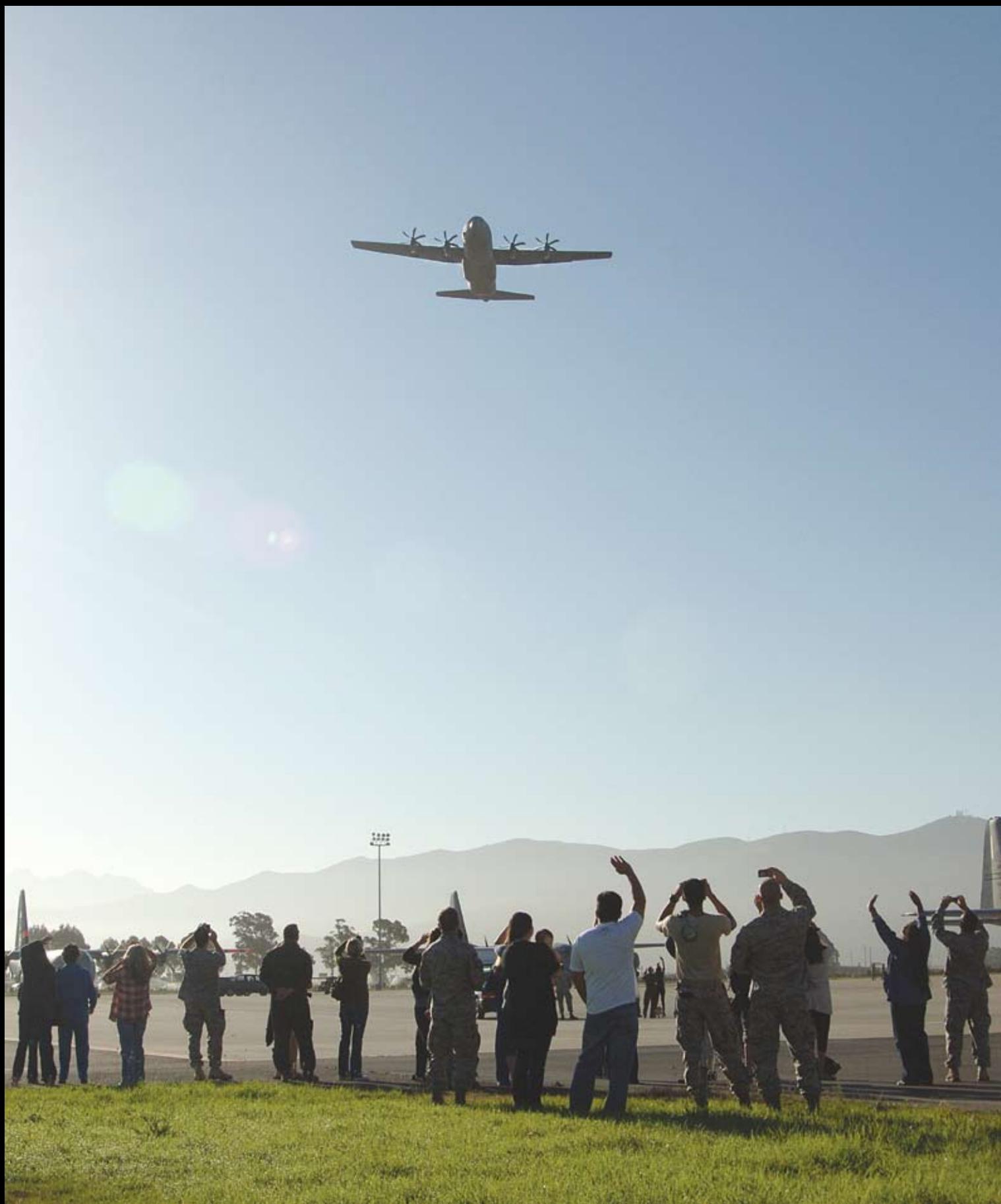
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Family members wave goodbye Aug. 25 as deploying Airmen from the 146th Airlift Wing start their journey to Afghanistan. More than 250 members of the wing, which is based at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station in Port Hueneme, Calif., have deployed during the past few months to provide airlift and airdrop capabilities to forward operating bases in Afghanistan. For more on 146th Airlift Wing deployments, see page 6. Photo by Senior Airman Nicholas Carzis