

# GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard



## VALOR

CNG presents Silver Star,  
Distinguished Flying Crosses **4**

Gov. launches Op Welcome Home

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

## TRICARE: Protect your health

Brigadier General Mary J. Kight



Each member of the California National Guard provides an essential service for which a grateful state and nation cannot adequately express our thanks. You are the defenders of this land, the protectors of our freedom and the security force that helps our citizens sleep soundly at night.

One way for the nation to express its thanks is through the wide array of benefits available to service members. School tuition, job counseling and housing assistance are just a few of the benefits available to members of the California National Guard. During my travels within our state, I have the distinct pleasure of conversing with our Soldiers, Airmen and families, and some of those discussions lead me to focus on the health benefits available through the military health plan, TRICARE.

When activated for more than 30 consecutive days in support of a contingency operation, Guard members become eligible for TRICARE Prime. Service members and their families pay no enrollment fees and no out-of-pocket costs for any type of care under TRICARE Prime (as long as care is received through their primary care manager and they receive a proper referral). This health coverage continues for 180 days after the end of the service member's active duty through the Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP).

After leaving active duty, the Guard member is also eligible for five years of veterans benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs for any reported (claim-filed) deployment-related injury or illness.

After the 180 days of TAMP coverage expires, Guard members are eligible for the Continued Health Care Benefits Program (CHCBP), a temporary plan that acts as a bridge between military health care benefits and enrollment in a civilian health care plan. CHCBP benefits are similar to TRICARE Standard benefits, with the

main difference that the Guard member must pay premiums to participate.

All drilling Guard members are also eligible for TRICARE Reserve Select health benefits, as long as they are not eligible for the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program. Monthly participation costs less than \$50 for a Soldier or Airman and less than \$200 for a family. This plan covers the full spectrum of health care needs. In addition, your annual health care costs (excluding premiums) should not exceed \$1,000, as out-of-pocket costs are capped for TRICARE Reserve Select beneficiaries. For plan details, visit the TRICARE website, [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil), or contact Jon Wilson at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento, at [jon.wilson@us.army.mil](mailto:jon.wilson@us.army.mil) or 916-854-3409.

I encourage command teams and our Operation Ready Families teams to continue incorporating the subject of TRICARE programs into your briefings at least semi-annually to ensure our members remain informed about the benefits of health care within the TRICARE system.

As individuals, each of us must make every effort to maintain health coverage for ourselves and our families. Alert your chain of command if that becomes an issue. Remember to register and/or file any claims for disabilities with the federal and state veterans departments: the California Department of Veterans Affairs, [www.cdva.ca.gov](http://www.cdva.ca.gov), and the federal Department of Veterans Affairs, [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). If you have any additional questions or concerns regarding health care benefits available through the federal or state government, contact Jon Wilson.

Please keep yourself and your loved ones safe — and accept our grateful nation's thanks — by taking full advantage of your TRICARE benefits. Your health is too important to you, your family, your colleagues, the California National Guard and this great nation to be left unprotected.

## TRICARE Reserve Select

### Who's eligible

Members of the Selected Reserve of the Ready Reserve who are not eligible for the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program

### Monthly premiums

- \$49.62 per member
- \$197.65 per family

### Outpatient costs

- Individual/family deductible for rank E-4 or lower: \$50/\$100
- Individual/family deductible for rank E-5 or higher: \$150/\$300
- In-network care: 15 percent of the negotiated rate
- Out-of-network: 20 percent of the TRICARE-allowable charge, plus fees

### Inpatient costs

- \$16.30 per day (\$25 minimum total)

### Cap on costs

Excluding monthly premiums, the most you will pay for health care in a federal fiscal year (Oct. 1 through Sept. 30) is \$1,000

### Covered services

- Emergency and urgent care
- Prescription drug coverage
- Behavioral health
- Annual eye exams
- Immunizations
- Health screenings
- Maternity care
- Much more ...

### Referrals

Never needed, though some services require prior authorization

### How to purchase

[www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/trs](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/trs)



## TRICARE Prime

### Who's eligible

- Guard members, and their families, who are activated for more than 30 consecutive days in support of Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Coverage continues for 180 days after return from deployment.

### Out-of-pocket costs

- No cost for inpatient care
- No cost for outpatient care

### Monthly premium

None

### Care

- Services will be provided in a military medical treatment facility or by a network provider in the beneficiary's home area
- A primary care manager supervises and coordinates all care
- A referral from a primary care manager is necessary for all specialty care



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## Submissions

### Articles:

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

### Photographs:

- ★ Highest resolution possible
- ★ No retouched photos
- ★ Caption (what is happening, who is pictured and the date of the photo)
- ★ Credit (who took the photo)

E-mail submissions by the 15th  
of the month to:  
GrizzlyMag.ngca@ng.army.mil

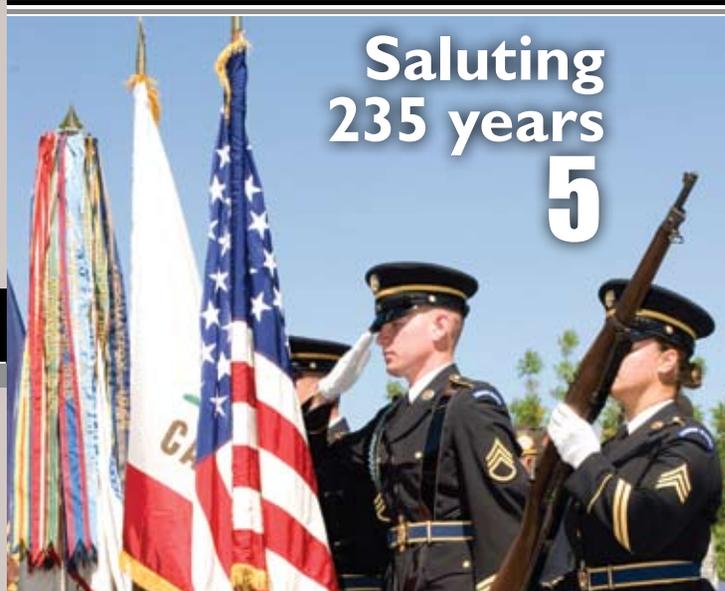
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## Cover Shot



Photo by  
Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Flagg

Silver Star recipient Staff Sgt. Emmett Spraktes, left, and Distinguished Flying Cross recipients Chief Warrant Officer Brandon Erdmann, Chief Warrant Officer Scott St. Aubin and Staff Sgt. Thomas A. Gifford salute during a ceremony June 13 at Mather Flight Facility near Sacramento. The Soldiers were honored for heroic actions during a medical evacuation mission in Afghanistan.



Saluting  
235 years  
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670th MPs  
return  
7



12  
Shooting Darts



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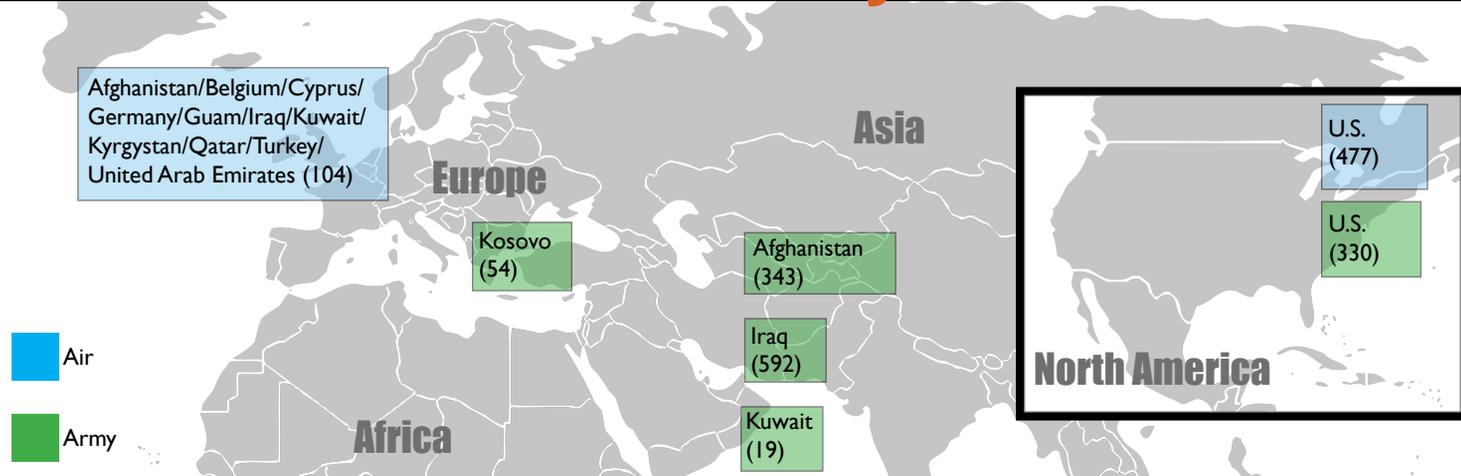
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The California National Guard as of **June** 2010



# Medevac Soldiers honored with Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Crosses

## Staff Sgt. Emmett Spraktes earned nation's third-highest award for valor

By Brandon Honig  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Hovering 70 feet over a battle zone, about to be lowered to the ground on a cable dangling from his helicopter, medic Staff Sgt. Emmett Spraktes drummed up the necessary courage by picturing the parents of the injured Soldiers below.

"We're up there, and we know we can't land and there's a risk, but I imagine looking into the eyes of a [Soldier's] parent and saying, 'I can't do this,'" Spraktes recalled. "How could I talk to the mother or father of one these boys and say, 'I was just too afraid to go?'"

Moments later, when the cable stopped moving only part-way to the ground — making Spraktes a sitting target above the battlefield — it was his own children who came to mind.

"When I was hanging, I thought I would never get out of there. I was convinced this would be the end of me," he said. "This is all my children are going to know of me — everything we've had up to this time."

He called up to Crew Chief Staff Sgt. Thomas A. Gifford: "Tell my children I love them."

"You love me?" came the confused response.

"Not you, you idiot!" Spraktes yelled. "My kids!" The men shared a momentary laugh amid the gunfire, and then the cable started moving again.

Spraktes reached the ground intact with explosions and gun bursts echoing all around him and went to work on the three injured patients as his Black Hawk crew flew to safety. This was only the beginning.

After tending to the most severely injured patient, Spraktes called for the Black Hawk to return to his location to pick up the injured Soldier and fly him to a nearby base. The Black Hawk delivered the patient then returned and picked up two more injured Soldiers — again leaving

Spraktes behind to care for and defend the Soldiers on the ground.

"By the grace of God we were not hit," said co-pilot Chief Warrant Officer Scott St. Aubin. "I have no idea how you miss a giant Black Hawk helicopter. It was really surreal."

After dropping off patients for the second time, the Black Hawk returned to find that Spraktes was treating two Soldiers for dehydration. He again deferred his place on the aircraft to the injured Soldiers and sent the Black Hawk on its way, this time telling the crew he would stay on the ground and return to base on foot.

Spraktes' crew would hear nothing of it, though, and returned to the dangerous location for a sixth time to perform yet another combat hoist extraction, finally bringing Spraktes to safety.

"I told the pilots I wasn't leaving him," Gifford said. "I was just doing my job and trying to get our guys out. [Medical evacuation] is a very dangerous job — there's always somebody trying to shoot you down and stop you from what you're trying to do."

Spraktes was honored for his actions June 13 with the Silver Star — the third-highest award for valor given by the U.S. armed forces — and Gifford, St. Aubin and pilot Chief Warrant Officer Brandon Erdmann each received the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor Device. Erdmann is a member of the Wyoming National Guard. The other three awardees are members of the California National Guard's Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion.

Spraktes was the first California National Guard member to receive the Silver Star this century and the 24th National Guard member nationwide.

"This ceremony is about your selfless service while protecting our freedoms here at home," said Brig. Gen. Mary J. Kight, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, during a ceremony at Mather Flight Facility near Sacramento. "These four Soldiers are American heroes. ... I am proud to serve with you and I believe the acronym DUSTOFF truly describes your actions."

**TOP:** Brig. Gen. Mary J. Kight, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, pins the Silver Star on Staff Sgt. Emmett Spraktes during an award ceremony June 13 at Mather Flight Facility near Sacramento. Spraktes received the Silver Star for heroic actions during a medical evacuation mission while serving in Afghanistan with the California National Guard's Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion. **LEFT:** From left to right, Staff Sgt. Thomas A. Gifford, Spraktes, Chief Warrant Officer Brandon Erdmann and Chief Warrant Officer Scott St. Aubin pause for a photo after the ceremony. Gifford, Erdmann and St. Aubin each received the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor Device for their actions in Afghanistan.



PHOTOS BY SGT. 1ST CLASS JESSE FLAGG



DUSTOFF, which is synonymous with medical evacuation (medevac), stands for Dedicated Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces.

"You four exemplify the very best of our military," said Col. Mitchell Medigovich, commander of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, which includes Company C. "We put you in the most austere conditions, the most difficult places and ask you to perform missions that are simply daunting, and you always rise to the occasion."

He noted that medevac helicopters — unlike all other aircraft flown by the CNG — are unarmed. The red cross on the helicopter is meant to deter fire, but the enemy often treats it as a bull's-eye instead, Medigovich said.

"[Medevac Soldiers] do the job every day, unhesitating," he said. "It's a very special breed. Just the fact that you're flying in there is testing one's mettle."

"[This crew] is the best example of how our Soldiers react to adversity and accomplish the mission, saving the lives of our fellow patriots."

The four awardees, however, deflected all praise, insisting they were only doing their job, doing what the Soldiers on the ground depended on them to do — doing what any other DUSTOFF crew would have done.

"We just happened to be there when the mission came up," St. Aubin said. "Any one of the crews with us [in Afghanistan] would have done the same thing. I'd trust my life with any single one of them."



# Army celebrates 235 years defending the nation

By Erin Wetzelberger  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Members of the California National Guard and their families gathered at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento to recognize two birthdays in June: the symbol of American freedom and the fighting force charged with protecting it.

June 14 marked the 235th birthday of the U.S. Army, which rose from a small band of patriots fighting for revolutionary ideals. The day is also recognized nationally as Flag Day, because on that day in 1777 the Continental Congress passed a resolution adopting the familiar stars and stripes of Old Glory as the symbol of the United States.

Retired Brig. Gen. Louis J. Antonetti, deputy adjutant general, California Army National Guard, spoke about this year's Army birthday theme, "America's Army: The Strength of a Nation."

"Where does that strength come from?" he asked. "It doesn't just come from its Soldiers, it comes from its families. The entire Army community of families makes our Army strong."



"Our families make a tremendous sacrifice to allow our Soldiers to be able to do their jobs," Antonetti continued. "We owe that sacrifice many thanks many times."

Guest speaker retired Master Sgt. Eldon Monday, 17th district commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Sacramento, explained the significance of the U.S. flag as a symbol of the American spirit.

"We honor [the flag]," he said to the Soldiers and Airmen gathered in Sacramento. "That's honoring each and every one of you. Respect your flag at all times, for it is a symbol of the very idea of an American way of life."

Monday outlined the significance of the colors: red for courageousness; white for purity and innocence; and blue for vigilance, perseverance and justice. He also made a plea to military families to instill these values in America's youth.

"The flag is each one of you and your families, because you stand behind the flag," he said. "Everything we do is behind that flag."

The event was capped off by the cutting of an official birthday cake by a saber delivered on horseback by members of the National Civil War Association ceremonial cavalry.

The Army's 235th birthday was also observed at the Pentagon near Washington, D.C., where Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates expressed admiration for Soldiers' ability to adapt to the current multi-faceted mission requirements.

"I'm awed by their ability to adapt and succeed in a mission that at various stages has called upon them to be scholars, teachers, policemen, farmers, bankers, engineers, social workers and, of course, warriors," he said. "Above all, I am perpetually thankful for their willingness to serve and have the greatest faith in their ability to face the difficult and dangerous missions that lie ahead."



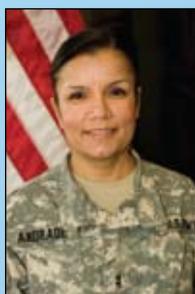
PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. DAVID J. LOEFFLER

**ABOVE:** Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Wall, a California National Guard Soldier and a member of the National Civil War Association's ceremonial cavalry, salutes during a ceremony celebrating both Flag Day and the Army's 235th birthday June 14 at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento. **LEFT:** Sgt. 1st Class Yvonne Diaz sings the national anthem to begin the ceremony.

## AWARDS AND HONORS

Six California National Guard members have been recognized this year through the Department of Defense Special Emphasis Awards Program for their exemplary military service and support for their communities.

**Chief Warrant Officer Sandy Andrade** won a Women's History Month Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Role Model Award this year. Andrade is the traffic management specialist for the California Army National Guard and is the CNG's General Services Administration fleet manager, container control officer, convoy clearance manager and non-tactical vehicle manager. In 2003 she served as mobility warrant officer at the Port of Umm Qasr, Iraq, the nation's only seaport, and was later instrumental in bringing transportation technology courses to military planners. Andrade has volunteered to support events at the Sacramento Children's Receiving Home and the Department of Veterans Affairs Hospital in Mather, Calif.



**Maj. James W. Hall** was recognized with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Roy Wilkins Renown Service Award. Hall distinguished himself this year through exemplary duty in the California Air National Guard and in his local community. His outstanding professional skills have contributed immensely to the effectiveness of the 144th Maintenance Group, based in Fresno, Calif. Hall was the maintenance officer for two deployments, which involved working with 13 aircraft, 180 service members and a variety of equipment. Hall's community involvement and positive influence on children and young adults have been instrumental in paving the way to a diverse community and state. He was recently honored as the 144th Fighter Wing's Outstanding Company Grade Officer of the Year.



**Staff Sgt. Vincent M. Orosco** received the 2010 Society of American Indian Government Employees Meritorious Service Award. Orosco is a critical asset to the California Army National Guard and contributes to the success of the state Office of the Judge Advocate General and the Joint Force Headquarters brigade. He is an exemplary leader, dedicated to guiding and advising his Soldiers. Orosco volunteers with organizations such as the Native Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, the Sacramento County Native American Caucus and the Sacramento Native American Health Center. He has taught and used both Native American traditions and Army Values in mentoring Native American youths. Orosco is especially focused on helping those who have been placed in group homes or with foster families.



**Senior Airman Jonathan J. Bass** of the 146th Security Forces Squadron earned a 2010 Military Meritorious Service Award from the Federal Asian Pacific American Council. Bass' vigilance recently resulted in the reporting of a suspicious vehicle along the perimeter of a base; the vehicle's occupants were later determined to be on the Department of Homeland Security's watch list. Bass deployed to Eskan Village, Saudi Arabia, in 2009 and was later selected as the 146th Security Forces Member of the Year. He also participated in the Ventura County Sheriff's Ride-Along Program, coached Little League baseball, volunteered for the Point Mugu Wildlife Preserve's Coastal Clean-Up, fed the homeless in Ventura County's Veterans Stand-Down and helped the 146th's morale and welfare programs by organizing outings and collecting recyclables.



**Master Sgt. Krista Hudson** earned this year's African-American History Month Recognition Award. She serves on state active duty as the Air Division resource management technician at Joint Force Headquarters. Hudson participated in the Air National Guard Crisis Action Team in response to Hurricane Katrina and was recognized for her assistance during Operation Lightning Strike, the Guard's response to the California wildfires of 2008. Hudson has deployed three times, each with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing. She volunteers at Natomas Park Elementary School in Sacramento, helping 2nd graders in math and reading, and is also active in organizations focused on cancer awareness and research.



**Staff Sgt. Leslie Zapata** received the 2010 National Image Inc. Meritorious Service Award. Zapata is an intelligence specialist for the 129th Operations Support Flight, 129th Rescue Wing. Her duties required her to track and compile incoming mission data for two squadrons with more than 200 deployed personnel in two separate air expeditionary forces. She was selected the 129th Rescue Wing's Airman of the Year in 2009. As a member of the Pasadena City College Associated Students Lobby Committee, Zapata lobbied state and federal legislators to increase benefits and rights for veterans and service members pursuing higher education. Her efforts aided the passage of two measures that became part of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill.





PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. DIANE DUCAT

# Governor launches Operation Welcome Home

## Program connects California veterans with benefit programs

Building on his commitment to strengthen employment and economic opportunities for California's veterans and their families, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger launched Operation Welcome Home aboard the USS Midway in San Diego on June 3.

Operation Welcome Home is a first-in-the-nation, statewide campaign to connect every returning veteran with the services they need to transition successfully from the battlefield to the home front.

"Operation Welcome Home is bringing state, federal and local governments, non-profits, volunteers and the private sector together to create a one-stop shop for our men and women in uniform when they return home," Schwarzenegger said. "All across our state, we are demonstrating our commitment to our veterans. We are doing more than thanking them, we are showing them our gratitude through our actions."

The mission of California's Operation Welcome Home is to directly connect the 30,000 veterans annually returning to California with the benefits they have earned and the services that can help them transition successfully from military service to civilian life. This operation will break down barriers and allow veterans straightforward and easy access to benefits and services including:

- Employment assistance
- Job training assistance and unemployment benefits
- Education opportunities
- Housing assistance
- Health care needs



- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits
- Support for families

Operation Welcome Home coordinates services provided by governmental agencies and departments, non-governmental entities and volunteer organizations. Newly formed regional outreach teams throughout the state will build local community networks tailored for veterans. Each regional team will manage and target resources to meet the individual needs of each veteran by partnering with service providers, volunteers and government entities.

Schwarzenegger has appointed Brig. Gen.

Daniel J. Nelan executive director of the program. Nelan is the assistant adjutant general, Army Division, California National Guard.

"The California Operation Welcome Home Program provides the critical support needed as these brave warriors transition from the battlefield to the home front, less the worries and fears that uncertain economic times present," said Deon Dorado, a California police officer and former member of the California National Guard who returned from deployment last year. "To me, the California Operation Welcome Home program represents the dedication of our state, the gratitude of our citizens and the support of a grateful nation."



**TOP: Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger launches Operation Welcome Home during a ceremony on the USS Midway in San Diego on June 3. The program is designed to help veterans transition to civilian life after a deployment by connecting them with available benefits.**

PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. DIANE DUCAT

PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS JESSE FLAGG

As part of Operation Welcome Home, the governor introduced the California Veteran Corps, a network to reinforce the efforts of the regional teams. The CalVet Corps, which is supported by \$20 million in funding, comprises 325 veterans hired by the California Employment Development Department in partnership with the California Department of Veteran Affairs. The CalVet Corps is responsible for directly contacting each of California's returning veterans at least three times in the first six months of separation from active duty. The CalVet Corps members will coordinate access to career services, mental health or substance abuse treatment and assistance with applying for state and federal veteran benefits.

# 670th MPs return from Afghanistan

By Pfc. Crystal Kirk  
69th Public Affairs Detachment

Greeted by the sounds of cheering family members and friends as they emerged at San Diego International Airport, nearly 40 Soldiers of the 670th Military Police Company navigated through the busy terminal scanning for the faces of their loved ones, and were reunited.

The National City, Calif.-based troops who returned to San Diego on May 27 had just completed a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan, where they assisted Afghan police and trained them in law enforcement and detainee-processing procedures.

"A lot of Americans take our freedom for granted," said Sgt. Benjamin Brown of the 670th. "This is not free."

The mission was long, he said, but thoughts of his wife and children kept Brown motivated.

"I don't recognize my kids, they have grown so much," he said.

Brown added that the first thing that he plans to do when he gets home is absolutely nothing.

"I just want to relax for now," he said. "Spending time with my wife and kids is my top priority."

Many of the Soldiers said they were able to stay in close contact with their loved ones during their Afghanistan tour, making the deployment easier on their mental state.

Spc. Marcus Adams and his wife, Teresa, kept in touch using Facebook, e-mail and phone calling cards during the deployment, which he said kept him motivated and helped him maintain high morale while deployed. The couple plans to take their son Luke to Disneyland now that the family is together again.

"We're going to Disneyland!" Adams exclaimed. "But first, I've got to take my wife out to dinner."



PHOTOS BY PFC. MARILYN LOWRY

Spc. Kevin Lahde echoed his fellow Soldiers and said he was happy just to be back on American soil.

"It's going to be a challenge to adapt to a different environment and lifestyle," Lahde said, "but I'll take some time off and then return to work ready to defend our freedom once again."

**TOP:** Friends and relatives await the arrival of loved ones from the 670th Military Police Company at San Diego International Airport on May 27. The 670th returned from a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan, where they assisted and trained Afghan police. **RIGHT:** Spc. Marcus Adams greets his son, Luke, who is excited to go to Disneyland with his dad.



# Girl Scouts send a taste of home to troops overseas

By Sgt. (CA) Jessica Cooper  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

For the second year in a row, Girl Scouts in northern California have given a gift to the National Guard, and it's not just cookies.

Girl Scouts from Lodi and Roseville, Calif., sold Girl Scout Cookies during February and March to raise money for their Girl Scout troops, and they also encouraged community members to purchase Girl Scout Cookies to be sent to service members overseas. They collected more than 198 cases, which translates to about 3,600 boxes of cookies for the men and women overseas. And inside each case? A card or letter from a Girl Scout and her family, thanking the troops for their service and reminding them they are appreciated and loved "with a little taste of home."

"The donation of the cookies is an expression of support from the Girl Scouts and the community at large," said Lt. Col. Laura L. Yeager, operations officer for the CNG Aviation and Safety Directorate, who accepted the donation on behalf of the Guard. "Our Soldiers and families are under stress during deployments, and the cookies show appreciation for dedicated service and they also remind us of all that is good and true about our great country."

Seventeen Girl Scouts were recognized for their significant contributions to this project during a ceremony at Mather Flight Facility near Sacramento on June 11. They then assisted as the cookies were loaded onto a CH-47 Chinook provided by Company B, 126th Aviation Regiment,



ment, and toured the helicopter.

In 2009 the Girl Scouts donated about 3,000 boxes of cookies to the Guard, the bulk of which were sent to the 579th Engineering Battalion, which was deployed to Afghanistan. The remaining boxes were distributed to units in Iraq by the California National Guard Family Support Group.

This year most of the cookies were given to Soldiers of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade to take with them when they deploy to Iraq later this year. The CNG Public Affairs Office and Family Support Group will distribute the remaining cases to other deployed National Guard units.



**RIGHT:** Sgt. Christopher Kalba of the 1-640th Aviation Support Battalion gets some help from a Girl Scout who was recognized for her efforts to send thousands of boxes of cookies to National Guard members serving overseas during a June 11 ceremony at Mather Flight Facility near Sacramento. **LEFT:** Cases of cookies are loaded onto a helicopter for delivery.

PHOTOS BY SGT. 1ST CLASS JESSE FLAGG



A Soldier who participated in Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos' first Arabic language immersion course examines an Arabic book at Jarir Bookstore during a field trip near JFTB-Los Alamitos in mid-April.

# Learning Arabic in Los Alamitos

Innovative course boosts proficiency, saves Guard time and money

Story and Photo by Sgt. Jan M. Bender  
Los Angeles Regional Public Affairs

Soldiers of the 250th Military Intelligence (MI) Battalion hosted a two-week Arabic language immersion course in mid-April on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos that drastically cut training costs while exceeding training goals. The course served as an alternative to various federal language schools around the country that run 30- to 180-day training cycles and require funding that many Guard units lack. The CNG saved money by using the lodging, classroom and catering facilities on JFTB-Los Alamitos instead.

Seven student linguists attended the inaugural immersion course on the training base. In addition to CNG members, Georgia, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Virginia sent National Guard members to participate. The students' minds were saturated with Middle Eastern language and culture during the course, shouldering 13 hours of class a day.

Two contracted native-speaking Arabic teachers covered the curriculum and employed a combination of memorization techniques, open learning through new media sources and a cultural field trip to a nearby Arab-American community. The course focused on reinforcing and improving the students' understanding of written and spoken Modern Standard Arabic, or MSA.

"I haven't spoken MSA for 11 years. It really helped to dust off a lot of language I haven't relied on for some time," said Pfc. Jacques Zersarkissias, a 250th MI linguist of Lebanese-Armenian descent. "Like most people, when I interact with my family I speak with a lot of slang terms and dialect. Having to read and speak [MSA] has been a great refresher."

The Defense Language Proficiency Test, which each student took at the course's conclusion, showed that five of the seven students improved their listening or reading proficiency, and several

students improved both.

"These short, intensive language courses are essential to maintaining the language proficiency of Guard and Reserve Soldiers who have trouble committing several months at traditional training locations," said Sgt. Kyle Morman, command language program manager for the 250th MI Battalion. "It's a win-win-win situation. We limit the time Guardsmen are away from their civilian career or school, we save money and increase language proficiency."

The blueprint for the course's layout and objectives mirror that of a program instituted by the Washington National Guard, Morman said. The leadership of the 250th recognized the cost-saving potential of having a course close to home for their linguists to attend, and they hoped linguists from other states would fill any seats left open. Every seat was filled for the inaugural course, and the students' gains showed the value of the training.

"I'd say we were able to gain similar — if not the same — results of a conventional school at roughly 20 to 30 percent of that cost," said Lt. Col Michel Kozak, commander of the 250th MI Battalion. "We provided everything they need here on base."

Considering the achievements made thus far and the potential for growth, Kozak is pushing for a more robust program in the future.

"We live in one the most diverse areas in the United States," he said. "We've got over 20 million people in southern California, and there are more than 120 languages being spoken daily here. Whether we're trying to host an Arabic, Chinese Mandarin or Korean immersion course, we can reach out and find communities right here that will support us with the cultural training and awareness. That's an invaluable resource we're looking to embrace."



## Learn a language, earn a bonus

Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus is monthly pay available to Soldiers who demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language the Army considers essential to mission support. The bonus can be as much as \$1,000 a month for multiple language proficiencies.

Proficiency is demonstrated by the Soldier's performance on the Defense Language Proficiency Test, which measures reading and listening ability. A Soldier must score a 2 in each category to be eligible for a bonus. The bonus amount a Soldier will receive is determined by a variable scale based on the Soldier's level of proficiency and the specific language.

A Soldier who is proficient in a "dominant" language — those for which the Army has a sufficient supply of speakers — can earn up to \$400 a month, but only if the Soldier has a language-coded military occupational specialty and assignment, such as those available with the 250th Military Intelligence Battalion and the 223rd MI Battalion:

- French, Russian, Portuguese and Spanish are classified as dominant languages.

Any Soldier who demonstrates proficiency in a "non-dominant" language is eligible to receive \$125 to \$400 a month, regardless of rank, grade, military occupational specialty or assignment:

- Soldiers who demonstrate proficiency in Arabic, Cebuano, Chavacano, Chinese (multiple dialects), Dari, Farsi, Hindi, Ilocano, Indonesian, Korean, Maguindanaon, Japanese, Javanese, Punjabi, Pushtu (Pashto), Tamil, Tausug, Telugu, Turkish, Turkoman or Urdu can earn a monthly bonus up to \$400.
- Soldiers who demonstrate proficiency in Azeri, Bengali, Cambodian, Czech, Georgian, Hausa, Hebrew, Igbo, Kazakh, Kurdish, Kurmanji, Malay, Serbo-Croatian, Somali, Sorani, Swahili, Tagalog, Thai, Uzbek, Vietnamese or Yoruba can earn a monthly bonus up to \$300.
- Soldiers who demonstrate proficiency in Amharic, Armenian, Chechen, Haitian-Creole and Kikongo can earn a monthly bonus up to \$275.

Soldiers interested in receiving a Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus should contact their unit's command language program manager. Soldiers whose units lack a language manager should contact Sgt. Kyle Morman of the 250th MI Battalion at 562-594-1517 or [kyle.morman@us.army.mil](mailto:kyle.morman@us.army.mil). For the 223rd MI Battalion, contact Staff Sgt. Ariel Dayrit at [ariel.dayrit@us.army.mil](mailto:ariel.dayrit@us.army.mil) or 415-665-5367.

### Attend the Defense Language Institute

The Defense Language Institute located at the Presidio in Monterey, Calif., provides culturally based foreign language education to support the Department of Defense. It is an immersive program that produces fluent speakers in languages important to the Defense Department. The California Army National Guard has many military intelligence positions requiring language proficiency. Any Soldier interested in pursuing language training in the military intelligence field should contact the 250th or 223rd MI battalions at the numbers listed above.

To learn more about the Defense Language Institute, visit its website at [www.dliflc.edu](http://www.dliflc.edu).

# CERFP, 1st responders prepare for terrorist attack

By Capt. Christopher T. Angle  
579th Engineer Battalion

The quiet calm of a Tuesday morning at the Port of Redwood City was broken by an explosion May 18, creating a thunderous report and causing billowing black smoke to snake through an otherwise beautiful skyline.

The 10 a.m. explosion was the second terrorist attack at the port facility that day. The first explosion destroyed a ship docked at a hazardous-materials storage area, while the second collapsed a building at an industrial compound, resulting in hundreds of civilian casualties and multiple victims trapped beneath tons of rubble.

The events, which were all simulated, were part of Golden Guardian, an annual homeland security and disaster-preparedness exercise started by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2004. This year's drill tested local responses to terrorist attacks on port facilities throughout the state. The Redwood City exercise was the largest, with more than 400 responders, firefighters, law enforcement officers and military personnel taking on the arduous task of managing the ensuing chaos.

Military trucks and rescue equipment rumbled down Seaport Boulevard all



PHOTO BY CAPT. CHRISTOPHER T. ANGLE

Members of the California National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, or CERFP, care for a patient with a mock injury May 18 at the Port of Redwood City during Golden Guardian, an annual homeland security and disaster-preparedness exercise begun by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2004.

day as a massive footprint of rescue capabilities was established, teams were launched, and victims were recovered and treated. More than half of the response force came from the California National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force

Package, or CERFP.

The response force is expected to rescue victims from collapsed structures and confined spaces, decontaminate them and provide medical treatment until the victims can be evacuated to local hospitals. Members are on six-hour recall to home-

station armories and are required to be on site for a disaster within 24 hours. Once on the ground, the force must be self-sufficient for up to 72 hours until federal resources arrive. California has proudly fielded this capability since 2004.

On May 18, the CERFP recovered, decontaminated and treated more than 300 victim role-players. The response force was graded on 16 tasks by a National Guard Bureau External Evaluation that day and received the highest possible scores, proving it is ready and capable of meeting its mission.

"I'm very proud of this task force," said CERFP Commander Lt. Col. Steve Martinelli of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 579th Engineer Battalion.

"In addition to maxing our scores during the validation process, the task force went above and beyond the standard by making it harder on ourselves," he explained. "The California CERFP deployed through Bay Area traffic to a venue that was not designed for a battalion task force to occupy and met all of the standards in a chaotic environment filled with civilian agencies, media and spectators.

"I can't think of a better way to assure the citizens of this state that we are ready to respond."

# Live, virtual exercise simulates in-theater mission

By 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

A major military operation took place in May at Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos involving the California National Guard's 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) and elements of the 40th Infantry Division (ID). This operation, commonly referred to as Warfighter, converted parts of the training base's grassy fields into a tactical operating base complete with a tent city, computer simulation center, mobile dining facility and modular work areas for about 1,000 Soldier participants.

More importantly, the exercise provided a valuable training opportunity for the 79th IBCT and its subordinate battalions (the 1-184th Infantry Battalion, 1-18th Cavalry Regiment, 1-160th Infantry Battalion, 1-143rd Field Artillery Battalion, 79th Brigade Special Troops Battalion and 40th Brigade Support Battalion) to work together on the battlefield.

"Warfighter is a full-spectrum exercise. It's a live, virtual exercise in the field and it involves computers and Soldiers working together," said Lt. Col. Keith Lochner, 79th IBCT chief of staff.

For two weeks, Soldiers worked through various simulated scenarios based on real-world events.

"[Warfighter] allows the brigade to plan and practice for an in-theater mission without placing Soldiers into the field," Lochner said.

He further explained that no platoon-level operations were involved: Instead, the troops were virtual warriors created by computers. The battlefield was also simulated, with brigade and battalion headquarter elements responding to a combat mission much like what is seen in Afghanistan.

"This is a national exercise for all Army units at brigade and divisional levels across the U.S., be it active duty, National Guard or Army Reserve," Lochner said. "We are one of 15 units that are getting this level of exercise, which basically is the ability for the brigade to command and control combat operations."

Aside from the infantry units, Warfighter also provided a great training opportunity for support elements.

"We are a sustainment battalion, so this has helped us learn how to provide supplies, maintenance, transportation, fuel and medical support to the troops," said Capt. Josephine Navarro of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB).

On the medical front, Warfighter also helped train medics and other Soldiers in the field.

"We were open for sick call daily and conducted periodic health assessments (PHA)," said Capt. Ward Wagenseller of the BSB's Company C.

Sick calls are something medics would do in a real-world scenario, Wagenseller explained, and PHAs are conducted to ensure the brigade's Soldiers are ready for a real-world deployment.

Aside from combat situations, Lochner said, much of the training during Warfighter crosses over and helps brigade Soldiers prepare for their state mission to assist in natural or man-made emergencies.

"These are the same techniques and the same combat information systems we would use in military support to civil authorities here in the United States for flood, fire or riots or whatever the governor needed us to do," Lochner said.

Because of this dual role, Brig. Gen. Keith D. Jones, commander of the Joint Forces Training Base, invited several civilian law enforcement officers to observe the training, including representatives from Fountain Valley, Irvine, Long Beach, Los Alamitos, Los Angeles, Orange County and Seal Beach.

All-in-all, Lochner said, this year's Warfighter was successful in that it provided invaluable training for California Army National Guard Soldiers, which will be useful if a deployment comes up in the future.



PHOTO BY SPC. LYNN GETTMAN

Col. Mark Malanka, commander of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, briefs Brig. Gen. Keith D. Jones during the live, virtual Warfighter exercise on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos in May.

"What we are doing is replicating a situation where the brigade is inserted into a conflict between insurgents and the legitimate government," he said. "This allows us to practice what we have learned and take this knowledge with us when we are mobilized."



Silver Star recipient Staff Sgt. Emmett Spraktes of Company C, 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion, walks off Raley Field in Sacramento after throwing out the first pitch at the Sacramento River Cats vs. Memphis Redbirds game on May 20. For more on Spraktes, see page 4. Photo by Sgt. Jonathan Guibord



Capt. Timothy Meier of Los Altos, Calif., chaplain for the 1-144th Maneuver Task Force in Kosovo, right, conducts mass for Kosovo Force (KFOR) Soldiers on June 12 with Don Christie, priest at the Shrine of the Black Madonna, Letnica, Kosovo, that was made famous by Mother Teresa. Meier said that while KFOR chaplains have joined in celebrating mass at area churches before, this mass was unique because it was conducted in English specifically for American KFOR troops.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hagburg



Brig. Gen. Keith D. Jones, commander of Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos (third from left), poses with staff and developmentally disabled members of the North Orange County Community College District during the district's annual Flag Day ceremony at Cypress College in Cypress, Calif. Jones spoke about the U.S. flag as one of the world's most widely recognized symbols, which "very clearly stands as a beacon of freedom."

Photo by Laura Herzog



A 40th Infantry Division Soldier rappels off a tower during training this week at Fort Ord, Calif. Luis Obispo, Calif.

Photo by Spc. Matthew Wright



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**ABOVE:** Airmen with the 146th Civil Engineering Squadron pour concrete on Pearl City Naval Base, Hawaii, on June 15. The 146th CES assisted with various construction projects during a two-week period, including remodeling a multi-purpose building on U.S. Coast Guard Air Station, Barbers Point. **RIGHT:** An Airman takes measurements on the Pearl City site.

Photos by Airman 1st Class Nicholas Carzis



Staff Sgt. Ryan Brayton of the the 233rd Engineer Team (Firefighters) leads a training scenario at the Camp Parks Fire Department facility near Dublin, Calif. The exercise introduced smoke to simulate real-life conditions in which visibility is limited by thick smoke and heated gasses. Brayton, the team's training noncommissioned officer, is a full-time firefighter for the Rocklin Fire Department.

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Elvin Gines





TOP: An F-106 Delta Dart, which was retired from the 194th Fighter Squadron in the mid-1980s.  
 BOTTOM: The 194th now flies the F-16C Fighting Falcon.

# 194th FS soars over competition

By 1st Lt. Michael Anthony Rodriguez  
 Command Historian, California National Guard

Air superiority is an essential component of modern combat. Control of the skies enables freedom of movement and maximum flexibility in tactics on the battlefield. The United States Air Force prides itself on being the best in the world through its professionalism and proven dominance in war.

In California the skies are clear thanks in part to the 194th Fighter Squadron, 144th Fighter Wing, whose mission is to provide air superiority worldwide and air defense for the western United States utilizing F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft.

The 194th Fighter Squadron's original home was the Naval Air Station in Alameda, Calif., where it was based when activated June 25, 1948. The unit is now based at the Air National Guard Base in Fresno, Calif., its home since 1957, following an eight-year stay in Hayward, Calif.

Though the unit carries the same name it did in 1947, it has had two other designations as well: the 194th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (1955–1992) and the 194th Fighter Bomber Squadron (1950–1955).

The squadron has received numerous accolades, including the Top Unit Award at the 1980 William Tell Weapons Meet at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., while flying the F-106

Delta Dart. The William Tell worldwide weapons meet began in 1954 as a separate air-to-air rocketry competition to complement the Air Force's third annual Fighter Gunnery and Weapons Meet. It was organized as a separate competition two years later.

In 1980, California outshone all rivals in the competition. Using drone targets and an electronic scoring system, units with the same airframe competed against each other for top honors. The 194th flew the Delta Dart superbly, and its AIM-4F missiles met the targets, ensuring 1980 was the unit's year.

The F-106 Delta Dart was manufactured by Convair at a price tag of \$4.7 million. It never saw combat or was exported to foreign users, but it still holds a reputation as the best interceptor fielded by the United States. Unique features included external fuel tanks rated for supersonic flight and an internal weapons bay for its missiles, which would later be utilized on the Air Force's stealth fighters. The Delta Dart was also used by NASA to train astronauts.

An F-106 Delta Dart can be seen at the Aerospace Museum of California in North Highlands, on the former site of McClellan Air Force Base.

## By the Numbers

23

The number of F-106 Delta Dart aircraft assigned to the 194th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 144th Fighter Wing, from 1974 to 1984.

*"Our warriors are no longer limited to the people who fly the airplanes. ... Our entire force is a warrior force. Being a warrior is not an [Air Force Specialty Code]. ... It's a condition of the heart."*

—Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force Chief of Staff, 2001–2005

## Fun Fact

The armament of the F-106 Delta Dart was quite impressive. It was capable of holding four AIM-4F missiles, which was the first air-to-air guided weapon to enter service with the Air Force, becoming operational in 1955. The Delta Dart also held the AIR-2A Genie — an air-to-air rocket with a nuclear warhead designed for use against formations of enemy bombers. It had no guidance system and was powered by a solid-propellant rocket motor. The AIR-2 was first test-launched in 1956 and became operational in January 1957. On July 19, 1957, an AIR-2 Genie was launched at 18,000 feet and detonated over Yucca Flats, Nev. It was the first and only test detonation of a U.S. nuclear-tipped air-to-air rocket. The F-106 Delta Dart, AIM-4F and AIR-2A remained in service until the mid-1980s. The Delta Dart was also known for its faulty ejection seat, which killed the first 12 pilots to eject from the aircraft.



# Ukrainian officers visit 146th Airlift Wing

## CNG share processes, protocols through State Partnership Program

By Senior Airman Nichole Ramirez  
146th Airlift Wing

Several high-ranking members of the Ukrainian military visited the 146th Airlift Wing on Channel Island Air National Guard Station, Calif., in May to observe the National Guard wing's predeployment procedures.

Since the California National Guard established a relationship with Ukraine in 2003 through the National Guard State Partnership Program, the 146th has shared its processes, protocols and capabilities with the Ukrainian military. The CNG Office of International Affairs manages the State Partnership Program with Ukraine and with California's other partner, Nigeria.

Ukrainian military representatives periodically visit California, and California National Guard teams periodically deploy to Ukraine to share information and assist Ukraine in modernizing its armed forces and strengthening the principles of democracy and free-market economics in that country.

Members of the 146th visited Ukraine in April. Ukrainian service members then visited those same Airmen in California the next month to learn detailed information about the 146th Airlift Wing's deployment processes. The Ukrainian delegation was shown various components of the wing's day-to-day business, with a large emphasis on the enlisted core and its impact on our military.

A significant difference between the two countries' armed



**LEFT: Ukrainian officers have lunch with members of the 146th Airlift Wing on Channel Island Air National Guard Station, Calif. Several high-ranking members of the Ukrainian military visited the wing to observe the wing's predeployment procedures. RIGHT: Master Sgt. Richard Figueroa demonstrates to officers from Ukraine the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems II used by the 146th.**

forces is that Ukrainian enlisted personnel are not granted the same level of authority as senior noncommissioned officers in the United States. Officers in Ukraine also do not delegate tasks to NCOs nearly as much and therefore must occupy much of their time with logistical issues. Ukrainian Col. V. Shkoliarenko said he and his fellow officers "are expected to handle so many details," and he was anxious to understand how U.S. Air Force leadership is able to trust subordinates and place enlisted personnel in roles of responsibility and authority.



PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. ALEX KOENIG

"There are too many layers to get small things accomplished," said Capt. Marie Kwon of the 146th. "We rely heavily on our enlisted core and avoid micro-management."

The Ukrainian leadership was also interested in learning how the 146th Airlift Wing retains its personnel. Salary, benefits and camaraderie were among the topics covered by the wing's personnel as aspects that strengthen the unit's capabilities and retention.

# Flight surgeon earns Order of St. Michael

Story and photo by Emily Brainard  
Army Flier

Lt. Col. Salvador Renteria of the Fresno, Calif.-based 40th Combat Aviation Brigade was honored with the Order of Saint Michael on June 8, recognizing him for 32 years of distinguished military service.

The Order, presented by the Army Aviation Association of America, recognizes individuals who have contributed significantly to the promotion of Army aviation in ways that stand out in the eyes of seniors, subordinates and peers, while demonstrating the highest moral character and professional competence.

"Doctor Renteria has taken our flight medical program for California to new heights and is well-deserving of this award," said Col. Mitchell Medigovich, commander of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade.

"He opens up doors on a routine basis if there's something out there that can help one of our Soldiers," Medigovich continued. "He has the skill and capability to make that happen, and he has that kind of prowess within the medical community to help make things happen."

Medigovich said Renteria is humble but is undoubtedly the best flight surgeon the California National Guard has had in many years. He noted that Renteria's skills — he is a cardiothoracic surgeon in his civilian career — make him unique in the Army's reserve and active-duty components.

"You generally don't get a doctor of his exceptional qualifications," Medigovich said.

Renteria also established three part-time

medical clinics throughout the state last summer that are run by National Guard members. The clinics perform flight duty exams and periodic health assessments for aviation Soldiers and track their pre-deployment health. Though they are run by the CNG, these facilities also serve active-duty California service members.

"I'm really honored," Renteria said about the award. "I've got to let it sink in."

Serving others and saving lives has been Renteria's passion since joining the Army in 1976 as a medic. He attended college and medical school in the 1980s and later joined the Army Reserve. He became an officer in the National Guard in 1990.

Renteria's unit flies a variety of aircraft, all of which he's worked in, including OH-58 Kiowas, CH-47 Chinooks, UH-60 Black Hawks, C-12 Hurons and C-23 Sherpas.

"I like the lifestyle," he said. "I like flying."

When he's not wearing his Army uniform or working as a civilian cardiothoracic surgeon, Renteria advises National Guard medical students and lectures frequently to pre-med students at the University of California, Davis.

"I love watching them grow," he said. "When you find that thing in your heart that makes you happy, and you have a bunch of challenges you meet and overcome [to achieve it], do it."

Renteria is scheduled to deploy to Iraq later this year.



**Lt. Col. Salvador Renteria of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade receives the Order of Saint Michael at the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence (AACE) on Fort Rucker, Ala. The award was presented by AACE and Fort Rucker Chief of Staff Col. Timothy Edens on June 8 in recognition of Renteria's 32 years of exceptional military service.**

# Top chefs in California burn up competition

Story and photos by Spc. Lynn Gettman  
40th Infantry Division

The 40th Brigade Support Battalion, home to the best cooks in the California Army National Guard, put its culinary skills to the test by taking part in the Philip A. Connelly Awards Competition on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos in May.

The winners of the nation's seven regions will be chosen by the Department of the Army. California is competing with six other states for the regional championship, and each unit is given the same recipe for the competition.

Connelly judges attended a meal prepared in the 40th BSB's field kitchen for more than 400 Soldiers on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos during the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's recent Warfighter exercise.

"They are judged on how well they follow directions — portion control and time organization, as an example," said Chief Warrant Officer Daryl Moss of the Utah National Guard, one of the Connelly judges on JFTB.

The winning unit will receive \$40,000, deposited into its General Services Administration account; the runner-up will receive \$20,000. Results will be announced later this year, after all states have been judged.

"Competing for the Connelly was a good challenge," said Sgt. Cesar Mancilla, a chef for the 40th BSB. "It was a lot of fun, [though] it was a little stressful because we didn't have all the equipment. It's a good experience, something you can learn a lot from."

Capt. Josephine Navarro of the BSB noted that the competition gave the cooks a chance to cook from scratch for the Soldiers.

"That strengthens their morale and builds camaraderie,"



Soldiers of the 40th Brigade Support Battalion prepare a meal in May on Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos that would be judged as part of the Army's Philip A. Connelly Award Competition. The BSB's field kitchen cooked for more than 400 Soldiers that day, during the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Warfighter exercise.

Navarro said. "Cooks are often overworked and under-appreciated."

Spc. Juanard Grimmitt, a chef for the 40th BSB, said the

competition definitely excited the cooks.

"Everyone wanted to be a part of the competition. We had all hands on deck," he said. "Everyone put their best in."

# Vietnam-era pilot retires after 42 years

By Erin Wetzelberger  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

On a clear sunny day at Mather Flight Facility near Sacramento, Chief Warrant Officer Randy Weatherhead came in for one last landing.

Taxiing his UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter under a ceremonial water arch, the Army aviator brought his 42-year military career to an end.

"I always knew what I wanted to do, and that's fly," he said.

On the ground, Weatherhead was greeted with a shower of cheers and champagne from friends, fellow Soldiers and loved ones. His wife, retired Sgt. 1st Class Alison B. Weatherhead, said she was proud of her husband's service.

"It took a whole facility to keep him in line; now they've turned him over to me," she joked.

Weatherhead began his military career in 1967 at age 19 as a mechanic for UH-1 Iriquois, or "Huey," and OH-6 Cayuse helicopters. Over the next 40 years, he became a helicopter pilot and completed thousands of missions, including fighting wildfires, search-and-rescue operations and combat missions abroad.

"I turned 21 when I was in Vietnam; that

was a long time ago," he said. "When I got to Iraq, I was 56."

Weatherhead joined the California National Guard in 1972 working at the Fresno Transportation Aviation Repair Shop, now known as the 1106th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group, where he served as shop foreman, instructor pilot, activity commander and C-7 Caribou pilot. In 1989 he relocated to Sacramento as the state's Army aviation safety officer. Since 1996, Weatherhead has worked at Mather Flight Facility near Sacramento as a flight instructor and safety officer. He has accumulated more than 10,000 hours of flight time as a pilot in command and instructor pilot.

During the May 13 ceremony, Weatherhead recalled his first rescue for the CNG, when in 1976 he flew to what is now known as the John Muir Wilderness area to rescue a hiker who had fallen and broken his ankle.

"You really [felt] that had you not been there, the person would not have made it on that trip," he said.

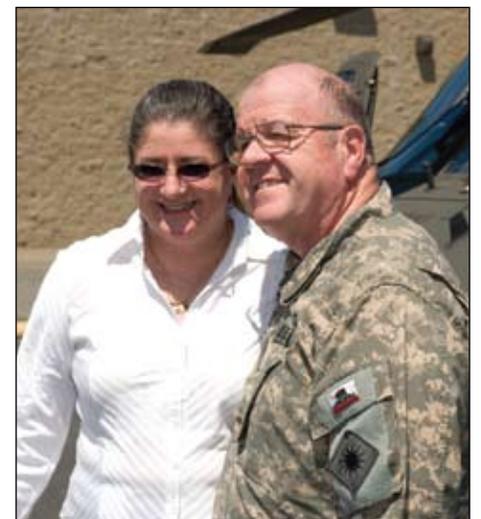
For retirement, Weatherhead said he has a house and yard to work on and grandkids to keep up with. Although combat and search-and-rescue missions are behind him, Weatherhead said he will still take to



the skies through his involvement with the Civil Air Patrol.

"I learned how to fly fixed-wing [aircraft] when I was in high school," he said. "The Army taught me how to fly helicopters. I've flown them both enough to know that I could go either way. But I'm pretty much done with helicopters."

ABOVE: Chief Warrant Officer Randy Weatherhead receives a champagne shower following his final flight May 13 near Sacramento. Weatherhead retired after a 42-year military career that included tours in Vietnam and Iraq. RIGHT: Weatherhead with his wife, retired Sgt. 1st Class Alison B. Weatherhead.



PHOTOS BY SGT. 1ST CLASS JESSE FLAGG



# Know the facts about tuition assistance

## Ready to go back to school? Get the aid you need

### Federal Tuition Assistance

The Army National Guard Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) program provides financial assistance to support Soldiers' professional and personal development goals. To qualify Soldiers must have a contractual obligation with the Army National Guard. FTA may be used to pursue one credential in each of the following levels: high school diploma or equivalency; associate's, bachelor's or master's degree; and vocational or technical certification or license.

#### Benefits

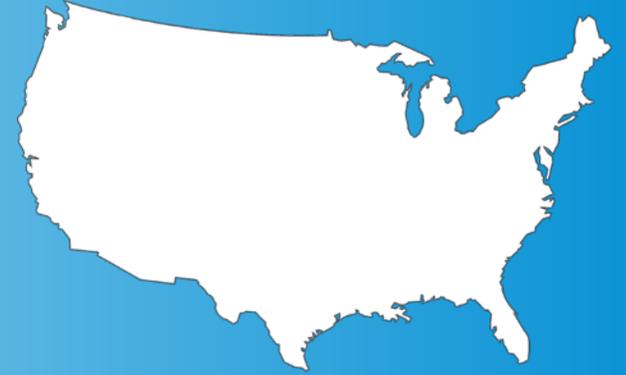
- 100 percent of tuition, with caps of \$250 per semester-hour, \$167 per quarter-hour and \$16.66 per clock-hour.
- \$4,500 maximum benefit per fiscal year (Oct. 1 through Sept. 30).
- FTA may be used with state tuition programs, the Montgomery G.I. Bill, G.I. Bill kickers and Pell Grants.

#### Eligibility

- California Army National Guard (CA ARNG) Soldiers must remain in an active drilling status and in good standing through the end date of the course in which FTA is used.
- Soldiers must attend a regionally or nationally accredited institution. A list of schools can be found at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation>.

#### How To

- Soldiers can apply online at [www.virtualarmory.com](http://www.virtualarmory.com) by clicking on the Education tab. Soldiers will need a Common Access Card-compatible computer to enter the website and submit their application.
- Active Guard Reserve personnel and Soldiers on Title X orders can apply online at [www.GoArmyEd.com](http://www.GoArmyEd.com) by scrolling over the Money for Education tab.



*Please Note: Federal Tuition Assistance is not an entitlement and is subject to availability of funds through federal budget processes.*

### State Tuition Assistance (EAAP)

The California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program (EAAP) is a state-funded program designed to provide an incentive for service members in the National Guard, California State Military Reserve or Naval Militia to improve their skills, competencies and abilities. The EAAP can be used to earn a certificate, degree or diploma.

#### Benefits

- The maximum award amounts for the EAAP directly reflect Cal Grant A and Cal Grant B amounts for the academic year (July 1 through June 30). Amounts are refigured annually and subject to

change. For the 2009-2010 academic year, the maximum amounts were:

- \$10,302 at a University of California school
- \$7,788 at a private institution
- \$4,026 at a California State University
- \$1,551 at a community college

#### Eligibility

Service members are eligible for the EAAP if they meet the following requirements:

- Have served two years and continue to serve in the California National Guard, California State Military Reserve or Naval Militia. Eligible members include Active Guard Reserve, technicians and state active duty personnel.
- Agree to remain an active member throughout their participation in the EAAP
- Have registered, enrolled or been accepted to a

qualifying institution

- Maintain enrollment in at least three academic units per semester, or the equivalent, at a qualifying institution
- Maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average
- Have lived in California for at least one year immediately preceding submission of their application

#### How To

- Applications and instructions for the EAAP can be found at [www.calguard.ca.gov/Education](http://www.calguard.ca.gov/Education).
- A list of eligible institutions can be found at [http://sandbox.csac.ca.gov/internet/Institution\\_Search.asp?mode=retrieve](http://sandbox.csac.ca.gov/internet/Institution_Search.asp?mode=retrieve).

*Please Note: The California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program is not an entitlement and is subject to availability of funds through state budget processes.*

## Banners of Honor celebrate military in Los Alamitos

By Laura Herzog  
Joint Forces Training Base Public Affairs

Members of the Los Alamitos, Calif., community celebrated Flag Day and the U.S. Army's birthday on June 14 with the help of one patriotic citizen who had a vision to show her appreciation for the military in a unique way.

For years Nancy Karmelich had thought about lining the Los Alamitos streets with banners to show appreciation for all the work of the armed forces, but raising a family was keeping her busy.

"It makes me so honored to share our city and be able to interact on a daily basis with our military personnel in our small town and surrounding cities," Karmelich said. "It makes me proud to see military vehicles and aircraft flying over and on our streets. I feel safe and proud."

A few months ago, after her youngest daughter started school, Karmelich was finally ready to move forward with her dream of honoring the troops at the training base, which has been operating in the community for more than 33 years. Karmelich went to work creating a nonprofit program, Banners of Honor, whose mission is to express the community's heartfelt appreciation for our freedoms.

Thirty-three banners were unveiled at Laurel Park on June

14 — coinciding with Flag Day and the U.S. Army's 235th birthday — and more are planned.

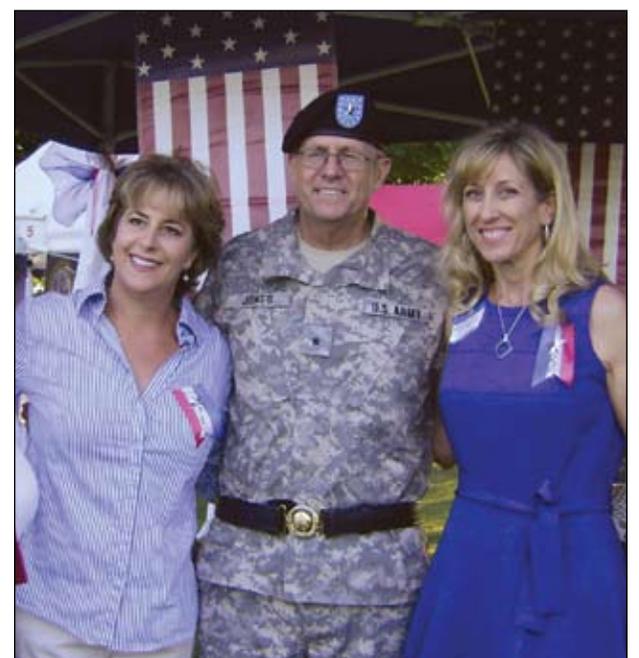
"It is my hope that the military [personnel] see these banners and it shows them just how much our community loves and appreciates them," Karmelich said.

The Los Alamitos City Council voted unanimously in support of Karmelich's program, and Mayor Marilyn Poe attended the unveiling.

"What a great experience for any veteran or military personnel to see the [banners] coming into and out of Los Alamitos," she said June 14. "These men and women will always know that the community of Los Alamitos has them in their hearts."

Brig. Gen. Keith Jones, commander of the Joint Forces Training Base, said the banners were an extraordinary idea and will inspire the troops. "It means so much for our military members ... to see the heartfelt response of the community," Jones said. "This program is a gesture that those serving the country will be grateful for."

Banners of Honor continues to seek funding for a second phase of the project. To donate toward the project or for more information, visit the nonprofit's website, [www.bannersofhonor.com](http://www.bannersofhonor.com).



Banners of Honor nonprofit volunteer Stephanie Gill, left, poses with Brig. Gen. Keith D. Jones, commander of Joint Forces Training Base-Los Alamitos, and Banners of Honor founder Nancy Karmelich on June 14, when the nonprofit's tribute to the military was revealed in Los Alamitos.

# Pentagon marks 60th anniversary of Korean War

By Elaine Wilson  
American Forces Press Service

Flanked by Korean War veterans, many proudly bearing the medals and insignias of their military service, defense officials commemorated the 60th anniversary of the Korean War and saluted the veterans during a ceremony at the Pentagon June 24.

"Americans have always been defined by their courage and character and incredible optimism about their country and its values," said Joseph W. Westphal, undersecretary of the Army. "Korean war veterans are examples of that."

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, when North Korea launched an attack on South Korea in an effort to place all of Korea under Communist rule. By September 1950, the efforts of United Nations, United States and South Korean forces held North Korea in check at the Pusan Perimeter.

The war lasted three years, and the California National Guard's 40th Infantry Division suffered many casualties. The "Sunshine Division" also distinguished itself with its service, earning three Medals of Honor, nine Distinguished Service Crosses, 246 Silver Stars and 675 Bronze Stars for valor.

After the war, Korea remained divided into a free, democratic South and a Communist-dominated North. The United States has had a "long and proud" relationship with South Korea since, Westphal said.

During the past 60 years, more than 3.5 million Americans have served military duty tours in Korea, Westphal said. The 28,500 U.S. service members who serve in South Korea today, he said, exemplify the nation's ongoing commitment to the defense of South Korea, which he called a critical ally, a valued partner and an honored friend of the United States.

South Korean ambassador Han Duk-soo thanked all Korean War veterans for their sacrifice to keep South Korea free.



In this 2001 painting by Rick Reeves, the Cal Guard's 40th Infantry Division, or "Sunshine Division," is depicted fighting in Kumwha Valley, Republic of Korea, in spring 1952.

"Korean flags still fly over the Republic of Korea, and the Korea-U.S. alliance, an alliance forged in blood, is still strong and valued by both sides today. This is why we call the Korean War a true victory," he said. "You won freedom, democracy and prosperity for our nation."

"For that, the Korean people are eternally grateful to all of you."

Today South Korean troops serve alongside the United States in Afghanistan, Iraq and the waters of Somalia, the ambassador said.

The June 24 ceremony marked the beginning of the Defense Department's three-year observance of key events of the Korean War, which will culminate on the 60th anniversary of the armistice signing, July 27, 2013.

## SHRM preps vets for the workforce

### Conference connects veterans, civilian employers

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Inigo  
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

Jobless veterans' numbers are in the millions, with the proportion of young veterans without jobs around 14 percent, according to the Department of Defense. Though it goes largely unspoken, some veterans believe there is a stigma associated with hiring veterans — especially those who are still serving part-time in the Reserves or National Guard.

Jobs that veterans are being offered are not paying the bills or are not a sufficient challenge, according to some troops. That is where the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) got involved with its drive to get veterans the jobs they deserve.

Down-and-out veterans, reservists and even active duty members with an eye toward the future received the royal treatment as part of an SHRM conference June 26-30 in San Diego.

Though it was not really a job-fair — more of a venue for sharing information — the veterans event kicked-off the conference. The event aimed to provide veterans with training and insight they need to get back in the workforce, while also showing civilian employers just how valuable a former service member can be.

Duty, dedication and tenacity are traits that all employers are looking for, said retired Master Sgt. Kevin Panet, formerly of the 146th Airlift Wing. Veterans can offer those traits, he said, adding that many service members are leaving the military with skill-sets that can pack a resume, but they are not getting jobs that reflect those talents. Panet has been laid off from five different jobs with mortgage companies that have fallen through during the past five years.

"Really, I like what they're doing here, trying to reach out to employers

and dispel some of the myths of the military culture," said Panet, who lives in Simi Valley, Calif. "Plus, this gives me a chance to see how HR people think and know the messages they are putting out there to help get us back to work."

In addition to keynote speakers, the event featured breakout sessions that instructed human resources professionals on how to recruit and retain service members, and instructed veterans how to properly apply for civilian jobs and succeed at them in the long-run.

Organizations such as Tip of the Arrow were also represented at the conference, informing veterans about available services to help them transition to civilian work life. Sherrill A. Curtis, director of Tip of the Arrow, said her volunteer staff can offer tricks of the trade and free coaching that will teach a service member how to execute a successful civilian job-hunting game plan.

Other organizations said they can assist troops in additional ways, such as by acting as the voice of the service member. For instance, Ted Daywalt of VetJobs said he personally holds civilian leaders and employers accountable and asks the hard questions when reservists are skipped over for qualifying positions.

"It's really a shame because people in the National Guard and other reserve components have the tendency to get fired because of their military work," Curtis said after the first day of the conference. "I finally got the [federal] administration to admit there is a problem and start helping these people out."

Having a specific military veterans' event was a first for the conference, but one that will be repeated in the future, according to Lon O'Neil, SHRM president and CEO.

"We want to let employers know former military offer a supply of talented people," he said.



# NGB chief: Guard part of solution to DoD budget woes

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy  
National Guard Bureau

The National Guard is uniquely poised to be part of the solution to many of the Department of Defense's future budget questions, the National Guard's top officer said during the Joint Warfighting Conference in Norfolk, Va., on May 13.

"Secretary [of Defense Robert] Gates has spoken very loud and very clear that our defense budget is going to have to come down, maybe considerably, over the next several years," said Air Force Gen. Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau. "We in the Department of Defense are going to have to look very seriously at what we can afford to do and how we meet the commitments of our combatant commanders in the future."

McKinley said difficult decisions will have to be made, and "I think we are going to be part of that solution. And we're going to have to take our share of the [cuts] and maintain an effective force that can continue for years to come."

The Guard's strength is that its mostly part-time force has full-time capabilities, he said.

"We do have an advantage, that in the days

when a [National Guard] Soldier or Airman is not mobilized or not volunteering for duty, those are days when you don't pay that Soldier," McKinley said. "That Soldier or Airman ... can integrate as needed."

Despite its cost-effectiveness, the Guard will continue to see changes, such as integrating with active duty components to share equipment and resources, McKinley said. However, the Guard will continue to be at the forefront of operational needs, he said.

"[Deputy Secretary of Defense William J. Lynn] said that the National Guard must maintain its role as a full-spectrum force," he said. "I think that is an acknowledgment that the last 8 1/2, almost 9 years of kinetic operations overseas has given the National Guard a fighting spirit and a capability that, quite possibly, they haven't had since Korea."

That fighting spirit can be seen in some of the niche missions the Guard has filled overseas, such as the Agribusiness Development Teams that draw on Guard members' civilian agriculture experience, McKinley said. As operations continue to shift to Afghanistan, the Guard will again



Gen. Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, testifies before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel in Washington, D.C., on May 12. The following day, he would speak in Norfolk, Va., during the Joint Warfighting Conference.

fill the niche missions as well as more traditional operational roles there, he said.

"We will continue to work with our Army and Air Force to provide the combat forces that the combatant commanders need. And

we are eager and willing to partner with our allies, with our state partners, with our inter-agency players, to make sure that the National Guard of the 21st Century is ready, is capable, is accessible, is adaptable and is affordable."

## Decade of Health targets warrior wellness

by Patrice Mauck-Messer

Today's Army National Guard is fighting on many different fronts, and one of them is for better overall wellness.

Following the Army National Guard's resilience-education effort in 2009, warriors have been calling for additional programs to strengthen resilience in Soldiers and families, particularly as they face multiple deployments. The Decade of Health campaign for 2010 therefore again focuses on behavioral health and warrior wellness: Ready & Resilient! II, Strength from Within!

"Statistics show that stress and pressure are taking a tremendous toll on Army National Guard Soldiers and their families," said Lt. Col. Jose M. Ortiz, chief of preventive medicine for the Army National Guard.

"The unique burdens and responsibilities placed on combat leaders, the continued need to cross-level Soldiers to fill unit rosters, the dispersion of Army National Guard Soldiers in remote communities after deployment, and 'compassion fatigue' among our medical professionals and chaplains, all combine to produce uniquely challenging stresses and strains in our states and territories."

About 40 percent of all Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom have been reserve component troops, Ortiz noted.

Total warrior wellness — body, mind and spirit — is critical to medical deployability, the Decade of Health program states on its website, [www.decadeofhealth.com](http://www.decadeofhealth.com). Creating a climate of fitness requires holistic wellness throughout the cycle of service and throughout a Soldier's life.

The Decade of Health initiative kicked off in 2006, when John Gipe was command sergeant major of the Army National Guard. The 10-year guerilla marketing campaign focuses on a specific health concern each year and targets Soldiers and their families with programs to promote readiness and enhance strength management.

"The very foundation of readiness and deployability is physical fitness," said Command Sgt. Maj. Gipe, who now



A California National Guard member takes a fitness test during the 2009 Soldier of the Year competition on Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.

serves as senior enlisted adviser to the assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs. "You have to be able to physically endure the rigors of combat before you consider the other requirements."

"The fact that some Soldiers are having difficulty meeting the Army Guard physical fitness standards is a problem."

What is the most imperative health battle for the Army Guard Soldier in the future? Gipe responded unequivocally: Smoking!

"There's been a huge increase in the number of smokers out there among the young Soldiers," he said. "I would estimate this number has doubled in the last few years."

The escalating number of accidents involving motorcycles and cars at high rates of speed is also of concern to Gipe, along with substance abuse. Gipe said that because of the combat situations troops now face, he fears "young Soldiers may have become adrenaline junkies, developing a need to get that rush from doing something on the edge."

Gipe added that health and physical fitness are integral to being successful, not only in the Guard, but in life.

"If you are physically fit, your whole body works better," he said. "You think better, your awareness of every aspect of your life is clarified. It can change the mindset of the Soldier and the family."

# Diversity is key to mission readiness



By Steve Read  
CNG Equal Employment Manager

We perceive our world through the broad scope of our diverse society. As society changed over the last several decades, its diverse factors influenced us, our families and every organization in which we participate. Nowhere are the impacts and benefits of diversity felt more than in today's workplace.

As Harriet Hankin wrote in the California Job Journal last year:

*America has always been a melting pot and this will not change in the future. What will change, however, is the diversity of the mix. If the shades in the melting pot of the past came from a box of eight colors, the shades of the future will come from a box of sixty-four. The workforce can be seen as a collection of different peoples working together toward common goals, yet each bringing his or her own perspective and abilities. Diversity in the future will be evolutionary, not revolutionary. It will have more to do with acceptance, flexibility, and respect. It will be about hiring/assigning someone different because it will broaden our perspective, open up new views, and better reflect our markets, not because it will get us a check mark in the affirmative action box on a review form.*

A multicultural workforce is a business asset and key to mission readiness. The California National Guard is committed to harnessing the diversity inherent to our state and maintaining a culture that:

- Provides every team member professional courtesy and respect
- Fosters a command climate that is fair, equitable and non-discriminatory
- Recognizes people as our most valuable asset
- Promotes teamwork and constructive working relationships
- Utilizes leadership as a tool to achieve results, pursue excellence and make the California National Guard an employer of choice

Leaders at all levels are expected to conduct their affairs free from discrimination and harassment. They will provide equal opportunity and treatment for all Guard members



irrespective of their race, color, religion, national origin or sex, except as prescribed by statute or military policy (civilian employees are also protected from discrimination based on age or disability). CNG leaders also must ensure that the command climate encourages employees to report injustices and discrimination without the threat of intimidation or reprisal.

The California National Guard Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office supports mission-readiness by ensuring all individuals receive treatment based only on individual merit, fitness and capability. The EEO Office provides third-party conflict resolution, mediation and agency referrals as well as formal and informal complaint assistance for feder-

al military members and civilian technicians who feel they have experienced unlawful discrimination. Employees are encouraged to use the EEO complaint process by alerting their chain of command. Members may directly contact the EEO Office if they fear reprisal for reporting incidents to their chain of command.

For more information, visit these websites:  
California National Guard EEO  
[www.calguard.ca.gov/eo-eeo](http://www.calguard.ca.gov/eo-eeo)  
Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute  
[www.deomi.org](http://www.deomi.org)  
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)

## AF website offers legal assistance

The next time an Airman needs a will or power of attorney, or just has a legal question, the new Air Force Legal Assistance website can help.

Officials created the website, <https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil>, to increase efficiency and track client satisfaction with the Air Force Legal Assistance Program. It is a public site, so clients can access it without a Common Access Card.

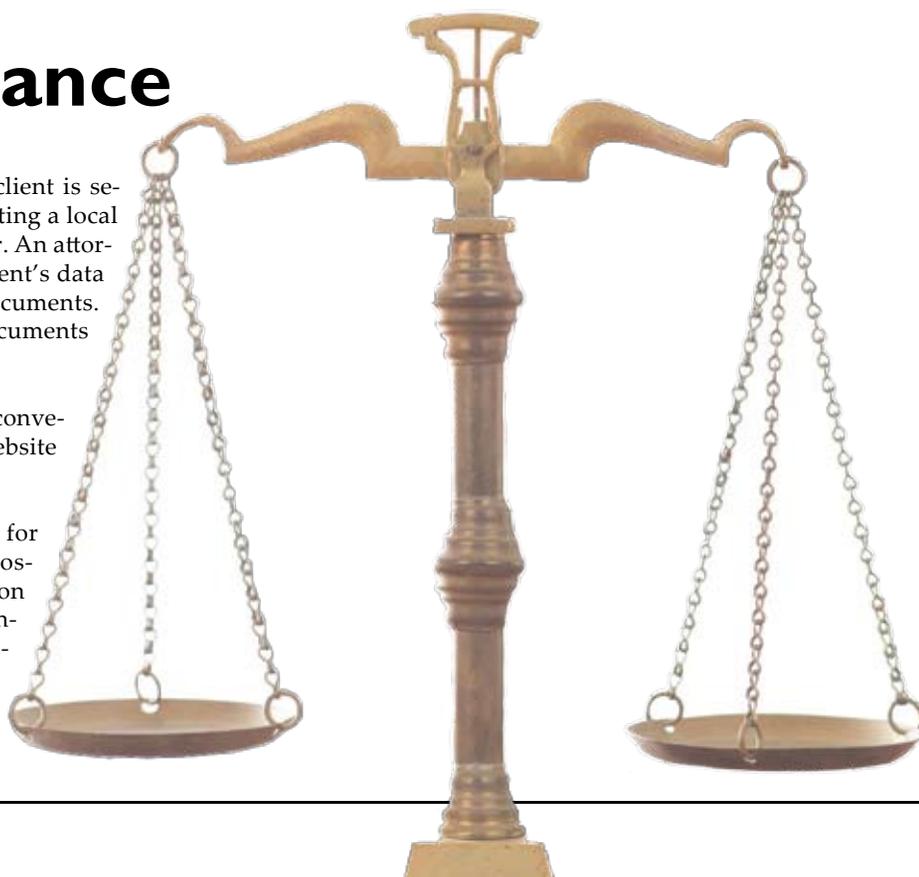
The site includes short papers on common legal-assistance topics such as wills and family law issues. It also provides links to other helpful web pages on these topics.

Legal worksheets and online questionnaires are available on the site for Airmen working on wills, living wills and powers of attorney. After an online worksheet is completed, the website provides the client a

"ticket number." Data entered by the client is secure and can only be accessed after visiting a local legal office to provide the ticket number. An attorney or paralegal will then access the client's data and prepare the appropriate legal documents. Clients will not be able to print legal documents from the website.

The website is designed only for client convenience: No one is required to use the website prior to visiting a legal office.

The information on the website is for educational and informational purposes only. It cannot replace consultation with your local Judge Advocate General, and Airmen should not rely solely on the website when making legal decisions.





**Sgt. Jonathan O'Gaffney of Company B, 1-126th Aviation Regiment, outfits Christopher Warrick with a helmet and flight gear outside a CH-47 Chinook helicopter at Mather Flight Facility near Sacramento. Christopher and his brother Matthew, left, accompanied their sister Ashley to Mather on June 11, when she and 16 other Girl Scouts were recognized for their efforts to send thousands of boxes of cookies to service members overseas. For more on the Girl Scouts drive, see Page 7. Photo by Sgt. (CA) Jessica Cooper**

## BG Nelan to lead Op Welcome Home

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Brig. Gen. Daniel J. Nelan executive director of Operation Welcome Home for the California Department of Veterans Affairs. Operation Welcome Home is a statewide campaign to connect returning veterans with the services they need to transition successfully from the battlefield to the home front.

Nelan is the assistant adjutant general, Army Division, California National Guard. He served as special assistant to the director of the Army National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C., from 2009 to 2010 and also served the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency/National Exercise Division as deputy director from 2009 to 2010.

Nelan served the California National Guard as chief of Joint Staff from 2005 to 2009, deputy chief of staff of operations from 2003 to 2005, director of Army aviation and safety from 2001 to 2003, and aircraft pilot supervisor from 1999 to 2001. He attended the U.S. Army War College from 1998 to 1999 and was an aircraft pilot supervisor for the California National Guard from 1991 to 1998. Nelan is a member of the National Guard Association of the U.S. and National Guard Association of California.

For more on Operation Welcome Home, see Page 6.

## Federal bill modeled on CNG embedded provider program

Sens. Patty Murray of Washington and Claire McCaskill of Missouri introduced legislation in June that would require the Pentagon to provide National Guard and Reserve units with embedded mental health counselors. The legislation would provide a consistent mental health professional in each unit to help earn the trust of Soldiers, military leaders and family members and to provide access to support during drill weekends and family readiness events.

"This bill is all about making sure the heroic men and women of our Guard have better access to mental health care, especially as mental health related illnesses are plaguing our veterans in increasing numbers, in the places where they serve their country," McCaskill said in a press release.

The Embedded Mental Health Providers for Reserves Act of 2010 is based on the Embedded Provider pilot program the California National Guard initiated in 2005 in partnership with TriWest Health Alliance. It currently supports 27 licensed behavioral health counselors embedded with 40 California National Guard units. Data from the program suggests easily available, early-intervention treatment can stem the need for more serious treatment in the long run, Murray and McCaskill said.

## Free work clothes for female vets

Re-entering the workforce is one of the biggest challenges facing service members transitioning back into civilian life after a deployment. Through her WE Support program, California first lady Maria Shriver has partnered with Talbots women's apparel chain to provide veterans with gift cards to help them purchase professional attire.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs and the WE Support program will distribute \$200 Talbots gift cards to service members who meet the following criteria:

- Female veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Non-student actively seeking employment, as verified through documentation
- Rank of E-4 or lower at discharge or return from OEF/OIF deployment

For more information visit [www.cdva.ca.gov/Resources/Women.aspx](http://www.cdva.ca.gov/Resources/Women.aspx). To register for the program, call the CNG Manpower and Personnel office at 916-854-3409.

## DID YOU KNOW...

### ... your motorcycle is your No. 1 safety risk outside a combat environment?

The leading cause of death for military personnel outside of combat is motor vehicle accidents, and about one-half of all motor vehicle fatalities are motorcycle riders, according to the Department of Defense.

All California National Guard members who ride motorcycles on- or off-duty are required to meet the adjutant general's motorcycle safety policy. The adjutant general's policy is part of a Defense Department-wide initiative to ensure all military personnel, including personnel returning from deployment, have the required motorcycle-rider training and approved protective equipment.

All Soldiers and Airmen riding motorcycles on military installations are required to pass the basic motorcycle safety course and meet all Defense Department and National Guard Bureau regulations concerning motorcycle operation and safety.

The adjutant general's policy memorandum is available at: <https://portal.ca.ngb.army.mil/topics/policy/>

For more information concerning motorcycle safety requirements: <https://safety.army.mil/Default.aspx?alias=safety.army.mil/povtoolbox> <http://www.wsmr.army.mil/pdf/motorcyclesafetyhandbook.pdf>



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### Grizzly Newsmagazine

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

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

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PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS JESSE FLAGG

Brig. Gen. Mary J. Kight, the adjutant general of the California National Guard, center, exits a June 3 ceremony aboard the USS Midway in San Diego to launch Operation Welcome Home, a state initiative to help veterans transition to civilian life after a deployment by connecting them with available benefits and services.