



THE ON GUARD

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Preparing for wildfire's aftermath

Sandbag filling vital next step to protecting Southern Californians

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

VALLEY CENTER, Calif. – Under a sky still smoky from active wildfires, National Guard Citizen-Soldiers prepared for the flash floods and mudslides that may come long after the flames of the October California wildfires are extinguished.

About 50 Citizen-Soldiers from the California Army National Guard's Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery set out to fill about 5,000 sandbags for residents in the Valley Center area north of San Diego in late October. Other National Guard units performed the same service in other communities hit by the Southern California wildfires.

AFTERMATH *continued on:*
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Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill

California Guardsmen fill up sandbags at Spring Valley, Calif., in preparation for the rainy season. The sandbags will provide erosion control in case of heavy rains.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. D. Clare

A 438th Air Expeditionary Group weapons loading team from the 175th Wing, Maryland Air National Guard, prepares to mount a Joint Direct Attack Munition to an A-10C Thunderbolt II using an MJ-1 "jammer" vehicle. The Airmen made history in Iraq when their up-graded A-10s successfully employed JDAMs in combat.

A-10 pilots, maintainers make history in Iraq

Air Guard pilots, maintainers make history in Iraq

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare
Ohio National Guard

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq -- Capt. Brian "Snap" Curland, a deployed member of the 175th Fighter Wing, Maryland Air National Guard, made history here when he dropped the first Joint Direct Attack Munition from the newly upgraded A-10C Thunderbolt II in combat Sept. 19.

The captain's strike, and the Air Guard's participation and support of precision engagement for the

A-10, mark a historic new range of capabilities and accuracy the aircraft is bringing to the battlefield.

Curland was on his second sortie here when he came upon a former safe house that insurgents had established as a house-borne improvised explosive device. The building had been rigged to detonate when Soldiers swept through the town.

"When I put that out and dropped it, it was basically two buildings away from a mosque. And we obviously don't want to be doing any damage to significant religious centers and people who aren't in the conflict at all," Curland said.

Despite the proximity of residential buildings and the mosque, structures immediately adjacent to the target suffered little more than a dusting from the attack. No coalition forces or noncombatants were harmed.

"With this munition, we're able to pinpoint a building," said Curland with the 438th Air Expeditionary Group. "Collateral damage is about zero. When the bomb impacts, it buries itself into the building and then detonates so you're looking at basically just taking the building out

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Civil Engineers build in Guantanamo Bay: Page 5

ABOUT THE ON GUARD

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What the militia protected when the Guard was born

Second of a two-part series

PLIMOTH PLANTATION, Mass. – Fewer than half of the housewives could read, and the women did not delve too deeply into politics nor venture too closely to the Indians.

English law required that the crops be fenced in so that animals, such as cows, could roam more or less freely without getting into the fields.

People did not bathe during the winter out of fear of catching a deadly chill. Washing their hands and face in front of a fire was their idea of basic hygiene.

All “fit and able” men between 16 and 60 were required to serve in the militia, and one commander acknowledged that some men were reluctant to do their duty.

Such were aspects of the New England society that the menfolk defended as members of the militia when the National Guard was born in Massachusetts 371 years ago this month – on Dec. 13, 1636.

That, we know, is when the Massachusetts General Court directed that the militia companies of 15 communities be formed into three regiments – the North, South and East Regiments – for the unified defense of the colony against the Pequot Indians. They totaled 1,500 men, and they were the first militia regiments organized in North America.

But what was the militia and what exactly was the lifestyle it defended? You can get a pretty good idea by visiting Plimoth Plantation's 1627 English Village here any day of the week between March 24 and Nov. 25. It is a replica, about a third in size, of the village of about 180 people where surviving settlers from the Mayflower and others were living seven years after the little cargo ship landed its 102 passengers in the New World in December 1620. It is a journey back to the 17th century, especially late in the day after most of the tourists have left. That's when the costumed role players can elaborate on the lifestyle they so convincingly portray.

I made the pilgrimage in mid-October. I assumed that the way people lived did not change all that much during the nine years between 1627 and 1636 when those three militia regiments were organized.

A couple of things surprised me.

Their colorful clothing: The villagers were dressed in shades of red and green and yellow which were considerably brighter than



By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
Senior Editor

the gray, unpainted cabins and the pictures of the black and white garbed “pilgrims” that we associate with the first Thanksgiving. William Bradford, the elected governor, wore a blue outfit that was almost regal, and Miles Standish, the militia company's elected captain, sported a green jacket, called a doublet, and rust-colored breeches.

Their loyalty to the crown: The word “American” was not in their vocabulary. They may have had their differences with the Church of England, but they nonetheless considered themselves on a mission for their country.

“I'm an Englishman, and this is England. This is an increase of

our king's domain,” said Bradford, holding court in his cabin as his wife did the household chores. “We may be reformed in our Christian discipline, but we love our king (Charles I) and we wish him a long and prosperous reign.”

Defending the village was men's work. Period.

“It's not really a place for women. You try to keep women and children out of that sort of thing,” Capt. Standish explained. “It's one of those businesses that's not good manners, really.”

The company was split into four squadrons, each led by a sergeant, and each squadron was assigned to defend one of the village's four gates in case of an attack, said Standish who explained the “great wall” was built around the village in 1623.

However, the cannons in the blockhouse built on a hill overlooking the village had never been fired in anger, he said. They were used for practice and to signal the men to return to the town. The blockhouse also served as the meeting house for Sunday worship even though it was not consecrated as a church.

The militia company of about 60 men mustered once or twice a year, as Standish directed, but the

squadrons trained more frequently, and there was a watch every night. The men kept watch for “hedge creepers, streetwalkers and ships coming into the harbor,” Bradford said. “We haven't had any day watches for some time.”

“We're farmers with muskets. That's a better name for it than soldiers,” said Thomas Prence.

Not all of the men were anxious to perform their additional, soldierly duties, Standish conceded. “Some of the men are more able than willing. Sometimes we have to persuade those who do not want to take their turns standing watch with appropriate punishment.”

There were, however, tactical considerations: taking the fight to the enemy and defending cabins that were on fire.

“Everyone would move into the fort if the town was ever under siege, but if at all possible we would take the fight away from the town. We would go to them rather than let them come to us,” said Standish.

Fire was a serious concern for a couple of reasons. One squadron would surround the burning building, their weapons at the ready, in case the fire was the result of an attack. The rest of the men would fight the flames, often by pulling down the thatched roof, to save what they could inside and to keep the fire from spreading to other structures.

The women? They tended to their homes and their children and left more worldly matters to the men.

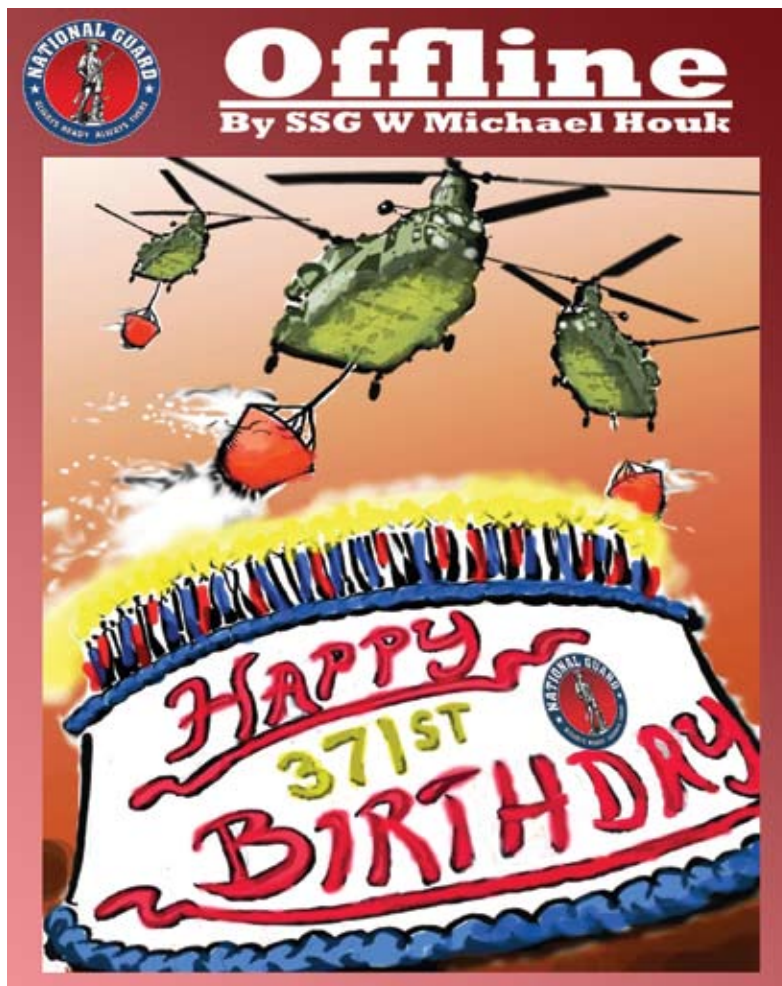
“I might express my opinion, but it's something I'm not skilled in,” said Mayflower survivor Susanna Winslow about the politics of governing the town. Her husband, Edward, was one of five magistrates, or constables, who maintained order and sat on the Governor's Council.

“I'm not able to understand the [Indian] women, and it's not my place to have contact with the men,” she added about her limited dealings with the natives.

And she made it clear that the limited festive occasions were not a holiday for the women.

“We labor six days and lay the seventh day aside for worship and rest,” she explained. “A day of leisure might be a brides feast (wedding) or a harvest feast. But that's not much leisure for the wives, I'll tell you.”

The real Susanna Winslow would probably be surprised indeed to observe the multiple roles, including direct combat, which wives and other women play in America 380 years later and 371 years after the birth of the National Guard.



The beginning of the National Guard is recognized as Dec. 13, 1636, when the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony ordered the organization of the colony's militia companies into three regiments: the North, South and East Regiments.

News briefs

Partnership

Maj. Gen. Terry Scherling, director of National Guard Bureau's Joint Staff, and Dr. David Banks, the Center for Asymmetric Warfare director, signed a letter Nov. 1 that officially recognizes a partnership between the two DoD agencies.

-National Guard Bureau

Airlift

A C-5 Galaxy cargo aircraft from the New York Air National Guard was used to transport a team of 19 Airmen and Soldiers and two helicopters from U.S. Southern Command's Joint Task Force Bravo to the Dominican Republic to assist with recovery efforts in the wake of Tropical Storm Noel. The 105th Airlift Wing based at Stewart Airport was used and departed Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, Nov. 5.

-U.S. Southern Command

Now playing

The National Guard is running a national theater advertising program Oct. 26 to Jan. 3. It includes a new 3:30 film entitled "Citizen Soldier" that features an original song about the National Guard by the multi-platinum alternative rock band 3 Doors Down. To view it, go to www.1800goguard.com/moviepromo.

Transfer

Nov. 3 marked the final day of duty for the 245th Engineer Company comprised of members from Colorado, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona National Guard. A transfer of authority took place that marked the lifting of the unit's responsibility after serving one year in Iraq. The incoming Guard unit, the 972nd Military Police Company of Reading, Mass., will work in Baghdad, acting as the personal security detail for many of the Iraqi government's higher ranking officials and also providing route security around the Green Zone.

-Spec. Megan Burmeister, Rhode Island National Guard

Colorado unit's colors flown in space

By Maj. Laura D. Kenney
Colorado National Guard

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – Colorado's 193rd Space Battalion was re-designated the 117th Space Battalion in a ceremony Oct. 20 with its new colors having been flown into space aboard the Space Shuttle Atlantis.

Astronaut Patrick Forrester, a retired Army colonel but still an active astronaut, was more than happy to carry the unit's new colors aboard the Atlantis.

"I was pretty excited and very proud to be asked to carry the flag of an Army unit that's done such great things into space. It gave me the opportunity to brag about you guys and tell your story for 5.8 million miles (the distance the shuttle flew in its June mission) and it's an honor to bring the flag back to you," said Forrester.

The very first and only Army Guard unit with a space mission, the then 193rd was activated in September 2001 at Peterson Air Force Base here. The unit gained a new name as it was formally transitioned to permanent status. It's assigned to the U.S. Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command.



Photo by Sharon Hartman

Retired Army Astronaut Col. Patrick Forrester admires the colors of the 117th Space Battalion that he took into space on a shuttle mission.

Forrester, who has performed two spacewalks totaling over 11 hours on earlier missions, was unable to bring the flag outside the shuttle on this particular trip, but it flew on the space deck and made a visit to the International Space Station, adding to its travel luster.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Kimberly D. Snow

Helo helping helo

Staff Sgt. James M. Thrasher, a UH-60 Blackhawk crewmember assigned to the Ohio Army National Guard's A Company, 1st Battalion, 137th Aviation Regiment, assists his crew Oct. 31 during the extraction of a downed Columbus Police Department helicopter. The McDonnell Douglas 369E rotorcraft helicopter was on a routine traffic patrol Oct. 29 south of downtown Columbus, when the crew experienced an in flight incident. The pilots safely landed on a bank beside the Scioto River and there the helicopter immediately began sinking in the mud and turned onto its side.

America sends more than \$5 million to help troops call home

DALLAS – It started simply enough in April 2004 as a program in which the American public could provide an avenue for Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Sailors in deployed areas to stay connected to loved ones back home.

Just three and a half years later, the contributions to "Help Our Troops Call Home" have totaled \$5,004,556.

"With contributions of more than \$5 million, America's outpouring of support for this program has been nothing short of spectacular," said

the Army and Air Force Exchange Service's Senior Enlisted Chief Master Sgt. Bryan Eaton. "And, with the holiday season rapidly approaching, there is no better time to show our support for the brave men and women of our military than by sending the means to connect with loved ones back home."

"Help Our Troops Call Home" allows anyone, even non-authorized exchange shoppers, to send Military Exchange Global Prepaid Phone cards to individual

servicemember, designated by the sender, or to "any servicemember" through a variety of charitable partners.

Since the "Help Our Troops Call Home" program inception, 129,912 individual orders for more than 214,000 phone cards have been purchased. More than 24,000 have been earmarked for "any servicemember" and distributed via charities such as the American Red Cross, Air Force Aid Society, Fisher House Foundation, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Soldier

& Family Assistance Center and USO.

By simply logging on to aafes.org or calling 800-527-2345, friends, family members and even civic groups can take part in the "Help Our Troops Call Home" effort by sending any one of three Military Exchange Global Prepaid Phone cards, including a 550-minute denomination card capable of providing more than two hours of call time from any one of 69 phone centers in Iraq, Afghanistan or Kuwait to the United States.

Tactical airlift initiatives further Air Force's total force integration ANG units in Tenn., New York affected

WASHINGTON (AFPN) -- Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley announced proposed initiatives Oct. 31 concerning C-130 Hercules tactical airlift, each of which furthers the service's vision for a seamless total force.

The initiatives, which would impact communities in Tennessee, New York, Georgia and Arkansas, are part of the total force integration effort to create innovative organizational arrangements among regular Air Force, Air National Guard (ANG) and Air Force Reserve components. The effort strives to leverage the strengths inherent within each of the three components.

The Tennessee ANG's 118th Airlift Wing has been selected for the proposed standup of a formal training unit at Nashville International Airport. The unit's day-to-day peacetime mission would be training allied airmen from strategic partner nations to safely fly and effectively employ C-130s, which simultaneously will prepare the wing for its federal wartime mission of training additional U.S. Airmen.

This arrangement would fill a critical need for international training that had not been met in recent years. To meet the need, the Tennessee ANG will acquire WC-130Hs, well-suited for the unit's newfound training mission, while its current C-130H aircraft are scheduled for disbursement as a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure, or BRAC, process.

The chief of staff also announced the strategy for Airmen in the New York ANG's 107th Air Refueling Wing to partner with the Air Force Reserve Command's 914th Airlift Wing at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, as directed by the 2005 BRAC. Based on four decades of experience associating regular Air Force and reserve component airlift wings, this Reserve/Guard association will be only the second such associate model ever established and the first-ever in combat delivery.

The 914th AW will continue to have primary responsibility for the unit's C-130H airlifters, but will partner with the 107th ARW Airmen in employing these aircraft.

Such associations generate efficiencies by sharing resources and reducing duplication of effort, providing contingency surge capability, preserving a corporate body of knowledge and enhancing retention and recruitment for the total force through personnel cross-flow. These associations also help maintain aircrew and maintenance expertise and experience levels and reduce peacetime training hours, thus saving money.

FLORIDA

Three F-15s assigned to the 125th Fighter Wing in the Sunshine State evacuated from Homestead Air Reserve Base to Jacksonville International Airport due to Tropical Storm Noel Oct. 30.

KENTUCKY

Maj. Gen. Donald C. Storm, adjutant general for The Bluegrass State, and more than 100 recruiters met on the front steps of the state capitol building in Frankfort Nov. 1 for an announcement on the state's recruiting effort. The Army National Guard there signed up 1,427 recruits during the 2007 fiscal year, bringing its membership up to 7,175, or 102 percent of authorized strength.

LOUISIANA

Soldiers from Pelican State's 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team received a hero's welcome at Texas Motor Speedway Nov. 4 when the Busch Series National Guard Racing Team honored them for their service during Operation Iraqi Freedom III. They spent a day at the track and were treated to walking tours of the garage and pit areas and a meet-and-greet with Busch Series National Guard driver Casey Mears.

MINNESOTA

The North Star State Guard, along with Fox Sports Net (FSN) North, the Minnesota Twins, Twin Cities Fox affiliate KMSP-TV, KFAN Radio, and Charter Communications received the Emmy for collaborative efforts resulting in the production of Freedom Week and Operation Home Base, a unique, week-long series of radio and television broadcasts that aired during the 2006 Major League Baseball season. It showcased the 'Red Bulls' of the Minnesota National Guard's 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT) of the 34th Infantry Division through the work of an FSN North sports reporting team embedded with 1st BCT units at Logistics Support Area Anaconda in Balad, Iraq.

NEVADA

The Air National Guard's Detachment 1 in the Silver State based at Creech Air Force Base in Indian Springs recently changed its name to the 232nd Operations Squadron. Its mission will not change as it will continue to protect, support and strengthen Nevada communities.

NEW YORK

The first two Empire State Air National Guard LC-130s flew to McMurdo Station, Antarctica, Oct. 15 to support Joint Task Force Support Forces Antarctica's Operation Deep Freeze. In all, six LC-130s, crews and support

★ Guarding America ★



Photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua Garcia

Hoosier daddy

Indiana Staff Sgt. Alec Cawfield, 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, removes a damaged section on the feed chute of a Universal Ammunition Loading System (UALS). The feed chute is used to load bullets into an aircraft. The UALS significantly reduces the time and manpower required to load aircraft equipped with internal Gatling gun systems.

personnel are to deploy to McMurdo. Two more LC-130s, currently in depot maintenance at Christchurch, New Zealand, will also support the operation.

PUERTO RICO

The Puerto Rico Army National Guard sent two helicopters and crews to the Dominican Republic to aid in the relief mission following Tropical Storm Noel. The international mission, approved by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, started Nov. 3 and was planned to last for approximately five days. The mission will support the U. S. Southern Command.

TENNESSEE

The Volunteer State's 134th Air Refueling Wing hosted Thomas F. Hall, assistant secretary of defense for Reserve Affairs, Nov. 4. He met with Wing Commander Col. Timothy T. Dearing and the state's Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Gus L. Hargett, among others.

TEXAS

The Lone Star State's 149th Fighter Wing hosted the 60th anniversary celebration of the 182nd Fighter Squadron with events in San Antonio Oct. 11-13. Almost 200 former members of the squadron, some of whom joined during the 1940s, attended the events, which included a welcome ceremony, base tours, a golf tournament and a social hour and banquet.

VIRGIN ISLANDS

One hundred members of the V.I. National Guard's 651st GS Maintenance Company deployed to Iraq received care packages filled by their Family Readiness Group. The packages were filled with traditional black cake, fruitcake, rum cake, coconut tarts, drops and cookies. They also received home-canned, locally grown gooseberry and tamarind stew.

WEST VIRGINIA

The Mountain State helped with a successful search and rescue mission in Tucker County in October when a lost 18-year-old autistic male was found alive. C Company, 1st Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment used UH-60 and OH-58 helicopters in the search.

WYOMING

A team of three UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and 19 Soldiers from the Equality State's C Company, 5/159th General Support Aviation Battalion recently supported the validation for the Canadian 408th Air Force Squadron as that squadron prepares to deploy to Afghanistan in early 2008. The 17-day Maple Guardian exercise provided real world training.

OIF Soldier dedicates flags to California hometown

By Sgt. Eddie Siguenza
1113th Transportation Company

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait – As a transportation driver, Sgt. Eric Adamsen carries more than supplies and equipment throughout Iraq.

He brings a patriotic message. And he does this courtesy of a United States flag.

Adamsen, an assistant convoy commander with the California National Guard's 1113th Transportation Company, devised a plan to honor his 29 Palms, Calif., hometown. Prior to every mission, Adamsen straps a U.S. flag to the antenna of his vehicle and flies it at every military base his convoy visits. At mission's end, that flag is encased and flown back to his hometown and presented to a family member, school or business.

"It's just to let people back home know I'm thinking of them and thanking them for their own sacrifices while I'm here," said Adamsen. "We always hear 'we support the troops, we support the troops.' But I don't think Soldiers are doing enough

to respond. Well, this is how I respond."

Each flag easily logs hundreds of miles, some even over a thousand, by mission's end. As a U.S. Army truck driver, Adamsen and his convoy deliver supplies to various forward operating bases (FOBs) throughout Iraq. Depending on a mission, the California Soldier may stop at five or six FOBs before returning to Camp Arifjan, his starting point. Missions can take days or weeks to complete.

He averages two to three missions per month. Adamsen still has a year to go in his Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment.

"I like his idea. I support his effort," said Staff Sgt. John Fonder, convoy commander. "That's going to be a lot of flags he'll be sending home, but there's so many people to thank for all their sacrifices."

An official certificate accompanies the flag when sent to California. For authenticity, Adamsen attaches an 8 x 10 inch photograph of the flag flying above his vehicle.

"We list every FOB where the flag has flown on every certificate," he said.



Photo by Sgt. Eddie Siguenza

Sgt. Eric Adamsen, a heavy vehicle operator with the 1113th Transportation Company, regularly flies an American flag on his vehicle while on convoy missions throughout Iraq.

Prime BEEF stamps hoofprints on Guantanamo

Work continues on \$10.2 million legal complex to try enemy combatants

Story/photos by Sgt. Sarah E. Stannard
JTF Guantanamo

Feature Story

Prime BEEF stamps hoof prints on Gitmo

By Army Sgt. Sarah E. Stannard
JTF-Guantanamo

GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba – A group of National Guard Airmen stand gazing out across the overgrown skeleton of Guantanamo Bay's original and once vital air-traffic hub in September. Examining the expanse of unkempt tarmac – grass extending over the tops of their

newly-issued tan combat boots, eyes half-closed by intense Guantanamo sunlight – members of the 474th Expedition-

474th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron is made up of civil engineers from seven states

ary Civil Engineering Squadron begin to plot the dynamic transformation of Guantanamo's McCalla Airfield.

The airfield resembles a military construction site in Iraq, complete with blowing dust, heavy equipment and a sprawling tent city. However, by the early part of next year the 474th plans to complete a \$10.2 million dollar Expeditionary Legal Complex there in which the U.S. Office of Military Commissions will restart the ongoing and evolving process of charging and trying enemy combatants detained in the Global War on Terrorism. Ground breaking for the project occurred, coincidentally, on Sept. 11.

Lt. Col. James Starnes, commander of the 474th "Red Bulls," estimates nearly 80 percent of his aggregate-force have returned from deployment in Iraq, Afghanistan or the U.S. southern border within the last two years. The 474th is made

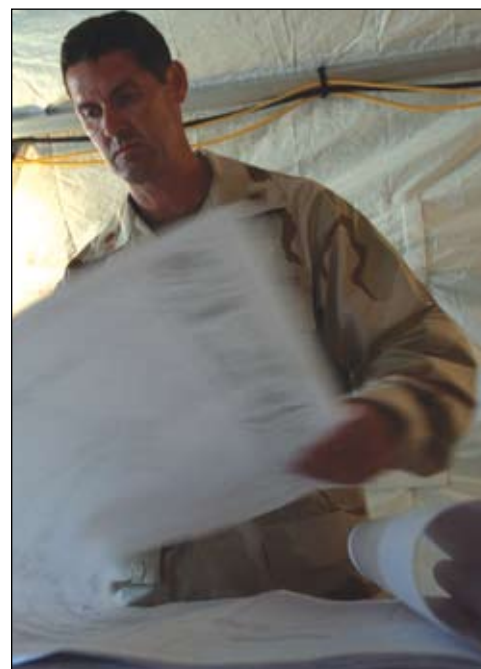


"Dirt boys" from the 474th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron (above and below) made up of Air Guard members prepare to lay a permanent foundation for Guantanamo Bay's new military commissions courtroom expected to be completed early next year.



up of civil engineers from Indiana's 122nd Fighter Wing, the Wisconsin's 128th Air Refueling Wing, Vermont's 158th Fighter Wing, Ohio's 121st Air Refueling Wing, California's 163rd Air Refueling Wing, New Mexico's 150th Fighter Wing and Florida's 823rd RED HORSE Squadron. These "Prime BEEF" (Base Engineer Emergency Force) teams arrived here in August poised to construct this Department of Defense (DoD) project.

"We're an Air Force unit on a Navy Base using Army assets to build a DoD project," said Staff Sgt. Mathew Johnson, a utilities specialist from the 122nd focused on plumbing, liquid fuels and pest manage-



Maj. Chad Warren examines the plans for the new facility.

From page 1:
A-10 HISTORY

Air Guard pilots, maintainers make history in Iraq

By Tech. Sgt. D. Clare
Ohio National Guard

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Despite the proximity of residential buildings and the mosque, structures immediately adjacent to the target suffered little more than a dusting from the attack. No coalition forces or non-combatants were harmed.

"With this munition, we're able to pinpoint a building," said Curland with the 438th Air Expeditionary Group. "Collateral damage is about zero. When the bomb impacts, it buries itself into the building and then detonates so you're looking at basically just taking the building out from the inside out instead of the outside in like before."

Thanks to the A-comprehensive digital upgrade completed by the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and Air Force, newly modified A-10C's are bring-



Disciplined enlistees stand in line awaiting the chance to enjoy cake and punch after the dedication of an educational facility at Camp Robinson, Ark. Students in the GED Plus program undergo extensive Soldier indoctrination as well as GED test preparation.

GED and more

Successful youth education program has new building, proven success

Story/photos by Maj. Eurydice Stanley
Professional Education Center

CAMP ROBINSON, Ark. — The Army National Guard General Education Diploma (GED) Plus program is making an investment in the lives of young people.

A new, 5,800-square-foot educational facility was dedicated in September. It includes six classrooms, office space for staff and a break area. Each classroom provides computer access, and the space can be configured as needed based on class size.

"This building is a commitment from the Army National Guard," said Lt. Gen. Clyde A. Vaughn, director, Army National Guard, during the building's dedication attended by 500 people, including GED Plus enlistees, Professional Education Center (PEC) staff, and Soldiers attending the basic recruiter course. "We're giving youth a chance to turn their lives around."

"There is no program like this anywhere else in the Department of Defense," noted Col. Michael Jones, chief of the Army National Guard Strength Maintenance Division.

The GED Plus Program provides the opportunity for non-high school graduate applicants with at least a 9th grade education

and score of 31 on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) to enlist. They are required to earn their GED prior to attending boot camp.

"They are still quality accessions. They just lack a diploma," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Duane Jahner, chief, PEC Strength Maintenance Training Center and officer in charge of the GED Plus program.

The program boasts a 74 percent pass rate for 2007, exceeding any similar program in the nation. Of the enlistees who pass, 71 percent have become military occupational specialty qualified (MOSQ) with another 15 percent in the training pipeline preparing to become MOSQ.

Enlistees, primarily between the ages of 17 and 24, represent all ages, ethnicities,

states and territories, and come from all walks of life. Their unifying tie is the need to complete their education.

"I was offered a job in high school and took the stupid route," said Pvt. Migdoel Flores, 37, of Queens, N.Y., about why he dropped out of high school. Known as "Pops" by his classmates, Flores is the oldest member of his GED Plus class.

"This program means a future for my family," said Pvt. Matthew Winegard, 22, of Grand Rapids, Mich. He had the highest physical training score and was given the honor of cutting the dedication ribbon with Vaughn, Col. Richard R. Guzzetta, chief of personnel, Army National Guard, and Col. Kenneth Newton, PEC commandant.

GED Plus students are assessed during in-processing. Based upon identified training needs, they are enrolled in a tailored program of 21, 16, or 12 days. They receive around-the-clock supervision as they are personally tutored and prepped to take the



Thirty-seven-year-old Pvt. Migdoel Flores, right, of Queens, N.Y., was the oldest student in his class. He was affectionately called "Pops" by classmates the same age as his oldest child.

GED. Additionally, they are treated as enlistees, preparing them for basic training.

"The primary focus of the program is ensuring the student successfully passes the GED. The secondary focus is Soldier indoctrination," said Jahner.

The GED Plus program is a groundbreaking initiative for the Army National Guard. By creating the GED option, it has infused more than 5,500 enlistees into the Guard since the program's inception last year. More than 2,300 attended the course at PEC, while others studied for their GED on their own in their home state. The program projects 10,000 annually by 2010.

The PEC GED test site is officially recognized by the American Council of Education (ACE) and the GED National Testing Service. In July, the PEC GED Plus program was recognized at the GED National Test Administrators Conference as the largest and most efficient military testing center.

Additionally, the exceptional efforts of 2nd Lts. Melissa Shipman and Michelle Grant were acknowledged as they were presented a plaque from the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Service (DANTES) by Vaughn based on the effectiveness of their testing program. As certified testing officials, they reduced the return time on test results from two weeks to two days.

There are plans to develop a direct ship program designed to send GED Soldiers directly to basic training after successfully passing their GED, as well as a recycle plan to retain students on location to prepare for a GED retest if necessary. Currently, students return home after completing the program where they can be exposed to the negative influences that may have caused them to drop out of school. The direct ship program would get enlistees into the system while they are still motivated and encouraged from their recent success in the GED Plus program.

Future goals for the program include achieving a 95 percent GED pass rate with a 97 percent MOSQ rate for course graduates.

The success of the GED Plus program can be attributed to its student focus of consistently providing opportunities for training, mentorship, and development.

"We want to influence their lives for the rest of their lives," said Vaughn.



PEC

The National Guard Professional Education Center (PEC) is seeking motivated Army National Guard Soldiers for national-level, Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS) tours. Tour lengths vary from six months to longer. Desired attributes include proven leadership, ability to work well with a team, exceptional written and oral communication skills, self-motivation and organizational skills sufficient to execute several projects at once. PEC ADOS opportunities include

- Classroom Instruction
- Project Officers
- Automation Network Support
- Event Planning
- Visual Information Support
- Logistics
- Admin and Operations Support

If interested in PEC opportunities, please call 501-212-4828.

Learn more about PEC at: www.pec.ngb.army.mil.

Rest easy America ... you are defended

Successful test proves missile defense capabilities

By Spc. Michael Cost
Colorado National Guard

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. -- Protecting a family from a home invasion is generally done with an alarm system or a firearm. But what could an American citizen use to defend against an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) hurtling through space, threatening not just their home but their entire neighborhood and city? The 100th Missile Defense Brigade (Ground-based Midcourse Defense) has the threat covered as a recent test confirmed.

The 100th MDB and the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) tested one of their ground-based interceptors Sept. 28 against a missile launched from Kodiak, Alaska. The GBI launched from the test pad located here hit its mark several hundred miles off the coast of California during yet another successful test launch.

All systems go

A strong breeze blew in from the ocean as the countdown over the radios began. Some onlookers were concerned about foul weather

reports out of Kodiak. Once the countdown reached 10 seconds, all doubts were pushed aside: "Ten, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4" and a giant stream of fire erupted from a silo on the coast of California.

The earth rumbled and smoke bellowed as the GBI rose up, then accelerated to its target. Cameras clicked and the crowd cheered as the missile pierced the sky.

Minutes ticked by and observers looked to the sky as if they actually expected to see the impact hundreds of miles up. Then MDA contractors cheered, signaling mission success.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of Soldiers and a multitude of contractors manning the system put in place as a result of President Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars" program.

"For that day and several days afterwards, my fellow crew members and I felt like we were walking on air," said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Mach, future operations officer on Charlie Crew, 100th MDB. "These tests continually prove to the war fighters that this system works and continues to advance."

A look inside

Enter the war fighter: Brig. Gen. Stuart Pike, Colorado National Guard deputy adjutant general for space, recently toured the 100th



100TH MISSILE DEFENSE BRIGADE

U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command and the Colorado Army National Guard activated the nation's first ground-based Midcourse Defense Brigade Oct. 16, 2003.

The brigade operates the first part of the integrated Ballistic Missile Defense System, which, in concert with sister services, is designed to protect the nation from accidental or intentional limited ballistic missile attacks.

The brigade provides expertise to U.S. Northern Command's command and control operations from the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center.

The brigade headquarters, near Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., is staffed by about 100 people – the majority are Army Guard members.

—Globalsecurity.org

Photo by Spc. Michael Cost

A ground-based interceptor on its way to the exoatmosphere to rendezvous with a missile launched out of Kodiak, Alaska.

MDB's facilities at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., to get a clearer picture of how this city-saving system works.

Sleepless in New York: A Soldier's vigil

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

NEW YORK – The city may never sleep, but the Big Apple was certainly resting at 2 o'clock on an October Saturday morning when Army National Guard Pfc. Adriel Rodriguez was on duty at Penn Station.

Yes, there was a steady stream of yellow cabs and other traffic outside on Eighth Avenue and West 33rd Street during the wee hours of Oct. 13. You could buy a hot lamb or chicken pita from a sidewalk vendor. And business was brisk at a 24-hour drugstore across the way from the station's entrance and down the street from the dark, towering presence of the Empire State Building. It was not, however, the vibrant city depicted in Frank Sinatra's rendition of "New York, New York."

But there was enough activity inside Penn Station to keep Rodriguez and Amtrak Police Officer Rich Byrnes on their toes even if it was about as quiet as the station gets during a 24-hour cycle. Rodriguez was Byrnes's Army Guard partner that evening in case the cop needed some help from the Soldier.

"I'm here to help the police officer if I'm asked," Rodriguez explained. "Otherwise, I just stay back."

Rodriguez was pulling his 11th night of duty, during the third shift, since joining the New York Guard's homeland security team, Task Force Empire Shield, 13 days earlier.

"A lot of drunks on Friday and Saturday nights. Home-

less people hitting on people for money or just making a nuisance of themselves. Earlier this evening, a couple of transvestites were blowing kisses at one of my partners," laughed Rodriguez when asked if he had seen anything unusual. "You see just about everything."

It was, in short, a quiet, nothing-special night for the Guard Soldiers who have been part of the homeland security presence at the Pennsylvania and Grand Central stations in New York City every day and night since the terrorists attacked America on Sept. 11, 2001. The scene seemed a lot more dull than dangerous. It was the routine, unspectacular side of how Guard Soldiers and Airmen are serving their nation at war.

Homeless people cocooned in blankets on the hard floor were trying to grab a few hours of sleep, comforted a bit by the classical music from the public address system. An intense young man with a goatee was lamenting the injustices of his life to a young woman who was listening just as intently in a corner they had staked out for their conversation.



Photo by Lt. Col. Paul Fanning

National Guard Soldiers on the main concourse, Grand Central Station, Manhattan.

No one seemed intent on blowing the station to Kingdom Come.

Yet, there is something comforting about seeing Rodriguez and other Guard Soldiers like him vigilantly manning their posts and walking the corridors of these venerable transportation centers more than six years after America's worst terrorist catastrophe. They are on watch by day when business people and tourists are pouring onto and off the trains and by night when most New Yorkers are asleep or watching television.

These Soldiers, distinctive in their Army Combat Uniforms and caps and minimal combat gear, remind people that New York has not let its guard down when it comes to standing up to the threat of terrorism.

"Oh, yeah. It's kind of reassuring to see these Soldiers here, working with the police," said one man after asking Rodriguez for directions to the Long Island Railroad platform. "It tells me that we're still paying attention. But I'm so used to seeing these Soldiers here that I don't really think about it."

The Guard troops have become as much a part of the scene as the Hudson News stand and the announcements of arriving and departing trains.

"I like the duty. It's what I do," said Rodriguez, 29, who is comfortable with working deep into the night. "I used to be a truck driver, and I drove a lot at night. So I don't mind this."

He is a boat mechanic by trade, and he and his second wife, Estela, were married July 20. They have two sons and a daughter from previous marriages. He joined the Guard in February 2004. Now he would like to serve full-time.

"I want to make a career of this. I'll get my chance," said Rodriguez, who does not lack for confidence.

He is doing one thing right when it comes to gaining attention. He's pulling the duty that others do not care for – in this case working the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift – and making the best of it.

"There's always something to do. Walking around. People asking you where they have to be" Rodriguez said. "The time goes by pretty quickly."



Eye in the sky wows firefighters

RC-26 aircraft provides detailed, full-motion video from 10,000 feet

**By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill and
Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Rotherham**
National Guard Bureau

SAN BERNADINO, Calif. — In the same sky from which the National Guard drops flame-suffocating retardant and dumps water on the Southern California wildfires, a camera hanging from the belly of an aircraft gives firefighters unprecedented information about their enemy's progress.

The National Guard's fleet of 11 sleek, gray RC-26 aircraft have been a key asset assisting law enforcement counterdrug efforts. The RC-26 has helped the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol improve border security. It has gleaned vital information during Hurricane Katrina. It has flown over Baghdad.

Now the aircraft are providing detailed, full-motion video from 10,000 feet above the wildfires, and a team of National Guard Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen are decoding the footage and relaying it in real time to the federal, state and local agencies tasked with extinguishing the fires and managing the aftermath.

It's the first time the technology has been used in California for firefighting. The National Guard previously tested it in Florida wildfires.

"Let's go eastbound to the fire's edge and we're going to want to reconnoiter the easternmost edge of the fire and work it back

to where we're ... going to fly counterclockwise from the north ... and we want to look for heat signatures ... out to the west. Copy?"

That's the voice of Ron Bollier. He's not a pilot. He's not even a member of the National Guard. He's a firefighter, the operations section chief for the 1,100-acre Grass Valley Fire near Lake Arrowhead northeast of Los Angeles, and he's talking via a National Guard radio to Lt. Col. Steven McShea of the California Air National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing, who is the pilot of an RC-26 flying high above Bollier's fire.

As Bollier talks, he watches live footage from the RC-26 being projected onto a wall at the Snow Valley Mountain Resort in the San Bernadino National Forest northeast of Los Angeles, where hundreds of firefighters have made their headquarters and struck up camp.

"It has been outstanding to have live feed," Bollier said. "We're actually looking at it real time."

The equipment on the RC-26 that gathers the images is from the same family as the FLIR — Forward-Looking Infrared — used by the National Guard for counterdrug and other surveillance operations.

Previously, firefighters have had to rely on information that's four to six hours old. The RC-26s have flown two, four-hour missions each day during the wildfires. They can monitor all of California's active wildfires in a single mission.

"The most useful thing we can provide is real-time, full-motion video to any customer, anywhere, anytime," McShea said. We can also provide this picture on the Internet to anyone who wants to log in, he added.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill

Senior Master Sgt. Randy Chambers of the Arkansas Air National Guard's 123th Intelligence Squadron decodes real-time, full-motion video images coming from an Air National Guard RC-26 aircraft.

8 DECEMBER 2007



Top: A North Carolina Air Guard C-130 Hercules from the 145th Airlift Wing sprays retardant on a burned car while on patrol in Valley Center, Calif., Oct. 24. Bottom right: A Citizen-Soldiers

That's made it possible for firefighters at remote locations to see the images — and for them to be seen at the Joint Operations Center in Sacramento, Calif., at U.S. Northern Command in Colorado Springs, Colo., and at the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va.

"It's real-time, highly accurate, high-definition information at the direction of the customer," McShea said. "They can talk to our aircraft real time via radio and tell us what they want to see. This is one of the most satisfying missions I've been part of since I've been a member of the National Guard. There's nothing better than answering the call of your neighbors. I have friends and family in this area, and I have friends that have lost their homes. It doesn't get any better than to answer the call of your home state in an emergency like we have now."

Here's how it works:

- The Air National Guard RC-26 flies over the fires relaying encoded images to the ground.
- An Air National Guard team on the ground uses a piece of equipment called a Dagoon to decode the images. "It's a great feeling," said Senior Master Sgt. Randy Chambers with the Arkansas National Guard's 123rd Intelligence Squadron. "This is what the National Guard is for."
- An Army National Guard team in a mobile communications station called an IC4U relays the images from the Dagoon to incident commanders and other customers such as NORTHCOM. "It's saving a lot of lives and a lot



of homes," said Sgt. Maj. Salvatore Santangelo. Incident commanders "have been absolutely elated to see the area of operation that they're responsible for in real time and be able to respond as quickly as they can," Santangelo said.

• Fire managers watch the images at their command stations, talking directly with the crew on the aircraft via a National Guard radio to request images of specific areas of interest. "We've never had real-time capability," said



the Southern California hills. Bottom left: A California Army National Guard Soldier examines a box of MREs to Qualcomm Stadium, which housed 11,000 wildfire evacuees.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill



Photo by Master Sgt. Dan Kacir

Bob Toups, a California Department of Forestry communications technology supervisor and planning officer. "I can talk on the radio and tell my ground commanders that they have a hotspot at this latitude and longitude ... and they can put ground resources in there right away."

- The National Guard works with the fire managers to provide information that puts an exact location to the images so that they correlate with the firefighters' maps.

Firefighters are able to be far more precise in their efforts using this technology. "We're able to target specific areas of heat," Bollier said. "We're able to target problem areas, what appears to be issues that may cause an escape on the line, may let the fire get outside. Just an overall good view of how much heat is inside

**RC-26 continued on:
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Photo by Master Sgt. Dan Kacir

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger personally thanks Pfc. Edgar Rivera, Pfc. Eliza Bealer, Sgt. Jerrod Dett, and Pfc. Ryan Adams at the San Diego Chargers' Qualcomm Stadium.

Football fans honor Soldiers who stayed on duty despite losses

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

SAN DIEGO, Calif. - The governor, the San Diego Chargers and a cheering crowd of 60,439 football fans consoled and thanked four National Guard Citizen-Soldiers in pre-game ceremonies here Oct. 28.

Despite personal losses from the Southern California wildfires, the four members of the California Army National Guard stayed on duty.

Pfc. Edgar Rivera's cousin died saving his 9-month-old sister's life; both Sgt. Jerrod Dett and Pfc. Ryan Adams lost their homes; and Pfc. Eliza Bealer was evacuated from hers. Yet the four declined to be relieved of their duties, insisting on remaining with the more than 2,000 National Guard Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen who were assisting civilian authorities fighting the wildfires.

"It's a very devastating thing," said Rivera, whose cousin dropped his 9-month-old sister from a second floor window into his uncle's arms but could not save his own life. "I

can't be selfish. There's other families out there that are having problems - more than I do. They lost their home and their family. It's my duty."

For Dett, the deciding moment came out on patrol. "When I saw these evacuees trying to come up the hill and being turned away, I felt that my duty was I needed to help these people," he said.

Bealer agreed: "Not only is it my duty, it's the reason I joined the National Guard," she said.

Struck by what he saw members of the San Diego community doing for each other, Adams felt a part of something bigger than himself. "I'm overwhelmed by the support

of everybody," he said. "People have been letting random strangers stay in their houses."

Adams said he's had offers of accommodation and even money from fellow Soldiers who've reached out to support him.

As he stood on the field, then shook hands with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Adams was teary-eyed. Rivera said he felt blessed. Nearby, Bealer fought to restrain her emotions. "This community came together so great," she said. "I'm very proud of this state."

The Soldiers stood alongside firefighters, police and other public servants also honored before the game - the same people that National Guard Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen have been assisting in joint efforts throughout the Southern California wildfire fight.

The crowd thanked the Guard, and

the Chargers beat the Houston Texans 35-10 in the game at Qualcomm Stadium, which housed 11,000 evacuees earlier in the week.

National Guard members provided security at the stadium while it was an evacuation center. They

helped process tons of donated supplies at the stadium. Closer to the fires, they were still patrolling evacuated neighborhoods, dropping water from helicopters, dropping retardant from aircraft and performing numerous other duties even as the football game continued.

The four Guardmembers honored at the game returned to duty afterwards, helping to provide communications, performing administrative functions and providing other assistance to their communities.

"I was told that I didn't have to stay," Adams said. "It's just what I was taught to do. I'm not trying to be heroic or anything. I'm just trying to do my part."

Sgt. Drug Free kicks off *Red Ribbon Week* in Alaska

By Tech. Sgt. Cheryl Hackley
National Guard Bureau

ANCHORAGE, Alaska - A large inflatable National Guardsman by the name of Sergeant Drug Free paid a visit to students at Sand Lake Elementary School here Oct. 22 as part of the kick off to Red Ribbon Week. Members of the Alaska National Guard Counterdrug Program's Drug Demand Reduction team brought the larger-than-life figure to the school to help guard youth against the dangers of alcohol and illicit drugs.

"Alaska's youth don't need drugs, tobacco or alcohol to have fun," said Mayor Mark Begich.

That message was reinforced by the Army and Air National Guard and Sergeant Drug Free. After shaking hands and greeting the children, he and Air Guard Staff Sgt. Gennie Arvites encouraged the youth to find drug-free activities. Arvites told the students her alternative is snowboarding. When she asked them, they shouted out activities like soccer, video games, and ice skating.

"Red Ribbon Week is one more opportunity for the National Guard Counterdrug Program to engage and support the schools in promoting students making better life decisions," said Air Guard Master Sgt. William Hall, drug demand reduction administrator.

Red Ribbon Week has been celebrated nationally in the last week of October every year since 1985 after

the kidnapping and drug-related murder of DEA Special Agent Enrique Camarena. A red ribbon is worn or displayed by adults and children to show their commitment to a drug-free lifestyle. For eight days, the National Family Partnership and organizations across the United States participate in events that promote those messages in the workplace, at school and in the community.

For the National Guard Counterdrug members, this is their busiest week of the year as they participate in many elementary, middle school and community events. Whether that's introducing Sergeant Drug Free to children across the state, teaching anti-drug courses or handing out tens of thousands of red ribbons, their goal is to help make Alaska 100 percent drug free.

Along with Arvites and Hall, Army Guard Master Sgt. Sherry But-

ters and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Scott Frickson were on hand in uniform to participate in the event. Later that afternoon, Frickson was

the co-pilot on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter that flew over a Fort Richardson elementary school as students gathered outside to form the word COURAGE. That message tied into the week's events to have the courage to say no to drugs and make healthier, drug-free lifestyle choices, said Frickson.

In addition to other drug presentations at schools around the city, the National Guard graduated a class from their Stay on Track pro-

Frickson was the co-pilot on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter that flew over a Fort Richardson elementary school as students gathered outside to form the word COURAGE.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Cheryl Hackley

Sergeant Drug Free greets students at Sand Lake Elementary School in Anchorage, Alaska, during the kick off for the annual Red Ribbon Week. The larger-than-life figure helps guard students against drugs.

gram. This science-based, anti-drug curriculum has been taught in 11 states by the National Guard since last school year and will eventually expand to nearly all 54 counterdrug programs.

Local law enforcement and other community-based organizations in the Last Frontier State have also forged together with the National Guard to bring awareness to the drug and alcohol problems among the youth in their community. According to coalition staff, a recent

Anchorage Risk Behavior Survey showed that 75.8 percent of youth have tried alcohol and 44.9 percent have tried marijuana.

Coalition members had many words of advice for the parents, teachers and adults to help keep youth from experimenting with drugs. They encouraged everyone to start talking early on to children about the dangers of drugs, alcohol and tobacco; guide children toward positive, skill-building activities; set serious boundaries and con-

sequences for alcohol and drug experimentation; and get to know the children who their children hang out with as well as their parents to create common ground rules and consequences.

"All these efforts by our Drug Demand Reduction staff, local law enforcement, schools, and community-based organizations prove our dedication to looking out for the future of our state," said Hall. "Together, we can help Alaska be drug free."

Flash floods possible after California wildfires

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AFTERMATH

"The purpose is to help residents out here when the rainy season starts so they're sure to have something to protect their houses so they don't get flooded," said 1st Lt. Nelson Varas of Alpha Battery.

Wildfires like the ones that have hit Southern California in October are typically followed by flash floods and mudslides. That's because rain runs off faster when vegetation is gone; and also because fire changes the chemistry of the soil.

In some places, the burning process creates a waxy coating on the soil hindering the absorption of water and speeding its flow, fire officials explained. The phenomenon is known as hydrophobicity. Water beads and runs over hydrophobic soil instead of soaking in, increasing the likelihood of flash floods and mudslides for months following wildfires.

Sandbags can protect homes and businesses from water and mud damage. The sandbags will be stored for distribution by area fire departments and the California Department of Forestry, said 1st Sgt. John Wood of Alpha Battery.

Like many of the Citizen-Soldiers working through the weekend to fill sandbags, Varas has served in Iraq. Varas balances a civilian job with his family, overseas deployments and homeland missions.

"We're all dedicated," he said. "We know what we signed

up for."

He was particularly pleased to serve in his own backyard. "That's what we're here for," he said. "That's our mission. We're National Guard. We're part of the state, and since we've got a crisis going on and people need help, the National Guard's here for that."

For Alpha Battery's Spc. Angel Flores, the sandbag mission was only his second time with his unit after a stint on active duty. During his year in Baghdad, Iraq, Flores's thoughts frequently turned to the family, friends and community that his service separated him from. He was still thinking of them as he filled sandbags Oct. 27.

"I figure that the people who need it most are the people that I was thinking about while I was gone," Flores said.

National Guardmembers said the gratitude they get from the neighbors they're helping only makes the task easier. In Southern California, restaurants have refused to let Soldiers and Airmen pay for meals, retailers have declined payment for supplies and residents have offered handshakes and pats on the back.

"It's been outstanding support," Varas said.

"We're happy to be here to help," said Sgt. Timothy Miller. "You have to take care of home. Home comes first."

More than 2,500 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen helped authorities tackle the Southern California wildfires. The National Guard has provided communications capabilities, supplied fire incident commanders with aerial images of the fires, dropped water from helicopters and retardant from aircraft, patrolled evacuated neighborhoods, handed out relief supplies and performed numerous other tasks.

Aerial imagery from RC-26 helpful in fight

From page 9:
RC-26

the fire perimeter."

As Bollier watches images of the Grass Valley Fire, hotspots show up on the screen like jewels on black velvet or stars against a rural night sky.

"We're able to determine where we need to place ground personnel and be effective in holding the fire where it's at," Bollier said. "We can see where the fire's spreading to and the point of impacts, whether it be structures or anything else."

The equipment can see through clouds and smoke.

"Every time I stop at a fire, we provide them a piece of information that they did not know before, and that's changed the way they've fought the fire," McShea said. "When I can show an incident commander at the edge of the fire exactly what's going on right now, that's the most powerful tool we can give them. A picture is worth a thousand words."

Firefighters say they would like to negotiate mutual support agreements to use the National Guard's RC-26s more often.

"If we had the RC-26 tasked to us, we'd use this on every fire in California over a couple of hundred acres, certainly on every large Santa Ana-driven fire," Toups said. "We could use this for flooding; we could use this for earthquakes; this could be a great tool to enhance the incident command structure ... to help mitigate emergencies."

Oregon reintegration team helps returning Soldiers

Oregon Guardsmen who lost limbs and loved ones in Iraq turn grief into action

By Kim Lippert
Oregon Military Department

"My boys. How are my boys?"

"They're fine, Sergeant Jacques. They're fine."

"Make sure my boys go before me. Get them on the bird first."

"Okay, Sergeant Jacques."

(The Devil's Sandbox, by John Bruning Jr.)

His Humvee had been blown to pieces—a mangled mess shattered by an improvised explosive device. His driver, Pfc. Kenny Leisten, was dead. Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Vince Jacques dangled upside down with his legs trapped under the dashboard. His gunner, Pfc. Ben Ring, was seriously wounded. But on that fateful day, July 28, 2004, in Iraq, despite his own injuries, Jacques had only one thing on his mind: his Soldiers, "his boys."

Miraculously, Jacques survived the blast. But his injuries prevented him from returning to Iraq with his unit, the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry. In the days and months that followed Jacques admits it was tough.

"Knowing they were over there and I wasn't was really hard," said Jacques.

Back home in Oregon, Retired Col. Scott McCrae was also struggling.

His son, 1st Lt. Erik McCrae, also a member of 2/162nd had died in Iraq only weeks before, in an IED attack that resulted in the largest loss of life the Oregon National Guard had faced in a single day since World War II.

"He was the kind of person you would have loved to have as a son," said McCrae.

In Eastern Oregon, another Oregon National Guard Soldier from the 2/162nd was also coping with immense loss. Sgt. Luke Wilson had lost his leg to a rocket-propelled grenade in Iraq. After getting out of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Wilson said he felt aimless.

"I pretty much hid in my garage for the first two to three months after I got home, working on my jeep," said Wilson. "There was no place out there looking to hire a one-legged man to kick in doors and pull triggers."

Out of the depths of despair emerged a mission. These men, united by separate twists of fate, would come together to ensure that their "boys," and all of Oregon's servicemembers, are taken care of when they return home from war. In February 2005, the Oregon National Guard Reintegration Team was formed.

"We do a great job of getting our Soldiers out the door, we train them to be a warrior and after they've been gone for 18 months or more, we send them back into the community and say, 'have a great life,'" said McCrae.

The Oregon National Guard recognizes that nearly 37 percent of its returning veterans are under or unemployed and 90 percent want college educations and job training for their families. The ORNG Reintegration Team works with federal, state, local and civilian agencies and refers servicemembers to resources where they can receive assistance for any need they may have.

"We are, in effect, a highly networked 'help desk' where we act as 'traffic cops' to direct Soldiers and Airmen to the right place," said McCrae.

One resource the ORNG Reintegration Team refers Soldiers and Airmen to is the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, where service officers can help them apply for benefits.

"I'm very impressed with the character and commitment of all of the Soldiers working for the Oregon Guard Reintegration Team," said Jim Willis, director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. "By working together we can make a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families."

Jacques said he wants to reach those who might otherwise slip through the cracks.

"When I was over there, the guys were the best I'd ever seen. We know they can handle a lot of responsibility. We need to provide them with tools to be successful here at home as well," said Jacques.

Jobs, counseling and education are just a few of the tools the ORNG Reintegration Team helps put in the hands of returning

“There was no place out there looking to hire a one-legged man to kick in doors and pull triggers.”

-Sgt. Luke Wilson

veterans. The team provides military job and benefit fairs, daily phone calls, and a commitment to 'never say no' to someone who needs help.

"We have never turned anyone away," said Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Maas, who leads the ORNG's Career Transition Assistance Program in Salem, an integral part of the ORNG Reintegration Team.

Currently, nine states are involved in reintegration issues for returning servicemembers. Oregon is the only state that combines its reintegration efforts with the Jobs Program and the Career Transition Assistance Program.

McCrae said he keeps his focus on helping veterans get back to a normal, healthy life.

"We want to fix physical problems, mental health problems, family problems and financial issues so they can be a productive member of the community and a stable, well-adjusted member of their unit," said McCrae.

For some Soldiers, like Spc. Patrick Silva, help meant a referral to be treated for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. According to Army statistics, the condition affects up to one in five Soldiers returning from Iraq.

"When I came back from Iraq I had

PTSD. It's nice they are finally recognizing that this is not something you can just get over overnight," said Silva of the 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry.

When a servicemember calls the ORNG Reintegration Team, someone always answers the phone. It is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"The phone calls don't always come at 8:00 to 4:30. Some of them come at 1:47 a.m. saying, 'oh, by the way, here is where I am and here is what is happening to me,' and we have to respond," said Maas.

Maas said servicemembers can connect with the ORNG Reintegration Team in a way others may not be able to because they are talking to someone who knows exactly what they are going through.

"We had a situation in Portland, a stand-off with one of our servicemembers. The police could not seem to get through to him. But Jacques, with the help of local law enforcement, walked up to the guy and said, 'hand me that (weapon), you and I are going to leave here together and we're going to get you some help.' And they did," said Maas. "The individual came into the office the other day, and he's cleaned up and back on his feet," added Maas.

Retired 1st Sgt. Ray Lewallen, NCO in charge of the ORNG Reintegration Team, and a Vietnam veteran, drove four hours in the middle of the night to resolve another police stand off involving a different Soldier.

"The guys on the team have personally intervened on 15 [attempted] suicides," said McCrae. "If we can prevent one Soldier from taking their life that's a great deal. You can't put a price on that."

McCrae said he believes suicide is not a sudden decision but a desperate act that occurs when many aspects of a person's life fall apart.

"Our goal is to break that chain somewhere along the cycle and not allow it to get to the point where they are hopeless, debilitated and dysfunctional," said McCrae.

A steady job, said Maas, can make a huge difference in the quality of life a Soldier and their family can enjoy.

"I got a phone call on a Saturday night from a woman who said, 'Sgt. Maas, you don't know me but you got my husband a job at Swift Trucking. He never had the money to take me shopping, but now we are at the mall and I'm buying a new dress and we're getting new clothes for the kids,'" said Maas.

Nearly three years since its implementation, the ORNG Reintegration Team continues to evolve. Each member has a story and purpose, their resolve forged from the fires of battle in Iraq.

"I love my job," said Wilson. "Every day I get up and help veterans and Soldiers."

For Wilson, Jacques, and McCrae who lost limbs or loved ones in Iraq, the reintegration team not only provides a chance to help, it's also a chance to heal.

"Working for the reintegration team has been a form of therapy for me," said Wilson. "It has helped me a lot."

HEADS UP!

Nominate

Nominations for the 2008 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award will be accepted at www.esgr.mil until Jan. 21. National Guard and Reserve members and their families are eligible and encouraged to nominate employers who have gone above and beyond in their support of military employees.

Enhanced services

An enhancement to the virtual Personnel Center - Guard and Reserve is scheduled to launch in December. The new vPC-GR Dashboard will streamline the way all Airmen manage their vPC-GR account profiles, submit new requests, check the status and coordinate on existing transactions. Information about these changes and future applications can be found on the Air Reserve Personnel Center, Personnel Services Delivery Transformation page at <http://www.arpc.af.mil/library/PSD/>.

Care package

The United Service Organizations Inc. (USO) is enlisting support of individuals around the world to support the troops through Operation USO Care Package. These packages are being delivered to members of the U.S. Armed Forces deployed around the world to show them they have not been forgotten and to provide a touch of home. With a donation of \$25, you can sponsor a care package and include a personal message of support and encouragement. These USO Care Packages include requested items such as pre-paid worldwide phone cards, sunscreen, travel size toiletries, disposable camera and a message from the donor thanking them for their service and sacrifice. Learn more at <http://www.usocares.org/>.

Career help

Helmets to Hardhats is a national program that connects National Guard, Reserve and transitioning active-duty military members with quality career training and employment opportunities within the construction industry. Visit www.HelmetsToHardhats.org to search for jobs, learn how to break into a trade, find apprenticeship programs and more.

\$60,000 bonuses

The Army National Guard has launched a new recruiting effort to attract prior-service Soldiers. Dubbed "Active First," the program targets new recruits who want to serve on active-duty but are willing to return to the Guard to finish out the remainder of their initial military service obligation. Officials hope to recruit as many as 2,000 Soldiers into the program this year, and recruits can earn bonuses as high as \$40,000 plus another \$20,000 when they transition into the National Guard. For more information, visit the Active First Web page at: www.1800goguard.com/activefirst/index.php.



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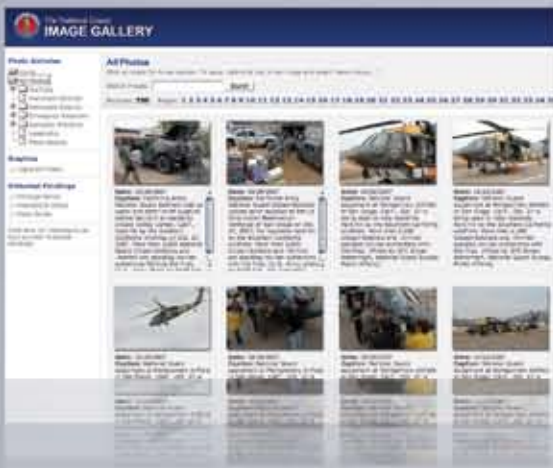
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Soldier turned beauty queen gives back

By Staff Sgt. Mary Flynn
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – What's another marathon, really, when you're Jill Stevens?

The 2007 Miss Utah is no stranger to the physical and mental discipline required to knock out 26.2 miles. She ran the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington Oct. 28, finishing in about 3.5 hours.

It's the third marathon she's run since winning the pageant title in June. "I love challenges," she said. "That's why I joined the military."

No, that's not a misprint. For one week-end a month and two weeks in the summer, Miss Utah becomes Sgt. Stevens of the Utah National Guard.

She trades in her high heels and gown for combat boots and ACUs, her bouquet of roses for a combat medic aid bag, and her sparkling tiara for a beret or patrol cap.

Wearing the uniform, she says, feels more natural to her. "I'm first off a Soldier. Always," said Stevens, who had originally laughed at the idea of participating in a beauty pageant. "I don't do heels. I didn't even know where to buy them!"

Having deployed as a combat medic with the 1st Battalion, 211th Aviation Group in April 2004 to Afghanistan, Stevens' lifestyle isn't what one would expect of the typical beauty queen.

The 25-year-old had previously shared the same opinion of beauty pageant contestants that many people hold. "I thought that all these girls do is wave their hand, look pretty and do nothing. I didn't want to be

associated with that."

She soon discovered, however, that the organization actually had a lot in common with the military. The Miss America program promotes education and teaches leadership, she says. It also promotes fitness and well-being, while focusing on bringing out one's best.

"I saw a great opportunity that would open doors," she said, referring to the titleholder's position as a chance to start organizations or influence legislation to create change. "[These women] can move people to action and really make a difference."

One way Stevens has chosen to make a difference is by raising funds and awareness for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a support network for the families of those who have died in service.

TAPS offers peer support and assists survivors through a wide variety of programs, including programs for youths.

"[I'm running] for my battle buddies and their families, people who have lost loved ones over there," she said.

While in D.C., Stevens met with some of the families and visited Soldiers recuperating at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. "I thought of them along this run. I'm doing this for them."

Stevens intends to participate in more marathons before her reign as Miss Utah is over. In each one, she will run for TAPS.

Stevens was first exposed to the National Guard when recruiters set up a booth in her high school. Beyond the tuition assistance



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary K. Flynn

Utah National Guard member and the 2007 Miss Utah Sgt. Jill Stevens smiles after crossing the finish line at the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington Oct. 28.

and the hands-on medical experience she would receive as a combat medic, she was drawn to the challenge that being a Soldier presented.

"I wondered, 'Can I hack that?'" she recalls.

Today, the recent graduate of Southern Utah University has a bachelor's degree in nursing, 12 marathons under her belt, six years as a combat medic in the Utah National Guard, and she's just applied for a direct commission to become an Army nurse.

Stevens attributes much of her success to her experiences in the Guard. "The military has really, truly provided me with a lot of opportunity" in addition to teaching her to make the best of a difficult situation, she said. "I turned Afghanistan into a positive

experience, an incredible experience, and I'm able to share [it]."

Since her return in April 2005, Stevens has frequently been invited to give talks on her experiences. She said it's an opportunity to give back, one that has only been fueled since her venture into pageantry.

Her schedule is packed with speaking engagements at junior high and elementary schools, where she discusses her platform – "Ready When Disaster Strikes: Emergency Preparedness for Everyone," and teaches the importance of living life to the fullest.

"I love giving back," she says, citing her opportunities as a Soldier, a medic, a nurse and now, a titleholder. "It gives me the best feeling in life – it's my passion."

Stevens will compete for the Miss America crown in January 2008.

Army National Guard partners with USA Rugby

BOULDER, Colo. – USA Rugby and the Army National Guard announced Oct. 31 that they have signed an agreement that will make the Army National Guard an official sponsor of USA Rugby. This deal includes title sponsorship of USA Rugby's College and High School Championships as well as the National Team.

This strategic partnership will enhance the support provided to the nations' top performing rugby athletes in premier matches throughout the United States. The National Guard's sponsorship of USA Rugby will include events such as the U.S. National College Playoffs and Championships, the Boys and Girls High School Championships, the National Guard Military Challenge and select men's and women's championship events.

"The National Guard is looking forward to partnering with USA Rugby," said Col. Mike Jones, chief of the Army National Guard's Strength Maintenance Division. "This initiative will reach communities across the nation, increasing awareness of the Army National Guard. USA Rugby's beliefs of lifelong camaraderie beyond the game and the greatest asset being the players are beliefs the Army National Guard shares. These shared values are a big part of the reason I think both organizations will benefit from our partnership."

In addition to title sponsorships, another added benefit of this new partnership is that in conjunction with official USA Rugby licensees, USA Rugby and the National Guard will also launch a comprehensive college kit campaign that will provide apparel and equipment to 300 college teams across the U.S. All colleges in good standing with USA Rugby will be eligible to apply for the free college kit. Applications will be processed through USA Rugby's National Guard Web page (www.usarugby.org/goto/national_guard), effective immediately.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian D. Lehnhardt

Breathe

Washington Air Guard Tech. Sgt. Michael Bergquist, a triathlete from Geiger Air National Guard Base, Wash., swims practice laps Oct. 13 to get ready for an upcoming triathlon at the Councell International du Sport Militaire's (Military World Games) in Mumbai, India. He finished sixth in the Armed Forces Triathlon Championship which earned a spot on the Military Team USA for the games.

Air controller recognized among industry's best

By Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON -- Controlling the ground and air space of thousands of military aircraft in a combat zone, day and night, in all weather for 12 months with limited facilities and equipment is what it took this year to receive the nation's top air traffic control award for civilian and military professionals. Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Leland Hughes, a tall, broad-shouldered Soldier from Louisiana, earned the distinction.

Hughes was awarded the General E. R. Quesada Memorial Award by the Air Traffic Control Association (ATCA) during an awards luncheon here Oct. 29 for his ATC duties under wartime conditions in Iraq.

Hughes, a senior air traffic controller with the Louisiana Guard's 2nd Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment, managed a team of Army Guard air traffic controllers from Louisiana and Maryland during a 12-month deployment last year to the Army airfield at Camp Taji.

"The award recognizes extraordinary achievement bringing Federal Aviation Administration, military and civilian aviation together," said ATCA President Peter F. Dumont. "[Hughes] embodies that." Dumont explained that the association poured over many nominations of high-caliber ATC professionals this year. "Sergeant Hughes stood out over and above all of the rest," he said.

Hughes and more than 20 Guard controllers deployed in November 2005 as Echo Company, 111th Aviation Regiment to support the Army's 4th Infantry Division (ID). The Soldiers were split into two groups stationed at Camp Taji and at a U.S. Embassy heliport in Baghdad.

Camp Taji is one of more than a dozen forward operating military air bases staged throughout Iraq. It was seized from enemy forces by the 4th ID in April 2003, and its



Sgt. 1st Class Leland Hughes was awarded the Quesada Memorial Award by the Air Traffic Control Association for his duties under wartime conditions in Iraq. He controlled aircraft, like the AH-64D Apache helicopter pictured above, from the tower at Camp Taji.

airfield includes a 5,500 foot runway. Hughes credits his ATCA recognition to the Soldiers he served with there.

"I may have made some decisions here and there to help steer the mission, but they are the ones who actually executed the mission and made it the success that it was," Hughes said.

At Camp Taji, Hughes and 12 controllers operated an ATC tower and radar facility

in support of the Army's 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, which based flight operations there.

"Obviously, we handled mostly helicopters there, including every model in the Army inventory, as well as coalition aircraft," Hughes said.

The Army's ATC military occupational specialty is all-encompassing and includes day and night, fixed-base and tactical air traffic

control. Hughes' greatest challenge, he said, was that the majority of his controllers were inexperienced. To accomplish the mission, he produced a work and training schedule that paired experienced and inexperienced controllers.

Hughes said Camp Taji was an extremely busy Army facility. "It was the busiest Army control tower in theatre," he said. "So it was a very high traffic level for the new controllers to have to assume, but they stepped up to the plate and did a great job, and we had a very successful mission."

There were long work days and austere conditions, Hughes said. The facility they were tasked to run included a former Iraqi control tower that was in deplorable condition. Their equipment was unreliable, and the gutted buildings had cables running through windows, which allowed Iraq's invasive sand and dust inside.

ATCA officials said Hughes "took the initiative to train his people and improve the facilities to an unprecedented extent, thus providing the best possible air traffic control service in the combat zone."

"We made significant improvements while we were there and brought it up to real-world standards," said Hughes. "When we handed that mission off to the next unit, they had improved facilities to come into."

Hughes and the battalion returned home last November.

"The people in Afghanistan and the people in Iraq are doing great work in the most difficult conditions you could imagine," said Dumont about military and civilian controllers working in the Global War on Terrorism.

The ATCA represents more than 2,200 controllers as well as corporate members. The association's Quesada award is given to a civilian or military individual for outstanding achievement or contribution during the previous year as an ATC manager. It was named after retired Lt. Gen. Elwood Quesada, who was the nation's first administrator of the FAA and also served as special assistant for aviation affairs under President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

"Part of what General Quesada stood for as head of the FAA was bringing together military and civilian aviation," said Dumont. He added that Hughes, like Quesada, demonstrated above anyone else that he could do that.

Alaska Guard Soldier assists in saving life on plane



Alaska National Guard photo

By Capt. Tim Brower
Alaska National Guard

FORT GREELY, Alaska -- "Have stethoscope, will travel," might be Staff Sgt. Eric Machmeier's new motto after his medical skills and handy equipment helped save a man's life aboard an airplane.

Maschmeier, a medical NCO assigned to the 49th Missile Defense Battalion (Ground-based Midcourse Defense) here, was traveling on Alaska Airlines Flight 388 from Fairbanks to Seattle Sept. 30. Suddenly, one of the first-class passengers, a heavy-set, middle-aged man stood up from his seat. He turned to his seatmate, told him that he was having difficulty breathing, and moved into the aisle. He then clutched his chest and fell over, unconscious.

The flight attendant was unable to revive him and immediately put out a call on the aircraft intercom asking for any medical professionals

Alaska Staff Sgt. Eric Machmeier used medical skills and handy equipment to help save a man's life aboard an airplane.

to identify themselves. Maschmeier and medical doctor Marc Johnson responded. During the next 15 minutes, they worked to stabilize the unconscious passenger. Maschmeier opened his luggage and provided a stethoscope and blood pressure cuff. Although his experience with this type of incident was limited, he was calm, professional, and swift. "When it happens, it

Although his experience with this type of incident was limited, he was calm, professional, and swift.

happens quickly and all the training comes back to you," Maschmeier commented.

While the doctor got on the radio with Mayo Clinic medical consultants, Maschmeier took serial blood pressures and monitored the patient's pulse. These minute-by-minute information updates enabled the physician to assess the patient's condition. This was critical, because no one had any idea what the

medical problem was, and decisions had to be made quickly to determine if loss of life was imminent. According to Johnson, the patient's life was in Maschmeier's hands.

Maschmeier directed passengers to search the patient's luggage for medications -- confirming that he was a smoker. He asked those seated near the man to recall his behavior prior to the incident. He asked the flight crew to determine if the patient had exhibited symptoms prior to boarding and deputized other first-class passengers to record vital signs and report additional symptoms. Maschmeier relayed this information to Johnson, all the while attempting to rouse the unresponsive patient. Maschmeier's calm, quiet and low-key manner in managing an unconscious, unresponsive, patient with a low blood pressure provided reassurance to the passengers and crew.

Ultimately, because the patient was unresponsive, sweating heavily, and maintained a low blood pressure, the aircraft diverted to Juneau. Paramedics revived the patient and transported him to an emergency room for evaluation and treatment.

Air Guard's airborne wildfire fighting role evolves

By Dr. Charles J. Gross
Air National Guard History

Like Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the horrendous wildfires that engulfed Southern California during October 2007 illustrated the valuable but often unnoticed role that the Air National Guard (ANG) has played for decades in supporting civil authorities. That role, during the fall of 2007, featured four C-130 Hercules from the North Carolina and Wyoming ANG equipped with the Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS).

MAFFS are owned by the U.S. Forest Service and flown on ANG and Air Force Reserve (AFRES) C-130 aircraft whose crews have been specially trained to dispense the fire retardant the equipment carries.

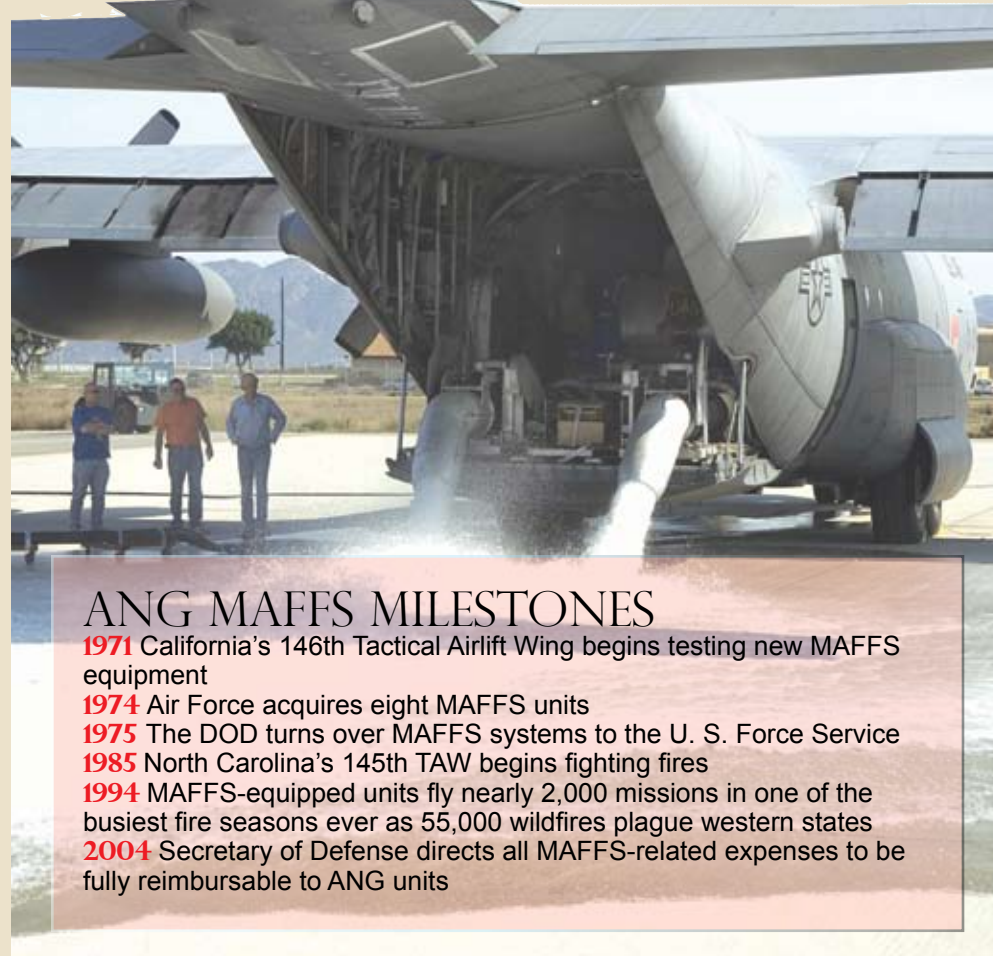
The Air Guard has a long history of fighting wildfires with MAFFS and had played a key role in developing the system's initial prototype. During the fall of 1970, bombs dropped by military aircraft on training ranges in remote locations had started wildfires that caused enormous damage to military reservations and adjacent private property. Those and other wildfires in Southern California had damaged or destroyed over 500 homes and caused major soil erosion problems on burned-over grasslands.

Wildfires also threatened Air Force early warning radar sites in Alaska and several national forests. In response, members of Congress pressured the Air Force to assist the Forest Service in fighting such conflagrations to protect federal military installations and serve as a backup to private contractors if the latter were unable to respond to all calls for help from civil authorities. The secretary of the Air Force authorized the development of airborne fire fighting systems for use in C-130 aircraft.

In September 1971, the California ANG's 146th Tactical Airlift Wing (TAW) began testing the new MAFFS equipment that had been developed by the Air Force Weapons Laboratory at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico and a private contractor. The following month, California Air Guardsmen employed the system against the Romero fire in the Los Padres National Forest.

After completing the system's operational tests and evaluation phase, the Air Force acquired eight MAFFS units in 1974 and deployed two of them to hotspots in the United States. Wyoming's 153rd TAW was selected for MAFFS that year and North Carolina's 145th TAW began fighting fires in 1985. AFRES' 302nd Airlift Wing at Peterson AFB, Col., assumed firefighting responsibilities in 1992.

Each MAFFS kit could disperse up to 27,000 pounds of commercial fire retardants or an equivalent amount of water. MAFFS was originally purchased to suppress fires on federal military reservations. The ANG employed it under that



ANG MAFFS MILESTONES

- 1971** California's 146th Tactical Airlift Wing begins testing new MAFFS equipment
- 1974** Air Force acquires eight MAFFS units
- 1975** The DOD turns over MAFFS systems to the U. S. Force Service
- 1985** North Carolina's 145th TAW begins fighting fires
- 1994** MAFFS-equipped units fly nearly 2,000 missions in one of the busiest fire seasons ever as 55,000 wildfires plague western states
- 2004** Secretary of Defense directs all MAFFS-related expenses to be fully reimbursable to ANG units

concept until 1975. That year, the Department of Defense turned over the MAFFS systems to the U. S. Force Service. The latter is the primary agency for all federal firefighting operations in the country. Bowing to pressure from commercial air tanker firefighting firms and pilots, DoD agreed with the departments of Interior and Agriculture in 1975 that the military would only employ the MAFFS when suitable civilian resources were not available.

That policy was consistent with provisions of federal law which prohibited the military from providing services that

ment for their firefighting operations. That changed in 1994 because of the long duration and intensity of those operations. The Forest Service agreed to reimburse flying hour costs for the Guard and Reserve units plus overtime pay for AFRES Title 5 personnel. In 2000, the Forest Service published an expanded list of reimbursable expenses. In 2004, the secretary of defense directed that all MAFFS-related expenses would be fully reimbursed. There were concerns within the ANG MAFFS community that this policy might price it out of the wildfire fighting mission.

In October 1997, the Wyoming ANG volunteered to assist the Indonesian government in fighting massive fires in that nation's tropical rain forests. Within 66 hours of notification, the Air Guard deployed 47 personnel and three C-130H aircraft, including two equipped with MAFFS

competed with those available from private firms. Those provisions could be waived in the event of presidential declarations of an emergency or natural disaster. However, there has never been such a declaration for wildfires in the history of the MAFFS program.

The 1994 fire fighting season was one of the busiest ever for MAFFS-equipped units. That year, over 55,000 wildfires plagued the western states. Consequently, the four C-130 fire fighting units flew nearly 2,000 missions, dropping some 51 million pounds of fire retardant. Prior to that, the MAFFS-equipped units had not requested reimburse-

In addition to duty within the states, Air Guardsmen and their MAFFS-equipped aircraft have been sent overseas to help suppress major fires. In October 1997, the Wyoming ANG volunteered to assist the Indonesian government in fighting massive fires in that nation's tropical rain forests. Within 66 hours of notification, the Air Guard deployed 47 personnel and three C-130H aircraft, including two equipped with MAFFS, a half a world away. They flew 250 sorties while logging 316.5 flying hours in Indonesia.

During 2000, wildfires burned over 5.6 million acres in the United States, the most

It happened in December

Events that made Guard history

December 4, 1864: Knoxville, Tenn. — Confederates, under the command of Gen. James Longstreet, lift their siege of Union forces in defensive positions around Knoxville. The siege started on Nov. 16 following the Battle of Campbell's Station, a Confederate victory that compelled Union Gen. Ambrose Burnside to retreat into the defenses of the city.

December 16, 1944: Ardennes Forest, Luxemburg — The German Army launches its last great offensive in the West in what has become known as the "Battle of the Bulge." Among the first units attacked is the 28th Infantry Division (PA) which, while giving ground, put up a stiff resistance to buy time for other Allied units to move to block the enemy assault. Other Guard outfits involved in the month-long battle included the 26th (MA) and the 30th (NC, SC, TN) and 35th (KS, MO, NE) infantry divisions.

December 22, 1916: Boise Barracks, Idaho — The 2nd Infantry Regiment, Idaho National Guard, arrives home from its deployment to Camp Little in Nogales, Ariz., during the Mexican Border crisis.

destructive season in 50 years. Air Guardsmen flew nearly 890 hours of MAFFS missions, dispensing 2.3 million gallons of fire retardant over 19 states during that fire season. That same year, Congress began appropriating money for the development of a more advanced airborne firefighting system that was dubbed the "Military Airborne Firefighting System II" (MAFFS II) by the Air Mobility Command. Responding to a DoD requirement, the new system would also be able to decontaminate areas that have been polluted by foul agents or oil spills. Currently, MAFFS II is not configured to be employed by C-130Js, but money has been set aside to modify it for use in those aircraft.

Droughts in the American west in 2005 and extending into 2006 produced busy wildfire seasons. During the first year, MAFFS was employed to combat fires in Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, and Washington state. The 145th AW and the 153rd AW flew 318 MAFFS sorties making 329 drops totaling 845,535 gallons of fire retardant while accumulating 356.1 flight hours. Two North Carolina planes and crews were deployed to Pensacola, Fla., in September 2005 by U.S. Northern Command to fight fires in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina but did not fly any operational missions. In 2006, MAFFS assisted in fighting fires in Arizona, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah and Idaho. All four MAFFS-equipped units flew 543.5 hours, making drops of 1,431,000 gallons of fire retardant weighing 4,459,449 pounds.

Holiday salute to our soldiers and Airmen

Dear Guardmembers,

Happy holidays to you and your families.

The holidays are a great time to focus on family and friends, look after our social and spiritual needs and recharge ourselves for the coming year. As you celebrate, please remember in your thoughts and prayers our deployed soldiers and Airmen around the world who are away from home and in harm's way.

We extend our warmest and most heartfelt wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

-The National Guard Bureau senior leadership



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BLUM, CHIEF,
NATIONAL
GUARD BUREAU



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ADVISOR, NGB



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