

GRIZZLY

Official Newsmagazine of the California National Guard

Big Guns

79th IBCT partners with active duty Army at Camp Roberts as part of Army Total Force Policy

page 12

Cal Guard escorts President Obama on Yosemite visit

page 6

Leadership Corner

The Cal Guard's optempo remains high

Major General David S. Baldwin



When the pace of deployments to Afghanistan and the Middle East slowed in recent years, some of you may have wondered how much our own pace would slow in the California National Guard. Now you know the answer: It won't.

Our state and nation depend on us for a wide array of responsibilities, and we continually strive to expand the ways we support our citizens. Cal Guard Soldiers and Airmen are actively honing their skills, finding new challenges and contributing to military and civil-support missions in states and countries around the globe.

You showed your mettle and mastery of your craft when deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq were frequent, and you've continued to impress as we've transitioned to a more domestic-focused role. I asked you to maintain your focus and pour as much energy into training and domestic missions as you did when a deployment was on the horizon, and you've met that expectation.

I'm grateful to all of you, who have shown the Cal Guard is a superior

fighting and domestic-response force. With your commitment of time, sweat and dedication, we have achieved great things.

Our mission, however, never ceases. There will never be time to rest on our laurels.

This is California, which means that as you read this, wildland fires are likely burning in several parts of the state. Cal Guard aviators, heavy equipment and hand crews are part of every year's planning for fire season, and last year, more than 900 Cal Guard troops fought blazes with our partners from Cal FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service. With summer quickly approaching, many of you should be ready to respond at a moment's notice when your unit gets the call.

Those of you who aren't called to the fire lines can expect a busy summer nonetheless. Most units have completed annual training, including infantry, military police and engineers who went through the Exportable Combat Training Capability program, or XCTC. A brigade field training exercise designed to certify platoon proficiency, XCTC is an intense series of

scenarios that challenge troops in a realistic combat setting, including ambush, company hasty attack, platoon movement to contact, recon and vehicle recovery training lanes that test Soldiers' skills and resolve.

Annual training, though, is only a part of our training calendar. Our Homeland Response Force, which covers all of FEMA Region IX, for instance, recently completed its external evaluation exercise, validating its ability to respond to a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) incident. Our two civil support teams also recently completed events that tested their CBRN-response skills in collaboration with a wide range of civilian partner organizations.

Building relationships with civilian and military partners, as well as foreign allies, is an integral and indispensable part of our job in the National Guard. Our partners complement our capabilities and provide valuable resources and training opportunities.

Cal Guard Airmen are currently serving in 14 foreign countries, with the largest contingent in the

Middle East, and major training events are coming up in Latvia and Australia.

Meanwhile, more than 1,000 Soldiers from our 40th Combat Aviation Brigade are serving a yearlong deployment in the Middle East. In addition, this spring alone, Cal Guard Soldiers trained in Germany, Guatemala, India, Jordan, Kuwait and South Korea, as well as in Nigeria and Ukraine, our two State Partnership Program nations. The Cal Guard has worked closely with Nigeria's armed forces since 2006 and with Ukraine's since 1993 to assist those nations in modernizing their militaries and strengthening the principles of democracy and a free market economy.

Building on that long-standing relationship with Ukraine, our 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team is leading Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine (JMTG-U). Comprising National Guard and active component U.S. Army forces as well as contributors from Canada, Estonia, Lithuania and the United Kingdom, JMTG-U is providing essential training as Ukraine faces its unique national security challenges. Those Soldiers

are joined in Ukraine by members of our 129th Rescue Wing and 144th Fighter Wing, who are working with their Ukrainian counterparts to share best practices and improve both internal security and defense of the nation's airspace.

The 144th and their F-15C Eagle aircraft also are working in Eastern Europe with NATO allies to strengthen interoperability and deter aggression in the region. Their six-month deployment in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve will take them to sites throughout Eastern Europe to conduct multinational training activities that promote stability in the region.

Not just California, but the world relies on the Cal Guard to bolster safety and security for people facing virtually any kind of threat. You have proven you are the right force to carry out this mission, and we have responded by putting new challenges in front of you.

Thank you for your commitment to this organization. Together we keep this state safe, and help our partners to do the same.

Our Soldiers and Airmen are doing great things overseas

Command Sergeant Major William Clark Jr.



I had the privilege of catching up with some of our very best Soldiers during my recent visit to Southwest Asia. As our nation and our National Guard experience our 16th year of conflict that began as a response to terrorism, it still seems as though defeating insurgents no matter where they may hide continues to be job one.

Witnessing Soldiers employ the skills they amassed during training is as gratifying to me as it is humbling, but it means even more to me when those Soldiers come from California. The Soldiers of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade (40th CAB) have been busy during the first half of their deployment this year supporting coalition forces tasked with Afghanistan security and stability. I was especially impressed with the recent contributions of the

1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment and the 40th CAB as they left Kuwait for a 9-day combat support mission with the Afghanistan National Army at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Joyce, Afghanistan. Additionally, I wish to acknowledge the fantastic effort of our aviation units deployed to FOB Dahlke, as they aid Afghan Forces in rooting out Taliban insurgents.

It is important to remember, even after 16 years of deploying Soldiers and Airmen, it never gets old and it never gets safe. I appreciate the sacrifice our service members are still making during this long and difficult fight, and I ask that you keep them in your thoughts while they are deployed overseas. Godspeed!

“Witnessing Soldiers employ the skills they amassed during training is as gratifying to me as it is humbling, but it means even more to me when those Soldiers come from California.

- Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark Jr.

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Submissions

Articles:

- ★ Articles range from 350 to 2,000 words. All articles should be accompanied by multiple high-resolution images.
- ★ Include first names, last names and military ranks. Always verify spelling.
- ★ Spell out acronyms, abbreviations and full unit designations on first reference.
- ★ Only submit articles that have been approved by your unit's public affairs officer.

Photographs:

- ★ Highest resolution possible: MB files, not KB.
- ★ No retouched photos, no special effects.
- ★ Include the photographer's name and rank, and a caption: what is happening in the photo, who is pictured and the date and location.

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Cover photo by
Master Sgt. Paul Wade

Staff Sgt. Shaun Valdivia, Spc. Chaiyapat Matchima and Spc. Destin McGhee set up Cyclops, their 105mm howitzer, along with the rest of the gun crew during annual training at Camp Roberts in May.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 Champion earns award

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nathan Champion, a pilot with the Cal Guard's A Company, 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, was awarded the California Military Cross for his actions during the Lodge Fire

146th Airlift Wing gets ready

Airmen from the 146th Airlift Wing conduct water drops with C-130 MAFFS (Modular Airborne Firefighting System) aircraft in preparation for the fire season

5 FRG comes to the rescue

While Sgt. Gilbert Britto was deployed, the Family Readiness Group helped his family move to a safer neighborhood

6 President Obama visits Yosemite

Four Cal Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopters from 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment provided 'fleet support' under Half Dome during President Barack Obama's recent visit to Yosemite National Park

7 Women and the draft

The passage in the U.S. Senate of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act means women may soon be required to register for Selective Service

Cal Guard troops train in Wyoming

Soldiers from the 340th Brigade Support Team head to Wyoming for Operation Gunsmoke

8 Cal Guard teams up with CAL FIRE

Cal Guard aviators head to a helibase near Sutter Creek, California, to conduct water bucket training with CAL FIRE in preparation for the 2016 fire season

9 Nevada aviators train in California

Nevada Army National Guard aviators bring a UH-72 Lakota helicopter to California to train for fire season with the Cal Guard and CAL FIRE outside Sutter Creek

9 115th RSG goes mobile

The 115th Regional Support Group set up a mobile command post at Beale Air Force Base to test disaster preparedness

12 Scorched earth

Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Regiment brings out the big guns and burns the grass at Camp Roberts

49th MPs trim down

Soldiers from the 49th Military Police Brigade participate in an innovative fitness program

13 Cal Guard gets a new general

Laura Yeager follows in her father's footsteps by getting promoted to brigadier general

14 9th CST pushes the limits

The 9th Civil Support Team conducts WMD training on the water in a multi-agency exercise in San Diego, California

15 Cadets follow their dreams

Cadets from the Cal Guard's Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy graduate and move forward toward their goals

16 Dragan hangs up the apron

Dragan Mirkovic retires after 20 years serving breakfast and lunch to Cal Guardsmen at Joint Force Headquarters

Fit to Fight

Maj. Jonathan Shiroma discusses how to break unhealthy eating habits

17 Soldiers move to the CAL DOJ

Former Counterdrug Task Force Soldiers are now instructors for the California Department of Justice

18 IG Basics -- Army NCOERs

Understanding the process can help avoid IG complaints regarding Army NCO evaluations



In Every Issue

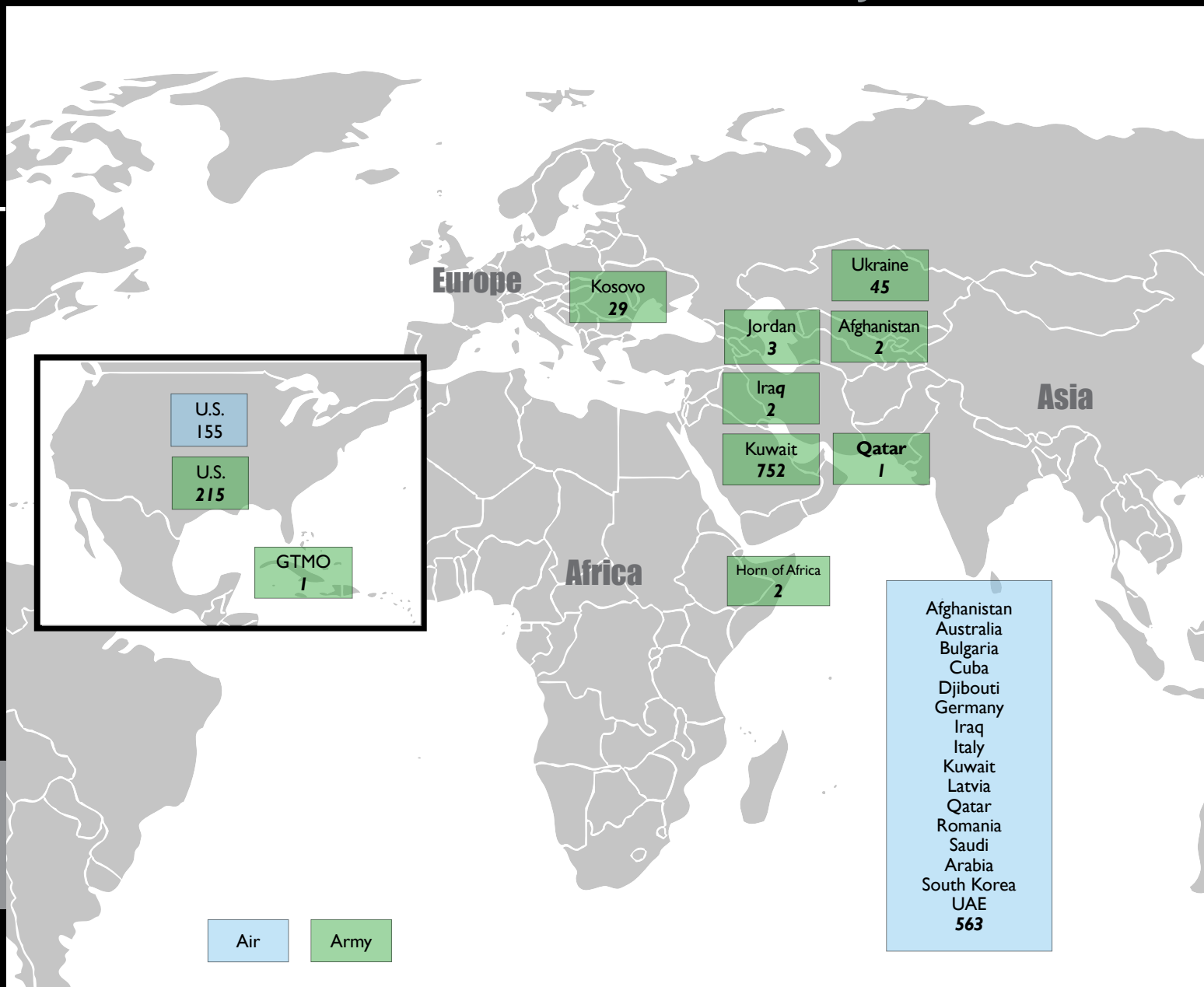
2 | Leadership Corner

10 | At a Glance

19 | News & Benefits

19 | Did You Know?

California National Guard troops mobilized as of June 2016



A true champion: CW3 Nathan Champion awarded for heroism

By **STAFF SGT. EDDIE SIGUENZA**
69th Public Affairs Detachment

A California Army National Guard pilot received the state's second-highest honor April 15 for his actions during the 2014 Lodge Fire in Mendocino County, California.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nathan Champion, a state aviation maintenance officer with the Cal Guard's Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, earned the California Military Cross for assisting in rescuing eight firefighters who were overrun by a wildfire. Flying a single-pilot UH-72A Lakota helicopter through smoke and low visibility, Champion used his aviator skills and experience to find the firefighters and help coordinate the rescue.

"There was no other option available to extract these personnel. Were it not for his heroic actions, these (people) may not have survived the night," stated Col. Laura L. Yeager, Chief of Staff, California

Military Department Joint Staff.

Champion and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) helicopter manager Capt. Mike Deacon surpassed their daily seven-hour flight time to remain airborne. They stayed in communication with the firefighters — some of whom sustained injuries — and coordinated water drops on the area where they were trapped.

"There were two calm factors in the cockpit that came together that day," said Capt. Dan Reese, CAL FIRE tactical air operations commander. "That's a no-joke award. It was rightfully earned, rightfully awarded."

The California Military Cross is the state equivalent to the federal Distinguished Service Cross, according to Col. Robert A. Spano, Director, California Military Department Joint Staff. The DSC is the nation's second highest award for military valor, behind only the Medal of Honor.

"We present this on behalf of a grateful command," Spano said, as Champion accepted the prestigious honor at the State of California Office of Emergency Services in Sacramento, California, in front of a room crowded with CAL FIRE and Cal Guard personnel. "Champion's confidence as a single pilot aviator — along with his great understanding of his Lakota — allowed him to heroically fly into very challenging conditions and extract injured personnel, potentially reducing the severity of their injuries."

"There were critical conditions they faced up in the air. There were tremendous smoky conditions, but they remained calm and cool," Reese added. "Everyone was lucky and glad to have experienced people up in the air."

As stated in the California National Guard's Awards and Decorations regulation, recipients of the California Military Cross "must have been such as to merit recognition of service rendered in a clear



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nathan Champion, left, of the California Army National Guard's Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, was awarded the California Military Cross from Col. Robert A. Spano, Director, California Military Department Joint Staff, April 15 at the State of California Office of Emergency Services in Sacramento, California. Photo by Staff Sgt. Eddie Siguenza

exceptional manner within the scope of a special requirement or of an extremely difficult duty performed in a clearly outstanding manner."

146th Airlift Wing's C-130 Airtankers Prepare for Wildland Fire Season

By **TECH SGT. CANDICE PAGE**
146th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Activity bustled this week on the flightline, at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station in Port Hueneme, California, as nearly 400 military and civilian personnel came together for MAFFS (Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems) annual certification and training. The inter-agency training hosted by U.S. Forest Service takes place each year and frequently combines all participating wings to train concurrently in order to ensure fluid processes during firefighting operations.

In addition to the 146th Airlift Wing's two MAFFS-equipped C-130s here on station, an additional six from three other wings around the country moved in for the week of May 2-6, as well as nine lead aircraft from the Forest Service.

"This year's MAFFS training and recertification event is unique because we are gathering all five military wings together for training," Col. David Bakos, commander 146th Airlift Wing, said. "The large group training only occurs every five years, so we are super excited here at Channel Islands to be hosting this event."

Military flight instructors trained alongside U.S. Forest Service aircrew flying in mountainous terrain in the Southern California Angeles Forest over simulated fire lines, while ground crew members honed their skills servicing the aircraft and reloading the MAFFS units at the tanker base. The MAFFS aerial firefighting fleet was composed this week of the Air Force



LEFT: A 146th Airlift Wing C-130 containing the MAFFS (Modular Airborne Firefighting System) drops water above the Los Angeles Forest during annual MAFFS training on May 3. Photo by Staff Sgt. Nicholas Carzis ABOVE RIGHT: Master Sgt. Dennis Heidenfelst from the 145th Airlift Wing in Charlotte, North Carolina, refuels a C-130 during firefighting training at the 146th Airlift Wing in Port Hueneme, California on May 4. Photo by Senior Airman Madeleine Richards BOTTOM RIGHT: A Cal Guard C-130J drops water near onlookers during MAFFS annual certification and training at Port Hueneme, California on May 4. Photo by Senior Airman Madeleine Richards

Reserve's 302nd Airlift Wing, based in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the Air National Guard's 153rd Airlift Wing, located in Cheyenne, Wyoming, the 152nd Airlift Wing in Reno, Nevada and the 145th Airlift Wing in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"Each participating organization is unified by a single vision tied to a single mission...to prepare and train to fight America's fires," Bakos said. "We are certifying and validating a combined civil/



military operation that protects property and saves lives."

MAFFS is a portable fire retardant delivery system that can be easily rolled into the back of C-130 aircraft converting the vessel into an air tanker when civilian fleets have been fully committed. Retardant is dropped from the C-130 with careful direction of Forest Service lead plane pilots who are in direct communication with incident commanders on the ground.

MAFFS units can drop up to 3,000 gallons of retardant per run on wildfires. Retardant lines are typically dropped ahead of the fire line in an effort to slow its spread, and to give ground crews a critical edge in gaining the upper hand on the blaze. The retardant's bright red color helps aircrews determine the accuracy of their drops.

Kim Christensen, National Interagency Fire Center deputy assistant director of operations for fire and aviation management, said the 2016 wildland fire potential could be significant. "There are two areas that are pointing to above average fire potential out west, including the Great Basin in Nevada and areas throughout Southern California," she added.

The MAFFS program is a joint effort between the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Defense. The Forest Service owns the MAFFS equipment and supplies the retardant, while DOD provides the C-130 aircraft, flight crews, and maintenance and support personnel to fly the missions.

"Our role as a DoD asset is to support both state and national civil firefighting agencies as a surge capability," Bakos said. "This week is another outstanding opportunity to not only train like we fight but also to build relationships and make new friends as well."

Photos, video, b-roll, and additional MAFFS information can be found at <https://dvidshub.net/feature/MAFF-SAEG>. Subscribe to the page for notifications of new MAFFS product throughout wildland fire season.

Family Readiness Group helps Soldier's threatened family, give peace of mind

When their beloved dog J.J. died after being poisoned, the Britto family knew it was time to move

By **BRANDON HONIG**

California Military Department Public Affairs

Sgt. Gilbert Britto knows the value of good battle buddies, not only in the field, but also at home. Britto deployed in October to the Middle East, where he can't keep a close watch over his wife and five kids.

A few months after he deployed with the California National Guard's 640th Aviation Support Battalion, the family's neighbors in San Diego's City Heights community noticed he was gone, his wife Yolanda said, and the family started getting "non-stop" break-ins.

"They were trying to break in even though they knew we were in the house. It was scary," she said. "The cops were out [to our house] seven times in less than two months. And right after the cops left, they would try to break in again, that same night."

Yolanda was grateful for the help of her brother, cousin and other family members who slept at the house to protect them, along with the vigilant eyes of the family's two boxers, including 150-pound J.J., who was a great watchdog and deeply loved by the family.

But the neighborhood crime element didn't feel the same way. To them, J.J. was an impediment to their criminal objectives, and he had to go.

J.J. got sick one day, and the family suspected he had been poisoned, but he eventually recovered. Then it happened again.

"He was on the floor, breathing heavily, and he was foaming at the mouth. His eyes were glossy, and he was choking," Yolanda remembered with a heavy heart. "We were trying to give him CPR because he was struggling — he was dying — but he just passed right in front of us."



Gavril Britto, 3, lost his best friend, boxer J.J., in March after the dog was apparently poisoned by San Diego criminals when Gavril's father, Sgt. Gilbert Britto, was deployed. Photo courtesy of the Britto family

A necropsy would later show J.J. had been poisoned.

When he died, Yolanda and the family were devastated, "broken" at the loss of their beloved pet, and terrified by the violence carried out against their family.

Just at that moment, "when my dog passed and I was having a bit of a breakdown," Yolanda received a text message from Ian Tolentino, a family assistance specialist for the California National Guard.

Tolentino had reached out to Yolanda at least once a month since Gilbert deployed, to check in on the family and see if they needed help in Gilbert's absence. Tolentino had been in contact with Yolanda just the day before, when she told him everything was fine. He only followed up again to of-



Yolanda Britto and her five children with Sgt. Gilbert Britto were harassed by San Diego criminals after Gilbert deployed to the Middle East with the California National Guard's 640th Aviation Support Battalion. The Cal Guard Family Assistance Program, though, came to the rescue, with 12 soldiers helping the family move to a safer location. Photo courtesy of the Britto family

fer her Padres baseball tickets.

"I'm a pretty strong wife, and I try to use the resources available to get by or do it on my own, so I would tell him, 'I'm OK. I'm alright,'" she said. "But he texted me at the right moment that day, and I was like, 'You know what, I am not OK.'"

"I told him every single thing that was going on, and Ian said, 'I'm getting on this right now.' It was just such a blessing."

Yolanda and the kids spent one last night in that rented house, and the next morning, the troops arrived. Five Soldiers showed up, some with food, some with moving boxes, and started the process of relocating the family to Gilbert's parents' house.

"We really have a lot of stuff, and I didn't have many people who could help me move. But we were not going to stick around anymore," Yolanda said. "When they poisoned my dog, to me, that was a threat on my family."

Over the next four days, 12 Soldiers, whom Yolanda called "guardian angels," helped move the family's belongings to their new, temporary home and into storage. One Soldier loaded up his truck and trailer for a trip to the dump, where he paid the disposal fee.

"I kept telling [Yolanda] to relax, get some sleep and spend some time with her kids. Let us handle this," said Staff Sgt. Donovan Greer of the 330th Military Police Company, who led the team of volunteers.

It didn't take long for Gilbert, halfway around the world, to find out what his fellow Soldiers and family assistance personnel — whom he didn't even know — had done for his family. And he wanted them to know how much it meant.

"Fighting terrorism while my family is being terrorized and my dog being murdered is something that only God could give the amount of strength and clarity needed to deal with in the appropriate manner," Gilbert told Tolentino in an email from overseas. "Thank you for your quick actions. Within a few short days, I went from zero focus, high amounts of stress, sadness and anger, to gradually having it dissolve each day as the National Guard worked and protected my family."

When Gilbert reached out to Greer, the MP said that the care he provided the Britto family is what Soldiers should expect from each other.

"I told him that if I was [deployed], I would want the same thing — not only want, but expect," Greer said. "[Yolanda] had gotten a call every month from Family Assistance, but she overlooked it because she didn't think anything could be done. They did not anticipate this type of support from the military."

Now that they know this type of support is available, the Britto family is spreading the word to other Guard members and families. They also are seeking financial assistance from the California Military Department Family Relief Fund to cover the lost security deposit on their rental house. Over the past 10 months, the fund of charitable donations has given a total of \$190,000 to 25 Guard families facing unexpected bills.

"I knew family assistance specialists and Family Readiness Groups were important; I knew they helped," Gilbert told Tolentino. "But I was not prepared for the amount of help my family would receive and how quickly this could be organized and have Soldiers on the property."

"My family is safe now, and I can focus on my mission here," he added. "With the National Guard's help, I'm now mission-capable."



Four California Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook crews based out of Stockton, California, supported President Obama's visit to Yosemite National Park on June 17-20, 2016. The Cal Guard aviators coordinated with White House aviation and security personnel to ensure a safe and smooth visit on the part of the president and his family as they prepare to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park System in August. Photo by Master Sgt. Dave Loeffler

Cal Guard lends support on Obama visit to Yosemite

By CAPT. WILLIAM MARTIN
California Military Department Public Affairs

In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Yosemite Grant Act, establishing the land that would later become the iconic national park as a protected wilderness area. In June of this year, President Obama became the first sitting president since John F. Kennedy to visit Yosemite, the latest presidential effort to mark the importance of protecting our public lands. And the Cal Guard was there to help.

On June 17, President Obama and his family traveled from Castle Airport, in Atwater, California, to Yosemite as the highlight of a weeklong presidential national park tour. As usual, a Marine helicopter squadron carried the first family, but the Pentagon tasked the California Army National Guard's 1-126th Aviation Regiment with providing four CH-47 Chinook aircraft to serve as 'fleet support' to the president's aerial armada. Normally, that duty falls to MV-22 Ospreys assigned to the White House, but for this special mission the Cal Guard proved a better fit.

"The Osprey exhaust is known to melt concrete and would have fried the sensitive flora in Cook's Meadow in Yosemite where the Chinooks landed," said Capt. Ben Bowman, an operations officer with the Cal Guard's Stockton Army Aviation Support Facility. "Our Chinooks were used to move White House staff, traveling media, Secret Service and maintenance equipment for the presidential aircraft."

Bowman said the professionalism and experience of the presidential aircrews and liaisons was evident through-



"There's something sacred about this place. And I suppose that's why the walls of this valley were referred to as cathedral walls, because here at Yosemite, we connect not just with our own spirit, but with something greater; it's almost the spirit of America, itself." President Barack Obama speaks in front of Yosemite Falls at Yosemite National Park, California, on Saturday, June 18. With the assistance of the California Army National Guard, the Obama family traveled to Yosemite to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the creation of America's national park system. AP photo courtesy of Common Streams

out the mission.

"[The White House] does this mission all over the world on a very regular basis, and they have it very locked down," Bowman said. "Our POCs were White House Liaison Officers (WHLO) who are also pilots, who came to Stockton early in the week to review techniques and

procedures for Presidential airlift missions. We also completed a very helpful full 'dress rehearsal' two days prior to 'game day' which made the actual movement of POTUS less stressful."

Even with all the review and coordination, recounted Bowman, the heightened requirements surrounding a presidential mission brought its share of unique stressors.

"There's a pretty intricate ballet of aircraft that needs to happen while the president is being moved; his aircraft must always depart first and land last, and while he's outside of the aircraft, no other aircraft can have blades spinning," said Bowman. "That was probably the most stressful part - doing a quick startup once he's in Marine One, passing him en route while loaded with a lot of passengers and weight, and quickly shutting down before Marine One."

But despite significant challenges posed by high-profile passengers and a nationally treasured landing zone, Bowman and the rest of the Cal Guard aviators welcomed the mission. Staffed "with the most experienced and qualified crew members," their enthusiasm for the mission garnered high marks from their White House counterparts.

"This mission is a once-in-a-career opportunity for our unit, not only flying the president and the first family, but taking them into Yosemite National Park," Bowman said. "Both the WHLOs and [the Marine commanding officer] said, 'without hesitation' that our crews and aircraft were the best they've ever worked with, and they do this every day. That was really great for everyone to hear."

Women may soon be required to register for the draft

By **BRIG. GEN. LAURAYEAGER**
California Military Department

The overwhelming passage of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act in the Senate by an 85-13 vote on June 14, 2016 could bring historic changes in the Selective Service, also known as the draft, should the provision to require females to register for selective service survive reconciliation with the House of Representatives.

The modern draft system requiring all males age 18 to 25 to register to be subject to military draft was set up in 1948 during the Cold War. It was curtailed in 1973 following the end of America's combat operations in Vietnam and reinstated in 1980 after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The draft itself has never been particularly popular among the American public. By a four to one margin, Americans opposed its reinstatement and while a you.gov June survey found 60 percent of Americans fa-

vor allowing women in combat roles, the same survey found the requirement for women to register is favored by only half of all Americans. The survey found among females only, support of the requirement to register drops further to 40 percent of the respondents.

The change to Selective Service registration is somewhat controversial within political circles, yet among senior military leadership including the Chief of Staff of the Army, it is strongly supported. Why now? Changes in Department of Defense policy which have opened all military positions, including combat roles, to women changed the landscape considerably. Further, the reality is when you consider eligibility for military service, subtracting for age, medical status, physical fitness and other factors such as criminal records, it is just not possible to fill the ranks with strictly male recruits. In 2014, the Pentagon estimated that 71 percent of 34 million 18-24 year olds

would not qualify for military service.

Will this mean if drafted women will be forced into combat assignment on the front lines? Not likely, since under current policy assignment to combat roles will be made based on gender neutral standards which will test a recruit's ability, whether they are male or female, to perform the physically challenging tasks necessary for the combat assignments. We all have a stake in democracy; the obligation to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, transcends socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, and gender.

Are you are interested in this topic or other issues related to gender integration within the military? If so, you are invited to participate in the Gender Integration Employee Resource Group which advises our office of diversity and senior leadership on strategies and initiatives to achieve



Staff Sgt. Shelda "Mayhem" Mairel, with the 1113th Transportation Company, 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, ensures a tactical convoy departs the motor pool without delay on its way to Forward Operating Base Tarin-Kwot, Afghanistan, Nov. 6, 2013. Photo by Staff Sgt. Raymond Kokel

a fully diverse and inclusive workforce. For further information, please contact Col. Michael Leeney, Gender Integration workgroup facilitator at (562) 795-2460 or michael.j.leeney@mail.mil.

340th BSB trains with 65th Fires Brigade in Wyoming

Cal Guard's 340th Brigade Support Battalion teams up with Utah and North Carolina in Wyoming for Operation Gunsmoke

By **SPC. AMY CARLE**
69th Public Affairs Detachment

California National Guard members from the 340th Brigade Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, returned May 23 from Wyoming where they participated in an annual training exercise with the Utah Army National Guard's 65th Fires Brigade.

The combined training brought together eight units from the 65th Fires Brigade. In total, over 1,300 Soldiers from California, Utah and North Carolina attended the 14 days of training, which allowed them to utilize their skills in a realistic environment.

The operation was a departure from many of the battalion's previous trainings, which had been conducted at Camp Roberts, California, and was the first time a mission of this magnitude had been conducted in over 13 years, according to 1st Sgt. Christopher Brownsilva, first sergeant for the headquarters and headquarters detachment. "What I liked, personally, was that young Soldiers

had the opportunity to fly in a military aircraft and do something different," Brownsilva said. "It broke the routine of training in California."

Master Sgt. Benjamin Rosenberg reiterated the value of coming together for the training, saying he appreciated the chance to build relationships and learn from other forward support companies from different states.

"I take tips away with me every time I train," Rosenberg said. "Seeing how another state does it, and how we do it, always helps. I'm going to add that to my toolbox."

The training brought many challenges with it, including unpredictable weather, travel across miles of unimproved or nonexistent roads, and disruptions to digital communications. The Soldiers also received surprise visits from herds of cows, which wandered through operations areas and entered tents, according to Sgt. Gregg A. Hierholzer, a logistics sergeant with the 340th BSB.

Hierholzer said that morale stayed high no matter what circumstances the battalion confronted. Not even heat, thunderstorms, ankle-deep mud puddles and frigid temperatures could affect the Soldiers, who had come well prepared.

"We went to Wyoming taking everything we'd ever been issued, and we had no idea what most of it was for, but we figured it out really fast," Hierholzer said.

Because of the harsh conditions, safety was made a top priority at all levels, and no one sustained any serious injuries, according to Lt. Col. Marvin R. Green III, the battalion commander.

"For younger Soldiers who've only been to basic (training) and AIT (Advanced Individual Training), this is a big eye opener," Green said. "The number one enemy is always the environment."

Green said that the collective training was a valuable experience, and praised the

work done by the battalion. He said that normal difficulties occurred, but everyone stayed focused, which he attributed to the leadership of his noncommissioned officers.

"The NCO corps brought their A-game," Green said. "They took care of business."

Hierholzer praised the quality of the food, the efficiency of work done, and overall team spirit showed by fellow Soldiers.

"To say they did an awesome job would be an understatement," he said. "Morale was through the roof."

Green said that seeing the Soldiers have a good time was one of the most rewarding parts of the training for him.

"Even with the misty type of rain that doesn't go away, I saw Soldiers with smiles on their faces," he said. "If these guys and gals can have that level of attitude, we're going to be just fine."



LEFT: A storm rolls across the 340th Brigade Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade's area of operations during a training in Wyoming, May 20. During the training, soldiers experienced highly unpredictable weather, including intense heat, cold, thunderstorms and ankle-deep mud. RIGHT: Cal Guard members from the 340th Brigade Support Battalion prepare to board a flight back to their home station, May 22. Approximately 1,300 personnel from units from three states participated in the training exercise, called Operation Gunsmoke. Photos by to Sgt. Gregg A. Hierholzer





LEFT: A CH-47 Chinook helicopter from 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment hoists a 2,000 gallon bucket during training near Sutter Creek, California, April 16. **RIGHT:** Sgt. Andrew Lynch, a crew chief with the 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment from Las Vegas, Nevada, prepares a UH-72 Lakota helicopter for flight near Sutter Creek, April 16. **Photos by Sgt. Brianne Roudebush**

The Cal Guard and CAL FIRE prepare for fire season

By SGT. BRIANNE ROUDEBUSH
69th Public Affairs Detachment

At the top of a hill overlooking Lake Pardee, two motorcyclists stop to take in the view of the scene below them. Boats float across the water, people fish along the banks, and on the other side of the lake, a CH-47 Chinook helicopter dips a bright orange bucket into the water. The motorcyclists have seen this before – it’s a common sight during California’s wildfire season.

“I didn’t know anything was burning,” one of them said.

The helicopter was not responding to a fire this time; rather, it was participating in joint Wild Land Fire Fighting training between CAL FIRE and the California National Guard held April 15-17.

The three-day training kicked off April 15 with classroom instruction and concluded with two days of practical exercises at a helibase near Sutter Creek, California.

“The purpose of the training was to ensure that CAL FIRE firefighters and agency personnel that are called upon to fight fire from the air can interact with the National Guard in their aircraft and assimilate into their air crews,” Chief Dan Reese, the deputy chief of tactical operations for CAL FIRE, said. “We want to ensure that they can all effectively work together.”

During California’s exhaustive wildfire season, CAL FIRE often relies on additional support from the National Guard.

“We can go to the National Guard for extra helicopters and air power,” Reese said. “In the summertime when we typically

do call in the Guard, [all of our assets] have been deployed already, so they are a surge capability for us to be able to utilize.”

Reese explained that California’s ongoing drought has caused a severe tree mortality issue – meaning that there are millions of dead trees throughout the state – which could potentially have devastating effects during the fire season.

“We always have to prepare for the worst, right?” Reese said.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Shaun Hollins of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment echoed these sentiments, adding, “I don’t have any forecasts personally, but every fire season is usually expected to be worse than the last and that’s what we plan for.”

This year, the Guard faces the added challenge of managing CAL FIRE support requests without the 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment (Air Assault), which is currently deployed in Kuwait.

“They won’t be getting back until September so they will be completely out of the mix for this fire season,” Maj. John Allen, the executive officer for the 3-140th, said. “That’s one-third of the aviation assets that we provide.”

Several pilots in command, crewmembers and airframes from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade and the 640th Aviation Support Battalion are augmenting the air assault battalion in Kuwait as well.

“There’s really no way you can make up for a whole air assault battalion being gone,” Allen said. “It just means a higher

operational tempo for the Black Hawks out of Mather Airfield and leaning on the Chinooks out of Stockton for the bucket drops.”

The CH-47F Chinook heavy lift helicopters were recently modified with radio equipment that can communicate with the system CAL FIRE uses, so the entire fleet is available for this year’s fire response.

The Chinooks, which are more powerful than the UH-60 Black Hawk and HH-60 Pave Hawk utility helicopters, are able to carry 2,000-gallon water buckets. The Black Hawks and Pave Hawks carry buckets with about a 600-gallon capacity.

“We got a [new valve system] that is made for low water sources,” Chief Warrant Officer 3 Eric Aguilar, a CH-47 pilot with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, said. “It allows us to pick up water in as little as 28 inches of water, so that’s a big plus for our aircraft now.”

The valve is especially important during times of drought when water sources run very low. The entire training was conducted with the drought in mind – water was used sparingly and drops were conducted along the side of a hill allowing the water to run back into the lake.

“Overall, the training was excellent,” Aguilar said. “This was our first time using the new bucket system, so it’s good familiarization.”

“Hopefully, we won’t be too affected with the CAB deploying, but I believe we can handle it, along with our civilian assets,” he continued. “We have very competent crews to facilitate those missions.”



LEFT: Sgt. Barbara Kizer, a fueler with 1st Battalion, 168th Task Force Medevac out of Mather, California, fuels a UH-72 Lakota helicopter during training near Sutter Creek, April 16. **CENTER:** Chief Warrant Officer 4 Aaron Wallace, a UH-72 Lakota helicopter pilot, and Justin Reid, a firefighter with CAL FIRE, discuss safety operations near Sutter Creek, April 16. **RIGHT:** National Guard and CAL FIRE public affairs specialists take photos of the first helicopter to take flight during training near Sutter Creek, April 16. **Photos by Sgt. Brianne Roudebush**

Nevada air assets train with California Guard firefighting force

By **STAFF SGT. EDDIE SIGUENZA**
69th Public Affairs Detachment

Just as Sgt. Andrew J. Lynch opened the door to his UH-72A Lakota helicopter, a breeze forced him to brace himself. He held the door open as he continued his pre-mission check.

"This thing's still new," said Lynch, crew chief from the Nevada Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment (Security and Support) out of Las Vegas. "Doors open as easily as getting into a car."

This is one of several doors Lynch and his flight crew are opening for their state's future. On this April day, they're students in the Wild Land Firefighting training course hosted by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the California National Guard in preparation for a common Nevada and California enemy: wildfires. The training took place April 15-17 in rural Northern California in Sutter Creek near the CAL FIRE Academy in Ione, California.

Lynch and pilots Chief Warrant Officer 4 Aaron Wallace and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kevin Keeler are learning

how CAL FIRE and the Cal Guard use Lakota helicopters in firefighting operations so they can incorporate lessons learned into Nevada's aerial battle against wildfires in the future.

"It's important for us to be here to learn how the Lakotas play a role in California's firefighting system," said Sgt. Andrew J. Lynch, crew chief and one of three Nevada Army National Guardsmen. "We're trying to employ the Lakotas into our (Nevada) firefighting assets. CAL FIRE has one of the best systems because they fight fires every year, much more than a lot of states."

In California, UH-60 Black Hawk utility helicopters and CH-47 Chinook heavy lift helicopters are used for water drops and transport in firefighting operations. The Lakotas are used for command and control, overseeing action in the air and on the ground.

"These Lakotas are new to the Nevada Guard. We got them just last year," said Keeler. "The U.S. Army was getting rid of all its Kiowas and replacing them with this version of the Lakota. Nevada is very fortunate to receive this aircraft."

Right now, the Nevada Guard uses CH-47 Chinooks and UH-60 Black Hawks for firefighting and other critical roles, Wallace added. The Cal Guard officially began using Lakotas for firefighting missions over the past two years.

"It's a win-win for Nevada being here. They've assisted us with air support in past fires, so the training they pick up is also a refresher to the pilots who have been here before," said CAL FIRE Capt. Dan Reese, tactical air operations commander. "The Lakotas are new to our overall operations and they're proving to be effective for command and control. It's all about getting the Nevada crew, as well as California's pilots, onto the same page of operations so we can run our air tactics more smoothly and without flaws."

One of the keys, according to Lynch, is that the Lakotas have exceptional communication capabilities where they can easily track military and civilian coordination. The Lakotas also can stay airborne longer than Black Hawks, keeping them in the fight and aiding ground operations.

"We need to pick up on how CAL FIRE operates, how (the California Guard) is integrated into the operation, and how the Lakotas are best utilized," Lynch explained. "Everything we pick up, everything we learn is something very important for what we will do in Nevada. We're still a few years away from getting the Lakotas into the (firefighting) program, but that's our goal."



LEFT: Sgt. Andrew J. Lynch of the Nevada Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, out of Las Vegas, briefs California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) personnel prior to an April 16 mission during Wild Land Firefighting Training (WLFF) at Sutter Creek, California. The training unites CAL FIRE and California National Guard personnel to prep for the upcoming fire season. **TOP RIGHT:** Sgt. Andrew J. Lynch of the Nevada Army National Guard stands outside his UH-72A Lakota on April 16. **LOWER RIGHT:** A UH-72A Lakota helicopter piloted by Chief Warrant Officer 4 Aaron Wallace of the Nevada Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, departs the Helibase April 16.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Eddie Siguenza

115th RSG sets up mobile command post at Beale AFB

By **SGT. BRIANNE ROUDEBUSH**
69th Public Affairs Detachment The 115th

The 115th Regional Support Group headed out to Beale Air Force Base June 4-5 to practice setting up a mobile Joint Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration (JRSOI) command post.

The 115th RSG is responsible for overseeing the in-processing of troops during emergencies. The unit manages supplies, personnel status and movement for the six joint receiving centers throughout the state that are capable of in-processing thousands of troops.

Last October, the unit received new tents that enable them to set up their operations virtually anywhere.

"Depending on where the location is or where the disaster is, we need to be mobile because we don't know where we are going to have to set up," Staff Sgt. Gary Thomas, the 115th Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment brigade paralegal noncommis-

sioned officer, said.

Typically the unit operates out of their home station in Roseville or in hard buildings on installations. The tents allow them to be prepared for any situation.

"If everything burned to the ground and we had to set up in the middle of town, now we could," Staff Sgt. Kasey Schmidt, the 115th Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment readiness noncommissioned officer, said.

They spent several drill weekends practicing setting up the tents at the armory but this was their first time staking them down, setting up communications, and making them fully operational.

"This gives us the ability to be more self-reliant," Maj. Mario Acevedo, an officer in the 115th RSG operations section, said. "By practicing this stuff and getting away from our hard structures, we are better able to zero in on the essential elements of running a command post and providing mis-

sion command."

Despite it being new equipment, they encountered very few issues during set-up.

"It was a team effort," Pfc. Selina Copaciu, a Soldier new to the unit, said. "The most difficult part for me, since I'm new, is that I



didn't know what the tents were supposed to look like in the first place. But everyone pulled their weight and we got it done."

By lunchtime, all three tents were set up and the Soldiers, tired and sweaty from the humid June day, considered their mission a success.



LEFT: Soldiers from the 115th Regional Support Group assemble a screen in a mobile command post June 4 at Beale Air Force Base. **ABOVE:** The 115th Regional Support Group tested its mobile command post June 4 at Beale. The mobile equipment, which is new to the 115th RSG, allows the unit to set up their operations virtually anywhere in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

Photos by Spc. Amy Carle



TOP LEFT: A CH-47 Chinook helicopter based out of Stockton, California, supported President Obama's visit to Yosemite National Park June 17-20. Photo by Master Sgt. Dave Loeffler TOP RIGHT: Spc. Destin McGhee, of Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, takes up a defensive position against an attack during annual training in May 2016 when Soldiers from the unit, based out of Ventura and Santa Maria, conducted platoon defense lanes training at Camp Roberts. BOTTOM RIGHT: McKenzie Sanchez tells fellow Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy cadets to follow their dreams and ignore the limitations others try to impose on them during Sunburst's graduation ceremony June 11 in Los Alamitos, California. The cadets endured an intense 22-week program of academics, fitness and discipline at Joint Forces Training Base Los Alamitos to learn life skills that will benefit them in the future. Photo by Brandon Honig BOTTOM LEFT: Cal Guardsmen and CAL FIRE personnel attend a briefing at a helibase near Sutter, California, during Wildland Fire Fighting training on April 16. Photo by Tech. Sgt. (CA) Gene Arias MIDDLE LEFT: CH-47 Chinook helicopters from the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade land at Forward Operating Base Fenty, Afghanistan, for a hot refuel May 21. Photo by Sgt. Ian Kummer

At a Glance



TOP: Spc. Philip Taylor, left, and Spc. Harley T. Diaz from Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, based out Ventura and Santa Maria, participate in platoon defense lanes training on the recently scorched earth of Camp Roberts in May during the unit's annual training. **CENTER:** California National Guard aviators and emergency-response personnel joined the Mendocino Sheriff Office's Remote Search and Rescue training exercise on July 12, in Ukiah, California. **Photo by Capt. Will Martin** **BOTTOM RIGHT:** On June 5, 2006, Sgt. 1st Class Isaac Lawson, assigned to the 49th MP Brigade, was killed by a roadside bomb. On the 10-year anniversary of his death, the 49th MP Brigade honored him with a ceremony at the Sacramento Memorial Lawn at which Lawson's wife Suzzettee Lawson and daughter, Chiara, were present. **Photo courtesy the 49th MP Brigade** Soldiers from the Fresno-based 1106th Theater Aviation Support Maintenance Group attend a deployment ceremony in Fresno, California, July 8. The unit is sending approximately 65 avionics, electrical, structural, armament, airframe, logistics and administrative aviation specialists to Kuwait in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. **Photo by Master Sgt. Paul Wade**



During annual training in May 2016 Soldiers from Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, based out of Ventura and Santa Maria, of the California Army National Guard, conducted a platoon defense lanes training on the recently scorched earth of Camp Roberts. Photo by Master Sgt. Paul Wade

Army Total Force partnerships improving readiness

By **DAVID VERGUN**
Army News Service

More National Guard and Reserve units are partnering with the active component under the Army Forces Command Total Force Partnership Program, and one of the latest is an infantry brigade combat team from California.

All eight Army National Guard division headquarters are now partnered with an active component corps headquarters under the program, which seeks to operationalize the Army Total Force Policy signed by the secretary of the Army in 2012. U.S. Army Forces Command also partnered each of the 28 ARNG brigade combat teams to active BCTs in 2014, a FORSCOM spokesman said.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

A recent example of how this type of partnership works is the California ARNG's 79th Infantry BCT, partnering with the 1st Armored Division's 4th Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment (Stryker) out of Fort Bliss, Texas.

From May 15 to June 4, the two units conducted joint training at Camp Roberts and Fort Hunter Liggett, both in California.

This type of partnership is "back to the future," said Lt. Col. David Murphy, commander, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, 79th IBCT.

As a lieutenant in 1999, he said he recalls his unit partnering with the 29th Field Artillery Regiment out of Fort Carson, Colorado.

Since that time, however, focus shifted to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the training partnerships melted away. The 79th IBCT, and others like it, trained in isolation.

That isolated training hurt readiness, Murphy said, because when a unit needed to deploy, more time was needed to integrate units at the pre-mobilization sites.

Now that has changed, he said, with this year being the first year in over a decade that his unit has partnered with an active-

duty one, and that partnership is expected to continue, he added.

EXTERNAL CTC

The recent exercise Murphy's unit participated in with the 4-17th was called an "external combat training center" event, because it was not at an officially designated CTC.

Having said that, the training offered enough real-estate to conduct dynamic, high-fidelity training, including live-fire that comprised two gun raids with all the platoons, an airlift and an opposition force, he said. Also, First Army's 3rd Bn., 358th Field Artillery, out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, provided observer-controllers "who were very helpful to us."

Feedback from the platoon leaders indicated that they felt the joint training experience was highly beneficial and it gave them a chance to improve troop-leading procedures and become fully engaged in the training, without the usual administrative requirements and distractors getting in the way, he said. The noncommissioned

officers had similar sentiments.

Murphy said he believes that as other units partner in likewise fashion, the Guard and Reserve will continue to maintain their status as a fully capable operational Reserve.

TOTAL FORCE INTEGRATION

Army Forces Command Total Force Partnership Program aims to integrate the Army's active and reserve components for training exercises, planning and improved interoperability, according to Paul Boyce of FORSCOM.

In March, the Associated Units pilot program — an Army Total Force initiative — was launched and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley remarked: "Much of America's Army's capacity is resident in the Reserve components and we must rely more heavily on them to meet the demands of a complex global environment. The Associated Units pilot allows us to leverage the capabilities and capacities of the Active component, Army Reserve and the Army National Guard as one Army."

MPs get fit - Part One of a two-part series on physical fitness

By **STAFF SGT. SALLI CURCHIN**
California Military Department Public Affairs

There's a new Army Directive (2016-07) that takes effect July, 2016 which changes how leaders report whether their Soldiers are listed as 'available', to now listed as 'deployable'. A deployable Soldier can report within 72 hours and be in compliance with all required personnel readiness standards and not restricted from deploying for fitness, health or other limiting factors.

The 49th Military Police Brigade took bold action this summer when 17 weight and fitness challenged members volunteered and were accepted into the pilot Cal Poly/49th MP BDE Fitness and Nutrition Enhancement Program aimed at rigorous

physical fitness training, nutrition based courses, and mental readiness, said course director, Capt. Graham L. Wintzer.

The 49th MPs are part of the state's Homeland Response Force (HRF) team that earlier this year completed validation certifying the team to perform its duties in support of state or federal emergencies for the next two years.

"We must be ready to respond to a state emergency should the governor activate us to fight fires, floods, and other natural or man-made disasters as part of our state mission, and we must also answer the call if the president activates us to federal duty to deploy outside the U.S.," said California Army National Guard commander, Maj. Gen. Lawrence Haskins, when speaking

on Soldier readiness.

Program

The two part pilot program was developed by Wintzer in partnership with California Polytechnic State University for research. It addresses strength, endurance, mobility, injury prevention, mental preparedness, nutrition knowledge and even cooking instruction combined with warrior training tasks, such as land navigation and weighted ruck marches.

Part one involved initial physical assessments, education and training of participants during the two-and-half week course with follow up evaluations of knowledge retained, body composition and fitness stats to be measured later in the year. In addition, the participants will

stay connected to researchers with monthly reporting.

"When I heard about this program, I thought of it as an opportunity for me to achieve my goals, better my PT [physical training], and further my military career if I can succeed," said Spc. Hector Cervantes Echeverria, a 5-year veteran who was offered a promotion with the 149th Chemical Company after passing his fitness test. He is a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Specialist.

Wintzer, a 7-year veteran with a 2012 deployment to Afghanistan, a Cross Fit Level 1 course and a degree from Cal Poly in Food Science Nutrition, worked with his team of NCOs, several nutrition professors

continued next page

Yeager promoted to brigadier general

By **CAPT. JASON SWEENEY**
69th Public Affairs Detachment

Brig. Gen. Laura Yeager is not related to the fast flying Chuck Yeager who famously was the first pilot to break the sound barrier, but she does have quite the aviation pedigree of her own.

She flew UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters during a combat deployment to Iraq and commanded the California National Guard's 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, among many other accomplishments over her military career. Her father, retired California National Guard Maj. Gen. Robert Brandt, was also a helicopter pilot who served two tours in Vietnam.

"My father has been a tremendous role model to me, both as a parent and as an officer and I have benefited immensely from his mentorship," Yeager said.

On May 31, Yeager was promoted to brigadier general, making her the fourth female general in California National Guard history.

"I am honored to serve at this level and know that it comes with the responsibility to use the position and authority I am being given in order to serve the needs of our members and the organization," she said. "I have enjoyed my career so much that it is hard for me to believe that I have been serving for 30 years, but I have, and being promoted will allow me to

continue to serve in this great profession."

Yeager is one of two female generals currently serving in the Cal Guard.

"As a female, I have found the military to provide opportunities and benefits unmatched by any profession," she said. "Clearly, females are in the minority within the military, yet in every assignment I have held, my mostly male peers, subordinates and superiors, have supported me, treated me with respect, coached, mentored and advised me. At the same time, I have been inspired by the incredibly strong and amazing women I have served with and for. Needless to say, I would not have achieved this rank without every one of them, from the professor of military science at Long Beach State, to the platoon sergeant I served with as a platoon leader, ranging all the way up to brigade commanders and the adjutant general."

Yeager serves as the California National Guard Director for the Military Department Joint Staff. In this capacity, she serves Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David Baldwin and implements his vision to ensure the California National Guard has mission-ready forces that meet the needs of the state and nation. In emergency situations, Yeager can be authorized to serve as the sole military commander for both active duty



Brig. Gen. Laura Yeager
U.S. Army photo

and reserve component forces deployed during domestic incidents.

Yeager's active duty military service began in May 1986 after receiving her commission as a second lieutenant from the Reserve Officer Training Corps. She began her Army career in the Medical Service Corps, but like her father, was attracted to flying.

"Though my dad was a pilot, I had never really considered becoming one myself, but once I decided to join the military, I wanted to do something that would be vastly different from anything I could do in a civilian occupation," she said. "Once I had a chance to fly in a helicopter as an ROTC cadet, I was hooked and became obsessed with going to flight school. To this day, the sound of a helicopter is music to

my ears and I never get tired of being on one or even seeing one in flight."

She completed military helicopter training in 1989 and began service as an aeromedical evacuation pilot.

"I left active duty not long after my son Scott was born," she said. "My husband and I were both serving on active duty and were finding maintaining two careers put a huge strain on our family. During transition counseling, I was introduced to the idea of serving in the reserve component. Serving in the reserves was a perfect balance between having a career and managing a great family life. I very much enjoyed my eight years of service on active duty, but in the National Guard I find the dedication, loyalty, sense of teamwork and professionalism of our members to be far superior. After my husband decided it was time for him to retire a little over 10 years ago, I was able to transition into a full-time position in the Guard."

The National Guard proved a good fit for Yeager, in terms of both her career as an officer and as a helicopter pilot. In 2011, she deployed to Iraq with the California National Guard's 40th Combat Aviation Brigade where she served as the brigade's deputy commander while also flying UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters in a combat environment.

"It was difficult to be separated from my family, but serving in Iraq and having the opportunity to fly throughout the country, was professionally satisfying and extremely memorable for me," she said.

Upon her return from Iraq, she took command of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade.

"Definitely being in command are the assignments and memories I most cherish, all the way from being a platoon leader to brigade command," she said. "I was especially proud to have commanded the same brigade, the 40th CAB, my father once commanded."

"I could not be more proud of Laura for choosing a professional career in which she has devoted her life to the service of our nation," her father, retired Maj. Gen. Brandt, said.

Maj. Gen. Baldwin promoted Yeager to brigadier general at a ceremony May 31 at the Sierra View Country Club in Roseville, California.

"Colonel Yeager has proven herself as a leader on both the battlefield and here at home," Baldwin said. "Whether she's at the helm of a Black Hawk helicopter in Iraq or leading emergency-response operations in Sacramento, she always leads from the front with the well-being of her troops in mind."

'MPs' previous page

from the college's Department of Food Science and Nutrition, and a local medical doctor and expert in health, metabolism and body composition.

Because of the research nature of the program, participants' body fat, muscle and bone health were evaluated and measured by dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) which is commonly believed to be a gold standard body fat assessment. Muscle glucose was also measured using ultrasound, along with other health measurements such as blood pressure, and heart health.

Fitness

"For active duty military police who struggle with fitness, Fort Benning puts you on a 24/7 program and you're told when and what to eat," said Wintzer. "Fitness readiness can be tough for National Guardsmen who have the influences and stresses of full-time civilian society and only part-time military support and



LEFT: Sgt. Daniel Gonzales of the 149th Chemical Company participates in the cooking instruction portion of the Cal Poly/49th MP BDE Fitness and Nutrition Enhancement Program. RIGHT: 49th MP Brigade Soldiers run at Morro Bay, California, June 6. Photos by Spc. Rommell Flores

pressure."

He believes a program this comprehensive can turn things around for those first-term Soldiers who have been serving for three to five years depending on their contract length. "PT failures run the risk of early discharge, disciplinary actions or inability to re-enlist when they might just need support for their fitness and nutrition practice and knowledge," said Wintzer.

Nutrition and Cooking

This portion of the training focused on teaching the participants how to navigate



the food environment by teaching them about menu balancing, portion control, the science behind nutrition and how to discern truth from marketing exaggerations when it comes to healthy shopping and eating, said Cal Poly's Assistant Professor of Nutrition, Kari Pilolla.

"The Soldiers came to us with some sort of risk factors and we taught them how to reduce those risk factors through nutrition," said Pilolla.

The Soldiers were also taught basic cooking skills,

how to prepare different dinners and snacks and how foods support physical and mental performance, said Pilolla.

"They obtained a better understanding that they can't just grab anything to eat. They learned about better choices to optimize their health, performance and cognition needed when on duty," explained Pilolla.

When asked about lessons learned from the training, Spc. Michael Hogan said, "Having a workout routine, meal preparation, looking at what is healthy. They

gave us the tools needed to be successful but it's up to us to apply them," said Hogan, who has been with the Guard for six years. After passing his fitness test, he was able to re-enlist for six more years. He is a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Specialist with the 149th Chemical Company.

Mental Health

In this study, mental health preparedness took a front seat. Not only were Army resiliency concepts taught but visualization techniques to overcome obstacles were also addressed. Instructors were sensitive to addressing cultural barriers, family obligations and other stressors that participants faced when they returned to their civilian lives.

"The mental readiness portion of the program, ultimately, was about enhancing each Soldier's ability to integrate the knowledge and skills they learned into their daily lives, said Lara Davis, Director of Arrow Institute, who taught these

courses.

"We were taught not just the physical aspect to be fit, but the nutritional and psychological side as well; the program was perfectly blended," said Hogan.

"The knowledge we've gained from this program will be life changing and long lasting," said Spc. Karla Pena, a 9-year military police veteran with the 670th Military Police Company. "It's knowledge we can share with other Soldiers who are willing to learn and make a lifestyle change that benefits our military career."

The majority of the participants lost weight, decreased in body fat, increased their run times, passed their fitness testing and made other health improvements according to Wintzer.

Stay tuned for Part 2 of this story to learn how the participants are doing several months after the initial workshop.

In the air, on the water and underground: 9th CST radiation drills push the limits in SoCal

By **BRANDON HONIG**

California Military Department Public Affairs

California's vast terrain includes a 140-mile international border and 840 miles of coastline — that's nearly a thousand miles of potential illegal entry points. Keeping those points closed to the smuggling of dangerous materials is vital to our national security.

"I ask myself daily how we haven't had an attack with a bomb or chemical weapon; I like to think it's because of our vigilance that has stifled would-be attackers," said Staff Sgt. David Brian of the California National Guard's 9th Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction). "It's extremely important that different agencies stay vigilant and work well with each other to prepare for these events, because it's only a matter of time. There's no limit to what the people who want to hurt this country will do."

Brian was speaking in April in San Diego, where he was participating in a multi-agency exercise to detect smugglers bringing radiation sources into the country via maritime routes. A month later, the Los Alamitos-based 9th CST was back in San Diego for a similar multi-agency exercise, this time detecting radiation-smugglers in underground tunnels.

"[The CST] are our experts, they're the top tier," said Brian Jensen, training lieutenant for the San Diego Harbor Police. "If there were a really bad real-world situation [involving radiation or other hazardous contaminants], we would look to them and say, 'You're the subject matter experts, this is your bailiwick.'"

Exposing Themselves to Risk

The Harbor Police led the April 25-29 maritime exercise, which included three CSTs, Customs and Border Protection, the FBI, the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, the Coast Guard and many City of San Diego elements, as well as the California Air National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing.

The 129th participated in a series of trials to determine if the CST could gather radiation readings off a boat while hovering overhead in an HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter. In one scenario, hostages were taken aboard a cruise ship, and a SWAT team preparing to breach the ship needed to know what type of environment they were about to enter.

"From where we were up in the helo, with the readings on our equipment, we were able to calculate how much energy was on the boat itself, and that correlates to how long personnel can work in that environment [safely]," said Staff Sgt. Jason Villasenor of the 9th CST. "In a [real-world] situation like this, someone from a responding agency has to be there in the presence of the potential radiation source, exposing themselves to risk. To make that mission a success, we need to make sure the people going in are comfortable relying on us to get them that information without slowing them down."

Ensuring different agencies are comfortable relying on each other was a main objective of the San Diego exercises. During the hostage scenario, for instance, two CST soldiers integrated into a SWAT team formation and provided the team a real-time assessment of the environmental dangers.



TOP: Members of the California National Guard's 9th Civil Support Team gather sensor readings off a boat near San Diego while aboard an HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from the Cal Guard's 129th Rescue Wing during a May exercise focused on preventing international smuggling of radiation sources. **Photo by Brandon Honig** **LEFT:** Staff Sgt. Zachary Liles of the North Carolina National Guard's 42nd Civil Support Team (CST) uses a QinetiQ Talon robot to detect non-hazardous radiation sources planted in a tunnel in the San Diego area for a multi-agency exercise focused on international smuggling May 26. **Photo by Capt. Shane Foss** **RIGHT:** Sgt. David Brian of the California National Guard's 9th Civil Support Team (CST), right, and Sgt. 1st Class Damien Silva of the D.C. National Guard's 33rd CST examine sensor readings April 28 aboard a boat in Mission Bay, San Diego. **Photo by Brandon Honig**

"It's always good to have opportunities to work with other agencies and get a feel for how they operate," Brian said. "We've done missions where we work side-by-side in a stack with SWAT, and others where they clear the room and then bring us in. Each unit works a bit differently, so it's vital that we rehearse and get to see how they operate and show them our capabilities and how we operate."

A Step Ahead

The CST continually works to improve the way it operates, including finding ways to use cutting-edge technologies to increase capabilities. During the May 24-26 tunnel exercise, for instance, the CST used a remotely operated robot to gather readings and employed a multi-laser digital mapping system to create a blueprint of an area inaccessible to GPS.

The 9th is the first of the nation's 57 CSTs to experiment with a QinetiQ Talon robot, which can climb stairs, drag 300 pounds through water and survive explosions. Most importantly, it keeps human team members out of harm's way.

"We're the guys that suit up, go downrange and do the hands-on operation to bring back samples from inside the hot zone," said Sgt. Taylor Coe, of the CST, during an exercise late last year. "Why not send a robot in, instead of having two of our guys risk their lives?"

In San Diego the CST found creative ways to insert the Talon into different locations, including using a winch-and-pulley system to hoist it onto the Midway aircraft carrier and welding a platform to lower it into a tunnel with a 70-foot vertical drop. Once in the tunnel, the Talon's sensors successfully located multiple radiation sources that had been planted for the exercise and relayed accurate information to the CST via radio.

"The robot is a good tool," said Maj. Drew Hanson, deputy commander of the 9th CST. "The proof of concept [for using it in the CST] has been established."

Test to the Limits

Unlike the Talon, which the 9th has trained with for about a year, the Enhanced Mapping and Positioning System (EMAPS) made its first appearance at a CST exercise in May. A soldier carried EMAPS in a backpack while walking through a tunnel under a water treatment plant, enabling the 4-pound system to build a digital representation with each step.

EMAPS uses a laser scanner to measure distances to walls and other objects, and a second laser can be added to collect those data in 3D. The resulting map is highly detailed, including building features such as columns and ceiling panels. Additional sensors can register and map the location of radiation sources or other toxic materials.

"We can go in somewhere where nobody knows what it looks like, do a quick site survey and get a blueprint of the whole target," said Capt. Shane Foss, operations officer for the CST. "Once you bring that out [of the site], we can develop a plan based on the blueprint you developed."

The team also tested their communications vigorously, using the Mobile Field Kit and Android Tactical Awareness Kit (MFK/ATAK), which enable survey team members to share data remotely. The 9th CST and Massachusetts' 1st CST pioneered the use of the MFK/ATAK package, researching the technology and partnering with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency to bring it to reality.

"Without the MFK, a survey team member would need to gather their readings, get out of the hot zone and go through the decontamination process before we could begin analyzing the data," Hanson said. "With MFK, sensor readings, radiation spectra and pictures can be sent to the command post in real-time, allowing the science team to analyze information and provide assessments before the entry team even gets out of the hot zone."

Based on the 9th and 1st CSTs' research and successful tests of the MFK/ATAK package, it soon will become a standard part of all CSTs' equipment.

Hanson said the 9th plans every exercise with the goal of stretching the team's technological capabilities to see how well it performs in disparate environments.

"We don't set ourselves up for failure, but we design each exercise to test every piece of equipment we have to the limits," he said. "We've got to know what's feasible and what's not."

Unified Effort

When disaster strikes, the strength of all our responding agencies will be needed, and they'll need to work seamlessly to minimize damage. The 9th CST covers roughly half of California (with the Cal Guard's 95th CST managing the northern half), requiring coordination with agencies all over the map.

"We are here to augment and support them when they need us — not to supplant, but to support," Hanson said. "Becoming good partners with police and fire, FBI, the Department of Energy, Border Patrol, and all the other agencies, sometimes comes down to figuring out ways to get integrated with them and make sure they realize we can be a tremendous asset for them as needed. That's why we exist."

Hanson said the CST's integration with agencies in Southern California improves every year. The San Diego maritime exercise, for example, showed a "true unified effort" between the various responding agencies.

"This is an important step toward us becoming a comfortable piece in their regional operations," Hanson said. "The Harbor Police understands how quickly resources would get eaten up in a real-world scenario like this, and we are a strong partner with some great capabilities."

'Be all that you dream of being' at the Sunburst Academy

The Cal Guard's Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy offers at-risk youths discipline and a chance to reach their full potential

By **BRANDON HONIG**

California Military Department Public Affairs

New cadets at Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy are in for a rude awakening — a 4:30 awakening to drill sergeant-style screaming and physical training the first morning. The cadre push you, try to scare you, and eventually break you, according to recent graduate Christina Moreno, so then they can remake you.

"We couldn't believe it was real," she said June 11, after 22 weeks in the voluntary program for at-risk youths. "Our first week, we were like, 'Oh my god, what did we do?'"

Moreno was one of many who almost pulled out of Sunburst in the early going, but instead, all 53 girls who enrolled in Class 17 also completed the grueling National Guard-run program.

"We had a lot of breakdowns, a lot of times we told them to call our moms, and we almost left," she said. "I was so close to going home, but [I stayed] because of the girls. We kept each other going."

In all, 201 of the 216 students who arrived at Joint Forces Training Base Los Alamitos, California, in January stayed for the full 22 weeks on base. With that 93 percent retention rate, Sunburst ranked at the top of the nation's 37 Youth ChalleNGe academies, a position it has held continuously for four years.

Life Lessons

The cadre at Sunburst pushed the cadets through 154 days of hard physical training, discipline and academics. They demanded commitment and excellence, and they yelled until "everybody hated them." In the beginning, Moreno said, "they're so tough on you, it seems as if they don't care."

As the cadets learn and grow, however, the demands of Sunburst become easier to them. And as they mature, the interactions between cadet and cadre change.

"[After about a month], they start to ease up and talk to you, try to get to know you. And from then on, you make a bond and a relationship with them," Noah Brooks said June 11, the day of his graduation from Sunburst. "They really care about me and what I'm going to be in the future. They want me to succeed in life, and I really look up to them."

Giving students what Moreno called life lessons is a daily part of the job for the cadre, whose cadets often have criminal histories, came from unhealthy environments or endured abuse. Those quiet moments are often the most meaningful, according to Sunburst graduates, as they instill values that will last a lifetime.

"They taught me that integrity is one of the most important things you can have in life, because without integrity, you won't succeed," Brooks said. "Working hard is everything."

The Work Isn't Over

Over 78 percent of Class 17's cadets made the Honor Roll, with a grade point average of 3.7 or higher. Twenty-five students also

earned a high school diploma or equivalency credential while at Sunburst, and together the cadets contributed more than 10,500 hours of community service work. They also learned how to carry themselves professionally, prepare a resume and balance a checkbook.

But after 22 weeks, Sunburst has to let the kids sink or soar on their own.

"Don't expect everything to be alright when you get out of Sunburst," said Ivan Torres, who completed the residential program in December as part of Class 16. "Going in there and fixing yourself is the easy part. When you come out, everything [else] is going to be the same. It's up to you to make the difference in your life."

The same old problems may persist at home or in school, and the people who used to be your friends may look at you differently now that you've matured, he said. It can be a challenge, trying to do the right thing.

Torres was speaking Sunday, June 12, the day after the Class 17 graduation, at a youth resource fair organized to help Sunburst graduates — and other youths — as they transition to adulthood. Israel Siguenza, who also was part of last year's Class 16 and attended the resource fair, learned about opportunities to earn his way through college with the help of programs offered by the Los Angeles Police Department and Long Beach City College.

"Financially, I'm good — my parents could pay for my education," Siguenza said. "But I'd rather do it on my own, be my own man."

Several other Sunburst graduates who attended the fair received job offers on the spot. There also was information available on a wide range of topics, such as mentoring programs, health care, LGBT resources, homeless assistance, addiction treatment and cadet programs.

In all, 60 organizations that provide free counseling and other services to youths in six counties came to Anaheim for the first My Brother's Keeper SoCal Challenge Community Resource Fair. Sunburst plans to host a similar public event twice a year going forward, in conjunction with each class graduation.

The fair was presented through a partnership between Sunburst and the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative, which the White House launched in 2014 to address opportunity gaps faced by young men of color and to ensure all young people can reach their full potential. Sunburst's student population is a diverse mix of boys and girls from different backgrounds, though most are young men of color.

"We work intensively with the cadets for nearly six months, instilling them with the values, work ethic and skills they need to excel later in life," said Lt. Col. Joel Armstrong, director of Sunburst. "One of the most difficult things we have to do is watch them leave after graduation, knowing we can no longer provide daily guidance. By gathering together in one place a wide swath of resources to help all our graduates, we can further set them up for



TOP: Cadre and graduating cadets embrace in celebration June 11, the cadets' final day in the California National Guard's Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy for at-risk youths. The cadets endured an intense 22-week program of academics, fitness and discipline at Joint Forces Training Base Los Alamitos to learn life skills that will benefit them in the future. LEFT: Fifty-three female students line up for the last time as Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy cadets on June 11, the day of their graduation from the 22-week residential program for at-risk youths. RIGHT: Twenty-five Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy cadets received their high school diploma or equivalency credential June 11, the same day they graduated from Sunburst's 22-week residential program for at-risk youths. Photo by Brandon Honig

success after high school."

A Beginning, Not an End

Before Sunburst, McKenzie Sanchez was tired. She was tired of sneaking out, tired of fake friends, tired of seeing disappointment in her parents' eyes. And she was tired of seeing friends die or get pregnant. But most of all, she was tired of being told she would never graduate or become the person she aspired to be.

That's why she entered Sunburst.

"We can now walk with a greater sense of accomplishment," she said on graduation day. "Nobody, not even our blood, can tell us that our dreams are unachievable."

Sanchez, who was chosen by her Sunburst peers and faculty to speak on Class 17's behalf at graduation, said the cadets' achievements at Sunburst proved they can attain any goal with hard work.

"Sunburst didn't just hand us a uniform and the strength to do push-ups," she told an audience of more than 2,000. "The school, along with the sergeants, have also given us the tools to strive for better, to not just settle for something below our expectations."

Sanchez urged the graduates to take the lessons learned at Sunburst with them. She praised the academy for the values it instilled and reminisced about the lifelong memories and friendships it created. Finally, though, she warned the cadets not to be complacent or too proud of their achieve-

ments thus far.

"We used to live by the limitations of others. Now we've met the challenges of Sunburst," she said. "Yet, don't allow Sunburst to be the best thing that has ever happened to you, because this is not the end, but the beginning."

"Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Stay true to yourself and be all that you dream of being."



Noah Brooks enjoys time with family June 11 after graduating from the California National Guard's Sunburst Youth ChalleNGe Academy for at-risk youths. Photo by Brandon Honig

Longtime operator of JFHQ's Guard Cafe hangs up the apron

Serbian immigrant Dragan Mirkovich and his wife Katarina have served pizza and sandwiches to Cal Guardsmen for 20 years

By **LAUREN HALL**

California Military Department Public Affairs

Dragan and Katarina Mirkovic have operated the Guard Café for 20 years, feeding hungry staff members and visitors to the California Military Department headquarters with their delicious home-style Serbian, Hungarian, German, Mexican and Italian specialties as well as their famous Serbian bean soup and homemade breads baked daily.

But the Guard Café is now operating with just one of the Mirkovics.

Dragan retired on May 13, hanging up his apron to lead a life of leisure.

His plans include working around his house, visiting family members in Serbia and visiting his brother and friends in Germany.

However, Katarina isn't ready to leave the café and her kitchen just yet. She will keep the Guard Café up and running on her own, without her favorite sidekick.

Originally from Belgrade, Serbia, Dragan and Katarina grew up as neighbors, but met for the first time in Los Angeles through a mutual friend.

"It's funny because we're from the same city. When he finished elementary school, I attended the music school in the building next door in same school yard. My grandparents lived three city blocks from his parents, but we never met," said Katarina.

Dragan left Serbia before his 17th birthday and headed to Germany where he already had a job lined up as a bartender. He quickly learned to speak German and enrolled in school.

"I was almost 24-years-old when I went back to Serbia to serve in the Serbian Army for one year, which is mandatory in order to get a passport," he said.



Katarina and Dragan Mirkovic are seen here at the Guard Cafe on June 10. Dragan retired in May after working 20 years at the Guard Cafe, but his wife Katarina is still on the job.

Photo by Lauren Hall

Naturally, his military job was that of chef.

"I had to prepare dinner for 1,000 people. I was used to only cooking for one person," said Dragan, who got his taste for cooking from his father, a master baker in Belgrade.

Once he completed his military service, Dragan returned to Germany and subsequently attended a three-year culinary school in Dusseldorf. After living in Germany for 13 years, he moved to Los Angeles.

"I wanted to live in a place with more sunshine so I decided to move to sunny California," he said. "I'd heard so much from other people how nice all the sunshine there was. They were right!"

That was when fate finally brought Dragan and Katarina together.

After graduating as the top student at the University of Belgrade, Katarina's father gave her a six-month trip to see the U.S. and to consider attending college at the University of California Los Angeles to earn her master's degree.

"I loved the United States and California. Everybody was so nice and everyone smiled," said Katarina. "But life took a com-

pletely different turn after I met Dragan."

The couple eventually got married, made Los Angeles their home and had a beautiful baby boy, Alex, in November 1989.

After losing many cherished possessions in the Northridge earthquake, the family moved to Sacramento. They wanted to open an espresso bar and learned that the kitchen in the California Military Department headquarters was vacant. However, once they came to see it, the need for a café was apparent and the rest, as they say, is history. In 1996, the Guard Café was up and running.

But their lives took another turn after suffering the devastating loss of their beloved Alex, their only child, to Marfan Syndrome of the heart two months before he would have turned 20-years-old.

Like his parents, Alex was a friendly face at the Guard Café, often working alongside them when he wasn't attending classes at American River College.

"He worked every single free moment that he had free from school working with us. Everyone called him "Quick Wit" and "G.Q." Alex," said Katarina. "I always had a smile when he was here. He was so adored. Alex was the most important thing for both of us."

Alex, at 6'6" tall, had played on the college's basketball team and was so impressive, he received a letter of recommendation from a Kings player to go to the NBA.

In his memory, the Mirkovics keep a donation jar at the café that they in turn donate to American River College where they award the "Alex Mirkovich Basketball Fund" to one player per year with qualities most like Alex: a good player, a "dunker", unselfish and a team player.

It is apparent that, after spending 20 years working with the California National Guard, Dragan and Katarina have made a

lot of friends here.

"They became our family and we are members of theirs. We do things together, go out together, spend holidays together," said Dragan. "It's hard to believe I've been here 20 years.... minus two weeks. I originally thought I would be here only two years."

While Dragan is looking forward to a happy retirement, Katarina doesn't intend to retire anytime in the foreseeable future. In fact, it seems as if there's no slowing her down. Not only will she keep running the Guard Café, she will continue working her other jobs at JC Penney and as guest lecturer at American River College where she teaches History of Classical Ballet.

"That's my passion, as is art history and playing piano," she said.

This is by no means "goodbye" to Dragan. You may even see him, or his cardboard poster likeness, courtesy of Visual Information, the next time you head to the Guard Café. But after 43 years on his feet, he says "enough is enough."

"Dragan's bread and pizza were great, but what I'll miss most are his stories about his upbringing in Serbia. His story is a success story of an immigrant who struggled and fought to succeed," said Master Sgt. David Loeffler, Visual Information Manager. "It is evident that Dragan loves America and he is a great reminder for us to value what we have in an age where so many people take our freedoms for granted."

He will surely be missed by many, but what will he miss the most about working at the Guard Cafe?

"Tough question. Really tough question," he said. "Of course, I'll miss my customers and my really good friends and family here. I'm going to make as many visits here as possible until they say, 'Enough! No more soup for you!'"

FIT to FIGHT with MAJ. JONATHAN SHIROMA

I teach a number of boot camp classes every week at a well-known national fitness chain outlet here in Sacramento. What sometimes makes it interesting is the fact that there is a well-known burger joint right next door to this outlet. Often times, as I am walking into the gym, the smell of



the burgers on the grill mixes into the air and quite frankly, sometimes; I'd rather skip my workouts and coaching and grab a juicy, greasy burger with fries instead.

Food...we all have a relationship with it and for better or for worse, this relationship will be with us until death do we part. But like any relationship, we all need to learn how to make it work in order to foster a healthy exchange between the two parties.

"Too often we eat on 'auto pilot' -- we associate food with certain activities or even times of the day, and without really paying attention to how much we're consuming, we overeat," says Warren Huberman, Ph.D., a psychologist with the NYU medical program for surgical weight loss.

My workout coach, Keali'I Forsberg, a certified fitness coach at one of the local

gyms here in Sacramento states "In the modern global economy we live in today, the combinations of those tastes are now seemingly endless," he says.

Forsberg explains that there is an experience of taste that we can sometimes be more in love with than the food and sustenance itself.

"There are textures of foods that attract, or detract us to maybe crunch through the entire bag of chips listening to them crush as you go," he says, "and all of this so far has nothing to do with what our body needs to sustain life."

So what do you do to break these chains that bind this unhealthy relationship? Forsberg breaks it down this way: "There are three basic universal demands the human body requires for sustenance and performance and we know them as carbs, fats, and proteins. Most common in busy American diets is far less than optimal protein and beyond excess in carbohydrates and fats. It is these gaps and holes from early morning fueling that open the door to late afternoon and evening disasters of 'cravings.' If there is not a protein

for every meal and every snack, for every three hours in the day, there will be chaos in the later day."

"Behavioral eating really is a lot like links in a chain; when you continually find yourself in a situation that is conducive to eating, or conducive to eating a particular food, and you follow through by eating that food, you reinforce a chain link of behaviors that is very much like being on autopilot, says Huberman.

"Change the time you eat, the TV show you are watching, the bowl you put the chips in - eat with your left hand instead of your right hand. The point is to make your brain work a little so that every bite you take is a conscious decision and not a learned, automatic behavior," says Huberman.

"Our bodies do need fuel, the right grade, and at the right time. If we wait till we are hungry to even think about food it will be a battle lost each time," he adds. "Plan out meals and fueling for the day, the week; or rinse, wash, and repeat the cycle that works for your goals at hand. Just eat real food!"



From Soldiers to state contractors

Two retired CDTF members return to help teach Cal DOJ rural operations course

By **SGT. BRIANNE ROUDEBUSH**
Counterdrug Task Force Public Affairs

They may have retired but they haven't hung up their boots just yet. Kelly Ames and William Riley, two former members of the California National Guard Counterdrug Task Force, returned to the training environment – this time, as instructors during the California Department of Justice's Tactical Concepts for Rural Operations course held at Fort Hunter-Liggett April 18-22.

With more than 50 years of combined experience, Ames and Riley are subject matter experts in rural operations, land navigation and safety. As such, Special Agent Supervisor Ed Plantaric, the CA DOJ training coordinator for the advanced training center, hired them as civilian contractors to help teach the course.

"They are a wealth of knowledge and they are professional," Plantaric said. "They understand the course and keep the wheels running smoothly."

Ames' and Riley's careers followed similar paths; they both joined the Cal Guard in 1996 after active duty enlistments and began working for Counterdrug in 1998. Ames, who retired in July 2014 as a first sergeant, said he has instructed four or five classes so far. This was the first class Riley has taught as a contractor since retiring in November 2015 as a sergeant first class.

"The teaching part and being able to pass on that knowledge is fun," Riley said. "It's a kick watching [the students] when the light bulb comes on."

The course is designed for law enforcement officers who work in rural environments and illegal marijuana grow sites. In 2010 alone, there were 10 shootings in marijuana gardens. These shootings, both by and at law enforcement, were the result of officers encountering armed growers. Following those incidents, Plantaric introduced the course to increase officer safety in those environments. It is the only Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)-certified rural operations course in the country.

"I love the woods," Plantaric said. "It really bothers me that we can't enjoy natural resources in our country without stumbling into an [illegal marijuana] garden."

Since the course's inception in 2010, CDTF personnel have participated as cadre in the classroom and opposition forces in the field. As cadre, they bring their knowledge in map reading, range and helicopter operations, casualty care, and small unit tactics. As opposition forces, they evade and ambush officers in the field, giving the officers and opportunity to practice their response techniques.

One of the officers highlighted the benefit of CDTF's support saying, "no one spends more time in a rural environment than a Soldier."

Plantaric agreed, adding that the course teaches "military tactics that are civilianized for law enforcement." These tactics include scouting, mission planning, moving as a unit, and land navigation using a compass rather than GPS which can be unreliable in rural areas.

"When it comes to tactics in rural environments, the military has developed that doctrine and expertise," he said. "They bring it to the forefront and I wouldn't have



TOP: Law enforcement officers participating in the Cal DOJ's Tactical Concepts for Rural Operations Course move as a small unit through the field at Fort Hunter-Liggett April 21. **LEFT:** Kelly Ames, a course instructor and retired first sergeant who worked with CDTF for 18 years, plans routes prior to heading out for the practical exercise portion of the course. **RIGHT:** Law enforcement officers and CDTF members playing opposition forces participate in a training exercise. **Photos by Sgt. Brianne Roudebush**

gotten [this class] off the ground without their support." Ames and Riley, who were part of the Counterdrug team that helped Plantaric develop the course, said they like being able to return in this capacity.

"I do this part-time and I love it," Ames said. "Full-time, I'm a retired goof-off. I'm enjoying retired life and this is a nice way to get back out and see the guys. We all come here to learn and share information, for the camaraderie, and for the fun and challenge of it."

Information sharing and camaraderie were key elements Ames and Riley kept coming back to.

"Some of these officers have never been in the woods, so I'll give them little tips and tricks that I've learned,"

Riley said. "Some of the skills I still love doing, like map-reading and land navigation."

He continued, saying "I was happy and giddy to retire, but I miss the camaraderie, hanging with the guys. It's nice to have the connection that I had when I was [enlisted], knowing that if something went down, we'd all protect each other."

Riley said looking back on his 22 years of service and all the long, hot days he and Ames spent hiking up and down the hills of Fort Hunter-Liggett with 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, gives him a sense of pride.

They both hope to continue returning to this course as contract instructors for years to come.



California National Guard

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NCO Evaluations:

Complaints to the IG regarding Army NCO evaluations is often the result of one or more of the following reasons: 1. Failure to establish and/or adhere to an established rating scheme. 2. Failure to execute required counseling. 3. Failure to follow the Evaluation Report Redress Program in order to prevent and/or redress errors or situations in which an NCO believes his/her evaluation is inaccurate. Knowing and strictly using all evaluation procedures will not only help prevent such grievances, but build trust and confidence in leadership and the organization, as well as enhance individual performance and improve unit readiness. Below highlights key information and procedures in these three areas. Use the references for specific procedures.

References:

AR 623-3



ADP 6-22



DA PAM 623-3



Rating Scheme

Commanders will:

- Publish and maintain a valid rating scheme.
- For AGR Soldiers - Ensure rating scheme shows rated Soldier's name and the effective date for each designated rating official.
- For M-Day Soldiers - Ensure rating schemes are published by duty position and the effective date for each designated rating official.
- Ensure rating scheme is accessible, manually or electronically, to each rated Soldier and member of the rating chain.
- Publish and distribute changes to rating schemes, as needed; however, changes to a Soldiers rating chain may not be retroactive.
- Ensure rating scheme is approved by the next higher Commander, Commandant or organizational leader.

Note: Readiness Management Tool (RMT) is not a Rating Scheme and should not be used solely to manage evaluation report periods. Also, HRC is working to add a new feature to the Evaluation Entry System (EES), "Manage Rating Chain," IOT enable key unit personnel to build rating schemes and identify rating officials based on approved organizational structure. Anticipated release of this new tool is FY17.

Counseling

Rated NCO

- Initiate DA Form 2166-9-1A (NCOER Support Form) upon beginning a new rating period and provide it to the Rater.
- Verify face-to-face counseling with Rater discussion by dating & initialing the DA Form 2166-9-1A.

Rater:

- Conduct face-to-face counseling with the rated NCO within 30 days of beginning rating period, and quarterly thereafter.
- Use DA Form 2166-9-1A (NCOER Support Form) to document the counseling.

Senior Rater:

- Should conduct face-to-face counseling with rated NCO w/in first 30 days, and a midpoint counseling for evaluation period.

Note: Use the Evaluation Entry System (EES) for the most current version of the Evaluation Report Form.

Evaluation Report Redress Program (ERRP)

The ERRP is designed to prevent and correct alleged injustices or regulatory violations. It consist of several elements at various levels, but starts with the communication between Rated Soldiers and their Raters using the Support Form during initial and quarterly counseling sessions to review duty requirements and performance objectives, as well as discussion of actual accomplishments. ERRP also follows AR 623-3 regulatory requirements, such as the evaluation report standing on its own without reference to events prior or subsequent to rating period, and the prohibition against command influence on rating officials during preparation of the report.

The following remedies within ERRP beyond the above program elements should be used when one believes an evaluation report is not accurate and/or contains administrative errors.

- **Commanders Inquiry:** Request and initiate a Commanders Inquiry of NCOER NLT 60 days after signing. A Commanders Inquiry does not constitute an appeal itself, but may be used to support one.
- **Army Special Review Board (ASRB):** ASRB operates within AR 623-3 guidelines. ASRB is comprised of senior officers and NCOs, and serves to evaluate and act on evaluation report appeals.
- **Appeals based on substantive inaccuracy:** To appeal an ASRB decision, an appellant will state what is being appealed and the basis for appeal, to include whether the entire evaluation report is contested or only a specific part or comment. Also state the basis for the belief that the rating officials were not objective and/or had an erroneous perception of their performance.
- **Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR):** Apply to ABCMR under provisions of AR 15-185.

Note: Per AR 20-1 the IG is not a means to redress issues regarding performance evaluations. However, an IG can conduct a due process review to determine if procedures were properly followed, or not.



Soldiers from Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, based out of Ventura and Santa Maria, conduct platoon defense lanes training on the recently scorched earth of Camp Roberts during annual training in May 2016. Photo by Master Sgt. Paul Wade

Sgt. 1st Class Isaac Lawson honored

A memorial service and reception were held for Sgt. 1st Class Isaac Lawson at the Sacramento Memorial Lawn on the 10th anniversary of Lawson's death.

On June 5, 2006, Lawson was killed while deployed to Iraq with the 49th Military Police Brigade when his convoy was struck by a roadside IED. Ten years later, Master Sgt. Arne Eastlund, a close friend of Lawson who was present at his death, arranged the memorial service and reception where family and friends came together to celebrate Lawson's life.

Col. Peter Cross, the current Brigade commander, remembered Lawson for his positive attitude, excellent leadership, compassion, and sense of humor. He reminded those in attendance to reflect on Lawson's goodness and never forget his great sacrifice.

"We must, and we will, remember [Isaac] for the rest of our lives," said Cross, who deployed alongside Lawson to Iraq. "And we will make sure that all of our children and the next generations know about Sgt. 1st Class Isaac Lawson."

Eastlund shared stories about Isaac's sense of humor and positive attitude, including Lawson's ability to outrun all of those who said he was too slow and old to keep up. For Eastlund, Lawson wasn't only a friend, but also a mentor.

"[Isaac] taught me the importance of mentoring others, and that is why I am here today, still wearing this uniform, picking up where he left off," said Eastlund.

Lawson is survived by his wife, Suzette Lawson, his daughters Chiara, Andrea, and Krystal, and his son, Dominick.

Soldiers can now roll up their sleeves

Commanders may authorize Soldiers to roll up their sleeves on the Universal Camouflage Pattern (UCP) Army Combat Uniform (ACU), Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP) ACU or Operation Enduring Freedom Camouflage Pattern (OEF-CP) ACU. The camouflage pattern must remain exposed when the sleeves are rolled up. Soldiers will roll sleeves neatly above the elbow no more than three inches above the elbow. Upon approval of the commander and only during field training exercises, the sleeves may be down and cuffed inside the coat.

For more information see Department of the Army Pamphlet 670-1, Guide to the Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia, 1 July 2015.

JFHQ observes Asian American and Pacific Islander Month

The California Military Department (CMD) celebrated Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month on May 23 at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento. The federal and state EEO Office worked with the Asian American and Pacific Islander Special Emphasis program Managers, Lt. Col. Sidney U. Cardozo and Maj. Jonathon M. Shiroma, plus volunteers, to organize the event.

Guest speaker Brian Wynn Huynh Travis, a lieutenant in the Solano County Sheriff's Department and commander of the Solano County Mobile Field Force Team, shared his story of escaping Vietnam under the cover of darkness in 1979 and spending 30 days adrift on the high seas with barely any food and water. Travis currently serves as a major in the Army Reserves and is assigned to the Pacific Command Joint Intelligence Center at Pearl Harbor.

Sacramento Taiko Dan performed traditional Japanese taiko drumming at the event and Halau Ka Waikane Lani Malie and Halau Kahulaliwai performed hula, a dance specific to Hawaii.

The Greater Sacramento Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese New Year Cultural Association showcased display tables. Food samplings were homemade as well as purchased from South Villa and Valerio's Tropical Bakery. Participants were introduced to cuisine such as lechon (roast pork); chicken and pork adobo; pancit canton (stir fried noodles); Shanghai meat rolls; seniorita bread; a variety of Filipino desserts; and Hawaiian butter mochi dessert.

--By Niki Ching

Holocaust remembered at JFHQ

Days of Remembrance and Holocaust Remembrance Day were observed May 2 at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento. Chaplain (CA) Capt. Matthew Friedman served as emcee, while Col. Richard Rabe welcomed guest speakers Maria Winkler and Rabbi Mendy Cohen who related stories of loved ones lost in the Holocaust.

After the speaking presentations, the audience was encouraged to personally talk or ask questions with the guest speakers; take a closer look at the displays of photos, books, and personal artifacts from Friedman and Winkler. Jewish food samplings, included pastrami and Kosher "Klub" sandwiches, chicken soup with matzo ball dumplings and dessert blintzes were provided by Bubbie's Love Deli and Catering.

--By Niki Ching



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Four California Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook crews based out of Stockton, California, supported President Obama's visit to Yosemite National Park on June 17-20. The Cal Guard aviators coordinated with White House aviation and security personnel to ensure a safe and smooth visit on the part of the president and his family as they prepare to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park System in August. Photo by Master Sgt. David Loeffler

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