



Battle Born



Premiere Issue

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Comments and Contributions

Letters to the editor must be signed and include the writer's full name and mailing address. Letters should be brief and are subject to editing. Other print and visual submissions of general interest to our diverse civilian employees, Nevada National Guard military members, retirees and families are

invited and encouraged. Please send articles and photos with name, phone number, e-mail and complete mailing address and comments to:

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Battle Born

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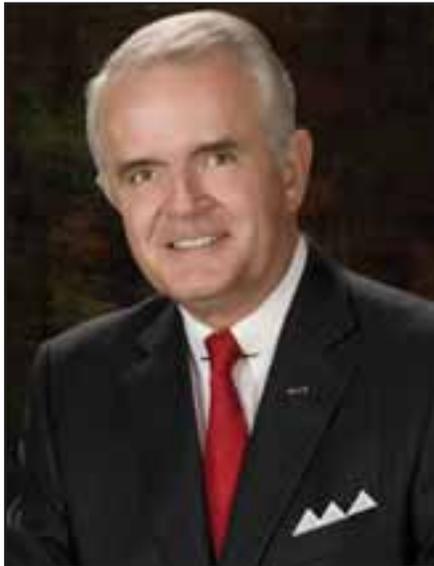


A CH-47 Chinook helicopter from Co. B, 1/189th General Support Aviation Battalion, lifts a Humvee from the 150th Maintenance Co. during a recent sling-load operation in the hills east of Carson City. The sling-load operation is an important training exercise to prepare air and land operators to deliver assets to combat areas in support of the war on terror as well as prepare for emergencies within the state.



FROM THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

Governor Jim Gibbons



Governor Jim Gibbons

Greetings, fellow Nevada National Guard members. I'm very pleased to be part of this premiere issue of *Battle Born* magazine and look forward to communicating with you

through it and sharing my vision for the future of the Silver State.

The Nevada Guard and I have a long history together. You and I have much in common. The 14 years I spent with the High Rollers in the Nevada Air Guard are some of my most cherished. I understand the camaraderie you share with your fellow Guard members, the reasons you belong, and thank you for your service.

I've had the pleasure of being your commander in chief for only a few months, but I must admit how impressed I've been with your accomplishments and continued commitment to our local communities, the state of Nevada and our nation as a whole.

From your constant deployments in support of the Global War on Terrorism to your dedication when called for local missions here in Nevada, I have every confidence in your abilities and realize what an asset you are to us all.

As Dawn reminds me, it isn't just the soldiers and airmen who serve and sacrifice.

Your families and your civilian employers also contribute greatly to your readiness, and I thank them. There is always work to be done, and balancing the Guard, your family and your civilian job is never easy.

We will use *Battle Born* and other venues to ensure we're communicating clearly with one another. Your efforts matter; what you are doing is important and what we're accomplishing together is significant. We're an organization that is dynamic, on the move, and a relevant, ready force of men and women – civilians and military members – doing the things our nation needs.

Always ready, always there, together we are the National Guard. ■

Governor Gibbons has a long military career capped with more than a decade of service as a pilot with the 152nd Airlift Wing, Nevada Air National Guard. He is a Vietnam and Gulf War veteran.

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FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Maj. Gen. Cindy Kirkland



Maj. Gen. (Nev.) Cindy Kirkland

Tough times continue

As we launch this new Nevada National Guard publication we find ourselves in the most challenging time the Guard has faced in modern history. Since before the American Revolution, the National Guard has been a dual-missioned force as a Reserve component of the federal force and the militia of the “several states.” We have trained and responded to every major conflict and state emergency since that time. But only since 9/11 has our role as the “State’s Militia” emerged as an equal role placing demands on our soldiers and airmen as never before. You have demonstrated over and over that you are a trained, professional force, and in many areas more skilled and experienced than your active component counterparts.

With shrinking resources, aging equipment and a lack of understanding at the national level of the Guard’s state role, we have been engaged in a fight for our survival as a relevant force in our nation’s defense, and for the resources required by the Guard to support both our federal and state missions.

Our Guard members have been mobilized and deployed at the most significant rate in our history. We have seen our members face multiple mobilizations, some as soon as only a few months after demobilization. At the same time, our constitutional responsibility to support the needs of our governor and the state has resulted in a demand within the state we have never before seen. I want you to know how proud I am to represent you as part of your leadership team. I have never witnessed such passion, commitment and levels of volunteerism as I have seen in our force, even in the face of the dangers and separation from family and employers. It’s humbling to know I am part of an organization that has never faltered in our support of the missions and responsibility to ensure that this nation and our communities are safe from the tyranny of an enemy who hates with passion, but significantly underestimates the strength of a passion for freedom.

We are working very hard to ensure Nevada’s Guard remains strong and every soldier and airman is provided the resources and equipment you deserve as volunteers fighting for our nation’s security and the safety of our local communities.

Recent reports from the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve, and legislation pending in both Congress and the State Legislature indicate a strong

understanding of the significant role you play in the nation’s defense and responding to our communities during emergencies. Your entire leadership team is committed to making sure your sacrifices are neither forgotten nor taken for granted.

Our future leaders lie within our ranks. I challenge each of you who believe you are up to the task to look for every opportunity to gain training and experience, to accept that responsibility. None of us probably imagine ourselves sitting in that seat, but I am here to tell you – you never know what role you may be asked to accept. Be prepared by looking for opportunities to challenge yourself to grow as a leader, whether enlisted or officer. You very well may be our next leader.

I also ask each of you to accept the task of telling the Guard story to all who will listen. Each of you is an ambassador to the communities who don’t understand or know what the Guard is. You are also our best recruiters. When you share your passion for the mission, you are educating and informing everyone of the opportunities to be a part of this great organization.

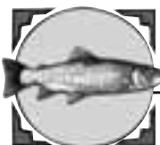
I look forward to being able to update you through this publication on the issues and efforts being made to bring force structure, modern equipment and missions, and the resources you need to continue being the great citizen soldiers and airmen you are. You are what makes this organization so strong and what makes the nation so great. Thank you for your hard work and passion to serve. ■

Maj. Gen. Cindy Kirkland was chosen as The Adjutant General in June 2005. She has served as a U.S. Navy Sailor, a mentor for at-risk youth and is an avid motorcycle rider.



As much as we’d like to be everywhere, the *Battle Born* staff isn’t large enough to cover every newsworthy event within the Nevada Guard. We would love to showcase your photos of unit training events or deployments and we’ll publish at least one reader-submitted photo in each issue. Photos should be high resolution, at least 300 dpi, and of general interest to our diverse civilian employees, Nevada Guard military members, retirees and families. Photos should be dynamic and illustrate the training event captured. Avoid posed or “family portrait” style photos.

Submit through e-mail at april.conway@nvreno.ang.af.mil. Include rank, first and last name of individuals in the photo, to which unit they belong, a description of what they’re doing and *your* contact phone number and e-mail address. Publication of material is determined by available space and reader interest. The staff reserves the right to edit all material. ■



STATE COMMAND

Command Sgt. Major Stephen Sitton



Command Sgt. Major Stephen Sitton

Leadership begins with one

Leadership is influencing people by providing purpose, direction and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.

As Guardsmen and NCOs we must always lead from the front. Troops follow us and judge us on our appearance, the way we wear our uniforms, the way we deal with our subordinates/peers/superiors, the example we set, the caring we exhibit and the way we speak to others.

NCOs must enforce standards, discipline, mentor, train and counsel our Guardsmen, set the example of performance at all times. Established policies pertaining to performance provide advice and make recommendations to the commanders and staff on all matters pertaining to enlisted personnel and their families, and most of all care for our members.

Everyone's plate is full and everything is important to the success of our mission and the welfare of our soldiers and airmen, but there is nothing more important than taking care of our troops and families. We must ensure our airmen and soldiers are trained in their MOS/AFSC Warrior Tasks and Skills, that they attend the appropriate level of noncommissioned officer education courses, that they are mentally and physically prepared for combat, and that they are equipped to accomplish their mission. We

must also ensure they are disciplined to follow and enforce standards; train safely; live the Soldier's Creed, NCO Creed, Army and Air Force Core Values; and fulfill their mission and duty.

To understand how standards and discipline are related in the green half of our organization, you have to start with the basic premise of how we grow sergeants in the U.S. Army. This is a basic three-step process as described by Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston.

Step one: establish a standard. Army Regulation 670-1, Wear of the Uniform, is a standard that tells us how to wear the uniform, items on the uniform and all the accessories. It guides our uniform in the field. The items we wear on the uniform or carry with us are usually in accordance with a unit standard operating procedure.

With the understanding of standards, step two is to put someone in charge of enforcing the standards. This is where the sergeant is now responsible for his or her piece of the Army, those three or four soldiers. It is the sergeant who conducts daily inspections of soldier's uniforms. It is the sergeant who conducts pre-conduct checks of his or her soldier's arms and equipment before going out on patrol.

Step three in growing our leaders is to hold sergeants accountable. This is where more senior leaders have responsibility. To see what is being done to standard, senior leaders must inspect. When a soldier on patrol is missing a piece of equipment, it means that piece was missed during PCCs by the sergeant and obviously missed by the more senior leader during a pre-combat inspection. This same analogy extends to every standard we set for our units and for our sergeants to enforce.

I praise our NCO corps every day. We have great NCOs and junior enlisted soldiers. We have soldiers ready to move up and perform at the next level. We must continue to ensure those who lead our organization's thirst for knowledge. Remember, the soldiers below us will soon be us. ■

Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Sitton has served for nearly 31 years in the Nevada National Guard. He is an avid basketball player. A few times a week you can join him in a pick-up game on the OTAG drill hall floor.

Diary excerpts from a deployed Guard member

Spec. Jenna Snyder's diary excerpts are a personal glimpse into her life as a Guard member serving with the 593rd. Snyder is 20 years old and from North Las Vegas. She said she always knew she'd join the military, but appreciates the Guard because she likes getting to choose where she lives. Prior to deploying, she was a cadet for the North Las Vegas Police Department. When not in Iraq, Snyder attends the Community College of Southern Nevada pursuing a degree in criminal justice, but is thinking about attending officer candidate school and volunteering for a second deployment when her unit returns to Nevada sometime this autumn. ■

Follow the excerpts from Spec. Jenna Snyder's diary throughout the coming editions of Battle Born.

I AM AN

AMERICAN

PREAMBLE

My name is SPC Jenna Christine Snyder and I am in the 593rd Motor Transportation Company. We are a National Guard Unit out of Reno, Nevada. We are currently deployed to Iraq and based at [REDACTED]. I drive trucks from [REDACTED] to bases in Northern Iraq. Through the 5 months that I have been in Iraq, I have kept a journal of my experiences. This is a section from that journal about the 1st convoy that I went on in Iraq. I am 19 and I think that it will be cool to look back at this journal when I am 40 and talking to my grandchildren about my experiences in the Army.

REFLECTORS

Hooah!

to form a more

1-30-01

Today is spot day. We have to be at the motorpool at 1500, PMCS the trucks again, then we will head down to the DMV (Onward Movement Yard) to check our loads and trailers. Last convoy we had trouble with the loads and the way they were tied down. We had to stop on Tampa so many times to fix the loads, so everyone is going to be picky about the way their loads are tied down. Once we get done at the DMV, we have to go to rock drills where we practice our bottle drills. I really need to clean my room before we leave tomorrow. I hate coming back to a dirty room.

We the People, in order

perfect Union, Establish

... justice

1-29-01

We found out today that we will be going on a convoy to [REDACTED] on the 31st. Today we are going to start to get the trucks ready. We have to do our PMCS (Preventative Maintenance checks and services) and fix anything that is wrong with the trucks. [REDACTED] is a long convoy - usually anywhere from 6-9 days, so it is very important that our trucks are in the best shape. I am riding with SPC Gatten again. We ride together two convoys ago and we seem to get along just fine. Getting along with the person you are riding with is important considering you could be in a truck with the same person for over 16 hours on a convoy. I need to get some rest because we have spot day tomorrow. That will probably be a long day.

593rd MTC

1-31-01

Well, what a long day today has been! Let me start at the beginning. We got to the motorpool about 1500 and had to be at the DMV at 1630. We hooked up to our trailers, got lined up, and headed off to the convoy brief. We left [REDACTED] at 1730 and it took us 6 hours to get to [REDACTED]. We waited while all of the gun trucks (GWS AM) fueled up and we got to stretch our legs. It took us an additional two hours to get to [REDACTED]. So, once we got to [REDACTED], we were exhausted. It is now 0600 and I just took a shower and am going to bed right now!



Reno, Nevada

CHANGE OF COMMANDERS



Brig. Gen. Michael D. Gullihur



Command of the Nevada Air National Guard changed hands April 15, from Brig. Gen. Michael D. Gullihur to Brig. Gen. Robert V. Fitch at the Nevada Air Guard base in Reno. Air Guard command entails oversight of the 152nd Airlift Wing and 152nd Intelligence Squadron in Reno, Detachment 1, NVANG at Nellis and Creech Air Force Bases and Headquarters, Nevada Air Guard in Carson City.

Gullihur's command of the 1,100 airmen capped off a 40-year career that began with his parents signing to allow the 17-year old to enlist. The E-1 Airman Basic began work in the fuels shop with his brother Larry, who he credits as his best friend and lifetime mentor, but quickly cross-trained to accept a full-time position in the base's welding shop.

Gullihur's career was punctuated with many accomplishments, including attaining the enlisted rank of technical sergeant, graduating with honors from undergraduate pilot training, flying 25 combat missions during Operation Desert Shield/Storm, being an instructor and evaluator on every aircraft he flew, command at many levels including wing commander and serving as the deputy director for mobility forces at Al Udiad Air Base in Qatar in 2003. Each

position in which he's served has given the Wooster High graduate memories he will forever hold closely.

During his enlisted years, working on all the different aircraft and with the true professionals in the enlisted ranks was truly satisfying, "no doubt about it," Gullihur said.

Other highlights included graduating from pilot training in Mississippi and getting to see his parents, who had driven the farthest of any family member in attendance, walk across the stage to meet him. "Anyone who doesn't come out of UPT with ulcers didn't understand what it was all about," he laughed.

Maj. Gen. (Nev.) Cindy Kirkland has worked side-by-side with Gullihur over the past several years and said she has seen his entire heart and soul poured into the unit.

"Never once have I heard Mike gripe about any part of this organization," she said. "He wears his heart on his sleeve and it's obvious to everyone how dedicated he is, how much he believes in our mission and loves the people with whom he works."

"In the Guard I've worked for and with people who have mentored me for literally 40 years, regardless of their rank or position," Gullihur said. "The people are what made it fun to come to work every day, to go on deployments and participate in competitions, inspections and to share the tremendous esprit de corps that is the history of our organization."



Brig. Gen. Robert V. Fitch

"But I'll never forget the feeling of how proud I was to drive on base my first day as the wing commander," he expressed, "to head up an organization with the quality people we had and still have today."

His retirement plans include spending more time with his family and "hopefully having the health to do more hiking, backpacking and fishing," Gullihur said.

The new commander, Brig. Gen. Robert (Bob) Fitch is also a longtime Guard member. He most recently served as the director of the joint staff for Nevada's Joint

"In every new command,

changes must occur to grow.

The goal must be to leave the organization better than when we found it."

— Brig. Gen. Robert V. Fitch

Other jobs Gullihur held in the operations group included being the weapons and tactics officer, the standardization and evaluation officer and the chief of safety.

Force Headquarters, but has also been assigned as a fuels management officer, mission support commander and logistics group commander, among other things.

New readiness center fits expanding mission

By Capt. April Conway, JFHQ Public Affairs

From his enlistment in 1969 as an Airman Basic, Fitch has always served as a traditional Guardsman. He graduated as an accounting major from the University of Nevada, Reno, in 1974, and attended the Academy of Military Science, becoming a commissioned officer in 1982.

In his civilian career, he is the manager of distribution design for Nevada Power Company in Las Vegas, and oddly enough, sits right next door to Brig. Gen. Frank Gonzales, the commander of the Nevada Army Guard.

Fitch says his civilian career gives him a unique outlook on his new position.

"It's been a long time since command has gone to someone who spent his career as a traditional airman," Fitch said. "I know firsthand the frustrations many of our traditional Guard members feel and though I never thought in a million years I'd be where I am today, I'm here nonetheless."

But, from where he is today, Fitch sees a much different Guard than that of even its recent past and he speaks passionately about the legacy he hopes to leave behind.

"In every new command, changes must occur to grow," he said. "The goal must be to leave the organization better than when we found it."

Even though he's just begun serving in the command role, the coming months will be much tougher than he ever thought, too.

"The end of my career is in sight now, so there's more of an urgency to roll up my sleeves and step out," Fitch said. "When I do go out I want to go utterly spent, burned up and not leaving anything on the table."

While he's fired-up about the new job, he admits it still gives him the "willies" to know his decisions personally impact each and every airman, as well as the reputation of the Nevada Guard as a whole.

"The only way to know you're doing the right thing is to be true to the Air Force Core Values," Fitch said. "When you get down to the individual level, people want leaders with integrity and the moral courage to make difficult decisions. I strive for that every day because I have to. It's too critical not to." ■

After years of sharing desk space, competing for time in the maintenance bays and scrounging up a piece of land for formations, several units finally have space to stretch out. For the first time in 10 years, the ever-expanding Nevada Army Guard has a brand new readiness center in Las Vegas. *At press time, soldiers had not yet begun to move in, but should have by the time you read this.*

The \$27 million facility houses the 422nd Signal Battalion's C Company, the headquarters of the 992nd Troop Command, the Medical Detachment, Detachment 1, 234th Vertical Construction Team and elements of the recruiting force's recruit sustainment program. While this provides sorely needed breathing room, Maj. Clayton Chappell, the construction and facilities and management officer for the Nevada Army Guard, said our current force structure will immediately fill the new place to capacity.

"If you visited either of the armories in Clark County on a drill weekend, you'd see we were bursting at the seams," Chappell said. "But building a new facility isn't easy. The entire process of land acquisition, funding and construction takes seven to 10 years."

"The next three or four projects slated for Clark County probably won't be finished until I'm retired," joked Clayton, "but they're necessary for an area with as much growth as the Vegas valley, and we're already working on things slated for 2012 and beyond."

Military construction funding is one area for which Nevada is always competing. Most Army facilities are funded with a 75/25 split, the majority of which comes from the federal government. It's difficult enough to get in the funding stream on the federal side, but Guard leadership also must request the remaining 25 percent of land and construction costs from the Nevada Legislature.

"We've been fortunate to have strong support from U.S. Sen. (Harry) Reid and his colleagues in Congress," said Col. Felix Castagnola, the chief of staff for the Army Guard, "but we've also been kept in the forefront of the minds of our state legislators and governors Guinn and Gibbons in the last few years as we compete for state dollars."

The single building encompasses 80,000 square feet on a nearly 50-acre plot of land in the southwest part of the Vegas valley in unincorporated Enterprise, Nev. Head south on Dean Martin Drive from the Bass Pro Shop Outdoor World, parallel to Interstate 15, and take a right on Silverado Ranch Boulevard.

It houses everything a unit could ask for. There is a theater-style auditorium, distance learning classrooms, a weight room, locker rooms, multiple arms vaults, a maintenance bay, a kitchen, medical exam rooms and more.

Contrary to some rumors, the new readiness center will not replace the Henderson Armory. That facility will remain as is, housing the 72nd Military Police Company, the Army Honor Guard and two new military police units currently under development.

"We need all the space we can get," said Castagnola. In the next five years Nevada is poised to take advantage of our population growth in a way we haven't seen in many years, Castagnola said.

"The Army and the National Guard Bureau are constantly re-evaluating states and their capacity to grow, and while we're already on the program sheet for some new military police units, this facility puts us in a great position for more down the road." ■

While Capt. April Conway was born in Las Vegas, she grew up in the small town of North Pole, Alaska, and still believes in elves.





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Gutsy Nevada team second in co-ed relay at Guard biathlon championships

By Spc. William Raitter, Joint Force Headquarters

The inexperienced but highly motivated Nevada National Guard biathlon team took on the rest of the country in the 2007 Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships in Jericho, Vt., in late February. The team members included Lt. Col. Jeff Mark of the 992nd Troop Command, Maj. Joyce Anacker of the Medical Detachment, Maj. Larry Irwin, Chief Warrant Officer Tom McElroy and Spc. William Raitter all of JFHQ. Chief Warrant Officer Liz Karosich, also of JFHQ, participated as the team's coach.

Competing in harsh weather accompanied by negative temperatures at a rugged, mountain warfare training site, the team competed in five races in the span of one week.

Despite competing without biathlon veteran Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka, who is currently on temporary duty in Germany, the team performed well under the capable leadership of Mark, who captained the patrol team and was the only member of the squad to complete all five races. Mark led the team to a second place in the co-ed patrol race.

Other results from the week included: a 30th place in the 10-kilometer race for Raitter, who was followed by McElroy in 42nd, Mark in 47th, and Irwin in 52nd. Mark was the only 20K finisher for Nevada and he finished in the top 50 in that grueling event.

The biathlon is a test of all National Guard disciplines, including leadership, fitness and teamwork. The sport encompasses the true reality of performance under stress.

In a typical biathlon race, Guardsmen are pushed to their aerobic limits in Nordic freestyle skiing while carrying their weapon harnessed to their back. With the athletes' heart rates near their maximum and with arms and legs burning from oxygen debt, the soldier or airmen is then required to hit a target about the size of a half dollar from 50 meters away. It is the sporting equivalent of trying to thread a needle in the middle of a hurricane.

The Nevada National Guard biathlon team has grown dramatically over the past five years. In 2002, just one Nevada Guard soldier participated in the championships. The biathlon team has become a priority within the state's sports program as it has acquired state-of-the-art equipment within the past year.

The next event is scheduled for December in Montana.

Other National Guard sports events include a marathon team, a marksmanship team, a parachute jumping team and a team triathlon is under development.

Soldiers and airmen wanting to participate in any Guard sports event should call Mark at (775) 887-7840. There is no cost to participate, but qualifying times may be required. ■

In addition to participating in the Guard biathlon team, Spc. William Raitter is the reigning National Guard marathon champion and is ranked third in the nation by the U.S. National Snowshoe Association.



Background photo: Maj. Joyce Anacker, in her first biathlon competition, rounds the final bend at the end of the race.

The standing position is one of two different positions from which Guard members must fire during the event. Lt. Col. Jeff Mark takes aim.

Maj. Joyce Anacker begins the day with target practice with Lt. Col. Jeff Mark before the course. Temperatures during the competition ranged from -14 degrees F to 13 degrees over the course of five days.

CAVALRY TRADITIONS

upheld in unlikely locations

Story: Staff Sgt. Stanley Hampton, 1/221st Cavalry, CSC Navistar, Kuwait. Photos: Sgt. Maj. Robert Brown, 1/221st Cavalry

More than 100 years ago the U.S. Cavalry patrolled the western plains with guidons snapping in the breeze, wearing floppy hats to keep off the rain and provide some relief from the bright sun. Armed with Spencer carbines, they rode out of their wooden posts to the tune of "The Girl I Left Behind Me." They set out to escort wagon trains, supply trains, or to ride into battle.

Today's Cavalrymen ride out of scattered camps in over-packed, up-armored HMMWVs known as gun trucks, each with protective shields mounted on the weapons turret that bristle with .50 caliber, M-240 machine guns, or MK-19 40mm grenade launchers. The floppy hat, now seen only on parade and in ceremonies, has been replaced by Kevlar helmets. The troopers carry the M-4 carbine and Beretta 9mm pistols and their music has been replaced by the latest rock, jazz, hip-hop and country and western tunes.

When the Cavalrymen of 1st Squadron, 221st Cavalry, home-based in Las Vegas, roll out of Combat Support Center Navistar in the state of Kuwait, they are going on missions with which their historical predecessors would be at home.

The squadron is the only combat arms unit in the Nevada Army National Guard and is the round-out unit to the Army's famed 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment stationed at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. The 11th ACR received orders for the Republic of Iraq and 1/221 Cavalry was mobilized to replace them. From August 2004 to May 2006, the Nevada and Arizona Cavalrymen "fought" against rotating units,

thereby certifying them for the type of desert insurgency warfare they would encounter.

As the mobilization was coming to an end, about 115 Cavalrymen were selected to remain on active duty and were attached to a Wisconsin Army Guard unit being mobilized for the first time. Wisconsin's 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery was going to Kuwait to conduct convoy security escort missions. Nevada's Cavalry folks would make up part of alpha company.

Since their arrival in-theater in July 2006, the Cavalrymen have journeyed through the ancient Euphrates and Tigris river valleys. They've experienced the heat and dust storms of the vast deserts of Syria that extend from the borders to the edges of the river valleys, and they've glimpsed the

Kurdish mountains of the north. They've visited the ancient Temple of Ur and toured one of Saddam Hussein's many palaces.

Convoy security missions on gun trucks that escort civilian contractor or military trucks to the Multinational Force camps and outposts scattered across Iraq can best be summed up as hours of alert boredom combined with moments of excitement and fear.

It's quick and dirty, usually consisting of exploding improvised explosive devices and sometimes rocket-propelled grenades or rifle and machine gun fire from entrenched insurgents. In the best Cavalry tradition, the gun trucks maneuver in the face of the enemy in order to return fire while other gun trucks keep the supply convoy rolling through the kill zone. If a gun truck is



The view is unchanging for most of the escort functions the 1/221st Cavalry perform in Iraq.

Cavalry soldiers prepare for an early morning mission.

damaged or destroyed in a fight, the crew is rescued; not just because it's what a soldier is supposed to do, but because it's what buddies do for one another.

So the war goes for the Nevada and Arizona Cavalrymen and the Maine field artillery soldiers who make up the rest of alpha company. Escorting convoys in Iraq is a war that can last for weeks on long missions or merely hours for quick missions to nearby locations.

Their war has already lasted 10 months, and if all goes well, will only last for another two.

When it's over, the Cavalrymen will disembark from their aircraft, weapons slung over one shoulder, a rucksack over the other, the 1/221st Cavalry guidon snapping in the hot Nevada wind, and maybe their floppy Stetsons worn at the jaunty angle of a veteran returning home to family and friends. ■

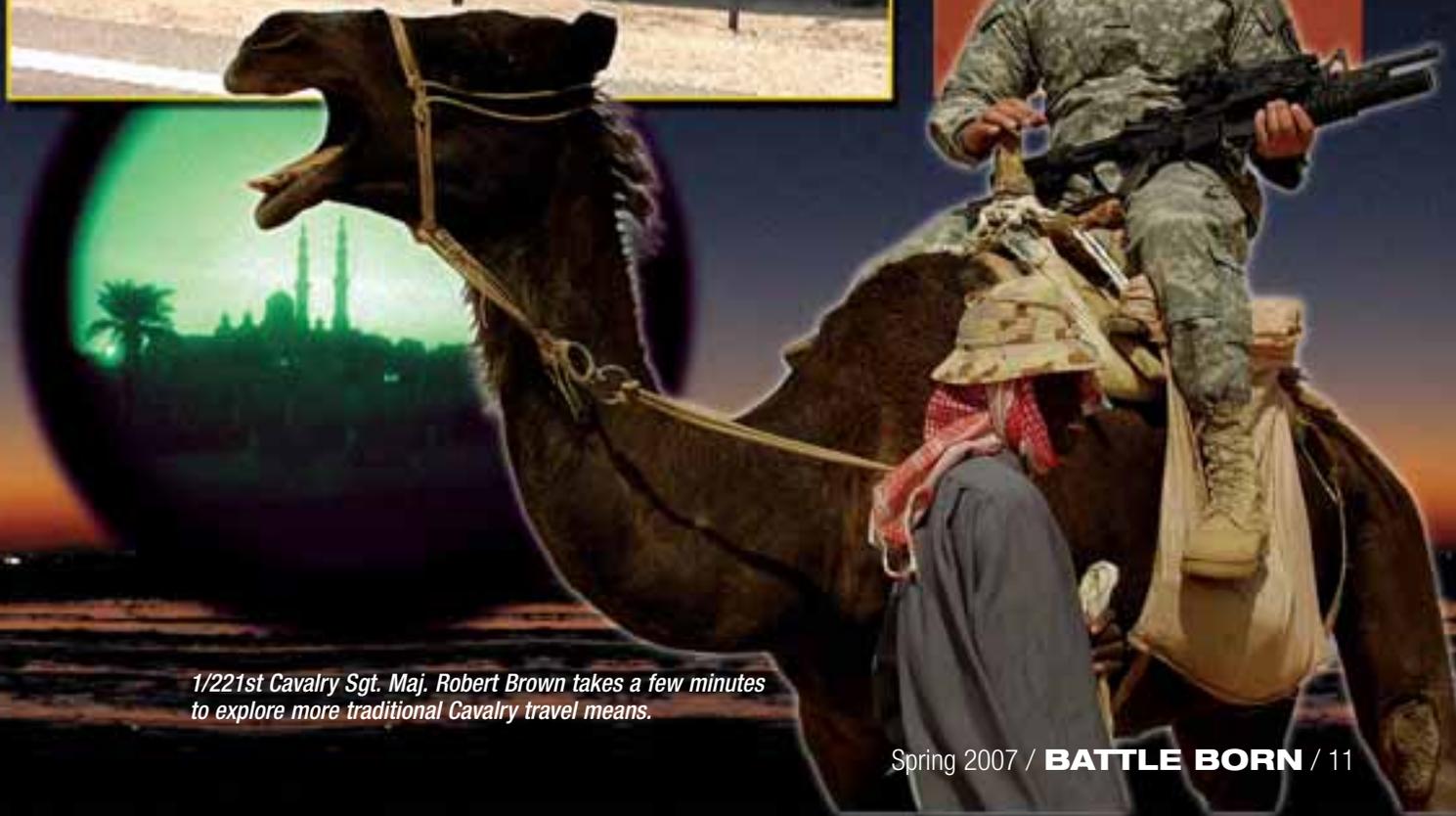
Staff Sgt. Stanley Hampton is of Choctaw descent and is from Las Vegas. When he isn't working with the Guard, he's an accomplished photographer and fiction writer.

The 1/221st Cavalry soldiers are serving as part of a security forces battalion guarding convoys that carry two-thirds of the logistics for the entire theatre. They have traveled more than 3.2 million miles in Iraq since arriving last July.

The soldiers go everywhere in Iraq from the southern regions north to Mosul. Their missions last anywhere from a single day to a month straight and are fraught with danger. They face IED threats and small arms fire on every mission. One soldier has been involved in nine IED incidents.

The approximately 115 Nevada Cavalry soldiers have been awarded 64 Combat Action Badges and one Army Commendation Medal with Valor device. They have earned four Purple Heart Medals, Three Bronze Stars and six Army Commendation Medals. Sixteen Army Achievement Medals are in the awards pipeline. ■

An IED hit to an M1000 heavy equipment truck transport last year shows how damaging and dangerous it can be to travel in Iraq. No Nevada Guardsmen were injured in this attack.



1/221st Cavalry Sgt. Maj. Robert Brown takes a few minutes to explore more traditional Cavalry travel means.



FAMILY SUPPORT

One Guard, One Family

Family Programs a wealth of knowledge for all family members

By Staff Sgt. Eric Ritter, JFHQ-Public Affairs

Don't let the name mislead you. The Nevada National Guard's Family Programs office isn't exactly just for families. You could look at it as the military acting as one big family, actually.

But whatever the title, its resources are priceless to everyone in the military community, especially for those who are deploying, are deployed or have recently returned from deployment.

According to Nevada State Family Programs Director, Maj. Joanne Farris, the duty of the Family Programs office is simply to educate the Guard member on the many benefits to which he or she may be entitled.

"We're here as a tool for the soldier or airman," she said. "We're here to educate and inform them and their families to what we can provide."

Mobilization is now an intricately woven part of the National Guard. The days are gone when the Guard rarely deployed. Therefore, Farris said, it's very important for Guardsmen to use these resources.

"Our ultimate goal is to ensure the Guard member and their family members understand the organization of their military unit and its mission."

She said her staff provides information about all the benefits for which they're eligible, including financial management assistance, ID cards, DEERS enrollment, medical care, legal assistance, social services and family support groups.

While preparing for mobilization, Farris said every Guard member has a responsibility to create a Family Care Plan. Even single parents and dual-military couples are required to prepare a FCP. The plan contains all the information needed during the deployment, including special instructions not given elsewhere and legal authorization for guardians along with names, addresses and important telephone numbers.

Working with service members who have recently returned from deployment is also an important tool.

"We try to re-adjust the families to be back together," she said. "Deployments are tough on spouses, too. They get used to the service member being gone and sometimes when they come back, they may find it difficult to fit back into the family routine. We go over what to expect and how to deal with many of the feelings they experience during that time."



Master Sgt. Bill Seifert, 152nd Operations Support Flight, and his wife Beth renew their wedding vows at the Virginia City Opera House as part of the Guard's marriage enrichment program.

Farris said that the Family Programs staff isn't just for Guard members.

"It's really open to anybody in the military. We will help all military members access our resources," she said. "We even handle a lot of retiree issues. We help service members who are about to retire by offering them some transition assistance.

We even help retirees by putting together a newsletter concerning them."

The Family Programs office also partners with other agencies such as the American Red Cross, Veterans of Foreign Wars, YMCA, 4-H Club, Veterans Administration and the Better Business Bureau to help provide just about any kind of assistance a service member or their family might need.

Farris' folks work closely with Nevada Job Connect, too, to help returning service members with employment issues.

Farris said the youth program is one of the more successful programs they offer.

"We're always having things for the kids," she said. "It's very hard on them when a parent (or parents) deploys, so we try to do every thing we can to make the time easier on them."

Some of the youth program events include CPR certification, fire safety, photography club, flag football, sand volleyball and parties – especially around the holidays.

Family Programs also works with the Guard's chaplaincy program, helping to host marriage enrichment programs for Guard members regardless of whether they have deployed.

Farris said the Family Program is always looking to grow.

"Our communications network is constantly expanding. Currently our communications goal is to achieve 100 percent contact to all Nevada Guardsman who are deployed on a special operation – soldiers, airmen, family and community who are concerned about the current on-goings of the Nevada National Guard, and to anyone requesting information on our Guard activities."

To get more information on Family Programs, call toll free (866) 699-3128. ■

STATE LEGISLATIVE ROUND-UP

By Capt. April Conway, JFHQ Public Affairs



The Nevada Legislature is winding down its scheduled 120-day session and while many bills benefiting Guard members are still going through the approval process, several bills passed in the 2005 session also offer benefits to Guard members.

Special Session Assembly Bill 580 provided an exemption from personal sales tax for Nevada Guard members engaged in Title 10 active duty. Want to buy a \$20,000 car? Normal sales tax would run you about \$1,500. But if you're called to Title 10 duty anywhere in the world, Nevada's Department of Taxation will issue you, or your spouse if you've already deployed, a tax exemption letter. The letter ensures you or your family won't pay Nevada sales tax on any taxable purchase including automobiles, furniture, clothing, etc. While the exemption is administered by the Nevada Department of Taxation, those called to Title 10 duty must first get approval at their unit level. Each Army Guard readiness NCO and Air Guard orderly room has more information.

Senate Bill 1 in the special session created the Nevada Global War on Terrorism Medal. The award is available to every Nevada resident Reservist and Guard member if they were mobilized in support of GWOT. Those eligible for the federal GWOT operations or GWOT expeditionary medals are also eligible for the state award and can begin wearing the medal in accordance with NVANGI 36-2803 or NMD PAM 672-1 uniform regulations. The medals and ribbons have begun being distributed. Airmen may contact the military personnel flight at the base in Reno and soldiers may contact their unit administrator or readiness NCO for additional information.

Assembly Bill 580 also created the Nevada Patriot Relief Account. This fund assists Guard members in a variety of ways. It provides funds to reimburse textbooks for Nevada Guard college students at the seven schools that fall under the University and Community College System in Nevada. Those schools include UNR, UNLV, Community College of Southern Nevada, Great Basin College, Truckee Meadows Community College and Western Nevada

Community College.

The bill also provides reimbursement to members of the Guard for SGLI premiums paid while activated on Title 10 status. The \$29 per month fee can add up over the course of a 12-month deployment to nearly \$350. If you've already paid, the bill allowed retroactive reimbursement. Only a few dozen of the hundreds of Guardsmen who have deployed have taken advantage of this lucrative benefit. NVARNG 608-4 and NVANG 36-2607 each give more information.

Additionally, the Patriot Relief Account provides money for soldiers and airmen in hardship situations due to deployments. Specific eligibility requirements and application processes are outlined in NVARNG 608-4 and NVANG 36-2607, but Nevada Guard members who fall on hard times while deployed may have some monetary relief available to them.

For state employees who are also traditional Guard members, Senate Bill 122 allows soldiers and airmen called to federal active service to continue contributing to their state PERS retirement system while on Title 10 duty. This ensures Guard members can continue building their civilian retirement benefits while called to active service. Prior to deployment you need to contact your state PERS system coordinator to apply for the benefit.

You can check out the next issue of *Battle Born* for a complete list of 2007 state legislation directly affecting Nevada Guard members. ■

Capt. April Conway is the state public affairs officer for the Nevada Guard. She served in the active duty Army for five years before defecting to the Air Guard.



The Nevada Legislature continues its biennial 120-day session to pass or defeat bills drafted for use throughout the state. Many proposed bills are set to benefit Guard members directly.



Army Guard companies refine skills in sling-load operation

Lt. Col. Steve Ranson, JFHQ Public Affairs. Photos: Lt. Col. Steve Ranson, JFHQ Public Affairs

Helicopter pilots and ground crews from two Nevada Army National Guard companies refined their skills in sling loading a vehicle over the hills east of Carson City recently in a mission critical to both units.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Steve Nielson, one of the pilots from Co. B, 1st Battalion,

189th Aviation based at the Stead, Nev., airport, said aviators must continually practice their sling-loading techniques.

He and co-pilot Capt. Daniel Lewis, commander of the company, said hooking up equipment and flying it from one location to another consumed many of their missions

when they served overseas for 18 months.

Both pilots were part of the Chinook unit when more than 100 Nevada Guardsmen were called up in January 2005 and sent to Afghanistan. Nielson said pilots must be aware of several factors affecting a sling-load operation.

"We do worry about the weight (of an object) so we don't jeopardize the performance of the aircraft," he said. "We are also concerned how an object is hooked up."

If problems arise, both pilots said they would jettison the load to save the aircraft.

First Sgt. Bryan Soule, one of two crew chiefs aboard the CH-47, said Nevada Army Guard aviators also conduct sling-loading operations with Special Forces and Navy SEALs at training areas near Hawthorne.

During the operation, Soule divided the ground crew from Carson City's 150th Maintenance Co., into two groups, each responsible for hooking up cables to one end of the Humvee. He said the sling-load cables were capable of hauling up to 25,000 pounds.

Once the cables were attached, the Chinook gently lifted the Humvee off the ground and then flew it in a circle over the hills that surrounded the Carson River.

Staff Sgt. Del Dennis, a platoon sergeant with the maintenance company, organized the training for soldiers of his platoon.

"I'm impressed with the second platoon folks," he said. "This is the first time they have done this."

Dennis said the exercise was part of the company's Mission Essential Task List.

"We're performing combat service support in desert operations by preparing vehicles for sling loads," he said.

Capt. Amy Klima, commander of the 150th Maintenance Co., said Dennis did a good job in preparing his soldiers for the training.

"He's one of our most innovative and motivated soldiers," Klima said. ■

After 19 years of herding pre-teen kids at Churchill County Junior High School in Fallon, Lt. Col. Ranson retired from the school district and now works at his first passion as a sports editor for the Lahontan Valley News newspaper.



First Sgt. Bryan Soule of Reno, crew chief of the CH-47 from Co. B, 1/189 Aviation, prepares the cables.



Pfc. Jessica Hana of 150th Maintenance Co., taping the mirrors so they will not break during the sling load. She is from Carson City.

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A Nevada Guard CH-47 transports a Humvee across the snow-covered Sierra Nevada.



A CH-47 of B. Co, 1/189th General Support Aviation Battalion hovers over a Humvee as it prepares to sling load the vehicle.

Pfc. James Montez of Sun Valley, Nev., checks the cables prior to the sling-load exercise.



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