Battle Born

Bradleys invade Nevada

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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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2460 Fairview Drive
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Growth an expanding challenge for Nevada leaders

As our organization launches into a new year, we can review our past and realize the dynamic environment of the Nevada National Guard. Faced with many changes and challenges, it’s sometimes hard to figure out where to devote our energy.

Activity at the national level has notched up significantly in the last several years. Trying to balance the limited resources between the war fight while simultaneously modernizing and transforming the services has been a great challenge. It is not only the national leadership that is charged with finding solutions to our challenges. The entire leadership team in Nevada is very involved in identifying options for our state and the nation.

Through frequent visits to our National Guard leadership in Washington and ongoing meetings and conferences with military leaders, Nevada officials have identified many issues to be addressed at the national level. At the same time, we make every attempt to formulate meaningful, realistic options for solutions to these issues.

Nevada continues to be one of the fastest growing states in the nation. With the ongoing demonstration of the Nevada Guard as an organization of professional and passionate citizen soldiers and airmen, we’re positioned to grow dramatically. Our recruiting and retention statistics have been strong in recent years and those numbers are noticed by national leadership. The result is a frequent, open discussion surrounding the growth of force structure in the Silver State.

The processes for the Nevada Army and Air Guard growth are very similar. Nevada officials started initiatives identifying our potential to grow within some existing mission areas and also to acquire new missions and capabilities. Once the initiatives were validated by the Army and Air Force, the hard work began.

We will continue to work closely with the National Guard Bureau to gain the resources (i.e., manpower, equipment) needed to make the Nevada Guard a stronger and more relevant force for the future of the state and the nation.

Because of the hard work and dedication of each and every member of this organization, Nevada has a national reputation as a “can-do” state. The excellence demonstrated in every mission, no matter how small, speaks volumes to the professional force that exists here. I thank each of you for all your extraordinary efforts and commitment to the people of this great state and look forward to our continued growth.

The excellence demonstrated in every mission, no matter how small, speaks volumes to the professional force that exists here.
Castagnola ready for property and fiscal officer role

Col. Felix Castagnola is set to become the eighth United States Property and Fiscal Officer in the history of the Nevada National Guard in early 2008. Castagnola’s promotion was announced by Nevada Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Cindy Kirkland in December after Gov. Jim Gibbons selected Castagnola from a list of candidates.

Castagnola will become the USPFO officer upon National Guard Bureau approval, likely in this month. Castagnola, most recently the chief of the joint staff of the Nevada Guard, replaces Col. Louis Cabrera, who had been the Nevada National Guard’s USPFO since 1998. As the USPFO, Castagnola is accountable and responsible for all federal resources in the possession of the Nevada National Guard within the state.

Turner new 152nd Airlift Wing commander

The command of the Nevada Air Guard’s 152nd Airlift Wing changed Dec. 2, when Col. Gary Turner assumed command of the wing that includes the 152nd Operations Group, the 152nd Mission Support Group, the 152nd Medical Group and the 152nd Logistics Group and comprises several hundred Reno-based airmen.

Turner assumed the command from Col. Jonathan Proehl, who transferred to the Air Force Reserves. Before assuming command of the wing, Turner was the 152nd Mission Support Group commander responsible for eight operational and support activities entailing more than 500 airmen on worldwide air mobility missions.

Also on Dec. 2, Col. Jim Cumings filled the vacancy created by Turner’s promotion and assumed the command of the 152nd Mission Support Group. Also, Lt. Col. Chris Ultsch took command of the 152nd Logistics Group following the retirement of Col. Steve Hanson.

Post Deployment Health Reassessment mandatory for returning combat soldiers

The completion of a Post Deployment Health Reassessment is mandatory for all soldiers returning from a deployment. The reassessment seeks to identify potential health issues before they become chronic conditions.

The PDHRA provides education, screening, assessment and access to care and addresses questions and concerns that soldiers may have about their health after they return from deployment. All soldiers who have redeployed from a combat zone more than 90 days ago should complete the PDHRA. There are two ways to complete the assessment:

Option 1: Begin PDHRA online and complete it over the phone. One may complete the PDHRA online through AKO by going to https://apps.mods.army.mil/secure/AKOForms.asp and logging in with your AKO user name and password. One must then call 1-888-PDHRA-99 to discuss your responses with a healthcare provider.

Option 2: Complete the PDHRA entirely over the phone. If you do not have access to a computer or AKO, you may call 1-888-PDHRA-99 and complete the entire assessment over the phone.

Retiree Hall of Fame welcomes three inductees

Three inductees were welcomed into the Nevada National Guard’s Retiree Hall of Fame on Nov. 4, during the annual Retiree Ceremony in Carson City. The three new inductees are retired Maj. Gen. Douglas Byington, retired Chief Warrant Officer Jack Christensen and retired Staff Sgt. Daryl Haines.

Byington retired from the National Guard in 1988. He developed the Nevada National Guard scholarship regulations and serves as an ombudsman for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. Christensen served in Iraq, Vietnam and Korea before retiring in 2007. He now volunteers much of his time on behalf of the Veterans Medical Center and the Disabled American Veterans.

Haines retired in 1987, and spends much of his time volunteering on behalf of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and the Highway Watch Program.

Remodel work begins on Ely Armory

The remodel of the Nevada Army Guard Ely Armory began in October 2007 and is set to be completed by summer 2008. The cost of the project is about $1.6 million.

The project will correct numerous safety issues and will update the building. Utilities will be upgraded and the building will become more accessible for disabled persons.

The building will become more energy efficient due to new, dual-glazed windows and an updated heating and air conditioning system will be installed in the drill hall for the first time. Additional anti-terrorism and force protection measures will also be incorporated into the construction.

During construction, the full-time staff has relocated to an office two blocks away donated by the Ely Chamber of Commerce.

Upon his induction into the Retiree Hall of Fame on Nov. 4, retired Maj. Gen. Douglas Byington gave a speech recounting his memories associated with the Nevada National Guard.

Photo: Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka
New chief offers secrets of his success

By Chief Master Sgt. Anthony Barozzi, 152nd Communications Flight

After joining the Nevada Air National Guard in 1983, I made many goals in my military career. One was to make the rank of chief master sergeant. About six months ago I finally made it. As I look back on my career progression, it’s interesting to reflect on how I reached my goal and how certain aspects of the rank are different than I thought they would be.

The biggest key in career progression is to stay current with your professional military education. It is amazing to me that individuals don’t look ahead and plan for their next promotion. The day after you get promoted, you should research what courses are required to attain the next rank. Even if you are not in a position with promotion potential, one should still prepare because one never knows when a position may open.

It is also very important to maintain the Air Force core values. Reading the little blue book is a great way to ensure professionalism in your career. After all, this is a profession, not just a job.

In my opinion, one of the best aspects of the National Guard in comparison to active duty is the long-term friendships one makes during a career. As your career progresses, it’s a great idea to have mentors along the way. As I look back, there are many people to thank who helped me attain my final promotion — far too many to mention. Without mentors, there’s no way I would have achieved my goal of attaining chief. The promotion to chief is only achievable by being mentored as well as learning from and working with your peers.

I made it to the rank of chief. Now what? I realize there are three aspects of the rank I did not expect.

I didn’t anticipate my responsibility to the entire unit. I have been a member of the communications flight for the past decade and I understand the responsibilities and expectations of my role in our flight, but the unit also has demands of every chief on base that must be accomplished.

Second, all of us are very visible every day, on duty or off. We’re all members of the Guard 24 hours per day and our actions reflect upon not only ourselves but the entire unit. This visibility is magnified as you attain a higher rank in the enlisted and officer ranks. Being a member of the Nevada Air National Guard is a responsibility and an honor that should never be taken for granted.

Lastly, I didn’t understand the camaraderie that exists among the chiefs. I’m impressed by their drive to improve conditions within the unit. If you ever have an issue, follow the chain of command and it is likely to be forwarded to your respective chief. Every month we meet and discuss issues our airmen face, and we work together to discover ways to improve the quality of life in the Guard.

There are always things you wish you would have done differently in your earlier career. My biggest regret is not being as involved in the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States as I should have been. EANGUS is there to assist all members of our profession. What our members have achieved over the past few years is a reflection of the people involved in EANGUS. If you are not currently a member, it is a great idea to join EANGUS.

Brig. Gen. Bob Fitch, the commander of the Nevada Air Guard, often speaks about the legacy you are going to leave behind when your career concludes. My question to you is the same: What will be your legacy? Every day you are in the National Guard you add a brick to your legacy.

There is no secret to attaining the rank of chief. For airmen who aspire to reach it, finish your professional military education, develop mentorships and work in close conjunction with your peers.

Remember, your legacy in the National Guard is shaped every day.

Air Guard graduates nine with associate degrees

Nine High Rollers earned associate degrees this fall from the Community College of the Air Force. The college is one of several federally chartered degree-granting institutions, but it is the only two-year institution exclusively serving enlisted personnel. The college offers nearly 2,200 mission-related courses and 6,300 instructors teach CCAF courses at affiliated schools worldwide.

- Tech. Sgt. Sarah Allegre, 152nd Communications Flight – Information Systems Technology
- Staff Sgt. Alexis Anastassatos, 152nd Maintenance Squadron – Aviation Maintenance Technology
- Staff Sgt. Adalberto Chavez, 152nd Civil Engineer Squadron – Mechanical and Electrical Technology
- Master Sgt. Kevin Cralle, 152nd Logistics Readiness Squadron – Logistics
- Chief Master Sgt. Andreas Flock, 152nd Civil Engineer Squadron – Fire Science
- Tech. Sgt. George Johnson Sr., 152nd Communications Flight – Information Management
- Senior Airman Kirk Santiago, 152nd Services Flight – Restaurant, Hotel and Fitness Management
- Senior Airman Aaron Washington, 152nd Intelligence Squadron – Communications Application Technology

The CCAF has awarded 308,596 associate in applied science degrees since April 1977.
Already soaked with water from the base fire truck, 152nd Airlift Wing Commander Col. Jon Proehl (left) gets doused with champagne by Lt. Col. Chris Ultsch after Proehl’s final C-130 flight with the Nevada Air National Guard. Air Force tradition calls for flight crew members to be drenched with water upon landing their final flight. Proehl relinquished command of the wing to Col. Gary Turner in December. Photo: Tsgt. Shelly Burroughs

A UH-60 from the 1/168th MEDEVAC unit in Nevada climbs out of Lake Poway, Calif., with a full bucket. Photos: Courtesy of California National Guard

A Nevada Army Guard CH-47 Chinook from the 1/189th Aviation unit swings 2,000 gallons of water onto a fire burning up Woodson Mountain in southern California.

A UH-60 Black Hawk from Nevada’s 1/168th MEDEVAC unit flies back to Los Alamitos along the Pacific Ocean. The smoke from the fires made for a spectacular sunset.

Read more about Nevada’s response to western wildfires on page 9.
Staff Sgt. Sargent Kolteryahn of the 72nd Military Police Co. receives high fives from the units' kids in Henderson, who gathered to see the 72nd Military Police depart for their second deployment to Iraq. Photo: Sgt. 1st Class Eric Studenicka

Tech. Sgt. Chris Couture of the 232nd Operations Sqdn. climbs a tower to perform a 28-day periodic maintenance inspection while in Afghanistan. The tower houses a data terminal for line of sight control of the unit’s Predator aircraft. Photo: Courtesy of Master Sgt. Robert Butchko

Tech. Sgt Gil Carrera of the 232nd Operations Sqdn. performs a forms review prior to his aircraft mission in Afghanistan. Photo: Courtesy of Master Sgt. Robert Butchko

Chief Master Sgt. John Ternau, the Command Chief Master Sgt. of the Nevada Air Guard, and Staff Sgt. Sean Raquepo of the 152nd Maintenance Squadron paint the recognizable Reno Arch and C-130 on a T-wall in Iraq. Photo: Courtesy of Chief Master Sgt. John Ternau
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The emergency response to the horrendous wildfires that burned thousands of acres throughout Nevada, Idaho, Utah and California this past summer underscores how important it is for states to share resources and work together during contingency situations.

The Emergency Management Assistance Compact established in 1996 is the cornerstone of mutual aid and is a model compact for disaster response. Since ratification by Congress in 1996, 50 states, three U.S. territories and the District of Columbia have agreed to join EMAC. EMAC was the first national disaster compact since the Civil Defense Compact of 1950 to be ratified by Congress.

EMAC offers state-to-state assistance during governor-declared state emergencies. It is a responsive and straightforward system for states to send personnel and equipment to disaster areas. EMAC has proven to be a critical part of emergency management response to local disasters such as Angora Fire at Lake Tahoe in June 2007. Local disasters such as wild fires and flooding reiterate the importance of standing, mutual-aid agreements between states.

"Lake Tahoe is a perfect example of the importance of memorandums of understanding," said Maj. Jeff Zupon, director of Military Support for the Nevada National Guard. "Because of the agreements, Nevada is better positioned to fight fires along the California/Nevada border in the Lake Tahoe region."

The mutual aid flows in both directions. Just as California often assists during Nevada contingencies, the state of Nevada has responded immediately to California emergencies, providing fire, law and medical aid to our western neighbor.

The EMAC process begins when a state's governor issues a state of emergency.

"Disaster response always begins at the local level," said Col. Mathew Brady, a branch chief for the National Guard Bureau. "If a county can't handle the emergency, it will ask the state for help. If the scope or scale of the event requires additional resources, the emergency management agency will ask for outside resources."

During the recent southern California fires, Nevada sent multiple resources to California.

"In total we sent six aircraft, including one UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, one CH-47 Chinook, two OH-58s Kiowa helicopters, and two C-130s, as well as half a dozen vehicles and 56 Nevada Guardsmen to support the California fire mission," said Master Sgt. Dean Long from the Nevada Joint Operations Center.

In an effort to fill in any gap where the EMAC may have fallen short, many states have initiated alternate compacts and or agreements with their neighboring states. For Nevada, these types of agreements are pivotal during the fire season.

"There are many small fires that don't constitute a state-declared emergency but are considered a county emergency," Zupon said.

During emergencies, response timeliness is the key to saving lives and property and the alternate agreements enable states to receive assistance in an expedited manner.

"The state of Nevada receives assistance from other states on a yearly basis, especially during fire season," said Gary Derks, an official with the Nevada Department of Emergency Management.

Two UH-60 Black Hawks, one from California Guard and one from the 1/168th MEDEVAC unit in Nevada, lift off from Gillespie Field with 750-gallon buckets. Photo: Courtesy of California National Guard

"We have an automatic aid agreement that extends 25 miles into all of the states around Nevada. During fire season, Nevada gets aid from each of the surrounding states."

The key to dealing with any emergency is response. The quicker the response, the lower the impact an incident has on a community. Pre-existing agreements enable states to share resources with ease and without the delay of a formal declaration of a state emergency.

"The concept is neighbor-helping-neighbor and the primary goal is to save lives," Derks said.

In recent history, there have been several examples of how the EMAC agreement could potentially assist Nevada during a time of crisis.

In 2004, EMAC displayed its worth during the response to hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne when EMAC deployed more than 800 state and local personnel from 38 states. The cost was about $15 million in personnel, equipment and National Guard expenditures.

In 2005, EMAC experienced its largest emergency response when all member states combined deployed 65,929 personnel in response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama and Florida.

Some interesting facts about the 2005 deployments include:

- More than 1,300 search and rescue personnel from 16 states searched more than 22,300 structures and rescued 6,582 people
- More than 2,000 healthcare professionals from 28 states treated more than 160,000 patients in the days and weeks after the storms, under the most primitive of conditions
- Nearly 3,000 fire/hazmat personnel from 28 states deployed
- About 200 engineers from nine states deployed
- More than 6,880 sheriff's deputies and police officers from 35 states and countless local jurisdictions deployed across Louisiana and Mississippi
- 112 animal rescue personnel from four states responded

Today EMAC stands as a model compact for disaster response and Nevadans can rest assured the states, territories and the District of Columbia will come to our aid in the event of a major catastrophe.
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They aren't quite tiger-striped and they aren't quite pixilated, but they might be just the thing if a war breaks out in Nye County.

The new sage green, gray-green and tan utility Airman Battle Uniforms are showing up in Nevada, a replacement for the 1980s era woodland pattern camouflage battle dress uniforms. Meant for wear in spots across the globe, excluding Southwest Asia, the color scheme also fits in well with the high desert decor of Nevada.

Although the new ABU doesn’t become mandatory until late 2011, deploying airmen and those in basic training are being issued the new uniform and some High Rollers have begun purchasing the uniform on their own.

Master Sgt. Jon Wolland bought the new ABUs as soon as they became available because, as he says, it was time.

“I was done with the BDUs and ready for a new look,” said Wolland, the shop chief of the 152nd Maintenance Squadron’s guidance control section. “These are the new toy for me at work.”

The new pattern is available at some AAFES exchanges and at several stores online, but demand is high. Wolland said he ended up ordering different uniform pieces through different Web sites, piecing together his new look.

Airmen should be careful when purchasing the uniforms, though. Different manufacturers are producing somewhat different color schemes. Pants ordered from one Web site may have more tan shadings than a top ordered from another. Both of the major manufacturers have their products in AAFES stores, so buyers should take a hard look at uniform pieces before purchasing.

The new shirt has four pockets on the front of the shirt and also a small pencil pocket on the left forearm and two pockets on the lower legs. In addition, inside the side and breast pockets are smaller sewn-in pockets to hold small tools, flashlights or cell phones.

Saving money was also an Air Force concern. The new uniforms forbid airmen from starching, ironing, washing them with detergents that contain optical brighteners or even using dryer sheets. A partial list of detergents without the brighteners is available at the Air Force Portal at www.my.af.mil – type in “uniform” in the search box.

They aren’t perfect though, and Wolland said some of his pocket flap corners have begun to turn up.

The new uniforms come with their own rules about which undergarments and overgarments may be worn concurrently with the ABUs. For the time being, a select few ABU and BDU uniform pieces can be mixed and matched, but airmen with questions should refer to the Air Force Portal.

Master Sgt. Rommie Brown from the clothing issue section in the 152nd Logistics Readiness Squadron said new uniforms are being ordered for those deploying to the desert. Presently, anyone needing a new uniform will receive the woodland pattern.

The patrol cap headgear remains the same, though in the new color scheme. No patches or command insignias are authorized on the ABU.

The boots are a suede gray green requiring no boot polish. For the first time, boots are now available in women’s sizes.

The new uniform’s sizing closely matches traditional civilian clothing sizes. Replacing the old sizes of extra small, small, medium and large coupled with short, regular or long lengths, ABU overshirt sizes are now determined by the traditional sizing of women’s civilian clothing (i.e., 6, 8, 10, etc.) and men’s civilian clothing (i.e., 38, 40, 42, etc.).

Reactions to the new uniforms thus far have been mixed. “Females seem more comfortable with the ABU because of the new sizing options,” Brown said.

Col. Jim Cumings, the 152nd Mission Support Group commander, said the sizes are pretty accurate for the shirts and pants but the length is different on the newer uniforms.

“I always wore a ‘long’ in the pants before, but now a ‘regular’ length fits just fine,” he said.
For many soldiers and airmen in the Nevada National Guard, their military job equates to doing their military occupation during drill weekends and two weeks of annual training. But when a soldier’s, airman’s or veteran’s death occurs, it causes many to reflect on a career spent protecting a nation, and in some cases, the sacrifice of a life on the field of battle.

Sacrifice means a great deal to the country and Nevada, and no one appreciates that sacrifice more than the Nevada Army Guard’s honor guard.

“I recall when we took a team in June 2004, to Rochester, New York, to bury Spc. Anthony Cometa. He was the first Nevada Guardsmen to be killed in Iraq,” said Staff Sgt. Ari Morales, the state coordinator of the Nevada Army Guard honor guard the past three years. “We took a 10-man team, along with State Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Sitton and then-commander of the Nevada Army Guard, Brig. Gen. Randall Sayre.

“Cometa was buried in a small cemetery there. That event will always stick in my mind. It was very difficult for our soldiers. A lot of our guys knew him. He was one of ours and that made it very personal for us. It was important for us to render those honors for that reason. There are honor guard teams from other states that come to Nevada to render honors for guys who were in their units. It’s like that. We know they are there to take care of their own.”

Morales, 24, is a contractor who was hired by Military Personnel Services Corporation to provide human resources management for the NVARNG state honor guard. The position was created three years ago with the strong backing of Sitton. Since then, the program has been built from the ground up and standardized. Morales was a traditional Guard soldier with the 72nd MP Company at that time and he deployed with the unit to Iraq. Upon his return, he felt compelled to assist the honor guard.

“It became apparent that it was important for me to get involved in the honor guard. One thing led to another,” he said.

Morales’ duties consist of receiving requests, forming teams, collecting data, writing policy, updating and implementing policy and working closely with the state command sergeant major on honor guard matters. Soldiers perform a variety of ceremonies for changes of command, retirements, funerals and honorable transfers of remains. He and several NCOs assist with military protocol and standards, imparting what they know to soldiers who give their extra time to the program.

“We have approximately 130 soldiers statewide,” Morales said. “About 45 of our soldiers are active participants. That means that they perform in at least one mission per week. Our full-time personnel, a staff of eight soldiers (five in Las Vegas and three in Carson City) run the operation, coordinate with the funeral homes, conduct training and look after our soldiers.”

Spc. Kayla Watford, 18, has volunteered and participated in 60 funeral services during the six months she has been with the honor guard. She is a support technician and keeps track of the number of funerals performed by the honor group.

Watford became interested in the honor guard after attending a briefing by Morales just weeks before she left for basic training. In the interim, she attended drills and learned more about military traditions.

“The way we figure it, if we go to someone’s funeral, someone is going to come to ours,” she said. “At one of the funerals, there was no family there. It was really sad. The flag was presented to the gardener. You want it to be memorable for the family. Like the way the flag is draped over the...
casket with the field of stars over the heart of the deceased. The flag is folded back over the feet to symbolize the soldier’s last walk.”

According to Morales, the honor guard uniforms are not standard dress uniforms. The linings are removed and then they are taped inside. They are also pressed for sharper creases. The amount of attention to detail the uniforms typifies the discipline maintained by the program.

Soldiers for the honor guard perform 55-65 missions a month; the majority of the funerals, about 85 percent, are in Las Vegas.

“We have participated in 15-20 a week,” Morales said. “Many days we have participated in consecutive ceremonies – one right after the other. In a single day, we performed in nine funerals in Las Vegas with teams at multiple locations.”

In addition to training in Nevada, soldiers can attend a two-week course at the Professional Education Center in Little Rock, Ark., where they can receive the ARNG honor guard tab. They learn about standard operating procedures including uniform maintenance and the ceremonies modeled after the traditions maintained by the 3rd Infantry Old Guard, the unit that performs the funeral honor guard services at Arlington National Cemetery.

“(The honor guard) is strict and organized, but not as bad as I thought,” said Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Ray, 34, of Henderson. He is a medical platoon sergeant in the 1/22nd Cavalry and started with the honor guard in January 2007. He has participated in more than 40 funeral services.

The state’s top two honor guard soldiers annually earn a trip to Virginia to Arlington National Cemetery. Last year, one soldier performed 125 missions.

“This is a seven-day-a-week operation. I have received requests at 3 a.m. for ceremonies that day. The Army National Guard has never missed a mission,” Morales said. “The reason we do it is because in the end, we will all be veterans, too. When I pass on, I know there will be other soldiers there for me.”

For information on the honor guard, contact Morales at (702) 339-1297 or visit www.Nevadaguard.com and click the honor guard link to fill out an application.
By Capt. April Conway, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

In sharp contrast to Nevada’s shrinking state budget and decreasing housing starts is the ongoing positive growth of the Silver State’s National Guard. In just two years, the number of Nevada Guardsmen has grown dramatically and today the Nevada National Guard entails close to 3,700 soldiers and airmen.

Accompanying the Guard’s growth is a broadening force-structure transformation that’s increasing the military resources available to the state and creating new employment opportunities for Battle Born Guard members.

Keeping track of brand-new units, reorganized units and units poised for transformation in the near future is challenging. Most of the changes are associated with brand new units, but some involve changing a unit’s numerical designation, mission or manning.

It’s difficult to single out the one organization that has incurred the most change, but the most visible transition is the 1/221st Cavalry Squadron’s evolution from a M1A1 armored tank battalion to a M3A2 armored reconnaissance squadron. The heavy duty tanks so adept at tracking down and engaging the enemy and so popular with Army recruits are now history. The unit is now welcoming its new, lighter Bradley fighting vehicles and a fleet of scout Humvees.

The squadron’s mission has changed...
along with its equipment. Since 1995, the cavalry was a portion of the nation’s premiere opposition force, training Guard, Reserve and active duty units at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. The OPFOR dressed like an enemy, attacked like an enemy and were as tough as nails as they helped train units for wartime deployments.

Today, the Cavalry still trains at Fort Irwin, deep in the Mojave Desert near Barstow, Calif., but its mission has become more a traditional scout, cat-and-mouse game these days. Cavalry scouts sneak in, identify targets and forward the information to follow-on combat forces.

“Now we’re a much more relevant unit for state of Nevada missions,” said Maj. Eric Wishart, the 1/221st executive officer. “There wasn’t too much call for heavy tanks when the governor needed assistance from the Guard.”

Wishart said the Cavalry is now the state’s official quick-reaction force and is poised to respond almost immediately to a call for assistance. His group can receive the call, mobilize and head out the door in a short amount of time, much like a 60-person motorized infantry.

“More Humvees (than before) assigned to this unit makes us more agile and more responsive,” Wishart said.

The equipment and mission changes also bring challenges. A traditional combat arms unit employs only males, while the new, armored-reconnaissance designation means females are assigned to the forward-support company within the squadron. Also, longtime tankers have had to say goodbye to the vehicles that made them feel invincible.

Master Gunner Master Sgt. Tamás Horvath spent 12 years driving tanks and he’s still reluctant to call himself a Bradley guy.

“It’s like when you spend your whole life driving a big truck and now you’re relegated to a Kia Sephia,” he said wistfully. “It’s a good move for us as a unit, but the mission is difficult to let go.”

As an armor unit, the cavalry employed about 600 soldiers. Today, it’s authorized about 525 soldiers. The majority of the 1/221st is based at the Clark County Armory in Las Vegas. One troop, L Troop, is based in Yerington.

422nd Signal Battalion

Although its changes may be less visible, the 422nd Signal Battalion has also made significant changes in the way it’s structured. Formerly an integrated theater signal battalion whose mission was to set up and maintain communication channels within a theater of operations, the battalion housed the 321st and 440th Signal Companies along with a headquarters detachment. About 375 soldiers were assigned in Stead and Henderson.

The mission of the 422nd is essentially the same as in the past, but with its association with disparate units far from the Silver State, the battalion can now easily train for its wartime mission of long-haul transmissions. It also means the state’s Guard communications ability is secure. If communications in Las Vegas or Reno were to shut down during a contingency, the other two nodes could step in and keep the state up and running with telephone, radio and computer service.

The battalion is currently authorized 223 soldiers, but with a large, information technology-savvy population in southern Nevada to draw from, the Nevada Army Guard has been actively trying to land another company sized signal unit there.

232nd Operations Squadron

Change hasn’t escaped the Nevada Air Guard, either. A new unit just a few years ago, Nevada Air Guard’s Detachment 1 is now officially the 232nd Operations Squadron. Based at Creech and Nellis Air Force bases in southern Nevada, it is a small but vitally important unit to the Nevada Guard structure.

An integrated unit with the active duty Air Force, the 232nd maintains and flies the MQ-1 Predator, an armed reconnaissance aircraft, and the MQ-9 Reaper attack aircraft. Both are unmanned aerial systems. Although the 232nd’s primary mission is to train the USAF Predator community, missions have deployed roughly 70 airmen to Afghanistan and Iraq numerous times and the airmen have performed wartime missions locally since the unit’s inception.

The Nevada High Rollers’ success led to the establishment of other new Air Guard unmanned aircraft units in Arizona, California, New York, North Dakota and Texas.

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Predator pilot Maj. Ted Wertzberger said it's nice to see the strength of each branch of the Air Force work in unison. of Nellis' airmen to experience new levels in a growing weapons system," he said.

But standing up the operations squadron is only the first phase of the Air Guard's footprint in southern Nevada. The second phase is planned to include assigning Nevada Guardsmen to the 57th Adversary Tactics Group, an active-duty training unit that acts as an opposition force for total force units rotating through Red Flag. Red Flag is the Air Force's premiere two-week exercise combining flying, space operations and cyberspace (information warfare). The eventual goal is to institute a full Air Force/Air Guard integrated squadron within the 57th.

992nd Troop Command

The 992nd Troop Command is another organization that has seen massive changes in its company-sized units' composition and missions. Most visibly, a large influx of military police units has given the troop command more resources for the nation and the state. The stalwart 72nd MP Company is currently deployed to Iraq, but when it comes home in early 2009 it will be joined by new military police units including the 485th MP Company in Fallon, and the 137th and 140th MP Detachments in Henderson.

The 485th MP Company is a traditional MP internment and resettlement unit that was officially recognized in June 2006. A large unit, the 160-soldier company carries on the legacy of MP units based in Fallon dating back some 30 years when the 72nd MPs were headquartered in the city.

The 140th, set to deploy to Iraq this winter, is a small, 12-person detachment whose mission is to provide oversight of internment operations. Their team is made up of soldiers with logistical, engineering, medical and legal specialties.

The 137th is another detachment with about 50 soldiers. It is a traditional garrison (installation) MP unit featuring four specialized cells that focus on tactical planning, force protection and command and control. It can also conduct investigations and respond to traffic accidents and criminal activity on a base.

Military police units have been in short supply throughout the Army, and Nevada's ability to recruit and retain MPs has allowed the state to garner more units. From roughly 175 MPs just two years to about 400 today, the increase has been dramatic.

Another unit within the battalion, the 777th Engineer Utility Team, has been a small – albeit very active – unit deploying in support of the Global War on Terrorism and assisting with Operation Jump Start on the U.S./Mexico border. Commercial construction in the Las Vegas valley has given the Army Guard a large construction-worker base capable of sustaining two engineering units in southern Nevada, so the 240th Engineer Company has now joined the 777th in Las Vegas. From the original 48 soldiers in the Triple Seven, the two units have grown to now employ about 175 soldiers whose mission is to build. A concrete team can prepare a land site for construction with follow-on work done by the units’ carpenters, electricians and plumbers.

152nd Intelligence Squadron

An Air Guard unit hoping for increases in force structure, the 152nd Intelligence Squadron is co-located at the Nevada Air Guard Base in Reno with the more visible C-130 airlift wing, but it performs a far different mission. The intelligence unit has about 100 airmen and nearly all have taken part in GWOT missions at home and abroad since October 2001. Air Force, Air Force Reserve, coalition and state of Nevada leaders have taken notice of the squadron's imagery gathering capability and continually asked for more of its services.

Roughly 70 percent of the airmen in the unit have been activated at least twice during the past six years. Some airmen brought on active duty six years ago remain on orders.

Lt. Col. Les Gonzalez, the Nevada Air Guard chief of staff and the unit’s former commander, said he’s voiced concern about the aggressive operations tempo many times and he hopes extra manning for the squadron is upcoming in the near future.
“We’ve been told by the National Guard Bureau there is an initiative in the fiscal year 2010 budget to double the size of the unit, but there are no guarantees,” Gonzalez said.

991st Troop Command

Rounding out the changes, the 991st Troop Command headquartered in Stead has changed aviation unit designators and added a water purification unit in Las Vegas.

The UH-60 Black Hawk 126th Aviation (Medical Evacuation) unit is now Charlie Company, 1/168th Aviation (MEDEVAC) and the CH-47 Chinook, 116th Aviation unit is now known as Bravo Company, 1/189th. Both units retain nearly identical missions and manpower requirements but are part of a larger, Army-wide transition to General Support Aviation Brigades.

The Reconnaissance Air Interdiction Detachment is now known as the 3/140th Security and Support Detachment. Based in Stead and North Las Vegas, its mission remains to act as the Nevada Army Guard’s first aviation response unit for domestic operations in the state. The detachment is often called upon to participate in search and rescue missions and other flights requiring daytime and nighttime imagery.

Another unit with a great likelihood for state use during an emergency is the 100th Quartermaster Company, the new water purification unit in Las Vegas. The 100th could be called upon to assist a community without safe drinking water in Nevada or it could be called to service anywhere in the world to generate potable water. This new unit is set to employ about 185 Guard soldiers. The equipment for the 100th has begun to trickle in but the unit is not fully functional or deployable as of press time.

In comparison to larger Guard states such as Texas and California, Nevada’s 3,700 National Guard soldiers and airmen remains small. But as Nevada’s general population continues to increase exponentially and as long as retention and recruitment levels remain strong, the future potential growth of the Nevada National Guard seems to be limited only by the rate at which the National Guard can add units to our growing state.

How do we get new units?

Acquiring additional force structure for an individual state is a complex and lengthy endeavor and there’s not only one way to make it happen. The adjutant general and the commanders of the Nevada Army and Air Guard periodically look at the force structure to evaluate how recruitment and retention levels measure for different career fields, what training opportunities have developed and what new population levels may be able to support.

On the green side, force structure growth is part of the Army Guard’s overall strategic plan. Through aggressive strength management, strategic planning and constant communication with battalions and the National Guard Bureau, the command is better prepared to accept or decline units that are not relevant to their long-range vision.

The National Guard Bureau allocates force structure from the active duty Army. There’s an actual list of available units. The list comes from units the active duty Army has “given” the bureau to distribute to appropriate states.

Another way for a state to gain a unit is when the bureau shuts down a unit that is underperforming in its given state. Other states interested in gaining that unit can petition NGB to have it relocated.

For many reasons, U.S. Property and Fiscal Officer Col. Felix Castagnola said Nevada has done a great job of garnering new units in the last ten years.

“We saw how some eastern states were having trouble filling units,” Castagnola said, “and after taking a long, hard look at the demographics of Nevada, decided to court military police and signal communications units, among others.”

Strength figures in terms of new soldiers, attrition and recruiting paint an honest picture of how Nevada manages its troops and positive numbers in each of those categories in the past few years has shown the organization’s ability to fill several available units.

“Being an honest broker goes a long way with force structure providers at NGB who can provide relevant new units,” Castagnola said.

For blue suiters things are much less open. Each year the Nevada Air Guard puts forth a total force wish list of sorts, through Air National Guard senior leadership and on to the USAF air staff.

Some of the big ticket items the High Rollers have pushed include growth in the 152nd Intelligence Squadron, increases in force structure that would allow the 232nd Operations Squadron, currently an integrated unit with Guard and active duty Air Force airmen, to become a stand-alone Air Guard unit, a bigger role in the integrated associate program with the 57th Adversary Tactics Group, and new manning to support a Modular Airborne Firefighting System on the C-130.

Like a child who asks Santa for too many Christmas gifts, senior leadership in the Air Guard knows its chances for additional growth are slim.

“The only Air Guard units who have been able to garner new mission sets in the last few years were ones that went through the Base Realignment and Closure program in 2005, and most of those new missions were re-rolled into their existing states,” said Col. Jim Cumings, the 152nd Mission Support Group Commander and former chief of staff of the Nevada Air Guard.

But the command is ever hopeful, and like the Army Guard, strong recruiting and stable retention demonstrate an ability to successfully land new units.

Never much of a chef, Capt. Conway has recently discovered a new snack. Melt shredded Parmesan cheese on a cookie sheet in the oven at 350 degrees until edges are lightly browned. Umm!
When Sgt. Ron Portillo volunteered to deploy to Iraq, he didn’t know he’d be going to the most dangerous place in the country. He didn’t know that the soldier he was replacing was killed by a rocket-propelled grenade round to the head. Nor did he know March 13, 2007, would change his life forever.

But none of that matters much to Portillo, 39, a Nevada Army National Guard soldier who lives in Henderson. That’s because Portillo is one tough guy. He’s never backed away from anything, but what happened on that March afternoon in Iraq is forcing him to tackle the biggest challenge of his life.

Portillo joined the Marines right out of high school. He sought the toughest job he could find, went into a reconnaissance unit, and completed a three-year stint. While gazing at his U.S. Marines tattoo on his forearm, he said, “You never really leave the Corps.”

After a short break in service, Portillo joined the Army. “At first I was an infantry soldier, but I put in for Special Forces and was selected,” he said.

Portillo applied for Special Forces because he liked working with small teams on high-risk missions. During the Gulf War he ended up doing exactly that. After the war Portillo left active duty and joined the Guard. Then he had a change of heart and went back on active duty.

A static-line injury led to a medical board review. Although he pleaded to stay in, the Army medically discharged him. “After 15 years they gave me a year of severance pay and taxed that at 28 percent,” he said with a laugh. “At that point I had a bad taste for the military, and I said to myself, ‘I’m done with you guys.’”

But Portillo was not really “done” with the military. He loved the warrior culture too much to walk away forever.

Leaving Fort Bragg, N.C., with his wife and six children, Portillo moved to Las Vegas to begin a new life. “I started my own business,” he said with a sense of pride. “It was a window tinting shop and we made lots of money.”

Then his oldest son decided he wanted to join the military. “I told him he should join the Guard,” Portillo said. Talking to recruiters about his son rekindled Portillo’s own fire for the military. “So I joined, too,” he said. “Three months later I was gone to Iraq, and two and a half months after that I was blown up!”

Portillo laughed while turning his head from side-to-side as if amazed by his own words.

Asked if he would retell the story of what happened March 13, 2007, Portillo gave a big sigh, hesitated, then slowly started to recount the events leading to that day.

“I got this letter in the mail about volunteering to go to Iraq (on an active duty tour),” he said. “So I told my wife, ‘You know I’m going.’”

Portillo admits that many people can’t understand why he volunteered. He’s a National Guard soldier in an armor battalion.

Sgt. Ron Portillo shares a moment with his dog Onyx in Henderson, Nev. Upon his return to Nevada after his deployment to Iraq, Portillo began a program to connect wounded soldiers with therapy dogs. Photo: Maj. Terry Conder
He then volunteered to go to Iraq as an active duty Special Forces soldier to serve with people he had never even met.

Talk to Portillo for just a few minutes though, and it’s not hard to understand why he volunteered. Portillo is a passionate man who believes deeply in the Army’s values.

“At the time, my business was making more than $100,000 a year,” he said. “My whole family was upset. But the Army was really hurting for people over there, so I decided ‘I’m going.’”

Portillo’s pre-deployment training with 35 soldiers lasted 25 days.

“As soon as we hit Kuwait, we dispersed. I went to Ramadi as an individual replacement. They sent me to replace an SF guy that lost his head. I replaced a guy that got hit in the head with an RPG round,” he said.

In Ramadi, Portillo’s team embedded with Iraqi police units. The mission was to train and equip Iraqis so they could secure their own neighborhoods.

“Some of the police were Shia and some were Sunni,” Portillo said. “One night they got into a shootout in the police station, and we yelled, ‘Hey don’t do that. We’re trying to get some sleep.’”

A big grin flashed across Portillo’s face and he laughed heartily after telling the story.

“We were getting V-bedded (vehicle-embedded explosive attack) and mortared almost every day,” he said. “Ramadi was really bad.”

A month into his deployment, he was reassigned to a Special Forces team in Fallujah.

“March 13, 2007, we were given a mission to go to a nearby village to train the Iraqi Police there,” Portillo said. “The plan was to live, eat and sleep with them for a week.”

A small contingent of Marines came along to provide security so Portillo’s Army Special Forces team could focus on training the Iraqis. As they were distributing ammo to the IPs, a Marine recon captain called in an urgent message.

“Some Marines were in a firefight and they were getting shot-up pretty bad,” Portillo said. “Their vehicles were down and they were getting lit up with 20 millimeter shots.”

Portillo knew exactly what he had to do.

“I got on the phone line and told them we were on the way. Then I told our lieutenant and he said OK, go get them.”

But getting to the pinned down Marines was not easy.

“All the roads in the area were blacked out. That means they were full of uncleared improvised explosive devices,” Portillo said. “So we started going cross country through the desert. After some time we came to a ravine. We followed it for a couple of miles until we found a bridge, but it was blown up.”

Eventually Portillo’s quick reaction force found a place to cross. Portillo suddenly stopped speaking and sat completely still. Seemingly on the verge of being overcome with emotion, he closed his eyes, then opened them, and restarted his tale as if he had never hesitated.

“I was driving an armored security vehicle,” Portillo said. “The minute I went down the ravine, it was black.”

Earlier when he was telling other stories, Portillo’s voice was strong and dynamic. He often punctuated his anecdotes with a laugh. But this story was different. He spoke softer and slower than before.

“When you go down, it’s black,” he said. “You can’t hear anything. When a bomb hits and you don’t hear it, you know you’re gone. And so we were hit.”

It was later determined that Portillo’s ASV ran over an IED made of two 155-millimeter artillery rounds. The blast lifted the 29,000-

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By the time he reached a hospital in Germany, he was angry and depressed. “I was pissed at everything,” Portillo said. “I couldn’t walk and I couldn’t talk. I was throwing things and running nurses out of my room.”

Then one day everything changed. “I woke up one morning and this dog hopped on my bed,” Portillo said with a big smile and his voice growing stronger. “I thought, ‘What the heck? What is this?’ I started petting him, and he licked my face.”

From that day on the therapy dog came to visit every day. “I started looking forward to seeing the dog,” Portillo said. “I started using my wheelchair and getting out of my room.”

Later, when Portillo moved to Brooks Army Medical Center his recovery took a step backward. “One day they wanted to drive me from the hospital to the barracks. I couldn’t get in the car,” he said. “I just broke down. I was mental. I was stuttering. BAMC was overflowing with soldiers suffering from devastating injuries. It could be depressing.”

BAMC released Portillo in June 2007, and he returned home. He started spending hours on the Internet thinking of ways to get therapy dogs to wounded warriors. “I got him, his whole demeanor changed.” Portillo said. “He never left his room. But the moment I showed him a picture of the dog I got him, his whole demeanor changed.”

Portillo has suspended his dog service after providing a German shepherd named Rex to a soldier from Louisiana. “I told them I was starting a service dog program, but stayed more than two hours to receive an amazing perspective on combat operations in Iraq. Portillo won the contest after telling Carolla that he was heading to Iraq. When Portillo returned home, he called Carolla to tell him he was back.

“I was stuttering real bad,” Portillo said. “I told them I was starting a service dog program for vets. They put me on the air and people started donating money. MTV got involved and the guys from West Coast Customs (a car remodeling company with a reality show on The Learning Channel) got involved. It’s just been going ever since.”

For a couple of months, Portillo spent nearly all of his time acquiring and training dogs for placement with wounded soldiers. He set up a Web site and found a sponsor who paid to fly wounded soldiers to Las Vegas to pick up their dogs.

The dogs have had an amazing effect on Portillo. Today, his stuttering flares up only occasionally and he gets around without a walker.

“For every soldier killed, there are seven to 15 wounded,” Portillo said. “If one of these dogs helps a soldier, that’s why I do this. If it makes a soldier feel better, that’s why I do this. When I came home I couldn’t even leave the house without my dog.”

The first dog Portillo trained went to a 19-year-old Marine who lost both legs to an RPG. “He lived across the hall from me (during my recuperation). They had all kinds of stuff for us: football games, barbecues, things to get us back into society,” Portillo said. “He never left his room. But the moment I showed him a picture of the dog I got him, his whole demeanor changed.”

Portillo has suspended his dog service after providing a German shepherd named Rex to a soldier from Louisiana. “I’m just overwhelmed right now,” he said.

With six children and unable to work, Portillo recently received some bad news—a letter from the Army denying his Traumatic Injury Protection insurance claim. “I have to focus on that right now,” he said.

Portillo’s Web site is still functioning and it provides information on the service-dog programs and helpful links. The address is: http://caninesforcombatwounded.org.

Maj. Conder planned a 30-minute interview with Portillo to talk about his service dog program, but stayed more than two hours to receive an amazing perspective on combat operations in Iraq.
Air, Army annual awards acknowledged, accumulated
Compiled by Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka

Airline passenger lucky en route to Vegas

A passenger on a non-stop Southwest Air flight en route to Las Vegas from Columbus, Ohio, got lucky long before ever landing in Nevada as two medically-trained Nevada National Guard airmen were aboard the flight and provided in-flight assistance when the man suffered a heart attack.

Chief Master Sgt. Ken Gray and Senior Master Sgt. Jim Morgan were returning from a symposium in Ohio when their Southwest flight crew requested medical assistance for a man in his 70s who was cold and pale and had a blood pressure of 60/40 – the symptoms of a myocardial infarction, or heart attack.

The two responded by starting oxygen and intravenous fluid for the man and they were able to improve his blood pressure reading to 120/80 and stabilize the situation until the plane landed in Las Vegas and emergency technicians were able to respond.

“It was the type of situation I experience everyday at my civilian job,” said Morgan, a firefighter/paramedic with the Lyon County Fire Department and the first sergeant for the Nevada Air Guard’s 152nd Medical Group. “I didn’t think much of it at the time.”

For their quick reactions and timely medical assistance, Gray and Morgan were awarded the Nevada Medal of Merit with Valor on Dec. 2, during the Nevada Air Guard’s annual awards ceremony.

The Adjutant General’s Silver State Sentinel Awards for Excellence were also announced during the annual awards ceremony. Recipients receive the award for service that is considered above and beyond what is expected and has a significant positive impact on the state. Many of this year’s winners participated in both wildfire-fighting operations and in the Steve Fossett search and rescue mission near Minden, Nev.

Receiving Sentinel Awards for their work within the intelligence and operations squadrons were: Chief Master Sgt. James Gabler; Senior Master Sgts. Craig Madole, Ken Riley and Bret Vantrees; Master Sgts. Jason Blancas, Dale Mills and William Seifert; and Tech. Sgts. Greg Evans and Joe Henle.

Four Army aviation soldiers also received the Silver State Sentinel Award in recognition of their work during the past year. The recipients of the award were: Maj. Kris Kirkland, Chief Warrant Officer Jeff Ducharme, Chief Warrant Officer Stephen Nielsen and Sgt. Caroline Boardrow.

Pierce receives medal for actions in Iraq

Spc. Douglas Pierce of the 221st Cavalry was presented the Army Commendation Medal with Valor by Brig. Gen. Frank Gonzales in October for his actions in Iraq on June 3, 2007.

On that date, Pierce was deployed as a medic with the 121st Field Artillery, 1st Sustainment Command when his convoy that was returning from Forward Operating Base Cedar came under attack and was hit with a roadside bomb. After his own vehicle cleared the kill zone, Pierce returned to the kill zone with his medical equipment to provide field dressings and begin intravenous fluids for the wounded soldiers.

One of the soldiers Pierce assisted, Spc. David Saucier of the Maine National Guard, remains at Walter Reed Hospital, but is alive today thanks to Pierce’s actions under fire. Saucier is set to remain at Walter Reed for two years as he recovers.

“This is the biggest award I've ever received in my military career,” Pierce said.

Army Guard announces soldier award recipients

Distinguishing themselves through job performance and a series of military boards, 1st Sgt. Michelle Sykes, Sgt. Charlston Hartfield and Spc. Patrick Quinn were named the 2008 Nevada Army Guard’s 1st Sgt. Of the Year, Non-commissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year awards respectively in early December. In recognition of her award, Sykes received the Army’s Meritorious Service Medal; Hartfield and Quinn both received the Army Commendation Medal.

Sykes has been the first sergeant of Charlie Company, 422nd Signal Battalion since June 2006. Before her current assignment with the Las Vegas unit, Sykes was the non-commissioned officer in charge of recruiting and retention in southern Nevada.

Hartfield is an instructor with the 421st Regional Training Institute headquartered in Reno. He specializes in teaching the Basic Non-commissioned Officer course. Before becoming an Army instructor, Hartfield assisted with the Nevada Army Guard’s recruit sustainment program.

Quinn is a soldier in the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 422nd Signal Battalion in Reno. Prior to joining the Nevada National Guard, he spent four years as a radio repairman in the active-duty Army. His future goals include becoming a section leader in his company and attaining the rank of sergeant.

Hartfield and Quinn now advance to compete in the Army’s regional soldier of the year competitions. There is no nationwide 1st Sgt. of the year competition. All three of the award recipients went through a lengthy selection process to earn their respective accolades. The military boards included a series of questions concerning leadership, Army values, strength maintenance and the welfare and care of soldiers. Finalists were also evaluated on appearance, military bearing, self-confidence and conversational skills.

Airmen of the Year recognized

The recipients of the Nevada Air National Guard’s 2007 Airmen of the Year honors were recognized Dec. 2, during the Nevada Air Guard’s annual awards ceremony at the air base in Reno. The 2007 award winners included: Airman of the Year Senior Airman Christina Miller of Sparks, 152nd Logistics Support Squadron; Non-commissioned Officer of the Year Tech. Sgt. Reina Sarabia of Sparks, 152nd
Air, Army annual awards acknowledged, accumulated

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Senior Master Sgt. Craig Madole, center, receives the award for Senior Non-commissioned Officer of the Year from Brig. Gen. Robert Fitch, left, and Lt. Col. Les Gonzalez on Dec. 2 in Reno during the annual Air guard awards ceremony. Photo: Nevada Air National Guard Public Affairs

Maintenance Squadron; Senior Non-commissioned Officer Senior Master Sgt. Craig Madole of Reno, 152nd Intelligence Squadron; 1st Sgt. of the Year Master Sgt. Marcy Broadway of Sparks, 152nd Maintenance Squadron; and Honor Guard Airman of the Year Master Sgt. Angela Ash of Las Vegas, 152nd Communication Flight.

Nominees for the annual awards earned quarterly awards in order to qualify as finalists. Finalists then participated in two boards that examined their leadership skills, job performance, self-improvement and base and community involvement.

All of the Nevada Air National Guard winners move on now to compete in the nationwide Air National Guard enlisted competition against representatives from the other 53 states and territories with Air Guard units. Winners from that contest will then compete in the Air Force’s “12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year” against both active and reserve component airmen.

The other major awards announced during the Dec. 2 ceremony included:

– Master Sgt. Mike Delsoldato received the Defense Meritorious Service Medal for his protective service detail work

– Senior Master Sgt. Rob Taulman won the NVANG’s Chief’s Award for leading the move and migration of the 152nd Communications Flight. Col. Jonathan Proehl also received the award for acting as a liaison between the Chief’s Council and senior leadership.
By Spc. William Raitter, Medical Detachment

WEST YELLOWSTONE, Mont. – Since the inception of the National Guard biathlon program in the 1970s, the Nevada National Guard team had been in a state of virtual hibernation, unable to field a competitive team or capture any individual medals in major competition.

That situation changed Dec. 7 when the Nevada Guard’s biathlon team ended its period of dormancy and Maj. Joyce Anacker captured the silver medal in the women’s sprint event at the NGB Western Regional in West Yellowstone, Mont.

West Yellowstone is the home for many grizzly bears who roam nearby in Yellowstone National Park and was the perfect backdrop for the biathlon competition that turned out perfectly for the Nevada team despite the fact there had been no snow for the team to train on in the Sierra. All five of Nevada’s skiers – Anacker, Chief Warrant Officer Tom McElroy, Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka, Sgt. Cirialla Santilliano and Spc. William Raitter – were able to meet the qualifying standards for the National Championships set for March in Minnesota. The coach of the team was Sgt. Anthony LaCoe, who did a fine job of zeroing the participants and waxing the team’s skis.

Another unique animal within the national park boundary is the grey wolf. These graceful hunters inspired Nevada’s own sharpshooters to incredible performances. Instead of small, furry rodents like rabbits and mice, however, the aim of the Nevada biathletes was a three-inch wide, metal target 50 meters away.

“Nevada’s biathlon team is just awakening from its proverbial den,” Studenicka said. “It is now an experienced team with excellent support and leadership from officers such as Lt. Col Jeff Mark who really support us with equipment and training opportunities. We have leaders now who understand the benefits of participating in biathlon as the sport improves both a soldier’s or airman’s physical-fitness readiness and rifle marksmanship. Anacker’s silver medal is just the start – look for great things in the spring when we are competing against the best in the nation in Minnesota.”

For information on joining the team in 2008, call Studenicka at (775) 887-7250.

Like an awakening grizzly, the Nevada National Guard biathlon team came out of dormancy to capture its first silver medal thanks to Maj. Joyce Anacker’s second-place finish in the women’s sprint at the NGB Western Regional in West Yellowstone, Mont., on Dec 7.

Photo: Sgt. Anthony LaCoe

Grizzly bear image: Capt. April Conway
AWARDS • PROMOTIONS • RETIREMENTS
Moving Up and Moving On • September, October, November 2007

AWARDS

Legion of Merit

LTC Michael Iratcabal ................. JFHQ NVARNG

Meritorious Service Medal

SGT Michael S. Alcosiba ............... JFHQ NVARNG
COL Alan John Butson ................. JFHQ NVARNG
COL David E. Cantrell ................. JFHQ NVARNG
COL Michael J. Carlson ............... JFHQ NVARNG
SFC Ronald W. Demet ................. HHC 442nd Sig Bn
SSG George H. Donelson .......... 1/221st Cavalry
SFC Timothy E. Johnson ............. JFHQ NVARNG
MSG Thomas Lima ..................... NVARNG Rec/Ret
LTC Jeffrey S. Mark ................. 992nd Troop Cmd
LTC Scott C. Maylath ................. 92nd CST
SSG Mark S. McAllister .............. NVARNG Rec/Ret
SFC Heidi C. Merrill-Hernandez .... 992nd Troop Cmd
MSG Ronald T. Morse ................. 421st RTI
LTC William Rohrer ................... JFHQ NVARNG
SSG Jean K. Schlauch ................. 991st Troop Cmd
SSG Helena S. Schroeder ............. 485th MP Co
MSG Dana C. Sparkes ................. NVARNG Rec/Ret
SSG Timothy L. Wadley ............... JFHQ NVARNG
COL Craig S. Wrobleswki ............. JFHQ NVARNG

Army Commendation Medal

SGT Jessica M. Atkins .................. 1/168th MEDEVAC
SFC Maryann Calleja ................... 92nd CST
MSG Russell L. David ................ JFHQ NVARNG
SFC Teresa A. Dennington .......... NVARNG Med Det
CPT Gene K. Dieters .................. JFHQ NVARNG
SPC Alexander E. Drossulis .......... NVARNG Med Det
SGT John R. Ellis ..................... NVARNG Med Det
SFC William R. Epps ................. JFHQ NVARNG
SSG Joseph P. Feenstra ............... NVARNG Rec/Ret
SPC Nicholas B. Gerfen ............... JFHQ NVARNG
SGT Kim M. Gitinjhi .................. 92nd CST
MAJ Michael R. Glynn ................. JFHQ NVARNG
2LT Steven R. Golladay ............. 92nd CST
CPT Christy M. Hales ................. JFHQ NVARNG
CPT Derek P. Imig .................... 992nd Troop Cmd
SSG Baha M. Ishitewi ................. 92nd CST
SFC David L. Jackson ................. JFHQ NVARNG
SSG Nancy Jasso ...................... NVARNG Med Det
SGT Isabel M. Jerger ................. 72nd MP Co
SFC Joshua L. Lappin ................. NVARNG Rec/Ret
SGT James D. Marble ................. 1/189th Aviation
SSG Miranda S. McElhiney .......... 1/189th Aviation
SFC Wade A. Mendenhall .......... NVARNG Rec/Ret
SGT Terrence J. Oliveira .......... NVARNG Rec/Ret
SFC Allen R. Palmer ................. NVARNG Rec/Ret

Air Force Commendation Medal

MSgt Larry S. Balko .................. 152nd Services Flt
TSGt Gary R. Guzicki ................. 152nd Security Forces Sqdn
TSGt David A. Hill ................... 152nd Services Flt
CMSgt Thomas M. Kurkowski .... 152nd Services Flt
MSgt Patrick M. Kutschera ........ 192nd Airlift Sqdn
SMgt Michael M. Muniz .............. 152nd Services Flt

Army Achievement Medal

SPC Heather N. Ammerman .......... NVARNG Med Det
SPC Steven J. Bunch ................. HHC 442nd Sig Bn
SSG Shawn C. Christiante .......... NVARNG Rec/Ret
SFC Jeffrey R. Dooley ............... NVARNG Med Det
SFC Kreston Eaton .................... NVARNG Rec/Ret
SSG Sandra Flores .................... NVARNG Med Det
SSG Rosemarie L. Fred .............. NVARNG Rec/Ret
SSG Richard C. Gilberti II .......... NVARNG Rec/Ret
SSG Jessica A. Hana ................. 485th MP Co
SGT Autumn L. Janoss ................. HHC 442nd Sig Bn
SSG Nancy Jasso ...................... NVARNG Med Det
SGT Miles T. McGuire ............... NVARNG Rec/Ret
SSG Ivan J. Parsons ................ NVARNG Rec/Ret
SFC Patrick M. Simmons ........... NVARNG Rec/Ret
SSG Soneya L. Stevens .............. JFHQ NVARNG
SGT Richard L. Williams ........... NVARNG Rec/Ret

Air Force Achievement Medal

MSgt Norman A. Albertsen ........... 152nd Log Readiness Sqdn
MSgt Angela D. Ash .................. 152nd Communications Flt
MSgt Gregory W. Bartlett .......... 152nd Intel Sqdn
TSGt Rafael F. Cheli .......... 152nd Civil Eng Sqdn
MSgt Douglas A. Larson .......... 152nd Log Readiness Sqdn

Order of Nevada

COL Louis A. Cabrera ................ JFHQ NVARNG

Nevada Distinguished Service Medal

COL Louis A. Cabrera ................ JFHQ NVARNG
LTC William Rohrer .................. JFHQ NVARNG

Nevada State Commendation Medal

PFC Brian T. Alston ................. HHC 442nd Sig Bn
SPC Abigail Ambrecht .............. NVARNG Med Det
SPC Heather N. Ammerman .......... NVARNG Med Det
SGT Edward Benites ................. NVARNG Rec/Ret
SPC Audrey E. Bocock .............. NVARNG Med Det
SPC Julian A. Brix ................. HHT, 1/221st Cavalry
Ms. Nichole D. Castagnola ........ JFHQ NVARNG
SPC Ken Clark ..................... 1864th Transportation Co
Ms. Nicole Crathers ............... JFHQ NVARNG
SPC Lynette F. D. O'Hare ........ 150th Maint Co
SPC Kyle S. Geller .................. 72nd MP Co
SPC Oreauna M. Henry .............. NVARNG Med Det
SPC Dashawna L. Hughes .......... 593rd Transportation Co
SPC Patrick J. Johnson ............. HHT, 1/221st Cavalry
SGT Brandon K. Kellogg .......... 991st Troop Cmd
SGT Kamran Z. Khan ................. HHT, 1/221st Cavalry
SPC Joshua L. Little ................. 1/189th Aviation
Ms. Melissa L. McFieh ............. JFHQ NVARNG
SSG Crystal M. Merritt ............. JFHQ NVARNG
MSgt Ronald T. Morse ............... 421st RTI
SPC William B. Ober ....... NVARNG Med Det
SPC Robert T. Peery ............... NVARNG Med Det
SPC William Ratter ................. NVARNG Med Det
SPC Anthony A. Ralph Jr. ......... HHT, 1/221st Cavalry
CPL Rachael T. Ramirez ........... NVARNG Rec/Ret
SGT Joseph H. Ramos ............... C Co, 422nd Sig Bn
SFC Aaron A. Ray ................. HHT, 1/221st Cavalry
SSG Michael J. Roe ................. 72nd MP Co
SPC Joseph A. Rutski ............... NVARNG Med Det
SPC Joshua C. Soriano ............. 72nd MP Co
PFC James V. Stanfield ............. HHT, 1/221st Cavalry

Congratulations!
<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>SrA Anastasia E. Brown</td>
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<td>SPC Kayla J. Watford</td>
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<td>SPC Allison E. Bailey</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGT Joseph D. Young</td>
<td>VARNG Med Det</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGT Vincent M. Arthur</td>
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<td>SFC Don R. Gable Jr.</td>
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<td>SGT Kent Greymbound</td>
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<td>1SG Michelle L. Sykes</td>
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**Nevada State Safety Ribbon**

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<td>SSG William Stevenson</td>
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**Nevada Humanitarian Service Ribbon**

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<tr>
<td>2ndLt Lawrence Chappell</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSgt Rafael F. Chelli</td>
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**Nevada Overseas Deployment Ribbon**

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**Retirements**

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**Nevada Recruiting Ribbon**

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<td>TSgt Roy F. Harvey</td>
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<td>TSgt William A. Smiraglia</td>
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**References**

- SGT Curtis W. Terry . . . 240th Engineer Co
- PV1 Landre M. Torado . . . 72nd MP Co
- SGT Michelle A. Tucay . . . VARNG Med Det
- SPC Kayla J. Watford . . . VARNG Med Det
- SPC Allison E. Bailey . . . VARNG Med Det
- SGT Joseph D. Young . . . VARNG Med Det
- SGT Vincent M. Arthur . . . 485th MP Co
- SFC Don R. Gable Jr. . . . 1/189th Aviation
- SGT Kent Greymbound . . . JFHQ VARNG
- SSG Tanya L. Leonard . . . 150th Maint Co
- 1SG Michelle L. Sykes . . . C Co, 422nd Sig Bn

Winter 2008 / BATTLE BORN / 25
ENLISTMENTS (continued)

152nd Aircraft Maint Sqn
Ryan E. Tremayne
Jesse L. Macdonald
Rueben O. Montero

152nd Airlift Wing
Krista S. Drinkwine

152nd Civil Engineer Sqn
Michael P. Diaz
Brian Green
Anthony Hinen
Gabriel D. Sanders
Jeffery Mello
David J. McNally

152nd Communications Flt
Devon Whitaker

152nd Intelligence Sqn
William J. Marler
Christopher C. Lamott
Amberley Dorrell
Jonathan W. Ewers

152nd Log. Readiness Sqn
Michael L. Mathews
Rhoderick J. Estrada
Bryanna R. Richard
Brent A. Bolsta
Baron Bement
Casandra L. Frankfurt
George Bly
Geane M. Mara
Jemmy Carter
Deannara L. Torres

152nd Maintenance Sqn
Matthew S. Brothwell
Katie J. Rimbe
Amada E. Puente
Lloyd C. Bond
Erik Christensen
Mark W. Thurtle
Jeffrey S. Meissler
Keoni Antolin
Joshua Mutua
Justin C. McClelland
Sperlin Christopher

232nd Operations Sqn
James Koth
Jarrett Miner

240th Engineer Co
Blake A. Corbetta
Bronson S. Koal
Daniel C. Rubalcava
Michael D. Bell
Randy C. Laurin
Calvin D. Williams

C Co, 422nd Sig Bn
Donald W. Caldwell
Andrew A. Demars
Derik J. Deweiler
Timothy S. Holland
Michael J. Love
Ryan M. Oroto
Sarah R. Calder
Thomas G. Hockin
Rashad R. Keenan
Keith R. Spears

Det. 45 OSA
Peter D. Sheldon

HHC 442nd Sig Bn
Earl C. Bennett
Shelley J. Hargraves
David Haruza
Christopher Moreland
Stephan J. Rundell
Michael D. Salazar

HHT, 1/221st Cavalry
Eric L. Christiansen
Rafael T. Concepcion
Franklin P. Demonteverde Jr.
Michael Gaylor
Paul J. Kelly
Joseph R. Menkavesch
Charles A. Rhodes Jr.
Bobby C. Smith
Will J. Spears Jr.
Michael T. Aquino
Reynaldo Jr. Ayala
Keith J. Bernis
Jesse J. Dalton
Joshua D. Didway
Javier D. Lanz
Michael A. Loeser
William M. Patton
Austin B. Rea
Donald L. Reynolds III
Michael D. Schiemer

1 Troop, 1/221st Cavalry
Phillip M. Beam
Alexander K. Davis
Derrick P. Eadler
Carlos R. Gomez
William W. Hobbins II
Clint A. Marlow
Stephen F. Paris
Jesse M. Vallejo
Ryan M. Willis

JJHQ NVARNG
Kevin D. Cobb
Cory A. Lariviere
Jason E. Miller
Jeremiah J. Mock

K Troop, 1/221st Cavalry
Kevin J. Bishop
Adrian J. Butler
Kristopher G. Garcia
Juan D. Gonzalez
Chad D. Gritten
Keith B. Johnson Jr.
David J. Laughlin
Steven P. May
Juan P. Valdez
Nicholas A. Vannucci
Jack B. Warren III

L Troop, 1/221st Cavalry
Wade Bennett
Christopher F. George
Nicholas T. Moran
Romel C. Olindo
Alexander L. Pico

NVARNG Med Det
Nelson P. Basa
Cristina M. Borlongan
Mark V. Gomez
Scott A. Grimmet
Karen M. Hansen
John J. Holland
Richard D. Narabatte Jr. 
Lianna C. Roberts

NVARNG Rec/Ret
Sara D. Pickering

Winter 2008 / BATTLE BORN / 27
## TRAINING SCHEDULE

### MARCH 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>152 AW, 152 IS, JFHQ, 422nd SIG BN, 991st Troop CMD, 992nd Troop CMD, 421st RTI BNOC, 421st RTI Special Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Daylight Saving Time</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>72nd MP, 1664th TC NGB Biathlon Championships</td>
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### APRIL 2008

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<td>13</td>
<td>JFHQ, Reception Co., 1/221st Cav</td>
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### MAY 2008

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<th>SATURDAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>152 AW, 152 IS, JFHQ, Reception Co, 422nd SIG BN, 992nd TC, NGB Marathon</td>
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<td>MOTHER’S DAY</td>
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**Additional Notes:**
- **Military Ball – Las Vegas Hilton:**
- **NVARNG Recruiting & Retention/RSP:**
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