

After 40 years Ernie Brace awarded POW Medal, Purple Heart

Story by

Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson,
173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. -- March 28, 1973 marked the day Ernest C. Brace was released from captivity during the Vietnam Conflict after enduring an incredible seven years, ten months, and seven days as a prisoner of war, the longest held civilian POW of the conflict.

Forty years later at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Ore., Marine Lt. Col. Kevin Williams pinned on the lapel of his sport coat the POW Medal and the Purple Heart, Aug. 16, 2013.

Brace's observation after the ceremony was "better late than never," with a broad smile on his face.

In 1973 Adm. James B. Stockdale recommended Brace for The Purple Heart after he and other Vietnam

(Continued on next page)



Ernest C. Brace wears both the Purple Heart and the Prisoner of War Medal awarded him during a ceremony at the 173rd Fighter Wing, Aug. 16, 2013. The medals were awarded 40 years after his release March 28, 1973. Brace is one of very few civilians to receive this award, although he was a Marine previously, he was a civilian at the time of his capture. Brace's stint in captivity is the longest known of any civilian with a total time of 7 years, 10 months, and 7 days. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson)

173rd community partnership prog named top in National Guard

Story by **Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson, 173rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs**

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. -- Since 2011 the 173rd Fighter Wing has undertaken the Public-Public, Public-Private (P4) Partnerships initiative. The National Guard Bureau named this program the top of its kind for the entire National Guard in late August 2013. The essence of the program is finding smarter ways to integrate and share resources between the local community and military installations. Lt. Col. Lance

McCuiston, P-4 initiator and team leader, describes the program saying, "we have sought and realized ways to save money, ways to give back to our community, and ways we can mutually support one another—in short, we have forged long and lasting relationships within our community."

The program allows for better coordination between the City of Klamath Falls and the base. These

collaborative relationships paid dividends immediately.

The wing needed routine maintenance on its sewer system and the City Public Works Department routinely does this for the entire community—except at Kingsley Field. Instead, the base is normally required to undergo a lengthy bid process and then hire a contractor to come in and inspect and clean the lines.

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Klamath Falls local honored for Vietnam captivity



U. S. Marine Lt. Col. Kevin Williams pins a Prisoner of War Medal on Ernie Brace's lapel 40 years after he was released from captivity during the Vietnam Conflict, Aug. 16, 2013, at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls, Ore. Brace is one of very few civilians to receive this award, although he was a Marine previously, he was a civilian at the time of his capture, May 21, 1965. Brace's stint in captivity is the longest known of any civilian returnee with a total time of 7 years, 10 months, and 7 days. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson/Released)

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POWs returned in 1973. The award was declined and Capt. Rod Knutson, a fellow POW, re-submitted the application to the Secretary of the Navy in 2011 through U.S. Senator John McCain's office when it was finally approved.

McCain and Brace share a special bond, one forged in what they called "The Plantation" where across walls of stone they conversed using rocks and tapping out code to one another.

"Talking through the wall is like a confessional, so we know a lot about each other," Brace said with a knowing grin.

But it wasn't until a White House ceremony for released POWs that he would lay eyes on McCain for the first time. The Arizona senator was unable to attend the Kingsley Field ceremony but sent a personal letter recounting some of their years as prisoners.

"Amidst the pain and cruelty of our time together I also vividly remember our conversations," McCain wrote. "How we kept each other's spirits up during those dark days when our hope never wavered."

People from around the country filled the base auditorium to capacity and bore witness to the historic event. Members of the

audience included fellow POW Jim Bedinger who was moved into Brace's cell at the "Hanoi Hilton" as it is commonly known. Brace said he was the first American he'd laid eyes on in four-and-a-half-years of solitary confinement.

"He talked so much in the first 24 hours I was about ready to go back to solitary confinement," teased Brace as both shared a laugh. The light moment typifies Brace who, after enduring nearly eight years of torture and inhumane treatment, shook the effects

and went on to a career spanning several decades and a number of hot spots around the world, including Operation DESERT STORM.

Williams opened the ceremony by pointing out that, "these medals are the ones no one wants to get." He went on to say that Brace "is a great American, a Hero." After calling the ceremony to order he pinned Brace with both.

Brace was a Marine prior to his capture which is why the award submission was routed through the Department of the Navy and the Marines from Engineer Company Alpha in Springfield, Ore., presented the award.

Oct. 1, changes to AF Fitness Test effective

Letter by Gen. Mark A. Welsh III
U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff

Fellow Airmen:

Chief Cody and I get a lot of questions about the physical fitness test (PFT). To ensure we fully understood the issues folks were concerned about, we conducted a comprehensive review of the Fitness Program. The one thing that was crystal clear to both of us when we finished is that we have a tremendous program that has fundamentally changed the AF's overall fitness level over the past few years. So I'll tell you right up front that the PFT itself is not going to change. But even the best program can be improved upon, so we are making changes in four different areas to enhance the overall program.

The first change involves the abdominal circumference (AC) portion of the test. We use the AC measurement to assess an Airman's body composition, which is a key component of fitness. Because the AC measurement is integrated into our fitness test, DoD approved a permanent waiver to the DoD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Program, making us the only service not required to have a separate weight management program requiring annual body mass index measurements and assessments for every Airman.

One of the two concerns Chief Cody and I hear most is that there are Airmen who pass every component of the PFT except the AC, but fail the AC because they have a very large, thick body type or are very muscular. To put this in perspective, since we implemented the PFT, only 348 of ~1.3 million Airmen tested resulted in an Airman failing the AC por-



Airmen attending the NCO Academy Class 13-4 participate in group physical training at the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center, McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, March 4, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Kurt Skoglund)

tion and passing all the others with a passing composite score of 75 or higher. That's 0.03 percent...so this is an unusual occurrence. But, in the future, if an Airman fails the AC portion of the test, and passes each of the other three components, we'll measure that Airman using the Body Mass Index (BMI) taping guidance in DoD instructions. If the Airman meets the DoD BMI standard, they pass the PFT.

Chief Cody and I also hear about the "many" Airmen who have been kicked out of the Air Force for AC-only failures. The fact is that since we started the new Fitness Program, only 76 airmen have been separated from the Air Force for failing only the AC portion of the test multiple times. That equates to 0.006% of the Airmen tested. It's certainly difficult for the airmen involved, but it really doesn't happen that often.

We're making three other modifications designed to improve the program. First, we're realigning the fitness appeal process back to Wing Commanders. Second, passing stan-

dards are being adjusted for Airmen who can only test on one component of the Fitness Assessment, and third, we're changing and simplifying the walk test.

All these changes will be effective 1 October 2013, and the A1 will send detailed implementation guidance to the field shortly.

The second comment Chief Cody and I hear most frequently is that we need to rethink how we document fitness performance in performance reports. We are doing that as part of a larger effort to examine the performance report itself, along with the promotion system it supports. We'll give you the results of that study in the near future.

I believe we have DoD's best designed, best run Fitness Program, and as a result, we have a force ready for any mission our nation asks us to execute. I'm extremely proud of how far we've come with our fitness culture! Thanks for your personal commitment to staying in shape!

As always, thanks for all you do! See you in the gym!

Kingsley Fire Dept trains for every emergency

Story by
Airman 1st Class
Penny Hamilton,
173rd Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

KINGSLEY FIELD, Ore.-- Firefighters from the Kingsley Fire Department trained while on duty at the base's firehouse in Klamath Falls, Ore., July 14, 2013. The 173rd Civil Engineer Squadron members take every opportunity to perfect their skills since they have a wide range of demands to fulfill, on-base and in their community.

Most scenarios at Kingsley Field involve responding to an aircraft or the occasional structure fire, but the firefighters at Kingsley also respond to calls from Fire District 1. These calls range from car accidents to house fires, both of which are rarely encountered during a shift on-base.

This mutual aid agreement with the community allows Fire District 1 and the Kingsley Fire Department to support each other when possible. Firefighters on-base respond to calls when they are available and can provide life-saving capabilities, whether it's by responding faster, adding more manpower, or bringing special equipment.

"Here at Kingsley Field we run a very diverse set of skills because of the fact we have aircraft; we have military aircraft, we run structure fires, we take care of our base, [and] we take care of the civilian



Oregon Air National Guard firefighter Stuart Dalton, 173rd Civil Engineer Squadron, prepares to douse a house fire at a local Klamath Falls residence, May 8, 2013. Because of the close proximity of the base to the fire, Kingsley crews arrived nearly five minutes before the next responders and were able to limit damage to the garage area of the dwelling. (Photo courtesy Kingsley Field Fire Department)

airport," said Firefighter Robert Underwood. "So it benefits the community that we are [an] all around accessible, useable entity instead of multiple agencies... we do everything in one shot."

These demands call for daily training. The training, as simple as it is at times, is imperative because a firefighter's job is inherently dangerous and unpredictable. Even basic skills like handling a hose are essential to a smooth response. Every skill they practice in a safe environment and in a safe manner means faster and safer reactions in real-life situations.

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Kingsley Firefighters make a difference

Commentary by
Deputy Fire Chief Howard Owens



The 173rd Fighter Wing Fire Department is a unique fire response agency within the county. Comprised of 30 state civilian firefighters and one federal technician chief, the primary roles

are to provide fire protection for the aircraft including civilian planes at Kingsley Field and Klamath Falls Airport, provide structural protection for the facilities, and medical response for sick and injured.

Developing close ties to the community and providing assistance to the fire partners at Fire District 1, Kingsley Fire & Emergency Services respond to numerous requests for mutual aid for medical calls,

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Kingsley Firefighters training supports local community

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Once firefighters arrive on-scene, they are forced to both analyze a situation's information and respond to it simultaneously. This is when the training that is engraved into a firefighter is put to the test because there is little time to think. If actions aren't taken quickly more risk and damage can occur.

After the training, Kingsley Firefighter Jesse St. James said, "There's an old saying in the fire service, that it's the only race where the race has started before you know



you're running."

During the past year, Kingsley firefighters have responded to 155 calls, 78 of them being mutual aid events. The firefighters have to make safety at Kingsley their priority, but if their location and skills can provide the most immediate life-saving capabilities they will likely choose to respond to a mutual aid call. Fire District 1 has the same limitations, keeping the safety of their community members in mind as well. The local firefighters have some training on aircraft and Kingsley specific emergencies to better prepare them for any on base emergency they may need to support.

Mutual aid proves its worth in Klamath Falls

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motor vehicle accidents and structure fires. Being the closest Fire Department to many of the homes in the southern part of the county, Kingsley Firefighters have been the initial responding fire apparatus on several emergency responses in which 173rd Fire Department made a difference.

Recently Kingsley Fire responded on two structure fires on Old Midland road, one was early in a.m. hours when most people are sleeping, unaware of the efforts that firefighters make to save life and property. When the call came in Kingsley engine 3211 was geographically the closest to the single family home on fire. That engine arrived first to the scene. In a business where seconds matter, being able to arrive minutes before the other department is critical to

getting a good "size up", ordering resources, and implementing the Incident Command System system.

Within five minutes engine 3211 arrived on-scene and the firefighters made good fire ground decisions, conserved water and implemented the correct tactics for the type of fire. Kingsley firefighters were able to limit the fire damage to the garage area; most fires double in size within minutes. The immediate response from Kingsley helped preserve valuable belongings, personal possessions and family photos. While all fires have a loss associated with them, people often feel a sense of reassurance when they can retrieve things that have monetary or sentimental value.

The second mutual aid fire was around 1:30 a.m. Kingsley firefighters responded to a two story family dwelling, fully engulfed in flames.

The residence was not occupied, and Kingsley Firefighters quickly determined the fire was suspicious in nature. They immediately began extinguishing the fire to preserve the scene as much as possible for an investigation. Falling back to training and experience you develop instinct to remember small things like the colors of smoke and the fire, open doors or windows, unusual obstructions or burn patterns.

When the incident was over, the Operations Chief and Fire Inspector for Fire District 1 complimented the Kingsley crew on their professionalism during the fire.

At Kingsley Field Fire and Emergency Service we are always striving to improve through education, training and experience. We are ready to provide excellent service to our customers and make a difference.

Klamath Falls Veterans Memorial expanded

Commentary and photos by Maj. Tim Bruner, 173rd Civil Engineer Squadron Commander

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. -- The Klamath Falls Veteran's Memorial Committee is proud to announce the completion of phase two of the Veteran's Memorial located within Veterans Park in downtown Klamath Falls, Oregon. The memorial was originally dedicated on Veterans Day in 2007 with coordination from the 173rd Fighter Wing, the City of Klamath Falls, veteran's organizations and donations from local groups and businesses. The memorial features a pavilion, war monuments and bricks inscribed with the names of veterans. The need for an expansion became apparent in 2012 when almost 5,000 bricks had already been purchased, leaving space for less than 150 bricks.

This expansion consists of two concrete monuments adding room for approximately 2,000 additional memorial bricks. The 173rd Civil Engineers Flight oversaw the design and construction of the expansion. Construction was completed with a combination of donations and volunteer work led by members of the civil engineering flight. Multiple businesses, community organizations, and individuals from the community supplied donations. Local companies donated materials and labor, and fundraisers sold hats and t-shirts to help make this expansion a reality.

The bricks are dedicated to all United States military members regardless of where they live and whether they are living or deceased, and can be purchased for \$50 each from the Klamath Falls City Parks Division at 226 S. 5th Street, Klamath Falls, Ore.,



or by visiting <http://ci.klamath-falls.or.us/veterans-memorial-project>

Those bricks are engraved with a veteran's name, rank, service branch, and the war they served in. Under the pavilion is an interactive touch screen where visitors can read a short history of the memorial and search for a veteran by name.

Top: From left: Chief Master Sgt. Dominic Ingle, Master Sgt. Tonia Brown, Staff Sgt., Mike McCormick, Senior Master Sgt. Kenneth "KJ" Aubut, Maj. Scott Ferre, Staff Sgt. Jason Koger, 1st Lt. Joe Young, and Airman 1st Class Oscar Ayala volunteer their time and energy to help with construction of the expansion, located at the aptly named Veteran's Park in Klamath Falls, Ore.

Bottom: The new sections added will showcase approximately 2,000 bricks engraved with the names of those who have served during the past or present. The original structure accommodated 5,000 bricks and will soon be filled.

Kingsley Program 'model for DoD, USAF'

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"In this case they were allowed to contract with the city to do the work, so we cleaned and televised the lines and we also got paid for the job," Mark Willrett, Director Klamath City Public Works Department said. Base Engineer Maj. Tim Bruner says the city found leaks in the system and fixed them which has already lowered utility costs for the Air National Guard.

Another great example of this partnership paying dividends emerged when it became apparent that the runway surface and surrounding ramp areas required complete resurfacing. This project would potentially displace the military mission at significant cost. An undertaking of this magnitude would normally come with a multi-million dollar price tag, and McCuiston says that was simply out of the question, but that P-4 provided the solution.

"In 2012, the Klamath Falls Airport led efforts to resurface the runway," said Bill Hancock, Klamath Falls Airport Operations. "They accomplished this effort without affecting military or civilian flying operations—a monumental task."

The City Public Works Department was instrumental, laying concrete and asphalt, just like they do around the community saving the military and airport thousands of dollars; in addition, accomplishing the resurfacing while carrying out the flying missions saved the United States Air Force and taxpayers \$3 million dollars. Perhaps more impor-

tantly McCuiston says, the runway is in "pristine condition today and supporting an increased fighter training requirement for the Air National Guard and U.S. Air Force."

That resurfacing project happened during one of the busiest years yet at Kingsley Field when flying hours grew from 3,600 to 4,800, which Maj. Micah Lambert says is a record for the base. He went on to make the point that in the near future Kingsley

the term credit hours offered at local colleges didn't cover CCAF requirements. As an example many students took a speech course and submitted it to CCAF only to learn that they fell short by as little as one credit. This required them to take a second speech course to fulfill the requirement for one course in their CCAF. Understandably student enrollment was very low for this reason, in the local college. The partnership offered an opportunity for the base to begin working directly with the college to overcome this hurdle.

"Once points of contacts were established, we were able to put Klamath Community College in direct contact with the Community College of the Air Force and a plan was devised to provide education to our members that CCAF could accept," said Shirar.

Starting this fall KCC will offer classes, on-base, tailored to meet CCAF requirements. Shirar says this is good timing because the Air Force has recently required the degree for promotion to grades E-8 and E-9. Given the growing emphasis the Air Force places on CCAF Shirar says it wouldn't be a stretch to see a requirement for the entire NCO corps.

McCuiston credits the timeliness of implementing the P4 program with the observation that this makes significant improvement in the ability to adapt to unstable budgets, limited resources, and Department of Defense re-structuring. He says finding efficiencies is a matter of survival and working smarter. P-4 is one of the major initiatives paving the way towards Kingsley and the Oregon Air National Guard's future, he adds.



is scheduled to go higher yet potentially reaching 6,200 hours as demand for trained fighter pilots in the USAF grows rapidly.

There are many examples of the P4 program's cost savings and what proponents call win-win scenarios for the community and the base, but none may better illustrate it than the partnership Kingsley has forged with Klamath Community College.

Master Sgt. Mike Shirar, P-4 program team member, wrestled with the problem of helping guard members with earning their Community College of the Air Force degree when



1st Air Force Commander visits 173rd

U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. William H. Etter, Commander First Air Force, (third from left) pays his first visit to the 173rd Fighter Wing after assuming his new command, Aug. 6, 2013. From left: Brig. Gen. Michael Stencel, Assistant Adjutant General-Air, Col. Jeremy Baenen, 173rd Fighter Wing commander, Etter, Brig. Gen. Steven Gregg, Oregon Air National Guard commander, stand for a photo following a briefing on Kingsley Field's mission and capabilities, namely that of training F-15C fighter pilots. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Penny Hamilton)

Credibility: "what does it mean to you?"

Commentary by
Col. P. Eric Swanson,
173rd Medical Group Commander

Fellow Guardsman:

These days, credibility is a hot topic. From earning it, keeping it, gaining it and losing it, everyone seems to have an opinion on their personal credibility.

Credibility is especially important for government and public employees, who are held to higher standards.

The public's expectation of government employees is high whether we are on the clock or off.

Like it or not, our actions, our friends, our words, and our social media posts can often affect our workplace credibility.

Government officials and their staff are in the public eye and can be scrutinized for behaviors on their per-

sonal time as well as work time. Any negative action by employees can affect the reputation of our organizations.

We can increase our credibility by:

1. Following through with our commitments and deadlines. By completing projects on time, we become respectful and successful in our careers.

2. Say what you mean and mean what you say. It is important to be truthful in all of our interactions. False statements and exaggerations may make a story more entertaining, but if we can't be taken seriously, our reputation will suffer.

3. Admit our mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. It is how we learn from and rectify our mistakes that is important.

4. Evaluate constructive criti-

cisms. Although hearing critiques from our supervisors can sometimes be difficult, our supervisors are there to help us to succeed. Remember: Your success is their success.

5. Be aware of how your actions and comments may be perceived. In today's electronic age, any activity we participate in outside of our homes may be recorded. Gone are the days when we would hope everyone will forget what we did last night. Remember the expression: "Would you want last night's activities on the front page of the paper?"

In these times when all government is viewed as being untrustworthy, we must be mindful that the organization's reputation is affected by our individual actions.

We need the public to recognize that we are honorable employees.

Let's put our best boot forward!

Pilot for a day program hosts local youths

Kaden Rarrick (front) and Courtney Tucker (behind), children enrolled in the mentorship program with Citizens for Safe Schools, wait for an F-15 to take off in Klamath Falls, Ore., Aug 8, 2013. Kingsley hosts a "Pilot for a Day" program where at-risk children are escorted by an F-15 pilot to experience a pilot's daily routine. The children were escorted by Oregon Air National Guard Maj. Jeremy Wieder, a 114th Fighter Squadron pilot. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Penny Hamilton)



WARRIOR SPOTLIGHT

Staff Sgt. Justin Love *173rd Maintenance Squadron* *Command Support Staff*

Staff Sgt. Justin Love joined the 173rd Fighter Wing in 2008 as a traditional guardsman as a member of finance. In 2008, he became a full-time member at Kingsley Field as a member of the maintenance squadron command support staff. In early 2002 Love began his military career at Seymour Johnson AFB, working on egress systems, joining six months after the events of 9/11. Love has received three awards for 2012: Airman of the Year Category II, and a wing and group level Chester E. McCarthy Award. The Chester E. McCarthy award is given to the most valuable person in a given career field. The records and filing properly handled by Love ensure the daily operations of the Maintenance Squadron. Love supports crucial members helping Team Kingsley fulfill their mission.



173rd FW



Fall Family Day

Kick off the Fall Family Day with lunch at 11
Events will begin at Noon and last until 3pm

Enjoy the events:

Hay Ride

Bounce House

Obstacle Course

Games

Fire Trucks

and More!



October 6th

For more information contact Family Readiness at:
885-6112 or 885-6238

Announcements



New Members Welcome to Kingsley Field!

Maj Scott J. Ferre	SrA Richard Sharber Jr.
SSgt Danielle Carpenter	SrA Wyatt H. Stinnett
SrA Sarah M. Hunt	A1C Katlyn P. Brown
SrA Tiffany L. Mccollam	

Recent Promotions!

LtCol John P. Prigmore	TSgt David Evinger
MSgt Anthony J. Clark	TSgt Joel C. Scott
MSgt Elizabeth Flogerzi	SSgt David J. Butler
MSgt Barbara M. Uhlig	SSgt Tamera L. Shaw
TSgt Darren Bennett	SSgt Niccoli Zalunardo
TSgt Brandon S. Dye	SrA Kory B. Estes
TSgt Steven Meng II	SrA Skyler T. Zeman

Free Friday Night Movies!!!



Join us every Friday,
7:00pm at the Kingsley
theater for free movies

*Volunteers are needed to keep this
program going. Please contact the
Public Affairs office at x5-6677 if you
would like to volunteer or learn more
about the Friday Night Movies.*

Movies subject to change or cancellation without notice.



Protestant and Catholic Services Sunday, July 14

Protestant Service: 7:30 a.m. Family
Readiness Area

Catholic Service: 7:30 a.m. LRS conference
room

Retiree Corner

Retirees and their families who need information or assistance with a "Retiree Issue" please contact the Oregon National Guard Retiree Service Office. (Air & Army)
Located at: Room 231, Anderson Readiness Center
3225 State Street, Salem OR 97309
Office Hours: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM Every Thursday
Phone: (503) 584-2891
E-mail: NGORJ1.RSO@ng.army.mil
Web site: www.orng-smfs.org

**173d Fighter Wing SARC,
Lt Col Martin Balakas
Call: (541) 885-6198 or
(541) 205-2305**

**You
are
not
alone**





Water Survival Training 2013





Oregon's only living Medal of Honor recipient Robert D. Maxwell, was a distinguished guest at a ceremony for Ernie Brace awarding him the Prisoner of War Medal and the Purple Heart at Kingsley Field, Klamath Falls, Ore., Aug. 16, 2013. Maxwell was awarded Medal of Honor May 12, 1945, at the Camp Carson Convalescent Hospital in Colorado where he was recovering from shrapnel wounds incurred from jumping on a grenade, an act that saved his fellow Soldiers and are immortalized on his Medal of Honor citation. At 92-years-of-age he still makes appearances around the state and Nation. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jefferson Thompson)

The views expressed, stated or implied in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Department of Defense, the U.S. Air Force or the Oregon Air National Guard. Circulation: 1,000. All photographs are U.S. Air Force or Air National Guard photographs unless otherwise indicated. Story submissions, letters to the editor or other comments are encouraged and may be directed to:



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