



# the AVIATOR

telling the Soldiers' story

**Soldiers  
and  
Family**



**Past  
and  
Present**





**“I am proud to work with this great team of men and women who stepped up and are representing their brigade and their state at Warfighter this month.**

**Keep up the good fight, and learn everything you can about your job and the jobs of your fellow Soldiers. Put out 100%, and we will have a story we can be proud of.”**

**Col. Jeffrey Holliday,  
Commanding**



**Stories and layout by  
Sgt. Ian M. Kummer**

**Copy-editing by  
Sgt. Yvette Fernandez**







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40th CAB Unit address:  
5575 E Airways Blvd,  
Fresno California, 93727







Specialist Dustin Sullivan (left) rides with his fellow Soldiers in their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to a Bambi bucket training mission over Folsom Lake in Sacramento, California. (Photo Credit: Sgt. Ian M. Kummer)

## Task Force Medevac Soldier prepares for wildfire season

Story by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

What started as a childhood fancy has grown into a career ambition that has propelled a Soldier around the world.

California Army National Guard Spc. Dustin Sullivan, a crew chief with the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade's Task Force Medevac, has always wanted to fly. If he plays his cards right, he may soon get to do just that. But for the time being, there are other challenges ahead of him in his service to his community, state and country.

The native of Roseville, California, joined his teammates aboard a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at Folsom Lake in Sacramento on April 2 to conduct a training exercise with a Bambi bucket. The bucket allows a helicopter and its crew to be

critical assets in fighting the wildfires that rage across the dry brush and forests of California summer after summer.

High winds and the added weight of the bucket filled with hundreds of gallons of water make the flight a considerably more difficult and hazardous one than usual.

Because of these added challenges, California Guard crews get as much training with Bambi buckets as they possibly can before the start of the wildfire season each year.

Sullivan and the other Soldiers in Task Force Medevac are no strangers to intense training. The task force provides medical and airlift capabilities that could prove critical in combat missions overseas, or during emergencies within the continental United States, such as natural disasters.

Regardless of the mission, the task force members must be able to work together effectively.

"The medics and crew chiefs cross train," Sullivan said. "We have to help each other in the back."

Though every Task Force Medevac Soldier needs to be proficient in his assigned tasks, Sullivan quickly distinguished himself as among the best, both at his full-time job as a federal technician and during his drill weekends with the California Guard. His hard work and dedication gained the notice of his supervisors, who offered him a chance to compete to be a battalion Soldier of the Year in February.

Sullivan passed with flying colors. He said the experience of being scrutinized by a board of senior leaders helped him identify areas where he could use improvement.

"There's a lot of things I didn't know," Sullivan said. "But I was confident, which is what they [the board members] were looking for."

These lessons may prove valuable for Sullivan in the near future, as he is currently going through the highly-competitive process of applying to be a warrant officer. This is a big step in his long-term goal to become a pilot.

To be considered as a warrant officer candidate, a Soldier must first spend years building skills in that career field, proving his





worth both as an individual worker and as a leader.

Sullivan first enlisted in the Army in 2009 and was stationed with the 3rd Infantry Division in Savannah, Georgia. During his time as an active duty Soldier, Sullivan also served for a year in South Korea with the 2nd Infantry Division. Six months after the end of his enlistment in 2013, Sullivan signed up in the California Guard and joined the ranks of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, a contingent of Task Force Medevac.

"[Sullivan] is a hard worker, and he lives up to the Army values," said Sgt. David Calderon, another crew chief in Task Force Medevac. "He's also what we would call a PT stud," referring to Sullivan's strength at physical training, or PT, and his consistently high scores in the Army Physical Fitness Test.

With hard work and dedication, the Guard can provide an affordable and fulfilling way to become a licensed pilot. Sullivan plans to apply at the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical College to further his education in his chosen craft.

"I wanted to be a pilot as long as I could remember," Sullivan said. "That's what I told the recruiter when I first went into the office, and this is how he told me I could do it."

The California National Guard currently has a critical need for warrant officers, especially in the following MOS fields:

915A – Automotive Maintenance Warrant Officer

255A – Information Services Technician

255N – Network Management Technician

If you are interested in becoming a warrant officer, call Northern California Warrant Officer Strength Manager Chief Warrant Officer Illeya Ringo at 916-862-3034, [illeya.c.ringo.mil@mail.mil](mailto:illeya.c.ringo.mil@mail.mil); or Southern California Warrant Officer Strength Manager CW2 Edward Ortega at 562-936-1767, [eduardo.ortega.mil@mail.mil](mailto:eduardo.ortega.mil@mail.mil).

For the warrant officer feeder MOS list, visit: [www.usarec.army.mil/hq/warrant/WOgeninfo\\_mos.shtml](http://www.usarec.army.mil/hq/warrant/WOgeninfo_mos.shtml).



# CAB in Review



TOP LEFT: Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, deputy commanding general for U.S. Forces-Iraq, congratulates Pfc. Corey Davis after pinning him with an Air Medal on Aug. 11 at Camp Taji, Iraq. (Photo credit: Spc. Swatts) MIDDLE RIGHT: Task Force Medevac pilots and crew chiefs received wildfire flight training with Chief Warrant Officer Bobby Brockly and Sergeant 1st Class Thomas Gifford at Folsom Lake, Sacramento, April 2, 2015. California Guard Soldiers, aircraft and other elements are expected to play a key role in this year's wildfire season. (Photo credit: Sgt. Ian M. Kummer) BOTTOM RIGHT: An American flag is lowered before being folded on COS Kalsu on May 25 in honor of Specialist Daniel Unger, a California Army National Guard soldier who died seven years ago during Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Photo credit: Spc. Swatts) ABOVE: aviation crews flew their helicopters around Ione, California, April 11-12, 2015, during CAL FIRE's seasonal wildland firefighting training. (Photo credit: Sgt. Ian M. Kummer)

RIGHT PAGE: Spc. Jason Frost, an air mission request processor with the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade stationed at Camp Taji, Iraq, looks at pictures of his wife, Brisa, and daughter, Margaret, sent from home, Fresno, California on June 28, 2011. (Photo credit: Spc. Swatts)









## Band-aids, beans and bullets: Supply troops in action

Story by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

“Management of many is the same as management of a few men, it is a matter of organization.”

These words were written by Sun Tzu, the legendary Chinese general who lived and fought more than 2,500 years ago. But perhaps no other passage could so succinctly describe the basis of the United States Army – a fighting force comprised of more than a million men and women participating in humanitarian actions, wars and peacekeeping operations around the globe. Yet this huge organization is unified as a command from the secretary of the army in the Pentagon all the way down to four-man fire teams kicking down doors.

Proper management and information flow is important for any component of the Army, but perhaps no more so than in the supply chain. If the supply personnel make a mistake, the unit may quickly face disaster. The Soldiers run out of water and use up their medical equipment. The vehicles run out of fuel and are unable to receive adequate replacement parts. A battle plan is only as good as the supply specialists’ ability to support it.

This month the California Army National Guard’s 40th Combat Aviation Brigade S-4 shop put this command and control doctrine to the test in full-scale simulated combined-arms operation participating with the 36th Infantry Division during the Warfighter Exercise 15-5 at Fort Hood, Texas. This training event is one of the key learning experiences for the brigade command and staff members in the tactical operations center (TOC)

before the unit’s scheduled deployment to Kuwait later this year.

During the exercise, supply Soldiers who previously only had experience working for their respective companies had the chance to learn how to support an entire brigade.

“A lot of this is foreign to me, I’m definitely broadening my horizons here,” said Spc. Sheila Medina, a supply specialist from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, 40th CAB.

Medina, a Los Angeles native currently living in Baldwin Park, Calif., has served in the California Guard for nearly six years and is well versed in her job as a supply specialist. But the warfighter exercise gave Medina and other Soldiers like her of the 40th who had not worked in the brigade TOC before an opportunity to continuously and personally engage with the most senior members in the unit.

“I’ve never seen so many [senior leaders] before – it’s not too often you can see your command sergeant major walking around nonchalantly talking to everyone,” Medina said. “He’s taking the time out of his day to talk to all the Soldiers and get to know them better.”

Seasoned Soldiers in the S-4 quickly brought their new teammates up to speed.

Continued next page

Band-aids continued.



# JAG Soldiers prepare troops before mission to Kuwait

Story by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

Want to give a Soldier peace of mind? Bring him to the legal experts of the Judge Advocate General (JAG). Deployed troops have enough to worry about and should be fully focused on the mission ahead of them, not legal troubles at home.

The JAG provides Soldiers a unique ability to discuss and hopefully solve almost any urgent court and financial situation facing them before a deployment – like for example a child support case or a landlord dispute. The JAG Soldiers can also assist troops in routine preventive measures to take before deploying, such as assigning a family member power of attorney or establishing child visitation rights with a former spouse.

Soldiers from the California Army National Guard's 40th Combat Aviation Brigade kicked off a full-scale simulated combined-arms operation as a part of the 36th Infantry Division during the Warfighter Exercise 15-5 at Fort Hood, Texas, on June 4. As more than a hundred uniformed men and women worked tirelessly around the clock to perfect their battle drills, the assigned legal counselors assumed their positions in the headquarters tent, as they would in the 40th's scheduled deployment to Kuwait later this year.

The JAG is tasked with providing the commander and the other staff sections with crucial guidance on a wide range of uncertainties facing the unit ranging from discipline of a Soldier who committed a minor infraction, or even the rights of an enemy prisoner of war. The brigade commander is ultimately responsible for any legal mistakes made under his command, making the JAG officer and his section a valuable source of advice in just about any combat mission.

"The other staff sections already know what they're doing, JAG is the sanity check," said Cpt. Erik Deakyne, a JAG officer assigned to Headquarters



and Headquarters Company, 40th CAB, in Fresno, Calif.

Deakyne, a Tom's River, N. J., native, graduated with a Juris Doctor from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, in Sacramento, giving him a skill-set unlike any other in the commander's special and personal staff.

"[The other unit members] are not legally trained, so I might see something they don't," Deakyne said. "I'm here to help the commander make sure the mission is within the law."

When it comes to counseling Soldiers seeking legal advice, the JAG officer is not alone in the fight. Sgt. Debora Martinez, a paralegal specialist assigned to HHC, 40th CAB, brings a whole different flavor to the JAG. As an enlisted Soldier, this Riverside, Calif., native often appears more approachable to junior Soldiers than a commissioned officer. It is no accident that a paralegal specialist like Martinez is usually the first JAG section member a Soldier will meet.

"Soldiers often come in here scared at first, but there won't be any reprisal from seeking advice," Martinez said. "We are here to make Soldiers' lives easier."

As a well-traveled mother of two and student of Argosy University in Ontario, Calif., Martinez brings a wide range of experiences and knowledge of her own to the table.

Continued next page





JAG Soldiers continued:

"Come back to talk to us as many times as you would like, and we'll help you," Martinez said.

Martinez advises all Soldiers with legal worries to use proper caution when sharing the details of their individual cases, as an overheard conversation could be used against the Soldier. Also not every JAG officer is the same, they each have a unique set of skills and experiences. One particular officer might be the best choice for a certain Soldier's circumstances.

"Don't tell everyone your information," Martinez said. "Come to me first and I'll set you up with the best person for your needs."

"S-4 is a management level of supply," said Thailand native and Fresno resident Sgt. Chong Vang, the S-4 assistant noncommissioned officer. Vang has worked in the S-4 for more than three years, and before being scheduled for deployment took classes in supply chain management at Ashford University.

The S-4 Soldiers continue to learn more every day, and look forward to successfully completing this exercise.

"This is awesome training for the deployment, it gives us a taste of how we would work and live," Medina said.







**A collection of photos taken of the CAB Soldiers and their helicopters throughout their deployment to Operation New Dawn in Iraq back in 2011. Many of these veterans are still in the unit today.**





# Soldiers on the Street

Why did you join the National Guard?

Word from the troops fighting the good fight at Fort Hood

I come from a family of military or corrections. I chose military. It has been the best choice so far.

Spc. Patrick Robinson,  
human resources  
specialist  
HHC, 1-140th



I wanted to belong and be part of the community. I was always a tomboy as a kid, I thought it would be cool.

Sgt. Dalila Rosales,  
automated  
logistics  
specialist  
HHC, 40th CAB



I was in fifth grade when the towers went down. Me and one of my buddies swore into the Guard May 17, 2008.

-Spc. Robert Rodriguez, Battle NCO,  
HHC, 40th CAB

I joined to serve my country.

-Staff Sgt. Charles Young, Geo-  
spacial engineer, HHC, 40th  
CAB







## CAB Warriors go back to the basics

by Sgt. Ian M. Kummer

The California Army National Guard boasts hard-working men and women from many walks of life serving in roles ranging from infantrymen and truck drivers to aviation crew members and administrative clerks. But regardless of job, every Soldier who deploys overseas needs to be trained and prepared for combat.

With this principle in mind, Soldiers from the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade trained at Camp Roberts April 13-17 in preparation for their scheduled deployment to Kuwait later this year.

"The training was really fun, and the instructors knew what they were talking about," said Spc. Natalia Sanchez, a Fresno native working as a supply specialist at the 40th CAB. "Thumbs

up to all of them for being so professional."

The five days of training encompassed a variety of skills needed in a combat environment ranging from land navigation to convoy operations and vehicle rollover training. None of these Soldiers are infantrymen, but they still must be prepared for the uncertainties that accompany any mission overseas.

"Due to mission requirements on the units, infantry skills often get pushed to the back burner – it's no fault of their own, just the nature of the beast," said Staff Sgt. Jason Marshall, a former Marine marksmanship instructor currently with the Los Alamitos training detachment. "That is where we, the trainers and instructors, step in."

New Soldiers who haven't deployed before enjoyed the experience, but Marshall and the other instructors strived to make

the daily exercises valuable for their more experienced students too.

"Does the training help Soldiers who have deployed before – the short answer is yes," Marshall said. "The trick is to present material that is not only fresh, but relevant to their mission."

These Soldiers, regardless of previous experience, were presented with a fresh perspective on basic Soldiering skills – the foundation of every warfighter's deployment preparation regardless of the exact mission they believe they will be performing.

"Some of these units get reassigned to do missions they were not expecting," Marshall said. "For instance a recent unit swore that they wouldn't be doing convoy operations. "Well guess what: they are."



