California State Auditor

BUREAU OF STATE AUDITS

California National Guard:

To Better Respond to State Emergencies and Disasters, It Can Improve Its Aviation Maintenance and Its Processes of Preparing for and Assessing State Missions

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February 14, 2002 2001-111.2

The Governor of California
President pro Tempore of the Senate
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor and Legislative Leaders:

As requested by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, the Bureau of State Audits presents its audit report concerning the California National Guard's (Guard) readiness to respond to a natural disaster, civil disturbance, armed conflict, or other emergency.

This report concludes that delays in receiving helicopter parts and a shortage of staff contribute to high percentages of grounded helicopters that may impair the California Army National Guard's (Army Guard) ability to respond to the Office of Emergency Services' (OES) requests for assistance in state emergencies and disasters. Further, because the Army Guard lacks an effective process to report only eligible troops to the U.S. Department of the Army, it may have overstated its personnel readiness levels, making it appear as though some units are more ready for war or other federal duties than they are. Finally, the U.S. Air Force's use of the California Air National Guard (Air Guard) as part of its total force to support worldwide expeditions affects the Air Guard's ability to respond to state missions.

We also found that the Guard does not track who attends critical disaster preparedness training and cannot ensure that all staff receive the training they need to work most effectively in an emergency. Furthermore, although required by the National Guard Bureau, the Guard does not have a process for annual reviews and updates of its plans for various types of emergencies such as fires, floods, and earthquakes. Finally, the Guard may not always learn from its previous mistakes because it lacks a process to ensure it implements corrective action from internal assessment reports.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Howle

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State Auditor

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SUMMARY

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The California National Guard (Guard) can improve its aviation maintenance and its process to prepare for and assess state missions:

- ☑ *The Army Guard's ability to perform state missions may be compromised by delays in receiving helicopter parts and a shortage of qualified aircraft mechanics.*
- ☑ *The Army Guard does not ensure that personnel readiness reports exclude ineligible troops; however, because the Office of Emergency Services typically does not request full troop strength, the Army Guard's personnel readiness has no bearing on its ability to assist the State.*
- ☑ *The Guard needs to make certain that personnel in its Joint Operations Center who coordinate the Guard's state mission response receive requisite training.*
- ☑ *The Guard does not annually review and update its various emergency plans nor ensure that it implements recommendations from past mission assessments.*

RESULTS IN BRIEF

Comprised of the Army National Guard (Army Guard) and the Air National Guard (Air Guard), the California National Guard (Guard) has a primary duty to mobilize for combat and peacekeeping missions as directed by the president of the United States. When not active in federal service, the Guard responds to requests from the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) to aid local governments across the State in fighting wildfires, controlling floods, and rescuing people, and to help maintain civil order during earthquakes, riots, and other disruptions of normal life. The Army Guard has come to the aid of California communities by responding to 137 state emergencies in the past three years. In three recent flood seasons, the Army Guard worked almost 30,000 man-days evacuating people from flooded areas, patrolling levees, and providing other necessary services. Last year, the Army Guard fought eight major fires by dropping about 2.6 million gallons of water, the largest total drop in a single year. Supporting civil authorities in terrorism prevention since last September, the Army Guard is now stationed at major airports and bridges.

Despite its response record, the Army Guard has a deficiency that could limit its ability to respond to an OES request for emergency help. Most of the Army Guard's state missions require helicopter support, and the three Army Guard units that most often respond to the OES have a combined fleet of 29 UH-60 and CH-47 helicopters. Unfortunately, the units' ability to respond to state disasters and emergencies may be compromised by a lack of timely maintenance caused by delays in receiving parts and a shortage of qualified aircraft mechanics.

The Air Guard also responds to state missions, frequently using the 129th Medical Squadron. The Air Guard reports high federal readiness, but because the 129th Medical Squadron is sometimes federally deployed, it is not always available to the State. Also, because the Army Guard does not ensure that units exclude ineligible troops from reports of personnel readiness, some of its units overstate their troop strength. Further, the Guard's Joint Operations Center (operations center) needs to develop a process

to ensure that all its staff members receive requisite training in military response to civil authorities. Finally, the Guard needs to make sure it annually reviews and updates its plans for various emergencies and implements recommendations from reports on previous missions.

In December 2001 the Army Guard reported that 17 of its 29 helicopters were inoperable, waiting for maintenance or parts for more than 15 days. When the OES asks the Army Guard for state emergency assistance, grounded helicopters are not available to do the job. The Guard says low percentages of operational aircraft are caused by a variety of factors, such as delays in receiving parts and a shortage of staff to perform maintenance. Many helicopters are grounded while waiting for shock absorbers, engines, and other parts. In December 2001 the three Army Guard units reported having to wait more than four months for about 20 percent of the total parts on order, with some delays exceeding a year. Further, the three units report a major shortage of qualified aircraft mechanics, with as much as 50 percent of two units' maintenance staff not formally trained to work on UH-60 helicopters. Causes of this shortage include a lack of space in federal maintenance training programs and the use of full-time aircraft mechanics as members of helicopter crews in fire-fighting missions.

Of the 37 state missions the Air Guard has responded to in the past three years, its 129th Medical Squadron performed roughly 50 percent. This unit often responds to OES requests for search and rescue missions because the squadron's HH-60 helicopters have advanced navigation and communication technology. In November 2000 the Air Guard reported that the majority of its units, including the 129th Medical Squadron, met their federal readiness goals. However, the 129th Medical Squadron also works closely with the U.S. Air Force and while on federal deployments, is not available to conduct critical search and rescue operations. To mitigate any impact the 129th Medical Squadron's deployment may have on the State, the Guard has a process to notify the OES of deployments, allowing the OES time to arrange for other search and rescue assistance.

The Guard's data on readiness ratings for federal action are largely classified and thus unavailable for this audit report. However, the Army Guard lacks an effective process to ensure that units include only eligible troops in their quarterly Unit Status Reports (USRs), which indicate personnel readiness. We found that the three Army Guard units we reviewed erroneously

included at least 21 total soldiers in their October 2001 USRs. The three units reported as available for duty, soldiers who were not deployable because they were inactive, absent without leave (AWOL), discharged, or pending discharge. Extending the error rate of 3.8 percent to all its reporting units, we found that the Army Guard may have incorrectly included more than 420 of its roughly 11,000 soldiers in its October 2001 USRs. Such reporting misrepresents the Army Guard's troop strength, giving a false picture of how ready it is for federal mobilization in wartime. However, the Army Guard's personnel readiness has minimal bearing on its ability to assist the State, because the OES typically does not request full troop strength. Also, the Guard's headquarters has no process to use data in its personnel office to validate the accuracy of USR personnel data for units, and at least one unit in the 40th Infantry Division (40th ID) did not get clear instructions on how to report ineligible soldiers in the USR.

The Guard typically coordinates its response to OES requests from the operations center in its Sacramento headquarters. Although it provides staff with opportunities for training on its operating procedures and the Response Information Management System and offers courses through state and national institutes, the operations center does not track who attends any of these courses. Without such a tracking system, the operations center cannot ensure that all its personnel receive the training they need to work most effectively in an emergency. Further, although some staff participate in premission activities, such as monitoring television news, the operations center has not included these activities in its Standard Operating Procedures manual (SOP manual). Consequently, some operations center employees may overlook critical information that could help the Guard anticipate mission requirements.

The Guard also lacks a process for consistent reviews and updates of its plans for various types of emergencies, such as wildfires, floods, and earthquakes. Although the National Guard Bureau requires an annual review, the Guard reviewed and updated only 3 of its 13 plans last year and has not reviewed the other 10 plans in up to 10 years. Without an emergency plan review process, the Guard cannot ensure that its disaster response plans reflect current conditions and resources. Finally, the operations center has no process to ensure that it implements recommendations from its After Action Reports (AARs), which the operations center prepares to evaluate missions, identify problems, and make suggestions

to improve performance. We reviewed AARs relating to various types of large-scale state emergencies that occurred between 1992 and 2001. Though the operations center did address a weakness in its asset-tracking process, the steps it took to correct this weakness were not timely. Lacking a process to guarantee it implements appropriate AAR recommendations promptly, the Guard cannot ensure that it learns from its experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To help improve its percentage of operational aircraft, the Army Guard should do the following:

- Improve its data tracking and collection to determine why helicopters are not operational and then act to correct the problems.
- Reassess the feasibility of distance learning opportunities for its maintenance personnel.
- Determine how frequently it uses its full-time flight facility personnel to respond to fire-fighting missions and set a standard that will not negatively affect the Army Guard's ability to meet helicopter maintenance demands.

To strengthen its process for personnel reporting through USRs, the Army Guard should do the following:

- Instruct the 40th ID and the personnel office to work together during the USR process to ensure that units in the 40th ID report accurate personnel data.
- Train appropriate staff in how to complete the USR.
- Strengthen its USR validation procedures to ensure that units adhere to U.S. Army regulations when they report USR data to the U.S. Army.

To strengthen its response to state missions, the Guard should do the following:

- Develop a system to continually identify requisite training for its operations center staff by March 31, 2002.
- Ensure that operations center staff are trained in providing military support to civil authorities to improve their response to state missions.

- Establish and maintain a system to track the training activities that operations center staff attend by March 31, 2002.
- Include premission activities in the operations center's SOP manual by June 30, 2002.
- Implement a system to ensure an annual review and update of state emergency plans, and review all state emergency plans by June 30, 2002.
- Establish a process to ensure action on AAR recommendations.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Guard concurs with our findings and recommendations. It has already begun implementing many of the recommendations. ■

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The California National Guard (Guard), composed of the Army National Guard (Army Guard) and the Air National Guard (Air Guard), has roughly 23,000 members at 118 armories and 10 air bases and stations throughout the State. A complex organization serving both the federal government and the State, the Guard's primary responsibility is to mobilize its units for combat and peacekeeping missions at the direction of the president of the United States. Its federal mission governs the Guard's organization, operation (including equipment), training requirements, and the number and size of its units. When the Guard is not in active federal service, the governor can call it to active state duty in response to natural or man-made disasters or emergencies such as wildfires, floods, earthquakes, or riots. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates the State's response to emergencies and disasters. This response is based on the State's agreement with all 58 counties and most cities to assist local governments in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. When a disaster or emergency strikes, local governments such as cities, counties, and special districts must immediately activate their emergency response plans. Then, if the situation escalates beyond their ability to control, the local governments can submit a formal request for assistance to the OES. The OES has statutory authority to call on state agencies to help provide support. The Guard, with its expertise, is one of the agencies the OES most often asks to assist with emergencies. As a response agency, the Guard typically does not deploy its units until after it receives OES' request for assistance. If a disaster or emergency escalates beyond the State's ability to control, the OES will request additional assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Guard's Role in Providing Military Support to Civil Authorities

National Guard Bureau regulations specify that the Guard does the following:

- Normally responds when a severe and widespread situation is beyond the capacity of local and state governments and civil resources have been exhausted.
- Provides support that is not in competition with private enterprise or the civilian labor force.
- Normally uses its resources to supplement civil resources needed for humanitarian relief or to protect property.
- Limits its assistance to tasks it can perform more effectively or efficiently than other agencies.
- Terminates support to civil authorities as soon as possible after those authorities are capable of handling the emergency.

The Guard and other related programs comprise the State's Military Department. The adjutant general, a gubernatorial appointee, manages the Military Department and serves as commander of

the Guard. As Figure 1 on page 9 shows, the Military Department consists of three divisions: joint staff, Army, and Air. Added in July 1999, the joint staff division supports the Guard by, among other things, developing and implementing policies and procedures. Also, the joint staff division includes Plans, Operations, and Security, under which the Joint Operations Center (operations center) coordinates the Guard's response during an emergency mission. The Army division issues directives and develops long-range plans and programs to train and equip the Army Guard to augment the U.S. Army in times of war or national emergency. The Air division develops and implements plans for using Air Guard resources during state emergencies and federal mobilization. (See Appendix A for a more detailed description of the Army and Air Guard.)

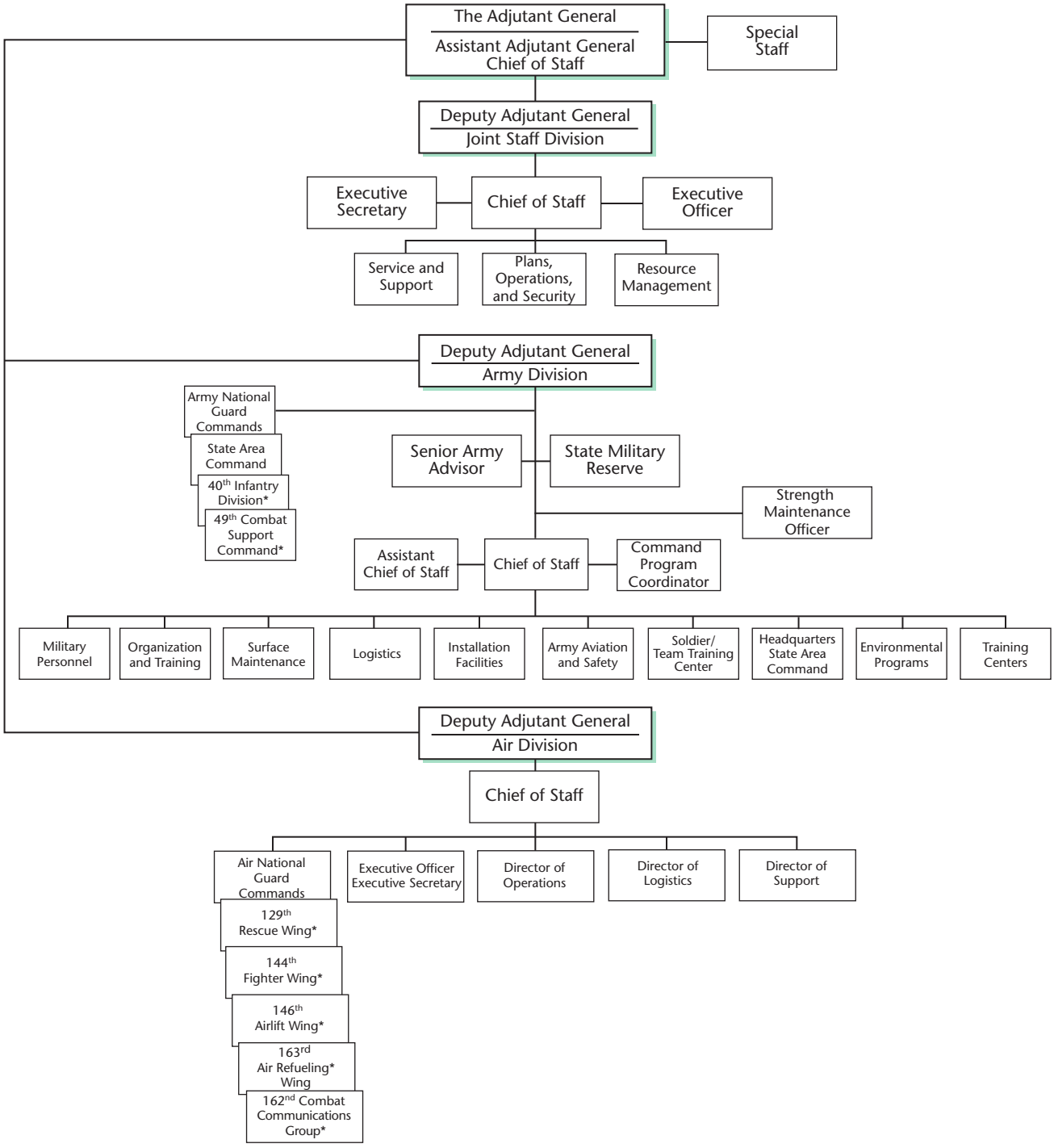
STATE MISSIONS

The National Guard Bureau (NGB) at the Pentagon is a joint bureau of the departments of the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force. The NGB's primary purpose is to acquire, manage, and distribute Army and Air Guard resources such as funding and equipment. In addition, the NGB develops and administers policies and programs and acts as a liaison between National Guard organizations and the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force. The NGB also has overall responsibility for establishing guidance and procedures for the Guard's military support to civil authorities.

The Guard reports that since California has a propensity for disasters and emergencies, it is the most tasked guard force in the nation. During the 1996, 1997, and 1998 flood seasons, the Guard worked almost 30,000 man-days patrolling levees, evacuating affected areas, and removing debris. Its 2001 missions included fighting eight major wildfires by dropping roughly 2.6 million gallons of water, the largest total drop in a single year. Since last September's terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Guard has been involved in terrorism response and prevention, supporting civil law enforcement authorities at 28 airports throughout the State, and assisting the California Highway Patrol with security at four major bridges.

FIGURE 1

Organization Chart for the Military Department's Office of the Adjutant General



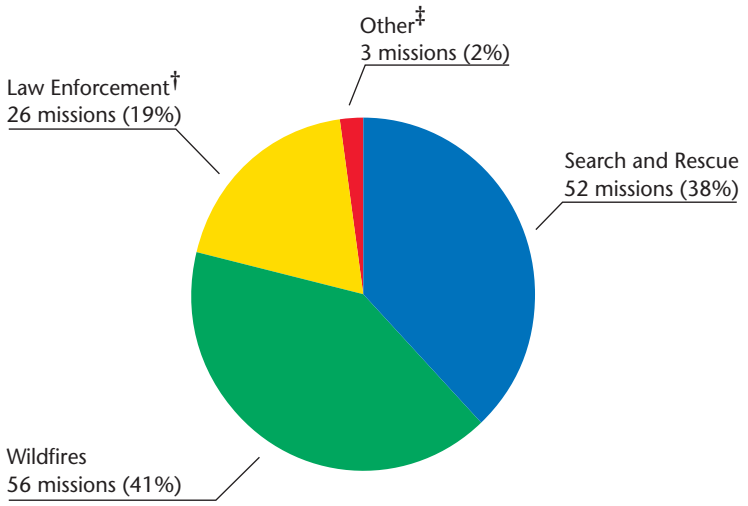
Source: California National Guard.

*For more detailed information, see Appendix A.

As Figure 2 shows, for the period from January 1999 through December 2001, the Army Guard responded to 137 state emergencies, the majority being wildfires and search and rescue missions. Roughly 90 percent of those state missions required aviation support, so the Army Guard primarily used 3 units of its total 66 units, that have helicopters.

FIGURE 2

Types of Army Guard State Missions,*
January 1999 Through December 2001



Source: California National Guard Mission Data Capture and Response Information Management System Database.

* The Air Guard also responded to 12 of these missions.

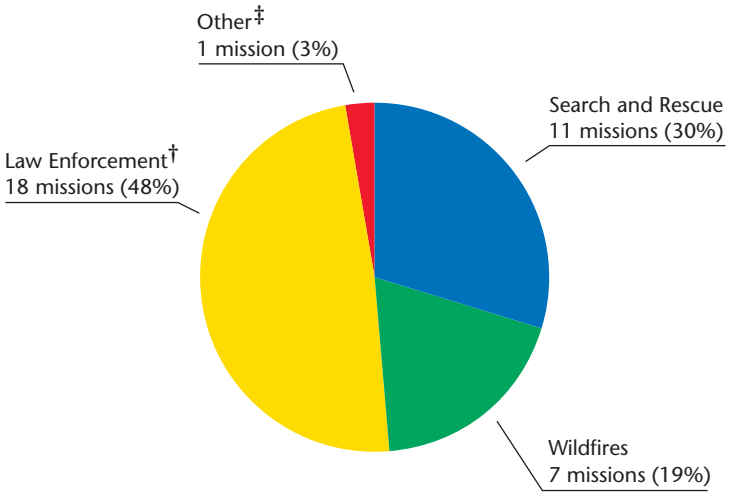
† Law enforcement includes missions relating to civil disturbances, weapons searches, and bomb disposals.

‡ "Other" includes missions relating to earthquakes, floods, and transporting constitutional officials and foreign dignitaries.

During the same period, the Air Guard responded to 37 state emergencies, as shown in Figure 3. In almost 50 percent of those state missions, the Air Guard responded with only one of its five units, the 129th Medical Squadron, which has helicopters with special capabilities that allow it to conduct search and rescue missions at night or in adverse weather conditions.

FIGURE 3

Types of Air Guard State Missions,*
January 1999 Through December 2001



Source: California National Guard Mission Data Capture and Response Information Management System Database.

*The Army Guard also responded to 12 of these missions.

†Law enforcement includes missions relating to civil disturbances, weapons searches, and bomb disposals.

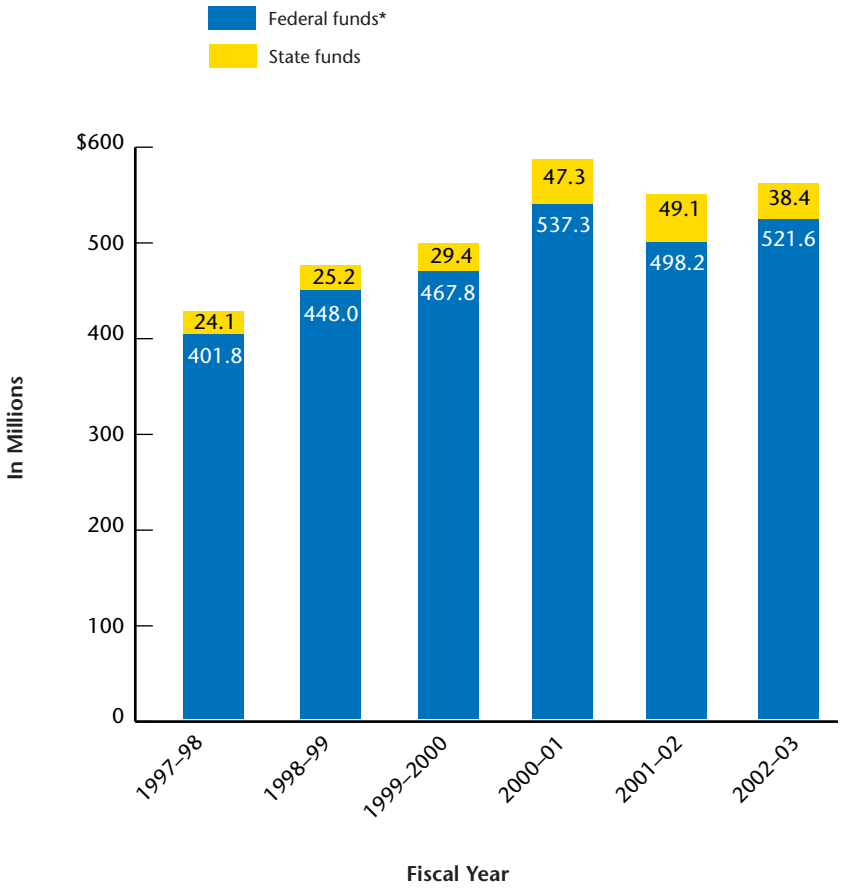
‡ "Other" includes providing assistance for disaster relief to Central America.

GUARD FUNDING

For state fiscal year 2001–02, the Guard expects the federal government to provide 91 percent (roughly $498 million) of its funding, as shown in Figure 4. The Guard uses federal funds to pay for, among other things, Army and Air Guard training, equipment maintenance and repair, food and clothing, security, and construction. The Guard uses its state funds to pay for the Military Department's operations and youth programs and to support the activities of armories, bases, and the border patrol.

FIGURE 4

State and Federal Funding of Guard Activities



Source: Governor's Budget, fiscal years 1997–98 through 2002–03.

*Between 7 percent and 11 percent of these funds are deposited in the state treasury for costs such as operations, maintenance, and communications.

MISSION READINESS

Readiness is a military unit's state of preparedness to perform its mission. The Army Guard assesses its readiness to respond to federal missions through the Unit Status Report (USR) submitted quarterly by each unit. USRs provide national authorities, such as the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the current status of the units and provide the Headquarters Department of the Army with indicators that do the following:

- Portray the Army Guard's overall conditions and trends.
- Identify factors that degrade unit status and highlight differences between units' current and full wartime personnel and equipment requirements.
- Provide information for resource allocation.
- Allow senior decision makers to judge how deployable the reporting units are.

The USR specifies criteria for four measurements of readiness: personnel, training, equipment on hand, and equipment serviceability (how well a unit is maintaining its equipment). A unit's personnel status is stated as P-levels—ranging from P-1 (highest) to P-4 (lowest)—which compare its available strength against wartime requirements.

The Air Guard completes a similar readiness assessment using the Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS)—a single automated reporting system—to track the status of units' select resources and training necessary to perform their full mission. Specifically, SORTS measures personnel, training, equipment condition, and equipment and supplies on hand. In addition, SORTS contains data critical to aid commanders in assessing the effectiveness of their deliberate and crisis planning processes.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The Joint Legislative Audit Committee requested that the Bureau of State Audits review the Guard's readiness to respond to a natural disaster, civil disturbance, armed conflict, or other emergency. However, many of the USR records on federal readiness are not available, being classified by the U.S. Army. Similarly, the U.S. Air Force has determined that all its SORTS

readiness data are classified. Consequently, we are unable to report on the Army Guard's or Air Guard's overall readiness ratings for their personnel, equipment on hand, equipment condition, and training. Therefore, we focused much of our audit on the missions the Guard performs at the State's request. We especially considered the three Army Guard units most frequently called up and how the percentages of grounded helicopters might affect their ability to assist in state emergencies. We also looked at how personnel readiness, as reported in the USRs, might affect use of the Army Guard for federal wartime duty.

To determine the types of state missions the Guard has performed, we reviewed emergencies with which the Guard assisted the State between January 1, 1999, and August 15, 2001. At our request, the Guard provided data on its state missions and the units that responded. We found that the Guard mainly performed fire-fighting and search and rescue missions. (See Appendix B for a detailed listing of state missions and the units responding.)

To assess the Army Guard's readiness to perform state missions, we reviewed the U.S. Army's and the NGB's regulations pertaining to readiness and military support to civil authorities. We interviewed key Army Guard staff and reviewed certain units' quarterly USRs prepared between January 2000 and July 2001. Our review of comments contained in the USRs found that the units reported low aircraft operational readiness rates due to a shortage of aircraft maintenance personnel and available parts. To understand these concerns and assess their impact on the Army Guard's ability to respond to state emergencies, we did the following:

- Interviewed key Army Guard staff.
- Examined monthly aircraft inventory, status, and flying time reports for April, July, October, and December 2001.
- Analyzed the December 28, 2001, Open Document Control Registers, which list data on aircraft parts ordered and outstanding.
- Reviewed relevant maintenance requirements.
- Reviewed unit manning reports, which identify all the units' personnel, their assigned duties, and formal training.

To assess how often full-time Guard soldiers respond to state fire-fighting missions and any effect this has on units' ability to perform helicopter maintenance, we compared rosters of Army Guard troops qualified to respond to fire-fighting missions to payroll data showing those sent on fire-fighting missions in 2000. We also interviewed Army Guard flight facility staff.

To determine if the Guard adheres to U.S. Army regulations for reporting personnel strength in its quarterly USRs, we interviewed staff responsible for coordinating the USR process. We also used personnel records to identify if selected units included in the October 15, 2001, USR certain categories of soldiers that regulations prohibit for USR reporting purposes.

The Air Guard's 129th Medical Squadron—a part of the 129th Rescue Wing—responded more frequently to state mission requests than other Air Guard units. To understand the Air Guard's readiness reporting requirements, we interviewed relevant Air Guard staff and reviewed U.S. Air Force regulations. We also examined whether federal deployments the Air Guard undertakes with the U.S. Air Force have any impact on the 129th Medical Squadron's ability to assist with state missions.

Finally, we assessed how effectively the Guard coordinates its response to state mission requests. We interviewed key staff in the Guard's operations center and reviewed the center's Standard Operating Procedures manual and NGB regulations outlining the Guard's response in support of civil authorities. To determine if the Guard had training prerequisites for operations center staff and tracked who completed the training, we interviewed Guard staff and reviewed training materials. To see if the Guard reviewed its emergency disaster plans in accordance with NGB regulations, we obtained copies of the plan and calculated the time elapsed since its last review and update. In addition, we examined the Guard's After Action Reports (AARs) from major disasters and missions that required significant resources for the period November 1992 through July 2001. Using selected recommendations contained in these AARs, we determined whether the Guard has a process for implementing corrective action. ■

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CHAPTER 1

The California National Guard Has Limited Aviation Capacity to Respond to State Disasters and May Overstate Its Personnel Readiness for Federal Service

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Helicopters are critical to the Army National Guard (Army Guard) in responding to state disasters and emergencies, particularly fire-fighting and search and rescue missions. Three Army Guard units with fleets of UH-60 and CH-47 helicopters most often respond to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES). However, high percentages of grounded aircraft in these units may impair the Army Guard's ability to respond to OES requests for help in state emergencies. Helicopter maintenance reports show that in July 2001, 25 of the three units' 29 helicopters required some maintenance work or parts, with almost half of the 25 helicopters losing 15 days of flight time. The likely causes of these high percentages are a lack of parts to repair the helicopters and a shortage of staff to perform required maintenance. On December 28, 2001, these three Army Guard units were waiting for shock absorbers, engines, and electrical components to repair their helicopters, and 15 percent of the needed parts had been on order for seven months or more. Two of the three units reported a shortage of qualified aircraft mechanics, partly caused by a lack of space in federal maintenance training programs and by the Army Guard's frequent use of full-time aviation maintenance staff in fire-fighting missions.

The Air National Guard (Air Guard) also responds to state emergencies but is limited by its priority of working closely with the U.S. Air Force, which depends on the Air Guard for worldwide combat and peacekeeping missions. With federal deployment a constant possibility, the Air Guard maintains a high degree of federal readiness. The Air Guard's 129th Medical Squadron is uniquely suited to assist the State in certain search and rescue missions because advanced navigation and communication equipment on the squadron's HH-60 helicopters allow them to fly at night or in adverse

weather. However, from August 15, 2001 to October 6, 2001, the 129th Medical Squadron deployed to Southwest Asia to support the U.S. Air Force, leaving only one aircrew and one HH-60 helicopter behind for state missions. The Air Guard acknowledges that when the squadron deploys with the U.S. Air Force, sometimes for extended periods, its capacity to respond to state search and rescue missions may be reduced. To lessen the impact of these deployments on the State, the Air Guard gives advance notice of federal deployment to the Guard's Joint Operations Center (operations center), which may then notify the OES to identify alternative resources.

Affecting only its federal response, the Army Guard lacks an adequate process to ensure that it does not include ineligible soldiers in the quarterly Unit Status Reports (USRs) it submits to the U.S. Army. USRs show whether the Army Guard has enough soldiers for wartime requirements. The three Army Guard units we reviewed erroneously included at least 4, 5, and 12 soldiers in their respective USRs. As a percentage of the total soldiers available, these numbers of ineligible solders may have resulted in the units overstating their personnel readiness levels, or P-levels, and appearing more ready for war or other federal duties than they are. However, the Army Guard's personnel readiness has minimal bearing on its ability to assist the State, because the OES typically does not request full troop strength.

DELAYS IN AVIATION MAINTENANCE MAY AFFECT THE ARMY GUARD'S CAPACITY TO PERFORM STATE MISSIONS

In July 2001, 12 of the 29 helicopters the Army Guard uses most frequently for state missions were grounded more than 15 days awaiting parts or maintenance.

The Army Guard frequently uses three units and their fleet of 29 helicopters (21 UH-60s and 8 CH-47s) on state fire-fighting and search and rescue missions. Yet various reports for the three Army Guard units that respond most frequently to OES requests show a limited number of these helicopters are available to fly missions. Because the Army Guard's helicopters are critical to its OES response, the lack of operable helicopters may impair the Army Guard's ability to respond to state missions. For example, in July 2001, Army Guard aircraft reports indicated that 12 of its 29 helicopters were grounded for more than 15 days awaiting parts or maintenance. According to the Army Guard's director of Army Aviation and Safety, lack of replacement parts is the greatest barrier to keeping these helicopters operational. The director says that because the U.S. Army has chosen not to use

its resources for the requisite amount of aircraft replacement parts, there are simply not enough parts in inventory to meet demand. For example, at the end of December 2001, the three units reported that almost 40 percent of the necessary parts to repair their helicopters had been on order for three months or more. The units also reported that they had been waiting for two parts since at least September 1999.

A lack of trained maintenance staff further compounds the Army Guard's efforts to keep its helicopters flying. In their USRs, the units comment on a lack of personnel to meet the heavy maintenance demands of the helicopter fleet. For two units flying UH-60 helicopters, the manning reports showed that 50 percent of the maintenance staff were not formally trained in UH-60 maintenance. Between the parts delay and the shortage of qualified aircraft mechanics, the Army Guard has fewer helicopters available to respond to potential OES missions.

Army Guard Units Most Often Responding to State Emergencies Have Many Helicopters Awaiting Maintenance and Parts

Helicopters are crucial to managing disasters such as wildfires and search and rescue missions—the operations that the Army Guard most frequently performs. When the OES calls on the Army Guard to assist local authorities, the three units that usually respond are those with fleets of UH-60 and CH-47 helicopters. However, helicopters require heavy maintenance, and data on these units show that many of their aircraft are grounded for maintenance and parts, making them unavailable to respond. As Table 1 on the following page shows, the Army Guard reported on four separate dates in 2001 that between 12 and 17 of its fleet of 29 helicopters were grounded 16 days or more.

Search and rescue.

Reasons for these maintenance delays include problems the three units have getting repair parts and keeping qualified maintenance personnel available to make inspections and repairs. Our evidence suggests that improvements in these areas would increase the units' ability to keep more of their helicopters available to respond to state missions.

TABLE 1

Record of Grounding of the Army Guard Helicopter Fleet

Days Grounded	Number of Days Helicopters Grounded In: April 2001	July 2001	October 2001	December 2001
0 to 5	0	2	3	2
6 to 10	4	7	2	5
11 to 15	4	4	0	5
16 to 31	15	12	15	17
Total helicopters grounded	23	25	20	29
Total helicopters in fleet	29	29	29	29

Source: Army Guard Aviation Logistics and Readiness Model/Unit Level Logistics System Bridge Commanders' Statements for April, July, October, and December 2001.

The Lack of Available Parts Contributes to Reduced Numbers of Operational Helicopters

Often waiting several months for parts to repair their helicopters, the three Army Guard units that most frequently respond to OES requests find it difficult to keep their aircraft operational. As the units wait for parts, the Guard's helicopters are unavailable to help California communities cope with disasters. Based on the Army Guard's monthly aircraft inventory, status, and flying time reports for April, July, October, and December 2001, one unit reported at least 4 of its 15 UH-60 helicopters grounded between 5 and 31 days in three of the four months. A second unit reported at least 1 of its 6 helicopters grounded between 5 and 31 days in each of the four reporting periods. According to the director of Army Aviation and Safety, delays in receiving some helicopter parts may play a significant role in the high percentages of inoperable aircraft. Moreover, he believes that the U.S. Army's decision to accept risk and use its resources in other areas—instead of funding the $450 million spare aircraft parts inventory that is necessary to meet demand—has made timely repairs difficult. Without the necessary inventory, units must compete for limited and sometimes critically low supplies of helicopter parts, which may take months to receive.

As of December 2001 the Army Guard was awaiting numerous helicopter parts; almost 40 percent had been on order for three months or more.

As of December 28, 2001, the three units reported waiting for delivery of 753 distinct types of helicopter parts, including a gas turbine power unit, shock absorbers, engines, and electrical components. As Table 2 shows, almost 40 percent of the parts had been on order for three months or more. The units also

reported that they had been waiting for 2 parts since at least September 1999. One part, an aircraft access door, is delayed because the U.S. Army is waiting for enough orders to justify requesting the manufacturer to make additional parts. We were told the same reason probably applies to the second part. Based on our analysis, it appears that the three units most likely to respond to state emergencies do not receive parts promptly and that the delays probably contribute to the low percentages of operational aircraft in the units.

TABLE 2

Time Elapsed Since Three Units of the Army Guard Ordered Aircraft Parts

Months Since Part Ordered	Total Distinct Types of Parts Ordered	Percent of Orders Outstanding
0 to 2	458	60.9
3 to 4	140	18.6
5 to 6	42	5.6
7 to 12	70	9.3
13 to 24	41	5.4
25 or more	2*	0.3
Total	**753**	

Source: California National Guard Open Document Control Registers, dated December 28, 2001.

* One part was ordered on July 2, 1999, and the second on September 18, 1999.

To keep its helicopters flying, the Army Guard performs a "controlled exchange" by taking serviceable parts from an unserviceable but repairable helicopter and installing them in another helicopter to restore it to mission capability. The U.S. Army authorizes controlled exchanges only when the needed part cannot be obtained from the supply system in time to meet operational readiness requirements. Unfortunately, these exchanges double the number of maintenance hours necessary to install a part and create delays. Moreover, although the Army Guard is able to repair one of two unserviceable helicopters, controlled exchanges are only temporary solutions; the second helicopter simply requires more parts than did the first, and the exchanged part is still necessary.

In a recently issued report, the General Accounting Office (GAO) identified many similar problems with the Army Guard's use of controlled exchanges.[1] The GAO reported that "a direct cost of controlled exchange is the additional personnel hours required to remove and reinstall a part." In fact, according to the report, controlled exchanges take at least twice as long to perform as normal repairs. Furthermore, the GAO noted that when performing a controlled exchange, maintenance personnel often have to remove other parts or components as well, possibly increasing the risk of damage to those aircraft parts and components. Finally, because a controlled exchange does not replace a broken part with a new one, it does not restore a component to its full projected life expectancy but increases the chance that the component will break down earlier than if a new replacement part was used.

Generally, when a high-cost part breaks down, the Army Guard orders a new one using funds in a federal account. The Army Guard sends the broken part to the U.S. Army and receives a credit for roughly 65 percent of the new part's cost. However, according to the director of Army Aviation and Safety, administrative delays may slow the arrival of the credit by several months. In the meantime, if another high-cost part breaks down, the Army Guard may not have sufficient funds to pay for a replacement part, delaying the order and extending the wait for the needed part. In November 2001 the Army Guard hired an independent contractor to provide technical assistance to implement a parts return and credit program. Specifically, the contractor will provide Army Guard staff with information and processes to collect the necessary real-time data to perform basic automated analysis, credit tracking, credit recovery, and problem resolution. With improved processing of parts credits, the Army Guard might be able to eliminate credit delays and have enough funds available to order parts to repair its helicopters more quickly, ensuring that these aircraft are available in times of state emergencies or disasters.

[1] In its report titled *Military Aircraft Services Need Strategies to Reduce Cannibalizations*, the GAO defines the term *cannibalization* as removing serviceable parts from one piece of equipment and installing them in another. The U.S. Army defines *controlled exchange* as the removal of serviceable parts, components, assemblies, and subassemblies from an unserviceable but economically repairable item for immediate installation on a like item to restore it to a mission-capable condition. However, it defines *cannibalization* as the authorized removal, under specified conditions, of serviceable and unserviceable parts, components, assemblies, and subassemblies from an item chosen for disposal.

A Lack of Staff Formally Trained in Helicopter Maintenance May Also Contribute to Low Numbers of Operational Aircraft

The Army Guard reports that its three aviation support facilities lack enough personnel to fully meet maintenance demands.

Helicopters are complex aircraft that require heavy maintenance to keep flying, so the Army Guard has three aviation support facilities throughout the State that maintain its helicopters. However, from comments found in the USRs of the three units that usually respond to OES requests, these facilities lack enough personnel to fully meet maintenance demands. For example, one unit noted that critical shortages in certain military specialties inhibited aircraft maintenance. Not having trained staff to maintain and repair these units' helicopters reduces the operational aircraft available to respond to state disasters and emergencies.

The Guard's Fleet Requires Scheduled and Unscheduled Maintenance and Is Aging

Staff at the aviation support facilities perform various types of scheduled and unscheduled maintenance that affect the Guard's ability to use these helicopters in state missions. The scheduled maintenance depends on the number of hours a helicopter has flown. For every 100 hours a UH-60 flies, U.S. Army regulations require about 185 hours of scheduled maintenance. Also, after every 500 hours of flight, helicopters are required to have a phase inspection—an in-depth examination of a helicopter's parts and systems. A phase inspection for a UH-60 takes roughly 2,500 man-hours and six or seven months to complete.

In addition, unscheduled maintenance demands are required by safety of flight (SOF) messages—the most serious electronic messages the U.S. Army sends to all its aircraft users, including the Army Guard. After receiving an SOF message, the Army Guard must address the conditions relating to affected aircraft according to the message's instructions. At times, SOF messages can ground all the affected aircraft. For example, in 1999, the U.S. Army grounded its CH-47 helicopter fleet pending an inspection of certain gears possibly damaged during manufacture. Obviously, while the Army Guard is addressing SOF conditions, its helicopters are not available for state missions. As Table 3 on the following page shows, for helicopters the Army Guard uses most to respond to state emergencies, the number of SOF messages increased significantly between federal fiscal years 1998–99 and 2000–01, from a total of 5 to 15. As of October 2001, the Army Guard owned at least 21 UH-60s, and for federal fiscal year 2000–01, it had to address 12 SOFs for that model of helicopter alone.

TABLE 3

Safety of Flight Messages Issued, Federal Fiscal Years 1994–95 Through 2000–01

Federal Fiscal Year	Type of Helicopter CH-47	UH-60	Totals
1994–95	2	2	4
1995–96	0	4	4
1996–97	1	1	2
1997–98	2	1	3
1998–99	5	0	5
1999–2000	7	2	9
2000–01	3	12	15
Totals	**20**	**22**	**42**

Source: U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command, Safety of Flight Messages issued as of November 29, 2001.

Moreover, as of November 2001, the average age of the two models of helicopters the Army Guard uses to respond to state fire and search and rescue missions—both the UH-60 and the CH-47—was 16 years. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, as aircraft age, they tend to break down more often and take longer to inspect and maintain, making them less available for training and operations.

The Army Guard's Three Units Lack Enough Aircraft Maintenance Staff

U.S. Army regulations instruct the Army Guard commanders to attain aircraft readiness goals by effectively managing maintenance and part supplies. However, data reported in the monthly Bridge Commanders' Statements do not identify reasons for delays in the helicopters receiving either parts or maintenance—specifically, whether delays are caused by personnel levels or some other factor. However, aircraft operational reports from the three units responding most to state missions indicate that the maintenance staff's inability to keep up with the required maintenance schedule contributes to low numbers of operational aircraft. The units report a shortage of formally trained aircraft mechanics. In their USRs

submitted between January 2000 and July 2001, two of the three units reported shortages of qualified aircraft mechanics. Our review of the units' manning reports—which identify all the units' personnel and their assigned duties and formal training—showed that 50 percent of two units' maintenance staff were not formally trained in maintenance of UH-60 helicopters. In the other unit, 41 percent of staff in its maintenance positions lacked formal training. As Table 1 on page 20 shows, the three units reported in April 2001 that 23 of their 29 helicopters required maintenance or parts and that 15 of these aircraft were grounded for more than 15 days. It seems reasonable to conclude that the low numbers of operational aircraft are influenced by a lack of trained aircraft mechanics.

Half of the maintenance staff in two of the three units that most often respond to state emergencies are not formally trained in UH-60 helicopter maintenance.

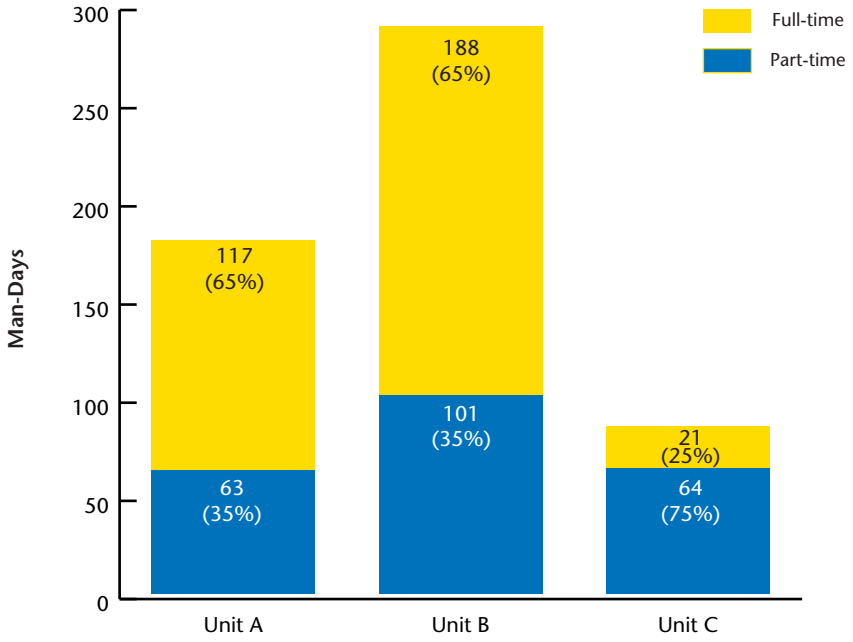
Generally, the U.S. Army trains the Guard's aircraft maintenance mechanics but cannot accommodate all new Guard recruits in its training courses. Therefore, the Army Guard must recruit aircraft mechanics with maintenance training on other types of helicopters and provide transition training to do maintenance on its UH-60s or CH-47s. However, these mechanics may not be able to work without supervision or sign off on major maintenance items. Further, because of increased time spent training and supervising personnel without formal training, the Army Guard's qualified staff may have fewer hours to spend meeting maintenance demands. The director of Army Aviation and Safety says that in the past, the U.S. Army has allowed the Army Guard to train its helicopter maintenance mechanics through distance learning courses. The Army Guard discontinued this approach because coordinating efforts with the U.S. Army was quite burdensome. However, until the U.S. Army can accommodate all new recruits in its training courses, the Army Guard could resume the distance learning course, freeing up its qualified aircraft mechanics to focus on meeting maintenance demands.

The Army Guard's use of part-time soldiers also decreases the man-hours available for aircraft maintenance. According to the director of Army Aviation and Safety, the Army Guard's traditional part-time troops do only 1 percent to 2 percent of aircraft maintenance—instead of the 15 percent originally planned—because they have other weekend drill requirements. This reduction of maintenance time only exacerbates the units' lack of operational aircraft.

Finally, the Guard's practice of using its full-time helicopter maintenance staff as crew to drop water on California wildfires delays maintenance and contributes to the lack of operational helicopters. For example, in 2000, the Army Guard flew its helicopters on 13 separate fire-fighting missions between July 26 and September 5 and dropped at least 2.4 million gallons of water. We analyzed the Guard's pay records, and as Figure 5 shows, full-time maintenance facility staff from two units contributed about 65 percent of their unit's total man-days during the 2000 fire season.

FIGURE 5

Man-Days of Full-Time Maintenance Facility Staff Used for Fire Missions in 2000



Source: California National Guard payroll data.

The Army Guard's flight facility staff acknowledge that using full-time personnel on these missions contributes to delays in meeting the existing maintenance demand. One Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF) commander told us that maintenance projects that are under way do not get done when staff are sent to support fire-fighting missions. However, another AASF operations officer said that sometimes he receives additional funds to reinforce personnel and stay ahead of the maintenance

The Army Guard's use of its full-time maintenance personnel beyond the initial response period for state missions can contribute to lower aircraft operational readiness rates.

requirements. Both agree that full-time staff go on fire-fighting missions because they are readily available and are more qualified. Although the U.S. Army concurs with this position, its regulations state that as the immediate threat diminishes, it is imperative that full-time support personnel are replaced with traditional Guard soldiers. If the Army Guard uses its full-time maintenance personnel beyond the initial response period, rates of aircraft operational readiness can decrease due to maintenance delays.

DESPITE HIGH FEDERAL READINESS LEVELS, THE AIR GUARD'S RESPONSE TO STATE MISSIONS MAY BE LIMITED BY ITS DEPLOYMENT WITH THE U.S. AIR FORCE

The 129th Medical Squadron of the California Air National Guard (Air Guard)—part of the 129th Rescue Wing, as shown in Appendix A—has some unique skills and equipment that make it valuable for state search and rescue missions. For example, the HH-60 helicopter has advanced communication and navigation equipment allowing the 129th Medical Squadron to conduct search and rescue missions at night or in adverse weather. The Air Guard overall reports a high level of federal readiness, which is necessary because it closely interacts with the U.S. Air Force. As the Air Guard recognizes, the 129th Medical Squadron's periodic deployment with the U.S. Air Force reduces the squadron's capacity to respond to state search and rescue missions. To lessen the impact of federal deployment on the State, the Air Guard gives advance notice to the operations center, which may then notify the OES. This process seems a reasonable way to ensure that the State has a chance to cover the gap created by the 129th Medical Squadron's deployment by identifying alternative resources.

The U.S. Air Force assesses unit readiness through its monthly Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS) reports. Because the U.S. Air Force classifies as at least confidential all its SORTS readiness data for individual units, we cannot report readiness ratings for specific Air Guard units. However, in its November 2001 SORTS reports, the Air Guard stated that 92 percent of its reporting units met their federal readiness requirements. This report is consistent with a U.S. Air Force inspection team's conclusion in June 2001 that the 129th Rescue Wing was ready to conduct both federal and state missions.

The Air Guard's deployment with the U.S. Air Force, rather than its readiness levels, may affect its ability to respond to state missions.

The Air Guard must maintain its federal readiness levels because the U.S. Air Force uses the Air Guard as part of its total force to support worldwide air force expeditions, calling on Air Guard units to deploy with active duty troops for up to 90 days to form units that can rapidly respond to any crisis. Such use of the 129th Medical Squadron, rather than its readiness levels, may affect the Air Guard's ability to respond to state missions.

For the two and one-half years before August 15, 2001, the 129th Medical Squadron responded to 9 of the 10 search and rescue missions the Guard was asked to perform. However, from August 15, 2001, to October 6, 2001, the 129th Medical Squadron deployed most of its members to Southwest Asia to support the U.S. Air Force, leaving only one aircrew and one HH-60 behind for state missions. One aircrew and one helicopter may not be enough to respond to state search and rescue missions, considering the HH-60's uniqueness, crew rest requirements, and aircraft maintenance logistics. For instance, the in-flight refueling of the 129th Medical Squadron's HH-60 helicopters allows them to travel long distances over land or water, so other aircraft cannot substitute for the HH-60 in some emergencies, such as long-distance, off-shore rescues. Further, because aircrew require at least 8 hours of continuous, uninterrupted rest during the 12 hours immediately before their flight duty period, if a critical search and rescue mission were assigned late at night and the crew had not met minimum rest requirements, they would be unavailable to respond immediately.

The federal government provides virtually all supplies, equipment, transportation, support services, and funds necessary for training and deployment. The Air Guard acknowledges that its federal mission is its top priority. It also acknowledges that the 129th Medical Squadron's capability to respond to state search and rescue missions may be reduced by federal deployment. However, the director of operations explains that when the Air Guard is preparing to deploy with the U.S. Air Force and may be unavailable for state search and rescue missions, he notifies the Guard's operations center. Subsequently, the operations center assesses these reports and notifies the OES as appropriate. This communication process helps ensure that the OES is aware of potential shortfalls in the Air Guard's ability to respond to state missions and allows time to arrange for other assistance on search and rescue missions.

WEAKNESSES IN THE ARMY GUARD'S PROCESS FOR REPORTING PERSONNEL COULD RESULT IN OVERSTATED PERSONNEL READINESS

Contrasted with the aviation capability for state missions, the Army Guard's personnel readiness affects only the federal need for troops. In a quarterly USR, each unit in the Army Guard reports its personnel status by comparing available strength levels, or staffing, against wartime requirements. However, the Army Guard lacks an effective process to ensure that a unit includes only eligible soldiers in its strength levels. For example, the three Army Guard units we reviewed erroneously included at least 21 soldiers in their combined USRs. Therefore, these units may have overstated their personnel strength levels, or P-levels, making it appear as though they are more ready for war or other federal duties than they are.

U.S. Army regulations specify that soldiers who are unavailable for wartime missions should not be included when computing personnel strength for USRs. Nondeployable soldiers include those who are pending discharge, inactive, or absent without leave (AWOL). A unit calculates its P-levels by comparing soldiers in the following categories against established wartime requirements: available soldiers; military occupational specialty (MOS) qualified soldiers; and senior-grade soldiers, including commissioned officers, warrant officers, and noncommissioned officers above sergeant. The lowest percentage of the three comparisons determines the unit's overall P-level. Table 4 illustrates the percentages that correspond to the P-level ranges. For example, a unit might calculate its available, MOS qualified, and senior-grade levels to be 93 percent (P-1), 87 percent (P-1), and 77 percent (P-2), respectively. Based on the guidelines shown in Table 4, the unit's overall P-level would be P-2, the lowest of the unit's three calculated P-levels.

TABLE 4

Personnel Strength Levels for Available, MOS Qualified, and Senior-Grade Soldiers

	P-Level			
Soldier Category	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4
Available	100–90%	89–80%	79–70%	69% or less
MOS qualified	100–85	84–75	74–65	64 or less
Senior grade	100–85	84–75	74–65	64 or less

Source: U.S. Army Regulation 220-1, as of September 1997.

As Table 5 demonstrates, the three Army Guard units we reviewed inappropriately included at least 21 soldiers (3.8 percent) in their October 2001 USR personnel strength levels. Each P-level has a relatively small percentage range of 10 percent to 15 percent. Therefore, an error of 3.8 percent in computing P-levels can be significant for units close to the lower end of a range. In those cases, the units may actually have lower P-levels than they report on their USRs. For example, if a unit calculates its available soldiers to be 92 percent (P-1), assuming an error rate of 3.8 percent, the unit's actual available soldiers may be closer to 88.2 percent (P-2).

TABLE 5

Summary of Ineligible Soldiers the Army Guard Units Counted as Available

Ineligibility Category	Unit A	Unit B	Unit C	Totals
Inactive National Guard*	0	4	0	**4**
AWOL	2	0	2	**4**
Discharged	9	1	1	**11**
Legal processing†	1	0	0	**1**
Transfer to another state	0	0	1	**1**
Totals	**12**	**5**	**4**	**21**
Total soldiers reported as available	270	117	165	552
Ineligible soldier rate	**4.4%**	**4.3%**	**2.4%**	**3.8%**

Sources: Army Guard unit personnel reports for October 2001 USR period; Standard Installation/Division Personnel System (SIDPERS) data for listing of discharges processed in 2001; inactive national guard soldiers during January 1, 2001, through October 30, 2001; and NGB data for nonvalidate pay as of September 30, 2001.

* Inactive National Guard is an administrative category that allows soldiers to remain in the Guard when, for some reason, they are unable to participate in regularly scheduled training activities. Soldiers can be listed in this status for up to 18 months.

† Legal processing includes soldiers subject to arrest and confinement, under investigation, or pending court action or discharge.

We found that Unit A included one soldier as available despite his having an effective discharge date that was seven months before the USR reporting period. In another example, Unit B included one soldier as available who was placed inactive seven months before the USR reporting period. If all reporting units are incorrectly stating their P-levels, assuming an error rate of 3.8 percent, we estimate the Army Guard could have inappropriately included more than 420 soldiers in its

October 2001 USR. Consequently, if the U.S. Army calls on Army Guard units for wartime missions, the Army Guard may not be able to provide the number of soldiers it has reported.

Despite having most of the data necessary to do so, the Army Guard does not validate the accuracy of each unit's personnel readiness reports.

To validate the accuracy of USR data, we expected the Army Guard's headquarters would have a process that includes at least a comparison of soldiers pending discharge and inactive soldiers to those reported in the units' USRs. In addition, we expected the Army Guard would review soldiers listed in the "nonvalidate pay report" it receives from the NGB—a report that identifies part-time soldiers who have not received pay for 90 consecutive days—to see if any of these soldiers should be excluded from the USR's reported available personnel because they were AWOL, being transferred, or pending legal processing. The personnel office maintains data such as nonvalidate pay report, discharged, and inactive on every soldier in the Army Guard; therefore, it could use these records to ensure that units accurately compute their P-levels. However, the personnel office does not validate the accuracy of USR personnel data for all units, so the Army Guard's headquarters cannot ensure that units are preparing their P-levels accurately.

According to the director of the personnel office, headquarters does not instruct the units, such as those in the 40th Infantry Division (40th ID) to work with the personnel office during the USR process. Consequently, the Army Guard's headquarters is relying solely on the 40th ID to accurately compute its P-levels. The 40th ID represents 52 percent of the total units the Army Guard reports to the U.S. Army and 74 percent of the Army Guard's personnel. Yet we found that at least one unit within the 40th ID did not receive clear instructions on how to report ineligible soldiers in its USR. Specifically, a representative of the 40th ID told us that soldiers pending discharge should be reported in the USR as not available, which is consistent with U.S. Army regulations. However, Unit A in the 40th ID inappropriately included as available in its USR at least nine soldiers who were pending discharge. The Unit A commander told us that the 40th ID representative instructed the unit to include as available soldiers listed in the personnel database even if they had pending discharge or transfer orders. Further, as Table 5 shows, Unit A also had other reporting errors.

Currently, the personnel office assists the 49th Combat Support Command (49th CSC) by reviewing manning rosters to identify additional MOS qualified and senior-grade personnel, processing delinquent promotions, and to a limited degree, validating

the strength numbers as reported in the USR by comparing them with numbers reflected in the personnel office's database. Despite the personnel office's participation in the USR process for the 49th CSC, we found that two of its units (Units B and C in Table 5 on page 30) inappropriately reported two discharged soldiers, four inactive soldiers, two soldiers who were AWOL, and one soldier who had transferred to another state's national guard.

These errors show that the Guard needs to improve its staff's training and instructions on how to prepare USRs. By not detecting these errors before submitting the USRs to the U.S. Army, the Guard reveals that it lacks an effective process for validating USR personnel data. Although the Guard told us that it will instruct the 40th ID to work with the personnel office during the USR process beginning in April 2002, the Guard does not believe that additional training is necessary. Specifically, the director of personnel told us that she believes the USR procedures are plainly outlined in the U.S. Army regulations. She also believes that limitations in full-time staffing make it impossible for the personnel office to validate the accuracy of all the personnel information the units provide on the USR.

Flaws in the personnel office's database prevent the Guard from detecting all discharged soldiers reported by units on their personnel readiness reports.

Finally, even if the personnel office performed a more thorough review, its database contains flaws that prevent it from detecting all discharged soldiers on the USR. In our attempt to calculate the average time it takes the personnel office to process discharges, the Guard gave us two lists that we found to contain inaccurate data. First, the personnel office gave us a list of soldiers our selected units processed for discharge in 2001. From this list, we calculated that the Guard took, on average, seven and one-half months to process the discharges. We also noted that the Guard took more than three years to process discharges for six soldiers. The Guard later informed us that all six soldiers are still active members of the Army Guard. Because of the errors we identified, we requested and the personnel office sent us another list. Using this list, we calculated that on average the Guard took more than four months to process discharges. However, again we found incorrect information for some soldiers on the list, such as the Guard's officers and warrant officers. Until it corrects serious database deficiencies, the personnel office will not be able to detect all discharges that units report on their USRs.

A recent change to U.S. Army regulations may require more scrutiny of P-levels. On November 15, 2001, the U.S. Army released new regulations explicitly directing unit commanders

not to move soldiers from one unit to another (cross-leveling) solely for USR purposes. Prior to this revision, the Army Guard allowed unit commanders to use cross-leveling to boost P-levels reflected in its USRs by moving soldiers from one unit that had excess soldiers to another unit that was short soldiers. The Army Guard estimates that in the past, 14 of 29 units (48 percent) from the 49th CSC participated in cross-leveling. In fact, one of the three units we reviewed moved six soldiers (3.6 percent of its reported available soldiers) from other Army Guard units to help increase its P-levels. Beginning in January 2002, the Guard must ensure that units typically participating in cross-leveling not use this technique to inflate their USR P-levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To help improve its percentage of operational aircraft, the Army Guard should do the following:

- Improve its data tracking and collection to determine why helicopters are not operational and then take appropriate steps to correct the identified deficiencies.

- Reassess the feasibility of distance learning opportunities for its maintenance personnel, including those previously coordinated with the U.S. Army, until the U.S. Army makes training available for new recruits.

- Determine how frequently it uses its full-time flight facility personnel in fire-fighting missions and set a standard that will not negatively affect the Army Guard's ability to meet helicopter maintenance demands.

To strengthen its process for personnel reporting in the Unit Status Report (USR), the Army Guard should do the following:

- Instruct the 40th ID and the personnel office to work together during the USR process to ensure that units in the 40th ID report accurate personnel data.

- Train appropriate staff on how to complete the USR.

- Strengthen its USR validation procedures to ensure that units adhere to U.S. Army regulations when they report USR data. For example, the personnel office should revise its validation

procedures to prevent units from cross-leveling or including ineligible soldiers in the USR, such as those discharged or pending discharge and those gone inactive or AWOL.

- Correct deficiencies in its discharge database and continually update this database to make sure that it reflects soldiers who have been discharged. ■

CHAPTER 2

By Improving Its Preparation for and Assessment of State Missions, the California National Guard Can Respond to Emergencies More Effectively

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Responsible for managing missions involving support to civil authorities, the Joint Operations Center (operations center) of the California National Guard (Guard) effectively communicates with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and tracks the Guard's equipment, such as trucks and helicopters. However, the operations center can improve some processes that would make its state emergency response more effective. Because the operations center does not track which of its staff attend critical training in state mission response, it cannot ensure that all staff are properly trained to respond to OES requests. Further, the operations center has not fully standardized its premission activities, such as identifying Web sites that staff must review to track the status of potential and ongoing state emergencies or disasters. Consequently, staff responsible for these activities may overlook information that is critical to premission planning.

Moreover, although the National Guard Bureau (NGB) requires the Guard to annually review and update plans that guide its response to disasters such as wildfires, floods, and earthquakes, the Guard does not have a process to ensure that this review takes place. The Guard reviewed and updated only 3 plans in calendar year 2001, and it has not reviewed the remaining 10 plans for up to 10 years. Without an emergency plan review process, the Guard cannot ensure that its plans contain up-to-date and appropriate responses to disasters. Also, the Guard lacks a procedure to ensure that it implements recommendations in the operations center's After Action Reports (AARs), which evaluate the success of its responses to state emergencies, and make recommendations for future missions. Consequently, the operations center may not always act quickly to rectify its previous mistakes.

WEAKNESSES IN THE JOINT OPERATION CENTER'S PROCEDURES MAY LIMIT ITS ABILITY TO PROVIDE THE MOST EFFECTIVE STATE MISSION RESPONSE

As part of Plans, Operations, and Security located at the Guard's state headquarters, the operations center manages the Guard's state missions. The operations center provides in-house staff training on its operating procedures and a brief overview of the Response Information Management System (RIMS), an Internet-based system used by local and state agencies to manage the State's response to disasters and emergencies. However, the operations center does not track who has attended its in-house training or require its staff to complete other disaster preparedness training. Further, the operations center's premission monitoring of potential and ongoing disasters, which allows the Guard to anticipate the general requirements of potential state missions, is not included in its Standard Operating Procedures manual (SOP manual). Because the operations center cannot ensure that all appropriate personnel have received training or are aware of standard premission activities, staff may work less efficiently and be less prepared to act during times of emergency.

The operations center does not track which staff attend training nor requires its staff to complete requisite training.

By using effective communication and tracking procedures, the operations center can quickly identify available resources for OES missions. Through daily conversations with the OES to check the status of potential missions, the operations center keeps abreast of the latest developments. Further, its tracking reports on the status of available Army National Guard (Army Guard) aircraft, qualified crews, and trucks help the operations center quickly determine which units are most capable of responding to various state emergencies following an OES request. Combined, these procedures enable the operations center to respond to requests within 24 hours, or within 4 hours for search and rescue missions.

Despite its strengths, the operations center can improve its ability to provide the most effective state mission response by making sure all staff members receive in-house and other relevant training. Currently, the operations center does not have a system for identifying the requisite training activities relevant to military support to civil authorities and to track the employees who receive this training.

The operations center does train its staff on its operating procedures and provides a brief overview of the RIMS. The four-hour procedural training course gives an overview of general responsibilities for each unit in the operations center, such as personnel, intelligence, and logistics, and covers specific procedures, such as how to accept and close down missions. A separate course provides a brief overview for operations center staff on how to enter and retrieve necessary mission information from RIMS. However, the operations center does not track the individuals who attend its in-house courses and cannot ensure that all appropriate staff receive the necessary training. Therefore, untrained staff, without knowledge of operations details, may work less efficiently overall and face a higher learning curve than those who are trained. In addition, staff could benefit from attending more courses offered through the California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI)—a school managed by the OES and designed to promote public safety and security in disaster management—and through the National Interagency Civil-Military Institute (NICI)—a component of the NGB that provides free training on domestic military support capabilities in public safety and disaster preparedness.

The director of Plans, Operations, and Security told us that the operations center is not required to maintain training records. However, he believes there is value in having systems to track which employees complete the training, identify other training activities relevant to military support to civil authorities, and track who completes that training. By March 31, 2002, the Guard plans to prepare a list of training prerequisites that will include both in-house training and courses given by CSTI and NICI. Moreover, the operations center will track staff who complete these courses.

The Guard's premission activities such as daily conversations with emergency response agencies and monitoring broadcast media sources are useful, but it cannot ensure that all of its appropriate staff are aware of these activities.

The operations center's staff participate in premission activities to help identify potential emergencies, such as wildfires, search and rescue missions, and floods. These activities include daily conversations with OES and other emergency response agencies as well as monitoring of broadcast media sources and Web site reviews and queries. These premission activities help the operations center staff get a head start on its response by anticipating the type of emergency and the general requirements well in advance of an actual OES request. Because it did not include these premission activities in its SOP manual, the operations center cannot ensure that all its appropriate staff are aware of premission activities and operate in the most effective

manner. The director of Plans, Operations, and Security agrees that including these activities in the SOP manual will enable operations center staff to work as smoothly as possible, with a minimal learning curve, during an emergency. The Guard told us that it will amend its SOP manual to include its premission activities by June 30, 2002.

THE GUARD LACKS A PROCESS TO ANNUALLY REVIEW AND UPDATE ITS EMERGENCY PLANS

The Guard's emergency plans guide its response to disasters such as wildfires, floods, and earthquakes. Although the NGB requires the Guard to review and update these plans annually by September 30, the Guard does not have a process to ensure that this takes place. In fact, the Guard revised only 3 of its 13 plans in calendar year 2001. The director of Plans, Operations, and Security points to high staff turnover and vacancies as reasons for the delays. Without ensuring the revisions are completed, however, the Guard cannot guarantee that its plans contain up-to-date and effective responses to disasters.

A process to ensure emergency plans are reviewed and updated annually could help the Guard avoid costly mishaps.

For at least 13 different types of emergency events, the Guard has plans that lay out its response. Typically, the Guard's emergency plans contain a mission statement and information outlining the plan's execution. For example, the Guard's 1999 earthquake plan specifies four different ways the Guard will deploy its forces. Also, this plan outlines support tasks, such as providing communications, that certain staff will perform. The Guard invested considerable effort to create documents that would help it effectively and rapidly respond to an emergency, but failing to consistently review these plans degrades their value.

The NGB requires the Guard to annually review and update its emergency plans. Although NGB regulations do not state as much, we assume the requirement exists to keep the plans current and effective. As Table 6 shows, the Guard updated only 3 plans in calendar year 2001: terrorism, civil disturbance, and wildfires. The remaining 10 plans have not been reviewed for up to 10 years.

TABLE 6

The Guard's Emergency Plans and Time Elapsed Since Their Last Reviews

Plan Name	Plan Effective Date	Time Elapsed Since Last Review (as of January 31, 2002)
Tsunami	March 1992	9 years, 11 months
Search and rescue	March 1998	3 years, 11 months
Vital public services continuance	January 1999	3 years, 1 month
Earthquake	March 1999	2 years, 11 months
Nuclear incident response	April 1999	2 years, 9 months
Volcano	May 1999	2 years, 9 months
Flood	January 2000	2 years, 1 month
Mass feeding/potable water supply	February 2000	2 years
Temporary emergency shelter	February 2000	2 years
Confinement facility support	December 2000	1 year, 2 months
Terrorism	May 2001	9 months
Civil disturbance	May 2001	9 months
Wildfires	August 2001	6 months

Source: California National Guard.

Based on our analysis of OES requests for the last two and one-half years, search and rescue missions are the most common assistance the Guard gives the State. However, Table 6 shows that the Guard has not updated this plan since March 1998. Because the Guard does not have a process to ensure annual reviews of emergency plans, its plans may not be effective and up-to-date. For example, in July 2001, a Guard rescue crew flew to Mt. Shasta to evacuate an injured hiker. However, according to the Guard's assessment of the mission, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the U.S. Forest Service, and the OES did not communicate to the Guard their decision to relocate the hiker on foot to a lower altitude. Consequently, the Guard's helicopter rescue crew could not access the hiker and the mission, which cost about $16,000, was aborted. In its assessment, the Guard's crew raised issues regarding the appropriate decision-making process. If the Guard regularly reviewed and updated its plans, it could include ways to improve communication with other entities and avoid such mishaps in the future.

The director of Plans, Operations, and Security said he recognizes that the Guard's plans must be reviewed annually, but factors such as staff turnover prevent these reviews. He notes that since 1998, there have been four separate directors of Plans, Operations, and Security. Also, the position of chief of Plans and Intelligence, the unit responsible for maintaining the plans, was vacant throughout 2000. Finally, the director said that since 1998, the Guard has made a significant effort to design two teams to assist civil authorities in protecting citizens against weapons of mass destruction. The Guard does, however, recognize the importance of complying with the NGB's requirement and will establish a system to ensure that it reviews and updates all state emergency plans annually. Further, it plans to review and update all plans by June 30, 2002.

THE GUARD DOES NOT HAVE A PROCESS TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ASSESSMENT REPORTS

The NGB requires the Guard to prepare AARs after completing each mission. An AAR is a formal assessment of a mission, including lessons learned and recommendations to improve future performance. However, because the Guard lacks a process for taking the necessary corrective actions identified in its AARs, the Guard is not able to learn from previous mistakes.

We reviewed AARs relating to various types of large-scale state emergencies, such as the 1992 Los Angeles riots, the 1994 Northridge earthquake, and various flood and fire seasons. The Guard provided significant resources—roughly 256,000 man-days—in response to these emergencies. After completing each mission, the operations center performed a formal assessment of the Guard's performance and typically identified problems and recommendations on how the Guard could improve its state mission response. Specifically, the AARs for three missions between 1996 and 1998 indicate that at the start of each mission, the Guard should work with the OES to negotiate an exit strategy that includes clearly defined criteria for extracting the Guard from a mission. NGB regulations require the Guard to terminate its military support to civil authorities as soon as possible after civil authorities can handle the emergency. Without establishing an exit strategy at the start of each mission, the Guard's crews could remain active longer than necessary,

performing tasks that other entities could be doing. The Guard plans to update its SOP manual to ensure that staff establish an exit strategy at the start of each mission.

Also, in three AARs submitted between 1993 and 1997, we identified a recurring problem with the Guard's ability to easily track and update the status of critical equipment. However, the Guard did not implement corrective action until early 2001, nearly eight years after it first identified the problem, when the operations center developed a list of the equipment used in state missions and began tracking that equipment's availability through monthly reports prepared by other Guard directorates. The Guard also plans to include this procedure in its June 30, 2002, update of the SOP manual.

Although the Guard identified a recurring problem with its ability to track and update the status of critical equipment, it did not implement corrective action for nearly eight years.

Because the Guard has no formal process to address previous problems encountered during its missions, it cannot promptly implement corrective action on AAR recommendations. The Guard acknowledges it lacks an adequate system to benefit from the previous missions' lessons. It is currently conducting a study, expected to be ready by June 2002, to identify better tracking systems for all its actions and activities, including this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen its response to state missions, the Guard should do the following:

- Develop a system to continually identify requisite training for its operations center staff by March 31, 2002.
- Ensure that operations center staff receive the requisite training in military support to civil authorities, thereby improving staff response to state missions.
- Establish and maintain a system to track the training activities that operations center staff attend by March 31, 2002.
- Include premission activities—for example, broadcast media source monitoring, Web site reviews and queries, and communication with other emergency response agencies such as OES—in the operations center's SOP manual by June 30, 2002.

- Develop and implement a system to review and update its state emergency plans annually, as the NGB requires.
- Review all state emergency plans by June 30, 2002.
- Update the operations center's SOP manual to ensure that staff establish an exit strategy at the start of each mission.
- Establish a process to track and implement corrective action as appropriate on AAR recommendations, ensuring quick action to correct previous mistakes.
- Make sure that it completes its study by June 2002 so that it can identify better tracking systems for all of its actions and activities.

We conducted this review under the authority vested in the California State Auditor by Section 8543 et seq. of the California Government Code and according to generally accepted government auditing standards. We limited our review to those areas specified in the audit scope section of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

ELAINE M. HOWLE
State Auditor

Date: February 14, 2002

Staff: Joanne Quarles, CPA, Audit Principal
Sharon L. Smagala, CPA
Bryan Beyer
Stephanie Chan, CPA
Vern Hines

APPENDIX A

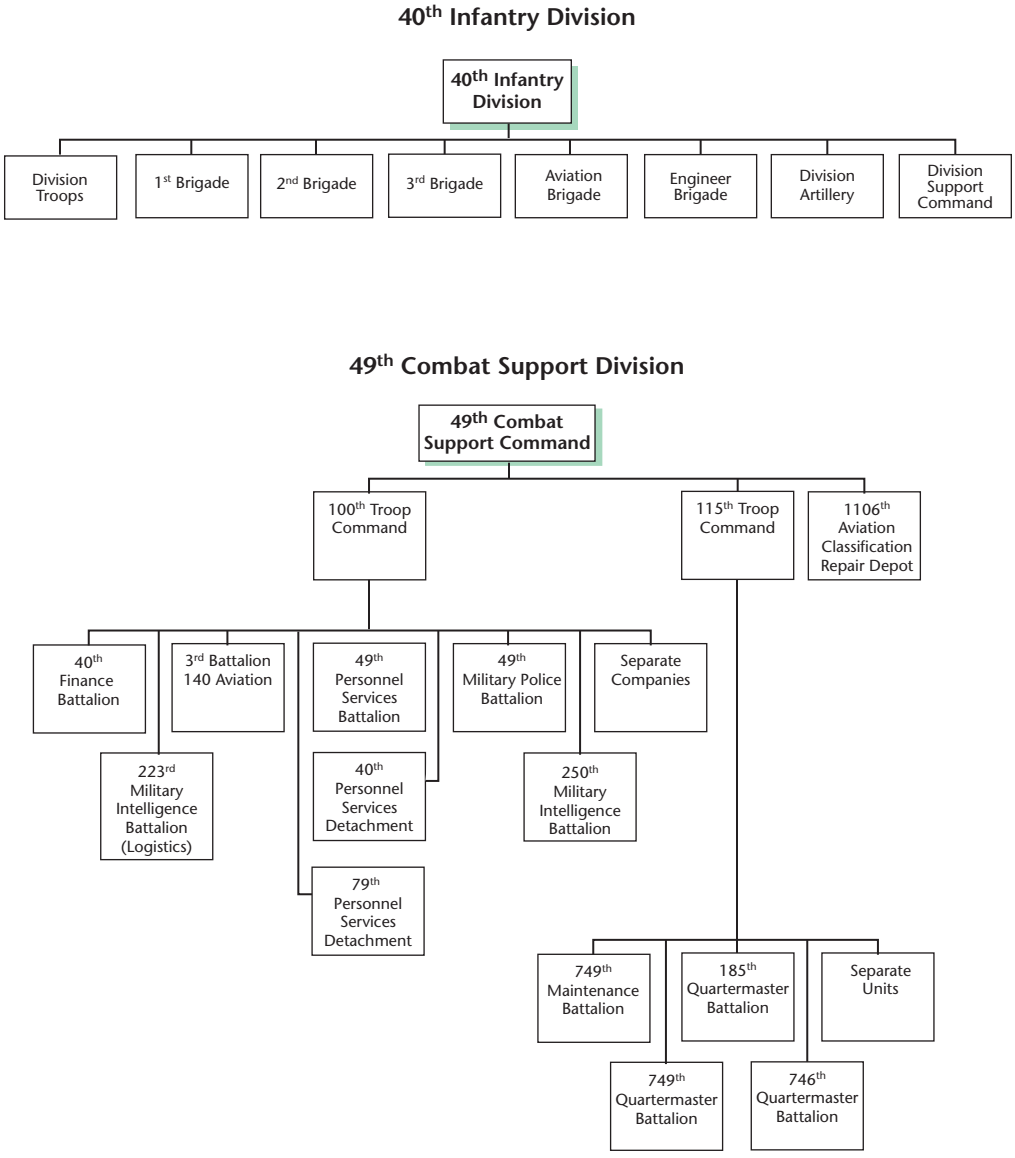
Army National Guard and Air National Guard Organization Charts

This appendix provides details of the California National Guard's Army National Guard (Army Guard) and Air National Guard (Air Guard). As shown in Figure A1 on the following page, the Army Guard is divided into two commands: the 40th Infantry Division and the 49th Combat Support Command. Across California, the Army Guard has 118 armories.

The Air Guard consists of five major commands: the 129th Rescue Wing, the 144th Fighter Wing, the 146th Airlift Wing, the 163rd Air Refueling Wing, and the 162nd Combat Communications Group as shown in Figure A2 on page 45. The Air Guard is dispersed across the state at 10 air bases and stations.

FIGURE A1

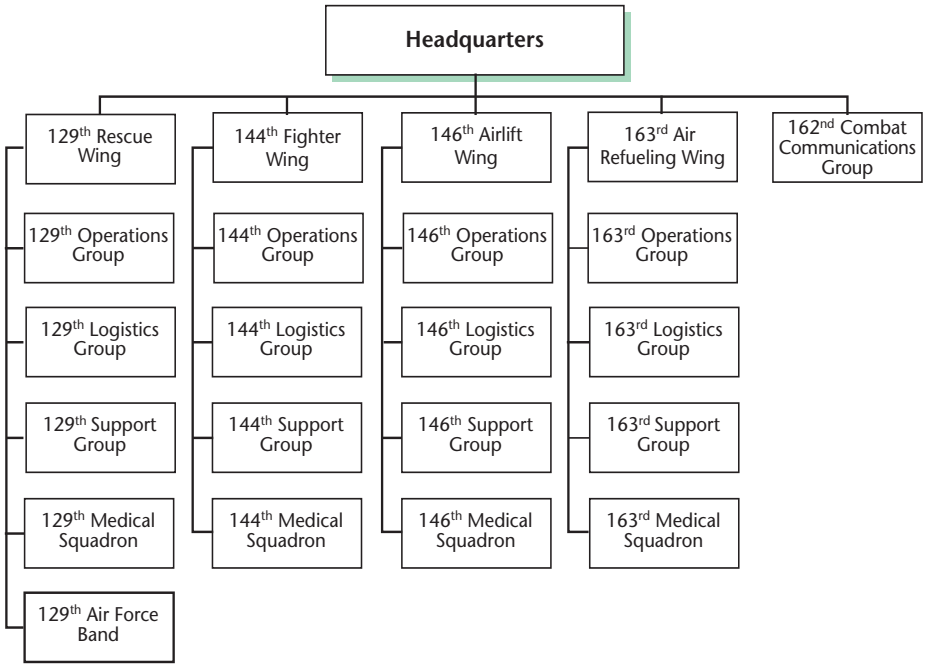
Organization Chart for the California Army National Guard



Source: California National Guard.

FIGURE A2

Organization Chart for the California Air National Guard



Source: California National Guard.

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APPENDIX B

Army National Guard and Air National Guard State Missions Between January 1, 1999, and August 15, 2001

Table B1 on the following pages lists the state missions the Army National Guard and Air National Guard performed between January 1, 1999, and August 15, 2001, in response to requests by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. Based largely on the equipment needed, such as helicopters, the California National Guard (Guard) selects the most appropriate unit to complete a mission. Summarized in the table are the individual units that responded and the type of mission they performed. According to the data, the Guard most often performed search and rescue and fire-fighting missions. In some cases, the Guard sent more than one unit, senior command, and branch to assist in the emergency.

TABLE B1

State Missions Performed by the Army and Air Guard, January 1, 1999, to August 15, 2001

Army Guard Missions								
	Mission				Mission Type			
Number	Start	Number	Unit	Senior Command	Search and Rescue	Wildfires	Law Enforcement	Other
1	01/15/99	99-OES0023	126AA	49th CSC	1			
2	04/06/99	99-OES0148	B/1-140 AVN	40th ID			1	
3	04/08/99	99-OES0150	G/140	49th CSC			1	
4	05/19/99	99-OES0155	126AA	49th CSC	1			
5	05/23/99	99-OES0216	G/140,126AA	49th CSC	1			
6	06/11/99	99-OES0239	126AA	49th CSC	1			
7	06/21/99	99-OES0266	126AA	49th CSC	1			
8	06/26/99	99-OES0271	126AA	49th CSC	1			
9	06/26/99	99-OES0272	A/1-140 AVN	40th ID	1			
10	06/30/99	99-OES0281	G/140	49th CSC	1			
11	07/15/99	99-OES0305	126AA	49th CSC	1			
12	07/21/99	99-OES0312	126AA	49th CSC	1			
13	07/23/99	99-OES0323	126AA	49th CSC	1			
14	07/26/99	99-OES0330	126AA	49th CSC	1			
15	07/27/99	99-OES0333	G/140	49th CSC	1			
16	08/10/99	99-OES0351	126AA	49th CSC	1			
17	08/12/99	99-OES0354	126AA	49th CSC	1			
18	08/15/99	99-OES0360	126AA	49th CSC	1			
19	08/17/99	99-OES0365	126AA, 129th RQW	49th CSC, 129th RQW	1			
20	08/19/99	99-OES0371	126AA	49th CSC	1			
21	08/20/99	99-OES0356	126AA	49th CSC	1			
22	08/23/99	99-OES4002	126AA, G/140	49th CSC		1		
23	08/24/99	99-OES4003	126AA	49th CSC		1		
24	08/24/99	99-OES4005	126AA	49th CSC		1		
25	08/24/99	99-OES4006	1-140 AVN	40th ID		1		
26	08/24/99	99-OES4004	G/140*	49th CSC†		1		
27	08/25/99	99-OES4007	HHC 3rd BDE	40th ID		1		
28	08/25/99	99-OES4008	STARC, 40th ID	STARC, 40th ID		1		
29	08/26/99	99-OES4010	340 FSB	40th ID		1		
30	08/26/99	99-OES4011	1-185	40th ID		1		
31	08/26/99	99-OES4012	132 ENG	40th ID		1		
32	08/26/99	99-OES4013	579 ENG	40th ID		1		
33	08/26/99	99-OES4014	1-149 AR	40th ID		1		
34	08/26/99	99-OES4015	G/140	49th CSC		1		
35	08/27/99	99-OES4016	G/140	49th CSC		1		

Army Guard Missions								
Mission					Mission Type			
Number	Start	Number	Unit	Senior Command	Search and Rescue	Wildfires	Law Enforcement	Other
36	08/27/99	99-INL8007	STARC, 40th ID	STARC, 40th ID		1		
37	08/28/99	99-OES4018	HHC 3rd BDE	40th ID		1		
38	08/28/99	99-OES4019	HHC 3rd BDE	40th ID		1		
39	08/29/99	99-OES0394	126AA,129th RQW	49th CSC, 129th RQW	1			
40	08/30/99	99-OES4023	126AA, G/140	49th CSC		1		
41	08/30/99	99-OES4024	126AA	49th CSC		1		
42	08/30/99	99-OES4025	1-140 AVN, G/140	40th ID, 49th CSC		1		
43	09/03/99	99-OES4027	126AA	49th CSC		1		
44	09/05/99	99-OES0407	126AA	49th CSC	1			
45	09/07/99	99-INL8009	126AA	49th CSC		1		
46	09/09/99	99-OES0419	126AA	49th CSC	1			
47	09/10/99	99-OES0420	G/140	49th CSC	1			
48	09/12/99	99-OES0428	126AA	49th CSC	1			
49	09/17/99	99-OES4028	126AA,129th RQW	49th CSC, 129th RQW		1		
50	09/22/99	99-OES0446	126AA	49th CSC	1			
51	09/29/99	99-OES4030	126AA	49th CSC		1		
52	09/29/99	99-OES4031	126AA, G/140	49th CSC		1		
53	10/01/99	99-OES4033	132 ENG	40th ID		1		
54	10/15/99	99-OES4038	126AA	49th CSC		1		
55	10/17/99	99-OES4039	126AA, G/140	49th CSC		1		
56	10/17/99	99-OES4040	G/140	49th CSC		1		
57	10/22/99	99-OES4041	1-140 AVN	40th ID				1
58	10/25/99	99-OES0500	126AA	49th CSC	1			
59	11/15/99	99-OES2002	126AA	49th CSC	1			
60	12/30/99	99-OES4044	126AA, G/140, 1-140 AVN‡	49th CSC, 40th ID§			1	
61	01/27/00	2000-OES0050	126AA	49th CSC	1			
62	03/02/00	2000-SOU9123	9 CST	STARC			1	
63	03/06/00	2000-OES0101	126AA	49th CSC	1			
64	03/10/00	2000-OES4047	40th ID	40th ID			1	
65	03/24/00	2000-OES0126	126AA	49th CSC	1			
66	04/14/00	2000-OES0156	126AA, G/140, 129th RQW	49th CSC, 129th RQW	1			
67	05/15/00	2000-OES0231	G/140	49th CSC	1			
68	05/18/00	2000-OES0235	126AA	49th CSC	1			
69	06/25/00	2000-OES0313	126AA	49th CSC	1			
70	07/08/00	2000-OES0337	G/140	49th CSC	1			
71	07/10/00	2000-OES0316	9 CST, 144th FW	STARC, 144th FW			1	
72	07/26/00	2000-OES4055	126AA	49th CSC		1		

continued on the next page

Army Guard Missions								
	Mission				Mission Type			
Number	Start	Number	Unit	Senior Command	Search and Rescue	Wildfires	Law Enforcement	Other
73	07/26/00	2000-OES4056	G/140, H/140	49th CSC		1		
74	07/28/00	2000-OES4058	126AA, G/140, AVCRAD	49th CSC		1		
75	07/30/00	2000-OES4059	G/140	49th CSC		1		
76	08/01/00	2000-OES4061	STARC, 40th ID	STARC, 40th ID		1		
77	08/01/00	2000-OES4062	STARC, 40th ID	STARC, 40th ID		1		
78	08/02/00	2000-OES4060	G/140	49th CSC		1		
79	08/03/00	2000-OES4063	G/140	49th CSC		1		
80	08/08/00	2000-OES4064	126AA	49th CSC		1		
81	08/08/00	2000-OES4065	G/140	49th CSC		1		
82	08/12/00	2000-OES0354	126AA	49th CSC	1			
83	08/17/00	2000-OES4066	132 ENG	40th ID		1		
84	08/19/00	2000-OES0422	126AA	49th CSC	1			
85	08/19/00	2000-OES4068	126AA, G/140	49th CSC		1		
86	08/24/00	2000-OES0430	126AA	49th CSC	1			
87	08/29/00	2000-OES4069	G/140	49th CSC		1		
88	09/20/00	2000-OES0469	1-140 AVN	40th ID	1			
89	11/14/00	2000-OES0520	1-185	40th ID			1	
90	12/14/00	2000-OES0578	126AA	49th CSC	1			
91	12/29/00	2000-OES0595	126AA	49th CSC	1			
92	02/22/01	2001-OES0674	126AA	49th CSC	1			
93	03/06/01	2001-SOU6005	340 FSB	40th ID				1
94	03/22/01	2001-OES0701	1-140 AVN	40th ID				1
95	04/20/01	2001-OES0763	1-184 INF	40th ID			1	
96	05/04/01	2001-OES4054	132 ENG	40th ID		1		
97	05/24/01	2001-OES0813	126AA	49th CSC	1			
98	05/29/01	2001-INL8003	132 ENG	40th ID		1		
99	06/18/01	2001-OES4056	126AA, 1-140 AVN	49th CSC, 40th ID		1		
100	06/24/01	2001-OES0878	B/1-140 AVN	40th ID	1			
101	07/07/01	2001-OES0899	126AA	49th CSC	1			
102	07/10/01	2001-OES4058	132 ENG	40th ID		1		
103	07/13/01	2001-OES0909	126AA	49th CSC	1			
104	07/16/01	2001-OES0918	G/140	49th CSC	1			
105	08/10/01	2001-OES2002	126AA, B/1-140 AVN	49th CSC, 40th ID		1		
106	08/12/01	2001-OES0971	126AA	49th CSC	1			
				1999	27	29	3	1
				2000	14	13	4	0
				2001	7	5	1	2
				Army Guard Totals	**48**	**47**	**8**	**3**
				Percent of Total Missions	**45.3%**	**44.3%**	**7.6%**	**2.8%**

Air Guard Missions								
Mission					Mission Type			
Number	Start	Number	Unit	Senior Command	Search and Rescue	Wildfires	Law Enforcement	Other
1	01/08/99	99-OES4001	129th RQW	129th RQW				1
2	06/20/99	99-OES0262	129th RQW	129th RQW			1	
3	07/16/99	99-OES0311/0256	146th AW	146th AW			1	
4	08/17/99	99-OES0365	126AA, 129th RQW	49th CSC, 129th RQW	1			
5	08/23/99	99-OES2001	146th AW	146th AW		1		
6	08/24/99	99-OES4004	G/140*	49th CSC†		1		
7	08/26/99	99-OES4009	162nd CCG	162nd CCG		1		
8	08/29/99	99-OES0394	126AA, 129th RQW	49th CSC, 129th RQW	1			
9	08/30/99	99-OES4026	129th RQW	129th RQW		1		
10	09/12/99	99-OES0432	129th RQW	129th RQW	1			
11	09/17/99	99-OES4028	126AA, 129th RQW	49th CSC, 129th RQW		1		
12	09/30/99	99-OES4032	162nd CCG	162nd CCG		1		
13	11/06/99	99-OES0525	144th FW	144th FW			1	
14	11/10/99	99-OES0531	144th FW	144th FW			1	
15	12/30/99	99-OES4044	126AA, G/140, 1-140 AVN ‡	49th CSC, 40th ID§			1	
16	12/30/99	99-OES0572	144th FW	144th FW			1	
17	01/06/00	2000-OES0007	144th FW	144th FW			1	
18	04/14/00	2000-OES0156	126AA, G/140, 129th RQW	49th CSC, 129th RQW	1			
19	05/21/00	2000-OES0239	129th RQW	129th RQW	1			
20	07/10/00	2000-OES0316	9 CST,144th FW	STARC, 144th FW			1	
21	07/18/00	2000-OES4053	144th FW	144th FW			1	
22	07/20/00	2000-OES0363	129th RQW	129th RQW	1			
23	07/27/00	2000-OES4057	146th AW	146th AW			1	
24	01/03/01	2001-OES0600	144th FW/EOD	144th FW			1	
25	02/01/01	2001-OES0633	144th FW/EOD	144th FW			1	
26	04/03/01	2001-OES0727	144th FW	144th FW			1	
27	04/12/01	2001-OES0754	129th RQW	129th RQW	1			
28	05/23/01	2001-OES0811	129th RQW	129th RQW	1			
29	06/10/01	2001-OES0843	144th FW/CD	144th FW	1			
30	06/22/01	2001-OES0876	129th RQW	129th RQW	1			
				1999	3	6	6	1
				2000	3	0	4	0
				2001	4	0	3	0
				Air Guard Totals	**10**	**6**	**13**	**1**
				Percent of Total Missions	**33.3%**	**20.0%**	**43.4%**	**3.3%**

Source: California National Guard Data Capture and Response Information Management System for the period January 1,1999, through August 15, 2001.

* The following units also provided response: STARC, 1-185, 3-140, 579 ENG, 2668 TC, A/297 TC, 79 PSB, 422 QM, 115th TC, 162nd CCG, 234 CCS.

† The following senior commands also provided response: 40th ID, STARC, 162nd CCG, 234 CCS.

‡ The following units also provided response: STARC, 40th ID, 1-185, HHC 3rd BDE, 9 CST, 40 MP, 1-184, 100th TC, 49 TC, 670 MP, 870 MP, 115th TC, C/297 TC, 162nd CCG, 146th AW, 129th RQW, 649 MP, 270 MP, A/5-19th SF, 79 PSB.

§ The following senior commands also provided response: STARC, 162nd CCG, 146th AW, 129th RQW.

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Agency's comments provided as text only.

Departments of the Army and the Air Force
Office of the Adjutant General
California National Guard
9800 Goethe Road P.O. Box 269101
Sacramento, CA 95826-9101

February 4, 2002

Ms. Elaine M. Howle
California State Auditor
Bureau of State Audits
555 Capitol Mall, Suite 300
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Ms. Howle:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Bureau of State Audits draft report titled, The California National Guard: To Better Respond to State Emergencies and Disasters, It Can Improve Its Aviation Maintenance and Its Processes to Prepare for and Assess State Missions.

The Audit Team conducted a professional and thorough review, and identified areas where we can improve our support to the State and our response to federal mobilizations. This reply will discuss our overall plan to address those areas identified in the audit report. Our detailed response to each recommendation described in the report is included in the attachment to this letter.

As the report identifies, The California National Guard is the most tasked Guard in the nation. We also depend on aviation support, both Army and Air National Guard aircraft, to respond to most state emergencies. We will, therefore, develop a procedure to significantly improve the operational readiness rate of all our aircraft. We will work with the National Guard Bureau to increase the number of available aviation mechanics, and improve the flow of aircraft repair parts. The detailed action for this issue is also shown in the attachment to this letter.

The California National Guard is organized to support the National Command Authority's National Defense Plan. This force is available to the State when not in a federal status. However, over the last 10 years, the California Guard has participated in an increasing number of federal deployments, reducing the forces available for state emergencies. To correct this issue, the California National Guard is currently in the process of working with Senator Diane Feinstein's office. We plan to develop a procedure for insuring that sufficient force structure remains to respond to state emergencies, during federal deployments.

We are also in the process of reorganizing our Joint Operations Center to insure that we improve our process for reviewing and updating our various emergency operations plans. This procedure will insure that improvements identified in our After Action Reviews are implemented and the results tracked.

The process in which Unit Readiness Reports are prepared will be greatly improved. Our Army Guard Personnel, and Operations/Training Offices will work closely with our field units in order to provide reports that contain accurate personnel data and are submitted on a timely basis.

If more information is needed related to the Military Department's responses in the attachment, Colonel Charles Clifton remains the point of contact at 854-3699.

Sincerely,

(*Signed by Paul D. Monroe, Jr.)*

Paul D. Monroe, Jr.
Major General
The Adjutant General

Attachment

The following Military Department responses are provided for each of the sixteen auditor recommendations included in the draft audit report.

Auditor Recommendation No. 1:

Improve its data tracking and collection to determine why helicopters are not operational, then take appropriate steps to correct the identified deficiencies.

Military Department Response:

A systematic program will be implemented by April 30, 2002, which will track, by aircraft serial number, the primary reason an aircraft is non-operational. In addition, the program will identify the actions being taken to mitigate systemic problems, and the resources needed by, and available to Flight Facility Commanders to repair the aircraft. These Commanders are being directed to be personally and decisively involved in tracking the inoperability of their respective assigned aircraft.

Auditor Recommendation No. 2:

Re-assess the feasibility of distance learning opportunities for its maintenance personnel, including those previously coordinated with the U.S. Army, until the U.S. Army makes available training slots for new recruits.

Military Department Response:

The State Headquarters Aviation Office is requesting the National Guard Bureau to conduct two distance-learning courses on the UH-60 helicopter in order to train the maintenance mechanics at both of the Guard's flight facilities in California. Currently, there is not a distance learning program offered by NGB for the CH-47 helicopters, however, the Aviation Office Director will pursue the development of such a course.

Auditor Recommendation No. 3:

Determine how frequently it uses its full-time flight facility personnel in fire fighting missions and set a standard that will not negatively affect the Army Guard's ability to meet helicopter maintenance demands.

Military Department Response:

Response time required for helicopter support during wildfires, and search and rescue missions is very short, and as result, the first responders are usually full-time aircrews and mechanics. After the missions have been underway for an extended period, part-time military Guardsmen are substituted for the full-time personnel. Beginning with the next major mission, the Aviation Office will begin tracking the employment of full-time versus part-time personnel. All aviation personnel, full-time or part-time, are always utilized in accordance with established qualifications and training.

Auditor Recommendation No. 4:

Instruct the 40th ID and the personnel office to work together during the USR process to ensure units in the 40th ID report accurate personnel data.

Military Department Response:

The Army Guard Personnel Office at State Headquarters and the staff of the 40th Infantry Division have been directed to physically work together to review and validate the Division units' personnel data input to the quarterly Unit Status Reports.

Auditor Recommendation No. 5:

Train appropriate staff on how to complete the USR.

Military Department Response:

Army Regulation No. 220-1 is the document which provides instructions on how to prepare the quarterly Unit Status Reports, a document of which is available to all Army Guard units and higher. Beginning with the preparation of the next quarterly USR's, the State Headquarters Operations and Training Office will provide training to field command personnel on the proper procedures to complete USR's. This Headquarters will also issue a letter to all Army Guard Commanders emphasizing the importance of accurate Unit Status Report data, and will direct any irregularities be corrected at each unit's higher headquarters.

Auditor Recommendation No. 6:

Strengthen its USR validation procedures to ensure that units adhere to U.S. Army regulations when they report USR data. For example, the personnel office should revise its validation procedures to ensure units do not cross-level or include ineligible soldiers in the USR, such as those discharged or pending discharge, and those gone inactive or AWOL.

Military Department Response:

Instructions in Army Regulation 220-1 were changed in November 2001 which now prohibits Commanders to report cross leveling of soldiers in their Unit Status Reports; prior to the regulation change, cross leveling was not prohibited. Beginning with the next quarterly Unit Status Reports in April 2002, the Personnel Office will use all personnel reports and data in that Office and work with the Army Guard field commands to ensure ineligible soldiers are not included in USR's.

Auditor Recommendation No. 7:

Correct deficiencies in its discharge database and continually update this database to ensure that it reflects soldiers who have been discharged.

Military Department Response:

The Army Guard personnel database at State Headquarters has been determined to be accurate, however, secondary reports generated from the database such as those that show soldier discharges, and were reviewed by the auditors, were found to contain inaccuracies. In the future, when secondary reports are drawn from the personnel database, checks and balances against the primary database will be conducted to ensure accuracy of the reports.

Auditor Recommendation No. 8:

By March 31, 2002, develop a system to continually identify requisite training for its Emergency Operations Center staff.

Military Department Response:

Six training courses offered at the National Interagency Civil Military Institute and the California Specialized Training Institute, both of which are located at Camp San Luis Obispo, have been identified to give military support to civil authority training to the Operations Center staff. A survey of courses already attended will be completed by March 31, 2002, and an annual review of courses offered will be conducted.

Auditor Recommendation No. 9:

Ensure that Operations Center staff receive the requisite training in military support to civil authority in order to improve their response to state missions.

Military Department Response:

The Plans and Operations Executive Officer, with approval from the Director, will be responsible for scheduling Operations Center staff members to attend the appropriate training courses.

Auditor Recommendation No. 10:

By March 31, 2002, establish and maintain a system to track the training activities that Operations Center staff attend.

Military Department Response:

By March 31, 2002,the Plans and Operations Executive Officer and the Senior Operations Sergeant will prepare and use a form to keep track of all Operations Center staff members attending military support to civil authority training courses. These forms for each individual will be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Auditor Recommendation No. 11:

Include pre-mission activities, such as broadcast media source monitoring, Internet Website reviews and queries, and communication with other emergency response agencies such as OES, in the Operations Center's SOP manual by June 30, 2002.

Military Department Response:

Instructions for monitoring pre-mission activities will be added to the Operations Center SOP manual by April 30, 2002.

Auditor Recommendation No. 12:

Develop and implement a system to review and update its state emergency plans annually as the NGB requires.

Military Department Response:

The Chief of Plans in the Plans and Operations Directorate will develop, implement, and monitor a matrix that will show the month and year that each emergency plan is reviewed and/or updated, and when the plan is forwarded to the National Guard Bureau.

Auditor Recommendation No. 13:

Review all state emergency plans by June 30, 2002.

Military Department Response:

All state emergency plans will be reviewed, and updated if necessary, by June 30, 2002.

Auditor Recommendation No. 14:

Update the Operations Center's SOP manual to ensure that staff establish an exit strategy at the start of each mission.

Military Department Response:

The Operations Center SOP has been revised to include this recommendation. This will be accomplished by discussions and coordination between the Military Department and OES, and monitoring daily situation reports.

Auditor Recommendation No. 15:

Establish a process to track and implement corrective action as appropriate on After Action Reports (AAR) recommendations, ensuring quick action to correct previous mistakes.

Military Department Response:

The Operations Center SOP has been changed to require the full-time Assistant Operations Officer in the Center to track the implementation of recommendations contained in after action reports, and also track those recommendations not implemented and the reasons therefor.

Auditor Recommendation No. 16:

Ensure that it completes its study by June 2002, so that it can identify better tracking systems for all of its actions and activities.

Military Department Response:

This recommendation refers to a Management Study directed by the Adjutant General and currently under development for the entire Military Department that will identify solutions for the following objectives, the implementation of which will be accomplished by June 30, 2002.

a. Track key activities in the Army, Air, and Joint Staff Divisions at State Headquarters.
b. Track critical resources.
c. Track progress on goals and objectives.
d. Establish performance baselines.
e. Capture lessons learned.
f. Provide “real time” reporting.
g. Develop a system that is simple to implement and administer.

cc: Members of the Legislature
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Milton Marks Commission on California State
Government Organization and Economy
Department of Finance
Attorney General
State Controller
State Treasurer
Legislative Analyst
Senate Office of Research
California Research Bureau
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