

# TROOPS Continued from page A1 Soldiers forced into jobs they're not trained for

ther unit this spring.  
"Every time I'm ready to ...  
et in tune with our wartime  
aining, I have to give guys  
p," Britton said. "Eventually,  
opefully, they'll all come back  
me."

His experience is nearly un-  
rual among the hundreds of  
ational Guard and reserve  
units that have deployed over-  
eas since the invasion of Iraq.  
hey were utterly unprepared  
to fight a major war because the  
entagon had understaffed and  
underfunded them for years,  
defense experts said.

About 88 percent of the state-  
ide Guard units are under-  
nipped for their missions do-  
estically and overseas, Lt.  
en H. Steven Blum, chief of  
e National Guard Bureau,  
aid last year.

The figure is probably  
igher now, said Arnold Puna-  
o, a retired Marine Corps ma-  
jor general from San Diego,  
let's chairman of the federal  
ommission on the National  
uard and Reserves, which  
esterday issued its final report  
o Congress urging drastic  
hanges to improve their pre-  
aredness.

"They are at their lowest  
tage of readiness in decades,"  
unaro said. "They'll continue  
o be less and less ready."

San Diego war veterans on Monday, February 11, 2008 at 6:30 a.m. in Committee Room 2-145 of Metropolitan's headquarters building at 700 North Alameda Street, Los Angeles, California before the Business and Finance Committee of Metropolitan's Board of Directors.

Public comments are encouraged. Information about the proposed rates and charges may be requested from the Board Executive Secretary at (213) 217-6291.

UT 29286 - 2/1/08 & 2/9/08



Sgt. Alex Wallgren, 33, of Alpine voluntarily transferred to the 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment for his second tour in Iraq. Howard Lipin / Union-Tribune photos

its 170 members were brought  
together from 72 units across  
California.

"We have absolutely piece-  
mealed our forces to death,"  
said John Goben of the Na-  
tional Guard Association of the  
United States in Washington,  
D.C., which lobbies on behalf  
of reserve forces.

For decades, federal leaders  
viewed the Guard as a force to  
be called up for war duty only in  
the direst of national emergen-  
cies, Congress and the Pentag-



# Guard, reserves ill-suited against attack, panel says

By Paul M. Krawzak  
COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — A com-  
mission charged with beefing  
up National Guard and reserve  
forces warned yesterday that  
the United States is hardly  
ready to deal with a major ter-  
rorist attack on its home soil.

Arnold Punaro of San Diego,  
a retired Marine major general  
who leads the Commission on  
the National Guard and Re-  
serves, blasted the U.S. North-  
ern Command for its lack of  
preparation.

"We looked at their plan. It's  
totally unacceptable. You  
couldn't move a Girl Scout unit  
with the kind of planning  
they're doing now," said Puna-  
ro, executive vice president for  
Science Applications Interna-  
tional Corp. in San Diego.

The Northern Command is  
the military authority charged  
with protecting the United  
States. In a statement respond-  
ing to Punaro and his fellow  
commissioners, the agency's  
officials pledged to work close-  
ly with Defense Secretary Robert  
Gates to "enhance our na-  
tion's ability to anticipate and  
conduct homeland defense and  
civil support missions."

Like the Northern Com-  
mand, Guard and reserve  
forces are vastly unprepared to  
help defend the nation because  
the federal government has ne-  
glected them for years, Punaro

reserve units are ill-equipped  
for their missions because they  
lack service members, money  
and other resources.

At the same time, the com-  
missioners said, these troops  
are more indispensable than ever  
in light of the heightened  
need for troops overseas and  
the ongoing threat of a terrorist  
attack in the United States.

"We've got a great military,  
but it's got a lot of problems in  
manpower and equipment,"  
said Dan McKinnon of San Die-  
go, one of 12 members on the  
commission.

The new report contains 95  
suggestions for making the  
Guard and reserves more sus-  
tainable. These include calls for  
developing a more attractive  
pay and benefits system, boost-  
ing funding for equipment and  
training, clarifying the Defense  
Department's role in homeland  
security and creating a seam-  
less relationship between ac-  
tive-duty and reserve forces.

Stronger coordination is  
needed so state and federal au-  
thorities know who wields au-  
thority in a particular emergen-  
cy and what roles they would  
take on during each crisis, said  
Wade Rowley, a commissioner  
from Campo.

Changes in personnel poli-  
cies would cost hundreds of  
millions of dollars, the commis-  
sioners estimated. They didn't  
provide a price tag for all of  
their recommendations.

## U.S. Navy Announces Alternative Arrangements for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act and Requests Public Input



On January 15, 2008, the Department of the Navy accepted alternative arrangements, approved by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These alternative arrangements specifically address the use of mid-frequency active (MFA) sonar and its effects on marine mammals during Navy exercises in the Southern California (SOCAL) Operating Area. These exercises include Composite Training Unit Exercises (COMPTUEXs) and Joint Task Force Exercises (JTFEXs) scheduled to occur between January 15, 2008 and January 23, 2009. A Decision Memorandum documenting the Navy's acceptance of these alternative arrangements was published in the Federal Register on January 24, 2008.

Information on the Navy's proposals for the SOCAL Operating Area including the full text of the Decision Memorandum is available at [www.SOCALRangeComplexEIS.com](http://www.SOCALRangeComplexEIS.com).

The Navy will prepare a post-exercise assessment after each exercise. By this Notice, the Navy requests input from the public on the process for reviewing the post-exercise assessments. The Navy is also offering the public the opportunity to discuss the implementation of these alternative arrangements. Input on reviewing the post-exercise assessments and any requests to meet with Navy and CEQ representatives about the alternative arrangements may be submitted by contacting Mr. Alex Stone at (619) 545-8128 or in writing to:

Naval Air Station North Island  
Attn: Alex Stone, CPF Environmental  
McCain Boulevard, Building 676, Room 218  
San Diego, CA 92135

For more information about the  
Navy's Decision Memorandum,  
visit [www.SOCALRangeComplexEIS.com](http://www.SOCALRangeComplexEIS.com).

# China's transport networks disrupted after foul weather

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

BEIJING — After blizzards  
disrupted coal deliveries, acute  
electricity shortages across a  
 swath of central and southern  
China have exposed the fragility  
of transport networks in the  
world's fastest-growing major  
economy.

The snow and ice that led to  
chaos at transport hubs as up to  
200 million migrant workers  
and other travelers attempt to  
return home for the Lunar New  
Year festival next week have  
also restricted coal shipments  
along critical rail arteries feed-  
ing power stations in the south-  
east, China's densely populated  
manufacturing heartland.

Food prices are increasing in  
major cities including Beijing  
as distribution bottlenecks and  
bad weather hamper deliveries  
of vegetables and meat, the official  
Xinhua news agency re-  
ported yesterday.

The shortages are a remind-  
er that China's huge, intercon-  
nected economy and its 1.3 bil-  
lion people are increasingly  
vulnerable to even short-lived  
interruptions to the flow of  
goods and services.

Senior leaders, including  
Prime Minister Wen Jiabao,  
have visited train stations to as-  
sure frustrated travelers that  
the authorities are working to  
solve the transport delays.

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