

# Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

## Soldiers welcomed home after six-month deployment

### Happy Reunions

By Spc. Anna Pongo  
Assistant Editor

Tears of happiness and excitement fell from many eyes as a crowd eagerly waited for busses carrying their Soldiers to arrive.

The 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion was welcomed home by families and friends during a Dec. 17 ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters building on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Nebraska.

About 65 battalion Soldiers were surprised when they learned they would be returning home a couple months early from their six-month deployment to the Middle East.

"Welcome Home Lt. Zulkoski, you are my biggest craving" read a sign held by 1st Lt. Derek Zulkoski's wife, Nicole. The couple was only a week away from welcoming their first baby into the family.

"I wanted to put something on the sign about the pregnancy," she said. "If I embarrass him a little bit, more power to me."

In the seven months that Derek was away, Nicole was able to communicate with her husband via Facetime. But that didn't make the separation easy.

When the busses finally arrived, the months of separation were just a memory. "It's incredible being back," said Zulkos-

See REUNIONS on 5.



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

**Holiday Homecoming Craving:** Nicole Zulkoski receives a well-earned kiss and early Christmas present from her husband, 1st Lt. Derek Zulkoski, after he and approximately 60 other Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers from the 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion stepped off a bus at the Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb., after a six-month overseas deployment, Dec. 17. The Zulkoskis were expecting the arrival of their first son approximately a week after the welcome home event.

## Nebraska Guard selected to share new cyber team

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes  
State Public Affairs Officer

The Nebraska National Guard received some good news Dec. 9 when it was informed that National Guard Bureau had selected Nebraska as one of 23 states that will host seven new Army National Guard cyber protection teams. The Nebraska Army National Guard will be partnering with Missouri and Arkansas in stationing the 39-Soldier team.

Details about the size and location of the Nebraska portion of the team are not available at this time.

The CPT is expected to begin forming in fiscal year 2018 and become mission capable by fiscal year 2019.

According to Nebraska Army National Guard officials, the organization is excited to host one of the CPTs, which will bring a number of important and highly coveted capabilities into the state.

"Cyber is an emerging (military occupational specialty) in the Army," said Brig. Gen. Richard Dahlman, Nebraska deputy adjutant general and assistant adjutant general, Army. "It's a cutting-edge

technology and a cutting-edge profession. And it is very popular with new Soldiers."

"You can pick up a newspaper any day and you will read stories about various entities that are under some form of cyber attack," Dalman said. "Cyber (protection) is here to stay, so we're excited to grow this capability."

The Nebraska Army National Guard's chief information/information security officer, echoed those comments.

"It is a significant event for Nebraska," said Lt. Col. Gordon Bjorman. "Although we are going to be sharing the force structure with two other states, being recognized for cyber structure is significant for our future."

"The world of cyber defense is continuing to define itself," said Bjorman, adding that this is not unlike the world that existed when the Army Air Corps transitioned into the U.S. Army Force in light of the emerging aerial domain.

"To get in on the ground floor of this emerging cyber domain is significant for Nebraska. Many people want to think of us as flyover states,

See CYBER TEAM on 4.



Photo by Spc. Anna Pongo

**Christmas Train:** Brad and Tamara Steinman, along with their children, Kaidence, Emmett and Justis, talk with Santa during the BNSF Holiday Express train ride, Dec. 7.

## Meeting Santa, making friends

By Spc. Anna Pongo  
Assistant Editor

Excitement for the holidays bubbled over as the train rumbled down the track and Santa made his way down the aisle, handing out ribbon wrapped gold presents.

Approximately 350 military families shared a 90-minute round trip to Dorchester and back on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Holiday Express train the evening of Dec. 7.

In the eight years that the BNSF has sponsored the Holiday Express across the country, they have given

rides to about 20,000 military families.

After the trip, the BNSF announced their donation of \$10,000 to the Nebraska National Guard Foundation.

Since the first Holiday Express ride, they have donated over \$500,000 to local non-profit organizations.

Gov. Pete Ricketts thanked the service members and their families for their support after the train arrived back at the station.

"This is a great way to acknowledge the sacrifices these families make," he said. "We can't say thank you often enough."

## Beginning of Change

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock  
Editor

Following the November 2015 announcement that the Nebraska Army National Guard would transform the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, leaders of the Nebraska Military Department began working with Soldiers across to state to provide them new opportunities.

The restructuring impacts roughly 1,100 Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers throughout Nebraska. The changes are part of the much larger reorganization that is happening across the entire Army National Guard.

"The transformation allows for the disbursement of a variety of military jobs to multiple locations within the state; this increases opportunity and minimizes the drive time of many of our Soldiers," said Sgt. Maj. Wilfred Uhing, Nebraska state quota source manager and sergeant major of the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade.

The transformation plan was developed to provide Soldiers new opportunities from the time they enlist into the Nebraska Army National Guard until the time they retire without having to travel as extensively as they are currently.

"While the transformation can appear to be chaotic," said Uhing,

## Nebraska National Guard Transformation Series 1

"it will provide opportunities for Soldiers to select a position that may offer more opportunity or be more challenging."

Not only will the transformation help with retention across the state it will help with recruiting efforts as well, say Guard officials.

"From a recruiting perspective, there will be more diverse set of (military occupational specialties) in western Nebraska," Lt. Col. William Prusia, commander of Nebraska's Recruiting and Retention Battalion. "And retention falls in the same line."

"This is an exciting time for me as the commander of recruiting and retention," said Prusia. "I hope others look at it like this, too. It's a great opportunity for the Nebraska National Guard team we have now and the team we hope to gain."

Command Sgt. Maj. William Beiber, the command sergeant major of Recruiting and Retention Battalion, says communication is extremely important for recruiting and retention.

"We have to ensure the decision that Soldiers staying in or changing positions is worthwhile

for them to come to drill, look at the benefits that are being offered and always remember the Citizen-Soldier aspect of the Guard," said Beiber.

Changing job specialties with the new force structure plan is a great way for Soldiers to learn new job skills that can translate into the civilian world and help broaden their horizons, he added.

According to Uhing, some of the Soldiers in his unit have already come up to him regarding changes and schooling opportunities because they are looking forward to the new opportunities the Nebraska Army National Guard can offer them.

"Advancement, jobs, opportunities, schools and training are all included in this transformation as long as a Soldier can meet the Army standards," said Uhing. "If there is some work to do, get it done, use it as a lesson learned and use this as an example."

"Opportunity is everywhere; look down the road one year and figure out where you want to be," added Uhing. "Now, seize the opportunity and take yourself there."



Inside

**Nebraska transportation Soldiers compete for bragging rights**

See story and photos on 7.



**Nebraska Airmen support NATO training in Germany**

See story and photos on 3.

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# NEWS DIGEST

## ■Carter announces 12 weeks of paid maternity leave

WASHINGTON (DoD News) — The Defense Department is increasing military maternity leave and instituting other changes in an effort to support military families, improve retention and strengthen the force of the future, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said.

Women across the joint force can now take 12 weeks of fully paid maternity leave, Carter told reporters at the Pentagon. The 12-week benefit is double the amount of time for paid maternity leave from when he became defense chief nearly a year ago, he noted.

"This puts DoD in the top tier of institutions nationwide and will have significant influence on decision-making for our military family members," Carter said.

While being an incentive for attracting and retaining talent, the secretary said, the benefit also promotes the health and wellness of mothers through facilitating recovery and promoting feeding and bonding with the infant.

"Our calculation is quite simple: we want our people to be able to balance two of the most solemn commitments they can ever make: a commitment to serve their country and a commitment to start and support a family," he said.

The announcement builds on previously announced initiatives on strengthening the force of the future, he said. Those previous reforms, he added, included opening all remaining combat occupations to women.

## ■All military occupation positions now open to women

WASHINGTON (DoD News) — Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that beginning in January 2016, all military occupations and positions will be open to women, without exception.

For the first time in U.S. military history, as long as they qualify and meet specific standards, the secretary said women will be able to contribute to the Defense Department mission with no barriers at all in their way.

"They'll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry Soldiers into combat," Carter added. "They'll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers, and everything else that was previously open only to men."

Even more importantly, he said, the military services will be better able to harness the skills and perspectives that talented women have to offer.

Though more than 111,000 positions had opened to women in uniform since 2013 until today's announcement, Carter said, about 10 percent of military positions, nearly 220,000, had remained closed to women. These includ-

ed infantry, armor, reconnaissance, and some special operations units, the secretary said.

In a memorandum to the secretaries of all military departments and others, Carter directed the military services to open all military occupational specialties to women and to provide updated implementation plans for integrating women into the positions now open to them.

Carter said Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Paul Selva will oversee the decision's short-term implementation, ensure there are no unintended consequences to the joint force, and periodically update Carter and Dunford.

Implementation won't happen overnight, Carter said.

"Fully integrating women into all military positions will make the U.S. armed forces better and stronger, but there will be problems to fix and challenges to overcome," he said. "We shouldn't diminish that."

The military has long prided itself on being a meritocracy, where those who serve are judged only on what they have to offer to help defend the country, Carter said.

"That's why we have the finest fighting force the world has ever known," he added, "and it's one other way we will strive to ensure that the force of the future remains so, long into the future."

## ■Veteran unemployment rate lowest in nearly eight years

WASHINGTON (DoD News) — A concerted national effort to hire veterans, coupled with their sought-after essential skills training, likely had an effect on making October's veteran unemployment rate the lowest since April 2008, a Defense Department official said Nov. 30.

Susan S. Kelly, who leads DoD's Transition to Veterans Program Office, spoke to DoD News about the October Bureau of Labor Statistics Report published by the Labor Department, which indicated that veteran unemployment has been lower than the rate of nonveteran unemployment for 23 consecutive weeks. In October, the veteran unemployment rate stood at just 3.9 percent, while nonveteran unemployment was 5.4 percent.

Kelly said she believes the drop in veterans' unemployment stems from several factors, such as the economic upturn across the country, as well as the many layers of effort in the public and private sectors to hire veterans.

In addition, she said, employers are seeking the professional "essential skills" ingrained in every veteran.

"Employers have been telling us the last 18 months, 'We can train them in technical skills, but the (other skills) take years to develop,'" Kelly said.

Those "essential skills" include leadership,



## Canine Selfie

Photo by Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac

**Making Friends:** Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, the Nebraska National Guard adjutant general, poses for a picture with Buckley, whose human is Senior Master Sgt. Stuart Stofferahn of the Nebraska Air National Guard. Buckley and Stofferahn are volunteer teammates at Tabitha Health Care Services's Hospice program.

If you happen to take a picture or selfie with the adjutant general, we'd love to see it. Tag it with #withmyNETAG so we can find it. It may even get shared on the general's Facebook page.

ability to handle work stress, persistence, attention to detail, interpersonal skills, teamwork and team-building, oral and written communication, decision making, training people, supervising, critical thinking and project planning, she said, adding that the philosophy behind hiring veterans has evolved from the "right thing to do" to "the smart thing to do."

"We look at these skills as an asset for the workforce, but our veterans have an incredible amount of attributes that can be used in all aspects of community life," Kelly said. "They can be leaders, and in [those] I meet, I tell them to run for public office, because our nation needs leaders, and they have what it takes ... for the betterment of all of community life."

## ■TRICARE benefit expands to cover new hip surgery

WASHINGTON (DoD News) — Starting in January 2016, TRICARE beneficiaries with a diagnosis and referral will be eligible for surgical treatment of a hip condition called femoroacetabular impingement, or FAI, according to a TRICARE news release issued today.

The FAI surgery is the first treatment to be evaluated and approved under the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act's provisional coverage program, which allows

TRICARE to provide coverage for emerging treatments and technologies, the release said.

The hip condition can occur when the bones of the hip are abnormally shaped and therefore rub against each other and cause damage to the joint, the release said. Symptoms include pain in the hip or groin area, which limits or hinders mobility, the release added.

Starting on Jan. 1, eligible beneficiaries with FAI will be able to get the surgery from any TRICARE-authorized orthopedic surgeon. Costs will vary by plan, the release said, but will be lower when using network providers. The surgery must be pre-authorized by the beneficiary's regional contractor, which lets providers present additional information for review by TRICARE and its contract partners. There is no retroactive preauthorization or coverage prior to Jan. 1.

"TRICARE can now review emerging health care products and services that are not currently covered under the TRICARE program, but may provide a benefit to patients under a provisional coverage status," Dr. James Black, medical director for the clinical support division of the Defense Health Agency, said in the release. "We will evaluate other emerging treatments and technologies for consideration and make public announcements when additional ones are approved."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

## Special Emphasis Program Group hosts Community Day

**Learning more:** Sgt. 1st Class Christine Hytrek and Spc. Cheri Wadas learn more about the Enlisted Association of the National Guard during the Nebraska Military Department's Special Emphasis Program Group's community day, Jan. 13, at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb. In support of Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac's enduring priority to increase involvement in local communities, the Special Emphasis Program Group hosted the event to highlight Nebraska Military Department employees' volunteer work.

## Prairie Soldier

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Letters, articles, notices of events, photographs and art are welcome, but may be edited for clarity or brevity. Publication of any submission is at the discretion of the editor. Submissions can also be emailed to heidi.j.mcclintock.mil@mail.mil. All photos must be high resolution and include complete caption information.

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**Guiding the Boom:** Staff Sgt. Luciana Jarzynka, a Nebraska Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotanker boom operator, skillfully guides a refueling boom toward a NATO E-3A Sentry over northern Germany during a training mission, Dec. 2. Jarzynka was part of a Nebraska team of more than 20 Airmen from the 155th Air Refueling Wing based in Lincoln, Neb., who supported aircrew training operations at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

**In-Flight Training:** Turkish Captain, Basar Ozkan (right), pays careful attention as German Capt. Tobias Bathelt maneuvers his NATO E-3A Sentry behind a Nebraska Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotanker so he can practice air refueling on Dec. 2. Aircrew from the 155th Air Refueling Wing provided NATO pilots, stationed at Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base, Germany, with nearly two hours of training and 15 to 20 real-world boom-to-aircraft refueling contacts each training sortie, or aviation mission.

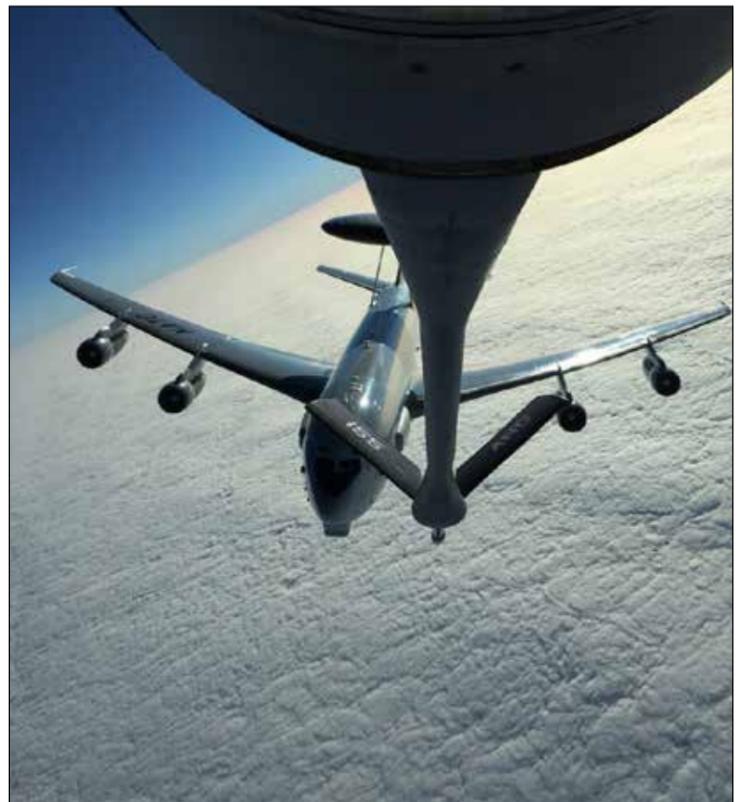


Photo courtesy of Staff. Sgt. Luciana Jarzynka

**A Beautiful View:** A NATO E-3A Sentry positions itself to be refueled behind a Nebraska Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotanker, Dec. 2. Airmen from the 155th Air Refueling Wing, based in Lincoln, Neb., supported the NATO training mission in Geilenkirchen, Germany Nov. 22 to Dec. 4.

## Nebraska Airmen support NATO training

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton  
Staff Writer

Airmen from the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing provided valuable air refueling training for NATO E-3A pilots assigned to the NATO E-3A Component in Germany, Nov. 22-Dec. 4.

A team of more than 20 pilots, boom operators, maintainers and support specialists helped the 155th ARW fulfill one of its two annual NATO mission commitments in Germany by training with NATO's Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) crews. While there, the Airmen – along with two KC-135R Stratotankers – provided valuable air refueling training for NATO pilots.

Even though the NATO pilots stationed in Germany have experience refueling in the air, most have no experience with the AWACS prior to being stationed at Geilenkirchen, said German Lt. Col. Frank Bareither, an instructor pilot and evaluator pilot in the NATO E-3A component at Geilenkirchen.

"Doing AWACS refueling here is like a blank sheet of paper," said Bareither. "To get (the pilots) qualified, the Air National Guard is required. Otherwise we would not be able to do air refueling training here. Without the Nebraska Air National Guard's contribution we would not be able to do our real-world mission."

"I found the Nebraska aircrew to be very supportive and high quality aircrew," said Bareither. "They are very accommodating and it is fun to work with them."

NATO and the Air National Guard's workhorse tanker community have maintained a continuous partnership to support aircrew training for more than two decades. Air National Guard refueling wings from across the United States cycle through Geilenkirchen Air Base on an annual basis. The Nebraska Air National Guard has participated in the training mission for over 20 years.

Working with the NATO E-3A component provided Nebraska Air Guard members the opportunity to train with multinational aircrew from 14 of NATO's 28 nations: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Romania and the United States.

According to the Nebraskans, it's a win-win situation for everyone involved.

"It's a learning experience for everyone," said Staff Sgt. Luciana Jarzynka, a boom operator from the 173rd Air Refueling Squadron based in Lincoln, Nebraska.

For Nebraska, each training sortie, or aviation mission, is nearly three hours long. Two of those are spent making between 15 and 20 contacts with the receiver aircraft.

During that time the tanker transfers about 40,000 pounds of fuel at a rate of 6,600 pounds per minute, she said. "After two hours you are exhausted and you know the receiver pilots are as well."

Support personnel from the 155th Maintenance Squadron also play a vital role in the mission ensuring each aircraft is refueled, inspected and ready for flight. Crew chiefs and specialists from hydraulics, electrical, communication and navigation, guidance and control, engine shop and supply were on hand to take care of any maintenance issues. "Our role is to launch, recover, refuel and inspect the KC-135 for training missions while assisting the back shop personnel with unscheduled maintenance to the aircraft," said Master Sgt. Steve Fisher, a crew chief who has been on the Geilenkirchen mission three times.

In addition to providing valuable training for aircrew and maintenance teams, the NATO mission gives Nebraska Airmen a chance interact with the locals, which is a valuable contribution to the NATO mission, said George Schmitz, mayor of Geilenkirchen and former journalist with longstanding ties to the base.

"Noise pollution from the E-3A is what most people associate the NATO air base with. Military personnel including Air National Guard members who come to Geilenkirchen to eat or shop in one of its many shops add a human element to the equation. We appreciate the Air National Guard and welcome them to our town anytime," he said.

Nebraska Air National Guard personnel will return for another training mission this coming summer.

NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen is located near Geilenkirchen, Germany, and is the main operating base of the NATO E-3A Component—one of two operational elements of the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

**On Ground:** A Nebraska Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotanker sits at Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base, Germany, before a NATO training mission. During the mission, Aircrew from the 155th Air Refueling Wing provided NATO pilots with nearly two hours of training and 15 to 20 real-world boom-to-aircraft refueling contacts.



Photo by Spc. Anna Pongo

**I Solemnly Swear:** Warrant Officer Candidates Joshua Blomstedt, Jeffery Daniels, Shane Harsh, Alisha Kelly and John Langley raise their hands as they repeat the warrant officer oath of office during a ceremony at Camp Ashland, Neb., on Sept. 27.

# Learning Leadership

## Warrant Officers graduate from three phase course

By Spc. Anna Pongo  
Assistant Editor

**F**ive Soldiers graduated from Warrant Officer Candidate School on Sept. 27 during a ceremony at Camp Ashland.

Warrant Officer Candidates Jeffery Daniels, Alisha Kelly, Shane Harsh, John Langley and Joshua Blomstedt, together with their families and friends, celebrated their graduation.

The newest warrant officers began their three-phase course back in April. This ceremony was the culmination of a lot of hard work ranging from ruck marching to classroom work to the Army Physical Fitness Test.

According to the graduates, the course helped them realize their individual dreams.

"I wanted to become a warrant officer so I could stay in my field, lead, and make changes at a higher level," said Warrant Officer Shane Harsh with 1057th Transportation Company. "You become that technical expert."

Warrant Officer Candidate School has three phases. The first phase was completed online before any of the WOC drills. Phase two was six months of drills consisting of

ruck marches, a physical readiness training test, community outreach and a lot of academics, said Warrant Officer Alisha Kelly, now with Information Systems at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln. Phase three was a two-week annual training at Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

For phase three, the candidates hit the ground running. Each day they got up at 4:30 a.m. to conduct physical readiness training. Throughout the day they participated in constant training.

"I learned a lot more than I thought I would as far as leadership development," said Warrant Officer Jeffery Daniels, now with Information Systems at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln.

Brig. Gen. Scott Gronewald, assistant adjutant general, Joint Staff, gave the candidates words of advice he had picked up after years of working closely with warrant officers.

First, he reminded them to always stay up to date on everything because they are the commander's technical experts.

Second he said to get out of their comfort zones and volunteer for things. "That's the way that you grow."

The third piece of advice he gave

to the candidates was to continue pursuing their education. "Round out yourself as a person. It inspires those around you," he said. "Learning is a lifelong opportunity."

Fourth, Gronewald asked the candidates to for full commitment. "In taking this oath you are committing yourself to a better Army, to a better National Guard, a better unit."

Last, he reminded them to have fun. "Don't take yourself too seriously. You'll be responsible for a lot of activities, a lot of organizations," Gronewald said. "Make sure you take that time for fun."

For some of the new graduates, becoming a warrant officer is about fun. "Ever since I was a little kid I wanted to be a pilot," said Warrant Officer Josh Bloomstead. "And I saw that warrant officer was a route that I could take... And some of the warrant officers that I've met really like their job. They're really good people and they inspire me."

"I wanted to give more than what my rank allowed me to at the time," said Daniels. "I was an E-4. I was in charge of some things, but I wanted to reach out and have more influence over things that are happening in my unit and things that are happening in the Guard."



Photo by Spc. Anna Pongo

**Allegiance And Fidelity:** New citizens raise their hands before taking the Oath of Allegiance to the United States during a Dec. 7 naturalization ceremony at the Joint Force Headquarters building in Lincoln, Neb.

# Celebrating Diversity

## Nebraska Military Department hosts naturalization ceremony to welcome newest citizens

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock  
Editor

**T**he Nebraska Military Department celebrated diversity and inclusion by hosting a naturalization ceremony for over 45 applicants from more than 16 countries.

The ceremony took place at the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters building in Lincoln, Neb., on Dec. 7.

This was the second time the Nebraska Military Department, in conjunction with the Special Emphasis Program Group, hosted a naturalization ceremony. They hosted the first in May 2014.

"Hosting a naturalization ceremony brings diversity to the forefront of National Guard members' views," said Lavonne Rosenthal, state equal employment manager for the Nebraska Military Department. "We can talk about diversity, but a naturalization ceremony gives us the realistic view."

"We can see the differences and hear the different countries listed, yet we're all United States citizens which is the unifying factor," added Rosenthal.

The Special Emphasis Pro-

gram Group works with leadership and management in carrying out their joint responsibility to identify barriers to the recruitment and advancement of special emphasis groups, devise solutions and draft plans to implement the solutions.

The SEP Group made it possible for the ceremony to take place by working with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service - Omaha Field Office.

United States Magistrate Judge Cheryl R. Zward administered the oath of citizenship.

To tie everything together, the guest speaker of the event was Capt. Mujahid Kuwa, a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard who was previously naturalized.

Also, Pfc. Pascal Bambara, 623rd Engineering Company and Guowei Pan, the husband of 1st Lt. Jessica Pan of the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, received their citizenship during the ceremony.

According to SEP Group members, it was a great to get Nebraska service members involved with the community and support such an important part of many people's lives.

## CYBER TEAM continued from page 1.

but the silicone prairie actually has a robust information technology workforce."

That need to grow the nation's ability to defend its critical cyber infrastructure were the force behind the need to build cyber protection teams.

According to 1st Lt. Vicki Kramer, Nebraska National Guard government relations officer, the cyber mission analysis mandated by the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act specified that Army National Guard CPTs would conduct defensive cyberspace operations for under-resourced cyber requirements and possess the capability to support the Defense Department's defense support of Civil Authorities or homeland defense missions in Title 10 or Title 32 status. If authorized they will support other appropriate state missions determined by the governor in state active duty status.

The teams will consist of highly-trained Soldiers experienced in network and systems support, computer incident response, advanced systems forensic concepts, network investigations, network penetration testing and cyber-based counter-intelligence.

Along with the Nebraska, Missouri and Arkansas announcement, National Guard Bureau also announced its plan to activate additional cyber units to be split between 20 other states.

"Our goal for cyber-defense is to train, equip and provide highly skilled forces responsive to the needs of the nation," said Gen. Frank Grass, chief of the National Guard Bureau. "Working with the Army and Air Force, our cyber squadrons and teams will provide trained and ready Soldiers and Airmen to support requirements established by the services and U.S. Cyber Command."

Seven new Army Guard Cyber Protection Teams will be activated across Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin. They join four previously announced Army Guard CPTs spread across California, Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan and Ohio.

In partnership with the Air Force, the Air Guard will activate four new Cyber Operations Squadrons in Idaho, Michigan, Texas and Virginia.

Additionally, a cyber Information Surveillance Reconnaissance squadron will stand up in California and a cyber ISR group in Massachusetts.

The current roll out of Guard cyber units is part of laying out a larger foundation for future cyber forces scheduled for activation, say National Guard officials.

"This is the beginning," said Col.

Kelly Hughes, chief of the Space and Cyber Warfare Operations Division at the Air National Guard Readiness Center. "This is a massive amount of force structure the Guard has laid into this mission, but this is just the first layer."

Activating cyber units in these states allows for the Guard to fulfill Army and Air Force cyber missions while positioning cyber protection units in each of the 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency response regions.

"The focus is to get that presence in as many states as possible and especially making sure we have all the FEMA regions covered," added Hughes about the current activation plans.

Ensuring each FEMA region has coverage ties into the Guard's mission to respond to large-scale emergencies and disasters at home, said Col. Timothy T. Lunderman, director of joint cyber operations at NGB, adding that cyber teams and squadrons are another asset governors can use at the state level should they be needed.

"If we have never met before, and I come knocking on your door and say, 'I'm here to help you with a cyber incident,' you'd close the door," said Lunderman. "The Guard is in all 50 states, three territories and the District of Columbia. We have the capability and relationships already established. If state and local officials need help they're

more likely to turn to the folks they know. The people they know are the Guard."

And like other Guard assets, cyber protection units—whose members only operate on DoD and government networks, including those of state governments—can be used in multi-state settings through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, said Lunderman.

While each state may not yet be home to a cyber protection team or squadron, Guard elements in each state, territory and the District of Columbia already have a computer network defense team or other cyber protection assets assigned, said Hughes.

"The Army National Guard has laid computer network defensive teams into every state," he said. "Between the Army Guard and the Air Guard, there is a level of cyber protection capability in each state."

Armed with civilian experience in cyber security and network engineering, Hughes said, National Guard cyber specialists are able to provide robust capability. "That's the kind of thing you can get with the Guard," he said. "Our longevity and knowledge is hard to match. That is what makes the Guard great."

It's also a mission that Guard members can easily transition from state to federal status.

"We can do this mission from anywhere," said Hughes. "We don't

have to physically relocate to do it. As long as we have the connectivity, we can operate from home station."

Guard cyber protection units are part of larger, service-specific requirements to provide cyber defense capabilities, explained Lunderman, adding that those requirements have been spread throughout the active, Guard and reserve components.

Each cyber team member, regardless of component, trains to the same service standard.

The future of cyber defense is open-ended.

"When you look at the way the Internet was designed and built, nobody could even fathom what it has become today and it's really even harder to think what it might become tomorrow," said Lunderman.

The need for cyber defense assets is expected to increase.

Dahlman said, "We already have a level of cyber capability in Nebraska with our current network defense team. The CPT will only enhance our capabilities."

"I think that ore teaming with Missouri and Arkansas is going to be a great strength," Dahlman added. "In fact, I think we're going to surpass all expectations and that this will be a great partnership that's going to endure for a long time."

**(Editor's Note: Portions of this article are from a National Guard Bureau news release.)**



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

**Warm Welcome:** Families and friends of 192nd Law and Order Detachment Soldiers hold up signs while waiting for the bus to arrive in Nebraska City, Neb. during the welcome home ceremony on Dec. 21.

# Home for Holidays

Families welcome military police Soldiers home from deployment

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock  
Editor

After spending 10 months deployed to the Persian Gulf region, 45 Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers made it home safely just in time for the holiday season.

Family, friends, fellow Soldiers and citizens of Nebraska came together to celebrate the homecoming of Soldiers from the Nebraska City-based 192nd Law and Order Detachment at the community's Middle School in Nebraska City, Nebraska, on December 21.

During the 192nd's time overseas it was responsible for conducting internal law and order operations and other support functions.

This included providing 24/7 security to the base they were on in addition to conducting and providing security checks, investigations, escorting currency, cargo and per-

sonnel, protective services, physical security and much more.

According to Lt. Eric Otte, officer-in-charge of the 192nd, he couldn't be more proud of the Soldiers.

"These men and women have done a phenomenal job," said Otte. "You should be proud of them. Their families have done a phenomenal job without them as well."

In attendance at the ceremony were Lt. Gov. Mike Foley, U.S. Senator Deb Fischer and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general.

Fischer thanked the Soldiers for their contributions overseas and their continued readiness to protect the United States.

"You played a very critical role where you served in the Persian Gulf," said Fischer. "You protected the service members and thousands of American families."

According to the members of the unit, they were excited to be home in time for the holidays to spend

with their families.

"It's wonderful to be home. I missed (my kids) so much," said Master Sgt. Jesse Bilttoft, operations noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the 192nd. "I missed the chaos of everyday life."

Bilttoft's girlfriend, Claire Saylor, said it's great to have him home.

"The kids missed him so much," said Saylor. "We can't wait to do things as a family again."

Sgt. Zachary Spurgeon echoed that sentiment.

"It's the best feeling in the world to be home in time for Christmas," said Spurgeon, who was finally able to see his daughter who was born during the unit's deployment. "It really is."

Otte said there was one more mission for his unit to perform.

"We are ready once more," said Otte. "We are ready to rejoice and rejoin our families and our friends."

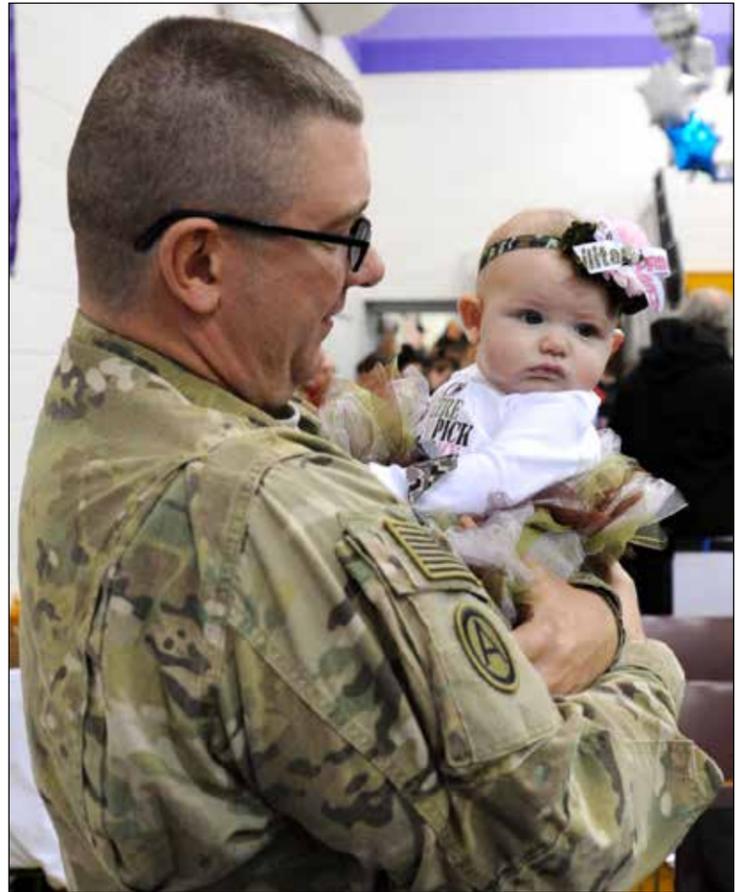


Photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

**Awaited Hugs:** Sgt. Aaron Wattenbach, a member of the 192nd Law and Order Detachment, holds his daughter during his unit's welcome home ceremony, Dec. 21, in Nebraska City, Neb.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

**Congratulations:** Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac presents Master Sgt. Rachel Stafford, noncommissioned-officer-in-charge of the 192nd Law and Order Detachment, with a coin for her leadership during the unit's deployment to the Persian Gulf.



Photo by Spc. Anna Pongo

**Wait Well Worth It:** Josie Tennant welcomes her boyfriend, Spc. Brain Froshbell, home after 10 months of separation.



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

**Welcome Home:** Family and friends of the Soldiers of the 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion gather during a Dec. 17 ceremony to welcome their Soldiers home from a six-month deployment.

## REUNIONS continued from page 1.

ki after the numerous hugs, kisses and tears had been shared. "It's unbelievable."

"I'm just so excited to finally see him," said his wife. "It's been a long time coming."

According to the Soldiers' commander, 1st Lt. Gregory Graham, he was proud of his Soldiers and their families for all they accomplished.

"I'd like to thank all the families for all your support," said Graham. "It's very obvious, living with these guys, living with your family members for the last year, that everybody has a supportive home and we couldn't have done it without you. Thanks for everything, all your guys' support for me. I couldn't have done it without you guys and welcome back."

While deployed, the Soldiers assigned to Grand Island's Company B were responsible for utilizing their CH-47 Chinook helicopters

to provide for the aerial movement of troops, supplies and equipment for maneuver, and supporting the U.S. military and allied operations.

The members of Lincoln's Company C utilized their UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopters to conduct aeromedical evacuation support operations.

The Soldiers from Companies D and E were responsible for providing maintenance and fuel support.

During the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, took a moment to express his thanks to the Soldiers returning home.

"All Nebraskans are grateful for what you do for the state and for your nation and your willingness to go, not just for this deployment, but for many of you time and time again to keep this nation safe," said Bohac. "It is indeed a big honor to have you back here in Nebraska."

## Nebraska Air National Guard refueling wing earns 12th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes  
State Public Affairs Officer

The Nebraska Air National Guard's Lincoln-based 155th Air Refueling Wing made history again when it was named the recipient of the 2015 U.S. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

This marks the 12th time in the unit's nearly 70 year history that it has earned the prestigious national award. The award covers the time period of Sept. 1, 2012, through Aug. 31, 2014.

"The dedication and commitment of these honored organizations enable the Air National Guard to continue to fulfill its commitment to the missions and the defense of America," said Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III, director of the Air National Guard, in making the announcement. The 155th Air Refueling Wing is one of 34 Air National Guard wings that were selected to receive the award this year.

"Congratulations to the members of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing for earning yet another award and adding to your illustrious legacy of outstanding service to our state and nation," said Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts. "The outstanding service to which you and your families have continually dedicated yourselves exemplifies why Nebraska is such a great place to live."

In earning the award, the

155th Air Refueling Wing was lauded for a number of accomplishments, including:

- Flying 1,657 sorties while offloading 1,518,703 gallons of fuel to U.S. and Coalition aircraft;
  - Maintaining a strength of 101 percent and a retention rate of 89.5 percent, which included an "astounding" 108 accessions over the two-year span;
  - Deploying 429 Nebraska Air National Guard Airmen to 26 separate locations including U.S. Central Command and U.S. Pacific Command bases.
  - Aided in the movement of 96 fallen service members, which involved the coordination of dignified transfers to ensure that the fallen service members were returned to their homes with the highest honor;
  - Supported numerous national-level exercises;
  - Provide significant support to neighboring communities through such activities as the Lincoln Public Schools Science Fair, the annual Thunder Run, Habitat for Humanity, the annual Cornhusker State Games, the state-wide Nose Art Program, Salvation Army Bell Ringers Program, Special Olympics, the National Guard Marathon and numerous other activities;
  - Extraordinary results following a number of separate inspections;
  - Being named the 2012 Outstanding Tanker Unit of the Year;
  - Numerous other unit and individual awards.
- According to Col. James "Bob"



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

**Colors:** Col. James Stevenson salutes Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac during a ceremony in which the 155th Air Refueling Wing receives its 12th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

Stevenson, the current commander of the 155th Air Refueling Wing, the organization is extremely proud to have earned another Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. "This award is simply outside validation of what we already know. Twelve of these awards is a little unprecedented, but when you have a standard, and you consistently perform to that standard, it's the only possible result and shows that the Nebraska Air National Guard is made up of top notch people doing great things for their state and nation," said Stevenson.

"Most Nebraskans and the majority of Americans don't realize that the Guard is in the fight day to day, overseas against ISIL. They also don't realize that their Guard is ready to answer the call here at home if tragedy strikes," he added. "We're here, we're ready and we're good."



Photos by Spc. Anna Pongo

**In Keeping With Tradition:** The oldest and youngest Soldiers and Airmen to attend the National Guard birthday celebration make the ceremonial first cuts to a birthday cake, Dec. 13, at the state capitol in Lincoln, Neb.

## Happy Birthday

### National Guard celebrates 379 years

By Spc. Anna Pongo  
Assistant Editor

Three hundred and seventy-nine years ago, on Dec. 13, 1636, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony formed the existing militia from towns surrounding Boston into the first Guard regiment. On that day they formed a component for the armed forces, which today is recognized as one of the nation's longest enduring institutions.

To celebrate that historical event, members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard got together to celebrate the organization's 379th Birthday during a Dec. 14 ceremony at the State Capitol.

Gov. Pete Ricketts, commander in chief of the Nebraska National Guard, took the opportunity to thank the state's Soldiers and Airmen for their sacrifices.

"That is one of the other factors that comes along with service," said Ricketts, "that you all will be working while your fellow citizens are sleeping. You all will be working while your fellow citizens are playing. You will be working on the holidays. You will miss that baseball game or that dance recital or that birthday or Christmas because of your service to our country."

"I can tell you on behalf of Nebraska... that Nebraskans are grateful for your service," Ricketts added. "They know the sacrifices that you make and they appreciate it. Nebraskans are patriotic. They are grateful that you would take the time away from your family so they

can spend time with their family."

The ceremony included music from the Nebraska Army National Guard's 43rd Army Band Woodwind Quintet and the singing of the national anthem by Spc. Claudia Rodriguez and Tech. Sgt. Lindsay Bustamante.

The Nebraska National Guard actually draws its lineage back to Dec. 23, 1854, when acting Nebraska Territorial Governor Thomas B. Cuming issued a proclamation recommending that the citizens of the territory organize, in their respective neighborhoods, into volunteer companies. The territory's first legally authorized militia consisted of only two regiments, one north and one south of the Platte River.

Ricketts said the Nebraska National Guard, which already has a distinguished history, is well positioned to continue adding to its laurels.

"As we look forward to the future we can see some of the things that will be coming our way," Ricketts said.

"You can see that nationally we are recognized as being an organization that can be trusted."

"We see this trust in the form of a new cyber unit. We are one of seven states that will get that new cyber unit with the mission to help protect our nation from the threats that we are perceiving electronically here, domestically at home, and from foreign countries... That demonstrates that the people in Washington recognize the great work that is going on here in Ne-



**379 Years:** Gov. Pete Ricketts speaks during the 379th National Guard birthday ceremony at the State Capitol in Lincoln, Dec. 17. Ricketts expressed how proud he is of the members of the Nebraska National Guard and how important their role is to the state.

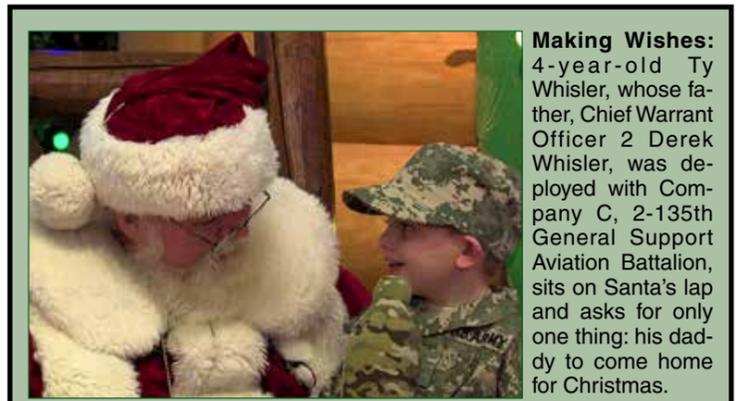
braska."

Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, reinforced the role that the communities throughout the state play in the success of the Nebraska National Guard.

"In the end of the day, it's our connections to our communities that bring our greatest support," said Bohac. "When the Nebraska National Guard is called to deploy in places far away, away from their families and friends, it's the communities in Nebraska that rally to our support."

"Generations of Nebraskans have always been ready, always been there when the nation gave the call," Bohac said. "It's a privilege for all of us to serve."

Following closing remarks by Lt. Col. Thomas Golden, the birthday celebration was concluded by eating cake, which was ceremonially cut by the youngest and oldest Air and Army National Guard members in attendance.



Photos courtesy of Stephanie Whisler

**Making Wishes:** 4-year-old Ty Whisler, whose father, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Derek Whisler, was deployed with Company C, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, sits on Santa's lap and asks for only one thing: his daddy to come home for Christmas.



**Wish come true:** 4-year-old Ty Whisler sees his father, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Derek Whisler, for the first time after his deployment. Derek's return was a surprise for Ty and his 1-year-old brother, Colton.

## All I want for Christmas

### Boy gets the one thing on his wish list: his daddy

By Spc. Anna Pongo  
Assistant Editor

Most kids have toys and clothes on their Christmas wish lists. But for 4-year-old Ty and 1-year-old Colton, all they wanted for Christmas was to have Chief Warrant Officer 2 Derek Whisler, their daddy, home. Whisler was deployed with Company C, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, for about seven months.

During the time Whisler was gone, Ty and Colton had cloth dolls of their daddy made as a constant reminder of him. Their daddy dolls went everywhere with them.

On Dec. 17 Whisler was

welcomed home by his wife Stephanie, during the welcome home ceremony for the 2-135th GSAB at the Joint Force Headquarters Building in Lincoln, Nebraska.

But the boys were staying with their grandparents and had no idea that their daddy was returning home.

A few days later they got the best Christmas surprise possible.

The boys visited Santa to tell him what they wanted for Christmas. While Ty was sitting on the red-clad man's lap, telling Santa of his wish for his daddy to come home, Whisler snuck up behind Ty.

Hugs and smiles ensued as the family was finally reunited.

## Troop Command sees enlisted changes

### New command sergeant major welcomed to 92nd Troop Command

By Spc. Anna Pongo  
Assistant Editor

A new face was welcomed by the Soldiers of the 92nd Troop Command as they welcomed Command Sgt. Maj. Richard D. Cruickshank to the organization's senior enlisted leadership post, Sept. 12.

During a change of command ceremony the 92nd Troop Command ceremonial noncommissioned officer sword was passed from Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker to Cruickshank at the Penterman Armory at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln.

In handing over the NCO sword, a symbol of authority marking him as the organization's senior enlisted leader, Baker signified the end of his role as the unit's command sergeant major. He is now the Nebraska Army National Guard's state command sergeant major.

"If there's one thing I could say about both of them... it's that they're the Soldiers' Soldiers," said Col. Lynn Heng, the commander of 92nd Troop Command. "They are an example of what Soldiers should be. When it comes to taking care of Soldiers, taking care of troops, they do whatever needs to be

done."

Cruickshank joins the 92nd Troop Command from the 402nd Military Police Battalion, where he served as their command sergeant major. He began his military career when he enlisted in the Marine Corps before later joining the Army National Guard. His deployments include Operation Enduring Freedom in 2005-06 and Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2010-11.

Cruickshank's military education includes Infantry Training School (USMC), Sea Duty/Nuclear Weapons Security (USMC), Non-Commissioned Officer Course (USMC), Basic Medical Specialist Course, Small Group Instructor Course, Primary Leader Development Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Supervisory Development Course, Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer Course, and United States Army Sergeants Major Academy. He also has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration from Doane College in Crete, Neb.

**Right:** The ceremonial noncommissioned officer sword of the 92nd Troop Command is passed from Co. Lynn Heng to Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Cruickshank at the Penterman Armory at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Sept. 12.



Photo by Spc. Anna Pongo

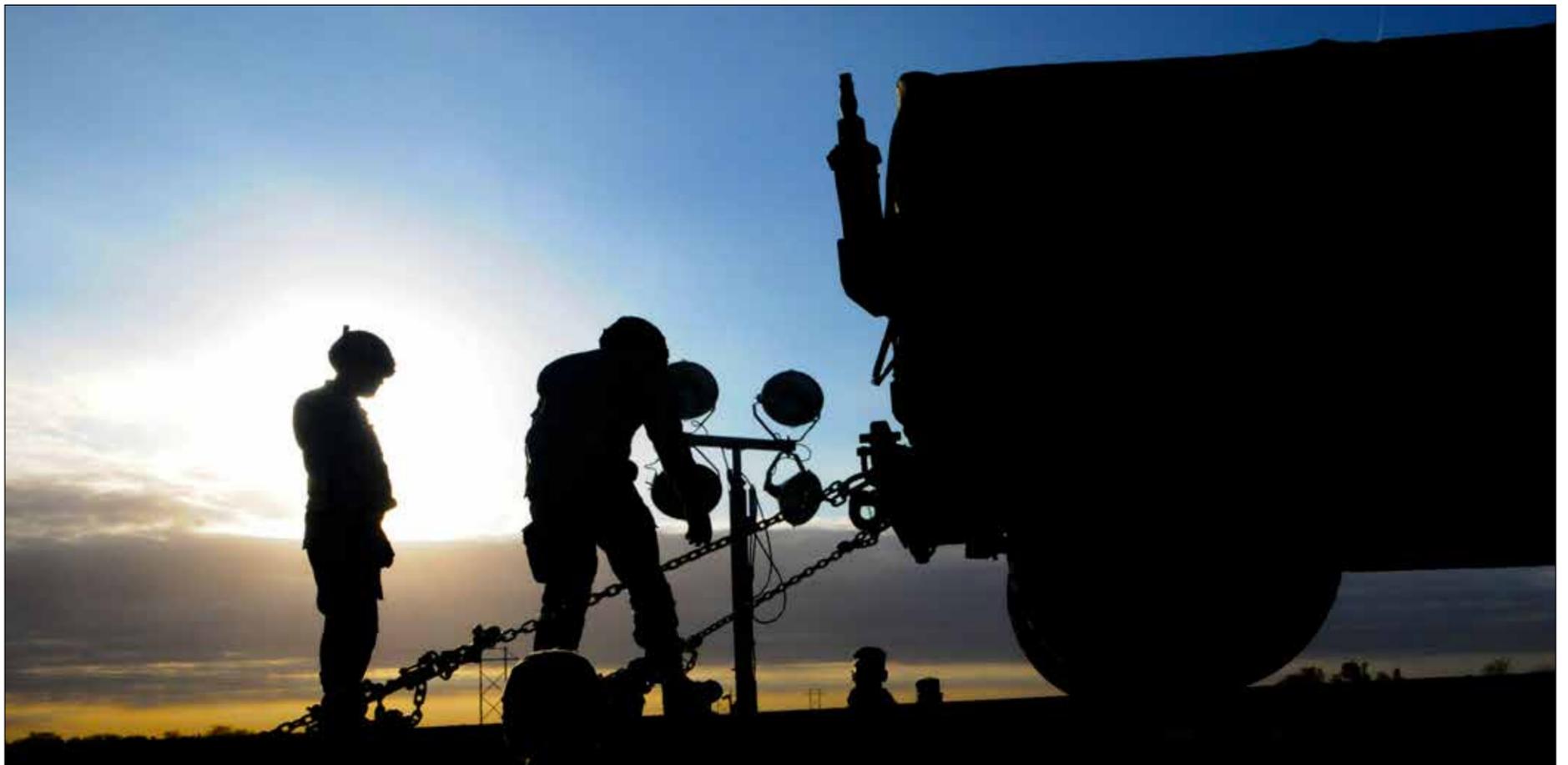


Photo by Spc. William Schneider

**Sunset:** Soldiers of the 734th Transportation Battalion work together to tie down a Humvee on the back of a truck bed platform. The battalion truck rodeo promotes teamwork and training not always experienced by Soldiers assigned to the Army National Guard's 734th Transportation Battalion.

# Learning through competition

Second annual truck rodeo marks the first time 734th Transportation Battalion's five companies train at same location since 2005

By Spc. Anna Pongo  
Assistant Editor

Soldiers from the 734th Transportation Battalion gathered for some friendly competition, Oct. 15-18, at Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Nebraska.

That Saturday, two teams of six Soldiers from each company participated in a truck rodeo, which consisted of five events. Each event was designed to test transportation-related skills learned by the Soldiers as a part of their military occupation speciality.

This second annual event "showcases the talents of the transportation companies in the battalion," said Maj. Cory Huskey, administration officer for the 734th Trans. Bn. "All of the tasks that they do, it really shows different skills that they have and the best teams get to compete."

This event marks the first time since 2001 that the battalion's five companies were together in one place. Soldiers of the 1057th, 1074th, 1195th, 1075th and 189th Transportation Companies all gathered for the rodeo from across the state of Nebraska.

"It's not very often that you get an entire battalion together," said Huskey.

All the events were timed and team scores were computed based on their time of completion and skill in completing each task.

In the alley dock lane, Soldiers had to back a trailer into a 90-degree angle.

The ground guide lane challenged both the driver and guide by blacking out the rear-view mirrors as they backed through a cone

obstacle course.

The preventative maintenance checks and services lane timed the Soldiers' ability to remove and replace a tire on a Humvee.

The commodity haul lane tested the Soldiers' skill to quickly and correctly tie a Humvee to a trailer in readiness for transport. And in the coupling and uncoupling lane the teams attached and then detached an LMTV, 1088 tractor and a 915 tractor.

The truck rodeo was designed to bring together the Soldiers of the 734th and build a battalion wide team. "They get to talk between units and you get some camaraderie," said Huskey.

It also doubled as a training exercise.

"When we do this event, we realize what we need to work on," said Spc. Jessica Reicks, 1074th Transportation Company. Reicks volunteered to join one of the teams because she wanted additional experience and to be able to bring her own knowledge to the group.

"Each event was really different," said Spc. Frankie Ayala, 1057th Transportation Company. "We get to do some of the stuff we don't get to do on a regular basis like changing a tire and doing the tie downs."

Ayala was chosen to be on her company's team because she has eight years of driving experience with a number of different trucks.

The activities during the four-day trip to Greenleaf were not limited to the truck rodeo, either. The Soldiers also got to participate in a resource fair and a best warrior competition as well as other train-



Photo by Spc. William Schneider

**Locking it Down:** Staff Sgt. Richard Bates and Spc. Levi Loomis, both of the 1057th Transportation Company, secure a Humvee to the back of a truck bed platform. Teams from across the state were able to take tasks sometimes thought of as mundane and turn them into exciting events to excel at.



Photo by Spc. Anna Pongo

**Reading Instructions:** Sgt. Brycen Gillming, 1074th Transportation Company, discusses Humvee tire changing directions with fellow Soldiers during the 734th Transportation Battalion Truck Rodeo.



Photo by Spc. Anna Pongo

**Taking Directions:** Soldiers from Norfolk's 189th Transportation Company work together on the ground guide lane during the 734th Transportation Battalion Truck Rodeo. This lane challenged both driver and guide by having them drive through a cone course with blacked out rear-view mirrors.



Photo by Spc. Anna Pongo

**Making Changes:** Sgt. Brycen Gillming, 1074th Transportation Company, changes a Humvee tire during the 734th Transportation Battalion Truck Rodeo.

ing opportunities.

Team One from the 1195th Trans. Co. took first place in the truck rodeo. The team consisted of Spc. Brett Johnson, Pfc. Kristin Severance, Pfc. Kane Dobish, Spc. Keenan Dobish and Sgt. Bret Stubbs.

Team Two from 1057th Trans. Co. took second place. The team members were Staff Sgt. Ryan Olsen, Sgt. Johnathon Albaugh, Spc. Brice Davis, Spc. Christopher Suttles, Cadet Joshua Mayer and Pfc. Trevor Coufal.

## State Missions 2015



**May 7:** Camp Ashland, a Nebraska National Guard training site, was hit by heavy rains and flash flooding, which caused approximately \$3 million in damage to repair over 50 buildings on Camp Ashland.



**May 18:** Six Army National Guard members flew the Governor and other state officials in support of the flooding in Southeast Nebraska.



**August 27-30:** Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, challenged the Lincoln-based Joint Force Headquarters to work from alternate work sites to perform their tasks in addition to supporting multiple emergency situations.



**Throughout 2015:** The 72nd Civil Support Team conducted five stand-by missions throughout the United States.

### Remembering 2015

2015 was an extremely busy year for the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard. Whether it be responding to the springtime floods, deploying overseas, conducting important training exercises or preparing for a monumental transformation, 2015 will definitely be remembered as a defining year for Nebraska Soldiers and Airmen. Here are a few of the many headlines from the past year.

**March 5:** Nebraska National Guardsmen and state emergency management officials participated in a day-long virtual tabletop exercise at the state emergency operations center located in the Joint Force Headquarters building in Lincoln.



**May 7-9:** A group of 20 Soldiers of Nebraska Army National Guard were put on state active duty to provide assistance, flood evacuation and traffic control points to Dewitt, Neb. after it was hit by major flash floods.



**July 21:** Gov. Pete Ricketts authorized Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, to take whatever measures deemed appropriate to arm additional personnel to ensure the Nebraska National Guard facilities and personnel are safe.



**October 28:** The 72nd Civil Support Team deployed to Red Willow, Nebraska, to investigate a suspicious substance.



**Throughout 2015:** The 155th Air Refueling Wing had 24 missions utilizing 84 Airmen from the fire department and explosive ordnance disposal.



## Federal Missions 2015



**Late January:** Approximately 30 Nebraska Air National Guard Airmen assigned to the Lincoln-based 155th Air Refueling Wing returned home following their deployment to the Persian Gulf.



**March 16-20:** Nearly 200 Soldiers and Airmen of the Nebraska and Iowa National Guard's emergency response team operated with Puerto Rico National Guard during Operation Borinqueneer Response 2015 in Puerto Rico.



**April 14:** Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, former adjutant general of Nebraska, was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general and sworn in as the 20th director of the Army National Guard in Washington, D.C.



**June 10:** Three Nebraska Army National Guard organizations were honored by the U.S. Army chief of staff during a ceremony for the annual Combined Logistics Excellence Awards program in Washington, D.C.



**February 14:** Approximately 45 Soldiers of the Nebraska City-based 192nd Law and Order Detachment were wished farewell as they were mobilized for an overseas mission in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel.



**April 4-18:** Forty-eight members of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing traveled to Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, for hands-on, job-specific training with their active Air Force counterparts.



**May 29:** Nearly 100 Soldiers assigned to two Nebraska Army National Guard helicopter units and several detachments were wished farewell before the start of their overseas missions during two separate sendoff ceremonies.



**July 4:** The Nebraska National Guard's new museum was dedicated during a ceremony in Seward, Nebraska.

## Federal Missions Cont. 2015



**September 19:** Around 230 Airmen from the 155th Air Refueling Wing were welcomed home from deployments that took them to the Middle East, Europe and the Pacific region at Joint Force Headquarters building in Lincoln, Nebraska.



**November 16:** The Nebraska Air National Guard announced that the 155th Air Refueling Wing earned its 12th U.S. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.



**December 9:** The Nebraska National Guard was informed that it was selected for one of seven new Army National Guard cyber protection teams being fielded by National Guard Bureau.



**December 21:** Approximately 45 Soldiers of the 192nd Law and Order Detachment were welcomed home during a ceremony at the Nebraska City Middle School in Nebraska City, Nebraska, after a 10 month deployment to the Middle East.

**August-December 2015:** One UH-72A and two pilots from the Nebraska Army National Guard conducted border operations in Texas.



**November 1:** Ten Soldiers with the 195th Forward Support Company Army Special Operations Forces Support Operation team, were wished farewell before an overseas deployment during a ceremony at the North Omaha Readiness Center.



**November 17:** Gov. Pete Ricketts and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, adjutant general of Nebraska, announced the major restructuring of the Nebraska Army National Guard during a press conference at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln.



**December 17:** Around 60 Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion were welcomed home to Nebraska following overseas deployments to the Middle East.



# Veterans reunite 25 years after Desert Storm

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes  
State Public Affairs Officer

For a few hours on Nov. 12, it seemed as if it were 1990 all over again.

Thoughts returned back to the hectic days of November 1990 when a group of Nebraska Soldiers were told that they had just three days – three days – to prepare themselves for the Nebraska National Guard's first major combat deployment since World War II; a deployment that would ultimately take two Nebraska Army National Guard aeromedical helicopter units halfway around the world and into a warzone as America prepared to liberate the tiny nation of Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's Iraqi Army.

"A lot of us weren't really believing that we would go," said Sgt. 1st Class Gustavus "George" Becher, a current member of the Nebraska Army National Guard, who, back in 1990, had just returned home from his basic and advanced individual training when he was told that his unit, the Lincoln-based 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) was being mobilized for Operation Desert Shield.

"It was a whirlwind," Becher would recall to the *Omaha World-Herald* 25 years later. "You couldn't wrap your head around it."

In 2015 it might be hard for many Nebraska Army National Guardsmen to realize that the steady diet of overseas deployments that the organization has experienced in recent years wasn't always so. Back in 1990 the Nebraska National Guard hadn't mobilized a unit for a major federal emergency since the Berlin Crisis of the early 1960s, or for a combat mission since World War II. In fact, in 1990 there were many who questioned the wisdom of the "All Volunteer Army" and whether or not the Total Force Policy, which decreed that the National Guard must be part of any future combat missions, was wise.

That was the environment that the members of the 24th Med. Co. and the Nebraska Army National Guard's Detachment 1, 1267th Med. Co. (Air Ambulance) found themselves stepping into when, just days after their November drill weekend, they were ordered to active duty for Operation Desert Shield.

Commanding the unit at the time was Maj. Steve Petersen, a former Air Force pilot who owned a small custom framing business in Lincoln. According to Petersen, who later retired as a lieutenant colonel, the unit was going through a major reorganization that would split the unit into a new 24th Med. Co. and Detachment 1, 1267th Med. Co.

"It was really tough," Petersen recalled. "There was so much that we had to do, but very little time to do it."

Along with reorganizing the unit, the Soldiers had pack up their equipment, aircraft and vehicles, while also doing whatever they could to put their civilian lives in order with the little time that remained.

"I remember thinking, 'Who's going to take care of my house and my cat?'" recalled retired Staff Sgt. Linda Plock, a helicopter crew chief who was one of 11 female Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers who deployed with the 24th Med. Co. "I was unemployed at the time, so work didn't matter. But my house and my cat did."

Along with his responsibilities as commander, Petersen worked with his wife, Carol, to ensure that she had enough information to keep their business afloat while he was gone for the undetermined length of the mission.

"I remember talking with her on the phone, going over the various details of the business that she normally didn't do," he said. "It wasn't the best way to do it, but we didn't have a whole lot of choices."

The Soldiers officially reported for duty in Lincoln on Nov. 17. They were met by a group of fellow Nebraska Army National Guard members from different units who pitched in to help get the unit on its way.

"It wasn't just us," said retired Sgt. 1st Class Bonnie Bessler, who was the 24th Med. Co.'s unit clerk, "it was the whole state."

"Everyone pitched in and helped. It was a total team effort," she said 25 years later.

Three days later the unit – which included a mix of new, relatively inexperienced college students and extremely experienced Vietnam helicopter pilots – was paraded out of Lincoln as citizens stood shoulder-to-shoulder to watch the unit leave town and the helicopters fly in formation down "O" Street.

A few days later the Soldiers of Det. 1, 1267th Med. Co. were also mobilized with their parent unit of the Missouri Army National Guard. They, too, left to a massive farewell.

The Soldiers of the 24th Med. Co. were soon at their mobilization station at Fort Riley, Kan., where they spent five weeks preparing for their departure for Saudi Arabia. When they did leave, the Soldiers and their equipment filled six cargo jets.

The Soldiers of the 1267th Med. Co. were sent to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, where they spent time completing their final preparation for whatever lay ahead. A few weeks later, while shuttling their UH-1 "Huey" helicopters to Texas, the 1267th Med. Co. experienced its lone

casualties when a helicopter flown by a crew that included 1st Lt. Pete Rose, detachment commander, crashed during inclement weather.

The loss of the three Soldier crew devastated both units, said Petersen. "It hit all of us," he said. "It really caused us to do a lot of second-guessing."

The 24th Med. Co. arrived in Saudi Arabia a few days before the air war started in January 1991. The 1267th Med. Co. would arrive several weeks later.

By then Operation Desert Shield had been renamed Operation Desert Storm and soon, the 24th Med. Co. was moved up to a place called Intermediate State Point Victor, which Petersen said was really just a stretch of rocky desert along a major highway.

"It looked like the surface of Mars," he said. A week later the unit moved again, this time up toward the border to a place called Log Base Charlie, which was really just a stretch of rocky desert located approximately 600 meters off of a major highway. "We said, 'This is our home.'"

Petersen said they soon realized how close



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

**Glad To See You Again:** Veterans of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) and Detachment 1, 1267th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), welcome each other before the start of a ceremony marking the 25th anniversary of their 1990 call-ups for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. This mobilization was the first combat mission deployment of Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers since World War II.

to the warzone they were. In the distance they could hear the sounds of aircraft flying and bombs exploding. On a military map they saw their location marked, barely six miles from the Iraq border; every other American and Coalition unit's location was marked behind them.

"There was nothing between us and Iraq," Petersen said. "Every other Army unit was behind us."

During the next three months – which included the 100-hour-long ground war – the 24th Med. Co. would fly 122 aeromedical missions. Some involved injured Iraqi Soldiers or local civilians. A few involved wounded American or Coalition troops. Others involved Americans injured in car accidents.

Many were heartbreaking. "The hardest ones were the children or small babies," said retired Master Sgt. Deb Tankesley, who served a platoon sergeant during the deployment. "Many of us had kids back home. It was emotional for a lot of us."

By the time the mission ended, Petersen said, they had convinced their active Army battalion commander – who had initially met their arrival with indifference – what a National Guard aviation unit could do.

"We won a lot of praise," added Plock. "A lot of people doubted us, but we showed them we were a good unit."

Brig. Gen. Scott Gronewold agreed. In 1990, Gronewold was a young Nebraska Army National Guard aviator assigned to another unit who watched from the catwalk of the Army Aviation Support Facility hangar as the unit prepared for the deployment.

This past November, he served as the keynote speaker for a 25th anniversary deployment reunion that took place at the Nebraska National Guard's new museum in Seward.

Gronewold said he remembered thinking at the time that he was watching history in the making.

"This was the first major Nebraska National Guard deployment since World War

II. It was the first major deployment of a volunteer Army. It was the largest deployment of female Soldiers," said Gronewold, adding: "I watched in awe."

Gronewold said that the 24th and 1267th Med. Cos. not only proved themselves during Operation Desert Storm, they set a bar for the future Nebraska National Guard deployments that would come.

"The 24th and the 1267th did as good, if not much better than, their active duty counterparts. And when you got home, you said it's not whether, but when, we deploy again," said Gronewold, who would later lead the 24th Med. Co. through a deployment to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1999 in support of peacekeeping efforts there. "We've trained with that sense of purpose ever since," he added. "You created the standard that we have since tried to uphold."

When the two units returned back to Nebraska in the spring and early summer of 1991, they were treated to heroes' welcomes as throngs of local citizens lined the streets to welcome them home. For many of the units' Vietnam veterans, it was the first time they'd ever been treated as heroes.

Master Sgt. Gus Swanson was a young flight operations specialist who had to pause his college career for the 24th Med. Co.'s deployment. On the return, he was riding with a Vietnam War veteran who had tears in his eyes as he witness the dizzying welcome.

"He looked at me and said, 'You don't understand. It wasn't like this for us.' That really is when it hit me," said Swanson.

Today, Plock said, November still holds a special sway as do the Soldiers she deployed with. "It always brings back memories this time of year," she said, as she watched her fellow Desert Storm veterans exchange long-standing jokes and over-told stories about the deployment with each other during the reunion in Seward. "These were such special Soldiers. We accomplished a lot while were there. And they're still some of the best friends I have ever had."

*In the distance they could hear the sounds of aircraft flying and bombs exploding.*

## Gronewold bids Guard farewell

By Sgt. Jason Drager  
Photojournalist

Brig. Gen. Scott Gronewold was honored for his distinguished 31 years of dedicated military service during a Dec. 5 retirement ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Gronewold, who enlisted into the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1984, most recently served as the Joint Staff director of the Nebraska Joint Force Headquarters.

As the Joint Staff director, Gronewold was responsible for supporting the Adjutant General's vision by directing Nebraska Army and Air National Guard for Homeland Security support to civilian authorities, international affairs and Soldier Airmen family support activities.

"There is no doubting his commitment to the organization, the

state and nation," said Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general who officiated over the retirement ceremony. "He was always looking for ways to make the organization better and you couldn't ask for anything more."

Gronewold received his commission in the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1986. He then went on to command at the troop, company, battalion and Medical Command levels. Among those assignments was command of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) during its 1999 deployment to Bosnia-Herzegovina where it served as the Regional Medical Company in support of operations of 1st Cavalry Division, Multinational Division (North) in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Operation Joint Forge).

In 2003 Gronewold deployed again, this time as commander of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 110th Medical Evacuation

Battalion and was responsible for command and control of ground and air ambulance, medical logistics, preventive medicine and combat stress teams, detachments and companies in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

According to Gronewold, an Army National Guard command pilot with more than 2,200 flying hours in the UH-1 "Huey," OH-58 "Kiowa" and UH-60 "Black Hawk" helicopters, he will miss the enduring friendships he made during the course of his military career.

"I'm going to miss the people the most," said Gronewold, who will officially retire from the Army National Guard on Dec. 31. "It's like being on this great train ride, people are getting off and on at all these stops, but each one is so important to the journey."

He added that the experiences he gained during his deployment will be probably the best memories of all.

"My best memories are of the



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

**Goodbye:** Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac presents retiring Brig. Gen. Scott Gronewold with the Legion of Merit during his Dec. 5 retirement ceremony in Lincoln, Neb.

deployments," he said. "You're initially very excited to deploy, but then overwhelmed with preparation.

Then, all of a sudden, all these terrific people show up and help make you and the deployment successful."

# A Family Tradition

## Nebraska Airmen celebrate Thanksgiving Guard-style

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton  
Photojournalist

The setting was reminiscent of a traditional family holiday gathering.

The smell of smoked turkey coming from smokers outside and the spicy scent of sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie filled the crisp fall air as several people busied themselves in the kitchen making last-minute dinner preparations while those not so inclined to cooking honed their card-playing skills around the table indulging in local brew. The occasional shout heralding a not-so-above board play of hand immediately followed by laughter could be heard throughout the area.

Set somewhere in the United States, the scene would portray any typical American family celebrating Thanksgiving. However in this case, a backdrop featuring two Nebraska Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotankers and NATO E-3A aircrafts lining the flight line behind the National Guard line shack on Geilenkirchen NATO Airbase in the east central German State of North Rhine-Westphalia, immediately made clear that this was not typical a American Thanksgiving celebration.

More than 20 members from the Lincoln-based 155th Air Refueling Wing, Nebraska Air National Guard, were treated to a family-style Thanksgiving holiday feast Guard-style in November. Their hosts were Lt. Col. Joseph Bosch of the Ohio Air National Guard pilot and Master Sgt. Dave Hudson, a boom operator from the Utah Air National Guard. Both are assigned to the NATO E-3A Component in Geilenkirchen.

The Nebraska Guard members were on a two-week assignment to the German base where they were responsible for providing valuable air refueling training for NATO E-3A pilots in Germany, Nov. 22 – Dec. 4.

According to Bosch, the feast was an important part of ensuring that the deployed Guard members knew that they weren't forgotten during the holiday season.

"I think the Guard is a place where, regardless of if you are family or not, you can always hang out with friends and it feels like family," said Bosch, Air National Guard liaison officer at Geilenkirchen and former Nebraska Air National Guard pilot.

It was Bosch and Hudson's idea to treat the Nebraska Air Guard members to a Thanksgiving spread that included six turkeys and over 20 pounds of sweet potatoes, stuffing and all the other trimmings that come with a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

"Eating, drinking and playing games is part of the Thanksgiving tradition. My wife and I wanted to make sure the Nebraska Guardsmen were treated the same as if they were home with their own families," said Bosch, who is stationed in Germany on a three-year NATO assignment with his wife and two children.

"Most everybody here is away from their family and Thanksgiving is a pretty major holiday in the United States. It's nice to bring everyone together and give them a little slice of home," said Hudson, who is half-way through his three-year NATO tour as assistant to the Air National Guard liaison and staff boom operator. "The Guard is something we all have in common. Thanksgiving is about spending time with friends and family, cooking a ton of food, drinking and having a good time. That's the concept behind it. I don't have family in Germany, so I'm thankful to be around my Guard family and good friends."

Cooking for 20-plus hungry Airmen is no easy feat, so Bosch enlisted the help and expertise of Capt. Travis Fincham, a pilot from the Kansas Air National Guard who is serving a six-month tour at Geilenkirchen in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

"I know a little bit about smoking and barbequing turkey, so I'm here with my wife helping Joe and Dave prepare the food," said Fincham

"I've been in this same situation," he said, explaining this was the fourth Thanksgiving in a row he's been away from his extended family and first time in three years he's been able to spend it with his wife.

"I know what it's like to be away from family and how much it means to be amongst friends and Guard family members," he said. "It's really nice to have a group of people



**Home Cooking:** (Above) Lt. Col. Joseph Bosch, Ohio Air National Guard, Master Sgt. Dave Hudson, Utah Air National Guard, and Capt. Travis Fincham, Kansas Air National Guard, work together to prepare a Thanksgiving meal for more than 20 members of the 155th Air Refueling Wing in Geilenkirchen, Germany.

**Meal Prep:** (Left) Master. Sgt. Dave Hudson, assistant to the Air National Guard liaison officer, mixes seasonings together for one of the side dishes during their Thanksgiving celebration in Geilenkirchen.

come together who have similar interests. Nebraska and Kansas we all have similar backgrounds, so it's nice to be able to spend the holiday together. There is a sense of family within the Guard as a whole. Whether you're from Kansas, Ohio, Utah or Nebraska, we all come together and are family."

Most Guard members were away from their immediate families and relished the time spent with their Guard family. Being away from home during the holidays is something many Nebraska Air Guard members have gotten used to due to increased operations tempo in the wake of 9/11.

"It's what I'm accustomed to," said Maj. Kent Leonard, a pilot in the Nebraska Air National Guard. "In the Guard, we take care of each other. It's not expected, but it's what I've become accustomed to. The Guard is like your family away from your family."

Although deployed, some lucky Guard members got to double-dip, getting to enjoy the company of their Guard family and their immediate family. Staff Sgt. Brittany Cain, a supply technician from the 155th ARW, deployed to Germany with her spouse, Tech. Sgt. Ryan Cain, a 155 ARW jet engine mechanic. "We are away from our kids, but having Ryan here has made the trip a lot less stressful in some ways because it's my first trip with the Guard."

Spending the holiday with fellow Nebraska Guard members and members from other states was a memorable experience for the couple. "We get the chance to celebrate even though we are away from home and we get to make new memories with new people," she said.

Cain, who served on active duty, has been in the Air National Guard less than a year. Being on this trip over Thanksgiving offered her the opportunity to get to know her colleagues on a new level, she said.



**Good Time For All:** Members of the 155th Air Refueling Wing gather together to celebrate Thanksgiving on Geilenkirchen NATO Airbase, Germany. They were treated to all sorts of side dishes and fixings to make them feel as if they were home.

"It's like a big family. The best part of the trip has been getting to know people from different sections and different units and getting to celebrate with them all."

When the food was ready, the Air National Guard family sat down together and, with football on the TV and 80s rock music playing in the background, Airmen from four different Guard units dined and indulged on local drinks together, creating new memories and lifelong friends.

"The ANGLO and his assistant did an amazing job of making the Nebraska Guard feel at home. I'm thankful for them and their spouses for putting this on," said Col. Donald Neff, commander of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Operations Group. "It's nice being here on the road with folks that I've known for years and years—it's like an extended family. That's what the Guard is about to me. No matter where we are at in the world, we can have a great time anywhere. That's what makes the Guard the Guard."



**Let's Talk About Turkeys:** Members of the Nebraska Air National Guard are treated to a Thanksgiving spread that included six turkeys.



**Smoking Hot:** Turkeys are fried for more than 20 members of the Air National Guard at Geilenkirchen NATO Airbase, Germany, during a Guard-style Thanksgiving meal that included six turkeys and all the fixings.

# Sad Farewells

Families and friends of the 195th say goodbye to deploying Soldiers

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes  
State Public Affairs Officer

A wide array of emotions were on display at the North Omaha Readiness Center, Nov. 1, when 10 members of a team were wished farewell by families, friends and state officials before the start of an overseas deployment.

The Soldiers are members of the Omaha-based 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne) Army Special Operations Forces Support Operation (ASPO) team, who were preparing to start a mission that will ultimately take them to the Middle East where they will provide a variety of logistical support functions for Joint Special Operations Forces.

However, on this day, that mission still lay in the future. On this day, all thoughts were turned to the Soldiers and the families they were temporarily leaving behind.

"It's a little more difficult this time," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Martin, a veteran of a past deployment with the 195th FSC who will serve as a property book sergeant while deployed. "Obviously, I'm going to miss (my) kids. I want to get over there, get focused and have the months fly by."

"But it's a little more difficult this time," said Martin, father of two daughters and a son. "The kids are a big part of my life, so I'm going to miss them."

Those feelings were expressed multiple times by the Soldiers deploying. Those feelings, say the leaders who spoke to the Guardsmen and their families during the ceremony, are completely understandable.

"Ten Soldiers leaving... not many," said Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general. "Not



**Spending Some Time With Guard Families:** Gov. Pete Ricketts spends some time talking with the youngest members of Staff Sgt. Brody Mayberry's family following the Nov. 1 sendoff ceremony for Soldiers assigned to Omaha's 195th Forward Support company (Special Operations) (Airborne) Army Special Operations Forces Support Operations (ASPO) team.

many, unless it's your Soldier, unless it's your family. That's why it's important that we're here today."

"Soldiers, trust in your training and trust us to take care of your families while you're gone," Bohac said. "We're here 24/7/365 when that need arises to serve your families so that you, the Soldiers who are deploying, know that your families are being taken care of while you're gone."

According to Gov. Pete Ricketts, the Soldiers and their families can take comfort in the fact they are part of a long tradition of military service in Nebraska and that citizens across the state support them as they prepared to make sacrifices for all Americans.

"I can tell you that Nebraskans are very patriotic and they all are very, very proud of the great work that you are doing," said Ricketts. He then added, "Nebraskans know that you will be working when other citizens are playing; that you will

be working when your fellow citizens are sleeping; that you will be working when they are spending the holidays with their families; that you will sacrifice by not being there or will miss that ballgame, that dance recital or that birthday."

Ricketts said that sacrifice is truly appreciated across the state. "Nebraskans appreciate it and are very, very thankful."

According to those deploying, they're ready – despite the anxious feelings about leaving loved ones behind – to tackle their mission.

"I'm excited to go. I'm excited to get my first deployment under my belt," said Staff Sgt. Brody Mayberry, who will be working as a contracting sergeant during his time overseas. He was accompanied by his first deployment sendoff ceremony by numerous family members. "(My family) is my inspiration to do well and keep them looking up to me."

"Having this many family members show up and show their



Photos by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

**Family Time:** Staff Sgt. Brody Mayberry, contracting noncommissioned officer, spends some time with his niece shortly before departing on a deployment to the Middle East. This is Mayberry's first deployment, so he spent the sendoff ceremony surrounded by numerous members of his extended family.

appreciation and support to me, that means a lot," said Mayberry. That support will undoubtedly be a source of strength for the team members, said Capt. Luke Holland, commander of the 195th FSC ASPO team.

"There are a lot of different emotions right now. We're excited to get on the road and start the mission, but at the same time when you leave your family – especially my young

daughter – there's a little heartache mixed into that as well."

But the team has trained hard over the months leading into the deployment, said Holland, so he said he's confident that the team will perform exceptionally well.

"We're 1,000 percent ready to get on the road," he said. "We're like race horses waiting for the gates to open."

The team's mission is expected to last between six and nine months.

## Licenses from five states banned at Defense Department bases

By Jim Garamone  
DoD News

Defense Department installations will no longer accept driver's licenses from Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri, New Mexico and Washington as proof of identity, DoD officials said.

The ban, which also includes licenses from American Samoa, is a consequence of the REAL ID Act of 2005.

The REAL ID Act grew out of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks – most of the terrorists involved had driver's licenses from Florida and Virginia. Congress tightened up issuance processes and documentation needed to get

a driver's license.

Compliant cards must have specific security features to prevent tampering, counterfeiting or duplication of the document. The licenses also must present data in a common, machine-readable format.

The REAL ID Act affects only access control policies where individuals are required to present an identification document for accessing federal facilities, entering nuclear power plants or boarding federally regulated commercial aircraft.

The federal REAL ID Act implementation rules allow for exceptions, officials noted. For example, they explained, life or safety issues such as medical emergencies, and situations

in which physical access is necessary to apply for benefits are two exceptions.

Those attempting to gain physical access to DoD installations must show an alternate form of identification, such as a passport, officials said. Service members, family members, DoD employees, and federal employees with the DoD common access card, DoD uniformed services identification and privileges cards, federal personal identification verification cards or transportation workers' identification credentials are not affected, officials said, as these cards are authorized in DoD policy to facilitate physical access to installations.

"All federal agencies including DoD must comply with the law regarding the use of

REAL IDs for official purposes," an official said. "For most DoD installations, an identification card or an installation pass is required to facilitate access. Hence, where an ID or an installation pass is used for physical access, DoD installations are prohibited from accepting driver's licenses or state identification cards from states deemed non-REAL ID compliant."

"DoD policy allows commanders to waive the DoD access control requirements for special situations, circumstances, or emergencies," the official said. "Therefore, installations may authorize other alternatives to facilitate installation access, such as a graduation ceremony guest list, escorts, etc."

## New Minuteman Scholarship provides opportunity for cadets

By Cadet Matthew Lehman  
Special for the Prairie Soldier

A new scholarship has been introduced this year that focuses on cadets who are involved in, or wish to become involved in, the National Guard's Simultaneous Membership Program.

The Minuteman Scholarship is offered with four-year, three-year, and two-year options with helpful benefits that assist cadets who are paying for their education. Benefits include full tuition and fees or payment for Room and Board up to \$10,000 per year.

Through the Simultaneous Membership Program, Cadets receive a monthly stipend from the ROTC program, which increases each year. Cadets receive \$300 a month as freshmen, \$350 as sophomores, \$450 as juniors, and \$500 as seniors. Cadets also receive monthly drill pay at the E-5 level and an annual book stipend worth \$1,200. Cadets are also eligible for state education benefits, which can pay for up to 75 percent of in-state tuition costs.

After graduation and commissioning, Minuteman Scholarship recipients are guaranteed placement in the Army reserves.

In order to qualify for the Minuteman Scholarship, a cadet must: be a United States citizen, serve in the National Guard, pass an Army Physical Fitness Test, pass height and weight standards set by AR 600-9, have a valid MEPS Physical, complete form SF86 to obtain security clearance, and pass an interview process.

Applicants for the scholarship must be younger than 31 by Dec. 31 of their commissioning year.

In Nebraska, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln awarded Minuteman Scholarships to five SMP cadets. Those cadets are: Andrew Hunt from Lincoln, Nebraska, who is assigned to Company A, 376th Aviation; Andrew Allgood from Lincoln, Nebraska, who is assigned to 754th Chemical Reconnaissance/Decontamination Company; Taylor Friedrich from Norfolk, Nebraska, who is assigned to the 313th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance); Melissa Throener from Blair, Ne-

braska, who is assigned to 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne); and Megan Brooks from Omaha, Nebraska, who assigned to 313th Medical Co.

According to Brooks, receiving the Minuteman Scholarship was a huge boost to her college efforts.

"I did not have to take out a student loan for the first time in my college career of over five years," she said. "The book stipend covered my books perfectly and the \$5,000 room/board reimbursement allowed me to pay graduate-rate in-state tuition."

"The monthly stipend covers my rent, my car insurance, and my parking pass, and my drill pay helps with my groceries, gas and car payment," Brooks said. "The Minuteman Scholarship helps me on my path to earn my Medical Family Therapy Certificate, which will allow me to provide for those with mental illness that are medicated and to possibly work in a hospital and facilitate communication with physicians."

Cadets in the Simultaneous Membership Program also benefit

from increased leadership opportunities. They are required to participate in a Nebraska National Guard unit's monthly drill for one-weekend-a-month and annual training for two weeks during the summer. They serve in a non-deployable MOS as a 09R.

According to 1st Lt. Jessica Wolff, Nebraska Army National Guard officer strength manager, "The program gives cadets an advantage over their peers by allowing cadets to shadow officers to see what their future as an Army leader would be like. SMP cadets also have the opportunity to train with their unit and to practice basic soldiering skills."

As a current member of the Simultaneous Membership Program and a 4 year recipient of the Minuteman Scholarship, Friedrich said the benefits go way beyond the simple financial boosts. "When you are in the National Guard, it is rewarding because you get extra experience. Basic training and (advanced individual training) was a humbling experience for me. It helped me learn to get along with other people from different backgrounds."

Incoming high school seniors can be eligible for the Scholarship, but they must be eligible for or already have status in the National Guard or Reserves, be 100 percent pre-qualified and have a nomination memorandum in their scholarship packet.

If a cadet leaves the ROTC program after their freshman year, recoupment of all scholarship funds will take place. However, these cadets will still have status in the National Guard or Reserves and will remain in a drilling status.

All Minuteman Scholarships are HQ USACC funded and do not impact a brigade's budget. For the 2015 year, there were a total of 302 nominations for the Minuteman Scholarship across all 54 U.S. states and territories. Of the 302 nominations, 121 of the Cadets were STEM Majors.

219 of those nominated were males and 83 were females.

For more information on the Minuteman Scholarship, contact Wolff by e-mail at jessica.l.wolff16.mil@mail.mil or by phone at (402) 309-7460.

## PROMOTIONS

### Army National Guard

#### Brigadier General

Kevin D. Lyons

#### Major

Cory N. Huskey  
Zachary V. Labrayere  
Johanna M. Missak  
Daniel D. Shiley  
Terry L. Zastrow

#### Captain

Christopher R. Barondeau  
Jeb J. Myers  
Sean C. Polson

#### Chief Warrant Officer 3

Brad C. Lamay  
Carrie L. Pittman  
Thomas W. Powell

#### Master Sergeant

Joseph A. Jackson  
Steven A. Jenny  
John J. Ruden  
Andrew J. Yates

#### Sergeant First Class

Dustin R. Anderson  
David J. Austin  
Michael D. Belleci  
Jacob A. Bramhall  
Donald L. Klute  
Annie L. Kobza  
Daniel R. Malizzi  
Christopher W. Martin  
Howard J. Taylor III  
John J. Walker

#### Staff Sergeant

David J. Buller  
Brenton J. Duryea  
Nicolas R. Hansen  
Terry L. Haun Jr.  
Derrick A. Jackson  
Aaron M. Kaufman  
Brisson G. Kuhn  
Sherri L. Maberry  
Jonathan J. Musilek  
Elizabeth I. Nielsen  
Carl J. Nolte  
Anthony W. Noyes  
Chad C. Oestreich  
Channon L. Price  
Kenneth C. J. Salisbury  
Clayton K. Shaw  
Robert E. Sherard Jr.  
Colton J. Stepp  
Dianna L. Waters  
Matthew T. Williams

#### Sergeant

Abdoulaziz Amadou  
David W. Benton  
Joshua R. Bowman  
Dylan M. Bryant  
Ethan G. Burnside  
Andrew C. Eshleman  
Timothy B. Failor  
Jacob D. Harrer  
Nicole M. Havlovic  
Jonathan D. Hawkins  
Robert C. Hayduk  
Sabrina M. Herchenbach  
Jeffery A. Hergenreder  
Joshua M. Holm

Steven H. Hope  
Alex J. Koehler  
Stephan P. Laboy  
James A. Lewis  
Beau R. Muehling  
Daniel W. O'Connell  
Brandon M. Olsen  
Jesse A. Pfeifer  
Shalyn K. Prochnow  
Jerry J. Rhein Jr.  
Clark W. Rowse  
Melissa A. Schmit  
Mick L. Shaw  
James W. Taylor  
Liwayway A. Taylor  
Alex M. Topil  
Carlos Valdez Jr.  
Shane A. Wimberley  
Eric B. Wills  
Scott J. Witthuhn

#### Specialist

Matthew A. Arthur  
Bryce E. Bohlender  
Tony M. Bohnet  
Gage M. Boyce  
Ruby M. Cuevas  
Zachary D. Ernst  
Isaac W. Finn  
Jacob A. Garrelts  
Barret D. Gibbons  
Jared J. Graff  
Dustin A. Groshans  
Miguel A. Guardiloa  
Derek D. Hedlund  
Nathan A. Holman  
Robert A. Hoy  
Marilee P. Jimerson

Gary L. Kaplan Jr.  
Aubriel R. Loomis  
Lane M. Mayfield  
James A. Meyers  
Nathan J. Meyers  
Jonathan R. Osterhoudt  
Andrew T. Oxtoby  
Jonathan L. Parker  
Caleb J. Pence  
Cameron S. Preshler  
Eric W. Roe  
Riley A. Sadd  
Dylan J. Samway  
Elliot M. Schmit  
Brinnon E. Schukei  
Christopher E. Shelby  
Tyler J. Sjovall  
Jason W. Skallberg  
Riley P. Smith  
Blake A. Summer  
Alexander R. Walker  
Taylor J. Wroblewski

#### Private First Class

Treu G. Anderson  
Kolton W. Brown  
Jason A. Camp  
Guillermo R. Chavez  
Cody J. Cramer  
Emily K. Delka  
Thomas J. Fox  
Amanda M. Green  
Noah J. Huber  
Erik L. Jacobson  
Jessica L. Kinghorn  
Jeromy P. Naslund Jr.  
Phillip M. Oden III  
Martin J. Odonnell Jr.

Oleg Petrusev  
Hector Rodriguez Jr.  
Beau R. Schomer  
Benjamin A. Serr  
Collin T. Sindt  
Noah Q. Spangler  
Brian J. Sydik  
Samuel R. Vanderheiden  
Spencer D. Volden  
Luke A. White  
Joshua D. Wilshusen

#### Private Two

Jake A. Bach  
Kadin J. Eilers  
Joseph K. Hamilton

### Air National Guard

**Lieutenant Colonel**  
Darin Durand  
Jason Palmer

#### Major

Ryan Duerk  
Valerie Newman

#### Captain

Erica Wilson  
Thomas Wilson

#### Chief Master Sergeant

Scott A. Boden  
Raynold G. Kobza  
Ronald J. Polivka

#### Senior Master Sergeant

Sarah A. Bredthauer

#### Master Sergeant

William M. Britten  
Jeremy J. Dean  
Timothy W. Vest

#### Technical Sergeant

Nicholas R. Cerveny  
Lisa M. Gomez  
Matthew L. Lindholm  
Donavan J. Mitchell  
Caitlin A. Price  
Bradley J. Schmale

#### Staff Sergeant

Luis M. Contreras  
Seth J. Deinert  
Tyler M. Klingemann  
Anthony C. Leaply  
Whitney A. Scholtes  
Matthew F. Spieker  
Gus E. Stamps  
Charlie A. Vega

#### Senior Airman

Ryan J. Dalton  
Nicholas C. Goodwin  
Roger R. Heusinkvelt  
Jacob S. Miller  
Hunter M. Oliver  
Zachary W. Silva  
Brett A. Thorne  
Michael B. Vantine  
Allen J. Seburg

#### Airman First Class

Ethan D. Haberman  
Brian D. Jacobson  
Christian C. Phifer

## AWARDS

#### Meritorious Service Medal

Lt. Col. Vernon A. Chandler  
Lt. Col. Brent D. Flachsbart  
Maj. Zachary V. Labrayere  
Capt. Jacques S. Smith III  
Command Sgt. Maj. Richard D. Cruickshank  
1st Sgt. Clint J. Thompson  
Sgt. 1st Class Chad A. Couillard  
Sgt. 1st Class Kyle D. Demaree

#### Army Commendation Medal

Capt. Gary P. Hansen  
1st Lt. David E. Stott  
1st Lt. Travis J. Wahlmeier  
Command Sgt. Maj. Monte A. Kerchal  
Master Sgt. Dennis D. Krecklow  
Master Sgt. Gus R. Swanson  
Sgt. 1st Class Timothy S. Elder  
Sgt. 1st Class Christopher G. Gross  
Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan L. Hagemann  
Sgt. 1st Class Matthew M. Hansen  
Sgt. 1st Class Michael L. Hytrek  
Sgt. 1st Class David M. Nanfite  
Staff Sgt. James A. Graham  
Staff Sgt. Timothy C. Harper  
Staff Sgt. Shantel G. Humphrey  
Staff Sgt. Larry C. Jackson  
Staff Sgt. Luke E. Katz  
Staff Sgt. Joshua D. Peavy  
Staff Sgt. Craig D. Worley

Sgt. Craig D. Hoppes  
Sgt. Brandon A. Pedersen  
Sgt. Bradley J. Wardyn  
Sgt. Charles M. Wilkins  
Spc. Steven T. Wagner

#### Army Achievement Medal

Capt. Oliver C. Berglund  
Capt. Jocelyn J. Kuta  
1st Lt. Jason R. Aschenbrenner  
1st Lt. Travis J. Wahlmeier  
1st Lt. Jessica L. Wolff  
2nd Lt. Cassandra M. Day  
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kevin C. George  
1st Sgt. Denise Y. Kaiser  
Master Sgt. Gerald D. Bouska  
Sgt. 1st Class Michael K. Benorden  
Sgt. 1st Class Steven R. Brewer  
Sgt. 1st Class Lillie D. Chambers  
Sgt. 1st Class Melessa J. Dasenbrock  
Sgt. 1st Class James G. Dinville  
Sgt. 1st Class Landen C. Koopman  
Sgt. 1st Class Chad E. Sample  
Sgt. 1st Class Jason M. Schiermeyer  
Staff Sgt. Nathan J. Avery  
Staff Sgt. Ethan D. Dodd  
Staff Sgt. Devin C. G. Lovgren  
Staff Sgt. Jeremiah B. Houlden  
Staff Sgt. Jessie A. London  
Staff Sgt. Kevin K. O'Brien

Staff Sgt. Patrick C. Rauch  
Staff Sgt. Rachell M. Rowley  
Staff Sgt. Josiah A. Smith  
Staff Sgt. Robert B. Thompson  
Staff Sgt. Erik L. Torres  
Sgt. Gage A. Brummer  
Sgt. Sean M. Carlson  
Sgt. Jason M. Dailey  
Sgt. Andrew C. Eshleman  
Sgt. Brycen L. Gillming  
Sgt. Bryce D. Hinrichs  
1st Lt. Joshua M. Holm  
Sgt. Steven H. Hope  
Sgt. Andres Lara  
Sgt. Joshua M. Mayer  
Sgt. Jerry J. Rhein Jr.  
Sgt. Matthew E. Schorfheide  
Sgt. Shawna M. Tibbetts  
Sgt. Kevin J. Weyers Jr.  
Spc. Jimmy Barajasmorales  
Spc. Anthony A. M. Casto  
Spc. Derek D. Crawford  
Spc. Keenan J. Dobish  
Spc. Elisabeth R. H. Eisenmann  
Spc. Zachary D. Ernst  
Spc. Logan L. Fay  
Spc. David E. Gerhardus  
Spc. Alexander S. P. Gould  
Spc. Ryan T. Green  
Spc. Ashton G. Henderson

Spc. Aaron S. Hensley  
Spc. Brett J. Johnson  
Spc. Dallas J. Kimminau  
Spc. Jeffrey P. Linscomb  
Spc. Paul W. Norden  
Spc. Dustin R. Payne  
Spc. Dayton C. Rasmussen  
Spc. Matthew J. Reidy  
Spc. Jason W. Skallberg  
Spc. Steven T. Wagner  
Pfc. Kane M. A. Dobish  
Pfc. Shawn M. Fleischman  
Pfc. Kristin K. Severance  
Pfc. Ali J. Taylor  
Pfc. Samuel R. Vanderheiden  
Pvt. Jordan E. Consolver

#### Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

Sgt. 1st Class Christine L. Gonzales

#### Combat Action Badge

Sgt. Joshua J. Taborsky

#### Combat Infantry Badge

Spc. Christopher E. Shelby

#### Nebraska National Guard

#### Commendation Medal

Cpt. Luke A. Holland  
Spc. Michael A. Lindgren

#### Nebraska National Guard

#### Individual Achievement Medal

Maj. Brett A. Scholting  
Capt. Joshua Metcalf  
Capt. Ryan E. Thompson  
2nd Lt. Cassandra M. Day  
Master Sgt. Carl K. Dehling  
Sgt. 1st Class Melessa J. Dasenbrock  
Sgt. 1st Class James G. Dinville  
Sgt. 1st Class David Godoy  
Sgt. 1st Class James C. Mendoza  
Sgt. 1st Class Mitchell S. Taylor  
Staff Sgt. David J. Buller  
Staff Sgt. Brenda J. Dutcher  
Staff Sgt. Devin C. G. Lovgren  
Staff Sgt. Tanner K. Hippen  
Staff Sgt. Jason A. Kilcoin  
Staff Sgt. Ryan S. Olsen  
Staff Sgt. Rachell M. Rowley  
Staff Sgt. Dustin E. Schlote  
Staff Sgt. Carley L. Schultz  
Staff Sgt. Sarah J. Sturges  
Staff Sgt. Paul D. Willman  
Sgt. Johnathon A. Albaugh  
Sgt. Mitchell B. Hunt  
Sgt. Robert C. Keck  
Sgt. Lawrence M. Lind  
Sgt. Joshua M. Mayer  
Sgt. Anastasia B. Whisenhunt  
Spc. Jose L. Audelorios

Spc. Zachary J. Bowlin  
Spc. Thomas a. Brown  
Spc. Bryce T. Davis  
Spc. Michael S. Escamilla  
Spc. Tanner D. Henning  
Spc. Kaytlen R. Hernandez  
Spc. Matthew M. McClure  
Spc. Jordan A. Miller  
Spc. Jacob V. Rexus  
Spc. James B. Ruffin III  
Spc. Christopher W. Suttles  
Spc. Jonathan R. Watson  
Pfc. Jacob P. Petersen  
Pfc. Brent S. Hellbusch  
Pfc. Brian J. Sydik  
Pvt. Ashlyn B. Schmidt

## RETIREMENTS

Brig. Gen. Scott A. Gronewold  
Sgt. Gary L. Lindeen

## TAPS

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Rowe  
Sgt. Michael O'Garro

# Shorttakes

## Lyons promoted to brigadier general

By Sgt. Jason Drager  
Photojournalist

The superintendent of St. Edward Public School and long-time Nebraska Army National Guard officer was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in the Nebraska Army National Guard during a Dec. 5 ceremony held at the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Kevin D. Lyons, a native of Gibbon, Nebraska, was promoted to his new rank in front of family, friends, civilian co-workers and fellow Nebraska National Guardsmen by Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general. Lyons will now serve as the Nebraska Army National Guard's land component commander.

According to Bohac, Lyons will now be responsible for helping the Nebraska Army National Guard navigate through the massive, upcoming state-wide force structure change as the Guard's 67th

Battlefield Surveillance Brigade transitions into the new 67th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. The changes will affect around 1,100 Soldiers, or roughly one-in-three members of the Nebraska Army National Guard.

Lyons most recently served as the commander of the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade.

"He has the perfect blend of experience, knowledge and temperament to help lead the organization through the upcoming change," said Bohac.

Lyons said the promotion represents a monumental moment in his military career.

"I'm very humbled and honored to be chosen," said Lyons. "I'm here to support the TAG's priorities and help make the transformation as smooth as possible."

Lyons has had a distinguished career thus far and attributes much of his success to his family. "I've been able to do this because I have a very good support system at home," said Lyons of his wife, their five children and their extended family.

"In addition to family support, I also want to thank my civilian employer – the St. Edward Public School Board of Education – for their continued support, allowing me the opportunity to progress in the Nebraska Army National Guard," Lyons added.

Lyons was born in Kearney and grew up in Gibbon, Nebraska. After graduating from Gibbon High School in 1984, Lyons went to Kearney State College where he received a bachelor of Science degree in Education. Lyons also received a Masters of Art degree in School Administration from University of Kearney-Nebraska in 2000.

Lyons enlisted in the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1986 and was assigned to 1-195th Armor in Kearney as a tank crewman. Upon commissioning in 1989, he was assigned to Troop A, 1-167th Cavalry Squadron, in Fremont.

He would later take command of Troop A, the first of many leadership assignments for Lyons. These assignments included commanding the 2nd Battalion, 209th Regiment



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

**Congratulations:** Kevin Lyons' daughters place his new brigadier general stars on his shoulders during a Dec. 5 ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln.

(Regional Training Institute), the 209th Regt. (RTI) and the 67th BFSB. Prior to his current assignment, he served as the Nebraska Army National Guard's senior operations and training officer.

In 2005, Lyons deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom with the Train-

ing Assistance Group, 53rd Infantry Brigade, out of Florida. He served as commander for the Advanced Individual Training Brigade and later as the operations officer for the Training Assistance Group.

Lyons is the Superintendent of Schools at St. Edward Public Schools in St. Edward, Nebraska.

# Street Talk

“What was the most memorable event of last year for you?”



**Spc. Treza Koung**  
1195th Transportation Company

*“Went to WLC (Warrior Leaders Course) at Ashland. It was a challenge, but I got through it. It was an achievement.”*

**Spc. Tanner Henning**  
1195th Transportation Company

*“Going to and completing WLC (Warrior Leaders Course). I felt it was a great accomplishment, and felt proud my unit chose me to go.”*



**Pvt. Jordan Houser**  
1057th Transportation Company

*“Went straight through Basic and AIT (Advanced Individual Training) this summer. It was just a little different than I thought it'd be and made some friends from all over the country.”*

# Happy New Year happy new you

## Manageable expectations often key to making successful New Year's resolutions

Every year most of us give ourselves New Year's resolutions. But how manageable or realistic are they?

Can you really cut out sweets for a year or lose that much weight?

Maybe. But let's be real. We all need to be a little more realistic when it comes to setting New Year's resolutions. I know from experience that even small changes can make big impacts in your life.

My New Year's resolutions are simple:

1) Stay in touch with friends and family. I love my friends and family, but sometimes my life is busy and I let days, if not weeks, go by where I don't talk to them. I want to do better at keeping in touch, whether that is sending them a text asking how there day is, calling them when I have some free time, or going out to dinner or to the mall. Hopefully stay in touch with them better than before.

2) Stay fit and healthy. Losing weight is one of the most common resolutions or goals people have. It is easy to start a new diet or exercise program, but the hard part is sticking with it. Make sure your resolution is something you can handle with your busy day-to-day life.

3) Reduce stress. I am a worry wart. I want to learn to be happier with my life and not stress so much about the little things.

4) Watch less TV. Now, if it was up to me, I wouldn't even have

Direct TV in my house. But my husband on the other hand probably couldn't survive without it. Watching less TV is about being more active and doing other things during that time where I could be more productive.

5) Be more organized. I always thought that I was an organized person. Well that changed once I had a baby. Some days I can't even find my car keys or hair brush. I hope that becoming more organized will free up some of my time looking around for things.

6) Start saving more money. It's time to start putting more money aside for my rainy day fund, emergency fund and for life in general. You never know when something will break down and you need to fix it.

7) Take some chances. You never know what opportunities will arise if you don't open your eyes and try something new.

8) Learn something new. I'm one who believes it's always good to learn new things and better myself. So this year I am making sure I learn something new. I don't even care if it's something small, like read a book on quilting or start



Editor

Staff Sergeant

**Heidi McClintock**

a new hobby.  
9) Help others. I always feel so good when I help others. Helping others could be as simple as donating clothes that don't fit or that you don't wear, or it could be volunteering at a local shelter or mentoring children in school.

10) Remembering to do date nights with my husband. It can be anything from renting a movie and ordering pizza or going on a walk around the park. Dates are important to grow as a couple, get a break from the norm, have a little fun and show your significant other that you are putting some special time aside for them.

If you are setting resolutions this year like I did, don't forget to write them down. And put them somewhere you see them every day. This really helps me stick to my goals and I hope it helps you too. I know seeing them on a regular basis opens my eyes and motivates me to do them.

It may seem like I have a lot of New Year's resolutions, but they are very simple goals that I know I can stick to.

Don't forget it's not too late to make your own New Year's resolutions.

You don't need a novel of resolutions or even a list, just having one resolution can make a difference in your life.

So, here's to a new year and a new you.

## Making Changes, accepting challenges

My mom wasn't too thrilled when I called her and told her I had been talking to an Army National Guard recruiter. Like most mothers, she was worried about her little girl.

“But what if you get deployed? But what if you can't make it through training? But what if...?”

That was only two-and-a-half-years ago. I look back now and am amazed at how many things have changed in my life in such a short time.

I was finishing up my last year of college at the time, trying my hardest to get a degree after changing my mind three times about what that degree would be. I had settled on a degree in communications with an emphasis in journalism. I liked to write, what could possibly go wrong?

One day, while I was standing over my sink, elbows deep in dish soap bubbles and a week's worth of dirty dishes (the number was quite amazing considering just my husband and me made them), someone knocked at my door.

My friend Morgan was wondering if I would come with him. He was going to meet an Army National Guard recruiter.

Like most college students who are buried in student loans, he was looking for debt freedom.

Tired of doing dishes anyways, I agreed to ride along, if only to laugh at the thought of him cutting

Assistant Editor

Specialist

**Anna Pongo**



and meeting people from all corners of the United States.

I have made life-long friends from both basic combat training and advanced individual training. There was something about all of us low-crawling through the sand

pit together that helped to bond a group of strangers into a disjointed family.

The experience has been one long learning process. I learned patience and perseverance through trudging mile after mile with a full ruck pack on my back. During those long ruck marches I would entertain myself by mentally singing every song I could think of and replaying movies in my head.

I learned to enjoy the little things in life like focusing on the sun rise instead of my burning legs during a run or getting an extra five minutes to eat lunch on Sundays.

I learned to rely on my battle buddies to help me up when I was down. This applied to both physically and mentally worn out.

I learned to rely on myself and believe that I COULD do the things that had previously seemed impossible.

So many things have changed since that day Morgan came knocking at my door. New friends, new experiences, new challenges and new life goals.

And I wouldn't change a thing.

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**PENTERMAN ARMORY**  
SOUTH END OF DRILL FLOOR NEAR 92ND  
TROOP COMMAND SUPPLY ROOM



Photos by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

**Through The Smoke:** Flags at the forefront, members of the Nebraska Cornhusker football team charge out onto the turf of Memorial Stadium before the start of the Nov. 11 game with the Michigan State Spartans. The game served as the "Veterans Day" observance for the University of Nebraska's football program.

## Memorial Day game keeps fans guessing before exciting win

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes  
State Public Affairs Officer

For Nebraska Cornhusker fans, the 2015 football season was, if anything, a trying time as Nebraska struggled through a 5-7 season under first-year head coach Mike Riley. It included five losses by five points or less – many coming on the final plays of the game.

However, if a person was to ask one of the several hundred Nebraska National Guardsmen who attended the Nov. 11 Nebraska-Michigan State game about what they will remember about the 2015 season, the answer might be surprising.

Instead of the close, often heart-breaking losses, those Nebraska Guard Soldiers and Airmen will probably most remember the mind-numbing, come from behind 39-38 Nebraska victory over the sixth-ranked and previously undefeated Spartans as Nebraska rallied from 19 points behind in the fourth quarter to win the game. They will also probably remember the 45-minute raucous celebration that followed.

"The guy next to me was crying," said 1st Lt. Edward Bosland, Nebraska Army National Guard educational services officer, who was one of a number of Guardsmen who received complimentary tickets to the game, which served as the University's annual Memorial Day observance. "Nobody wanted to leave."

For Bosland, a native of New Jersey, the Nov. 11 football game was an extra special experience. Along with seeing Nebraska win on a last second and somewhat controversial 30-yard touchdown pass to Brandon Reilly, he also experienced Nebraska Memorial Stadium on gameday for the first time.

"Even before I got (to Lincoln), I was aware of Husker mentality," said Bosland, who moved to Nebraska from New Jersey six months earlier. "I didn't know what it was, I just knew that it was."

"I was a little intimidated," Bosland said about preparing to go to Memorial Stadium where, since the early 1960s, tens of thousands of red-clad fans have filled the now-90,000-seat stadium to capacity, an



**Let's Go Huskers:** Staff Sgt. Bret Frohner, Nebraska Air National Guard, urges on the Huskers during Nebraska's furious fourth quarter rally to beat the Michigan State Spartans, Nov. 11, in Lincoln, Neb.

ongoing NCAA record. "I've been to dozens of college football games. However, at Rutgers, they're lucky if they get 10,000 fans or more to their games. I wasn't sure if I was ready. I wasn't sure what I was supposed to wear."

What Bosland saw was beyond anything he could have imagined.

"The first thing was that the stadium is huge. It's deceptively big," he said. "The next thing was the sound. It is so loud that you feel it. And then the red... they call it an ocean of red and that is exactly what it was like."

However, there were a few islands of green mixed in. Along with the section reserved for the visiting fans of Michigan State – who were attired in their green and white coats – there were also knots of green along the concourse behind the Nebraska football team's bench, where dozens of uniformed service members sat and watched what became an epic game between two Big 10 Conference heavyweights.

The service members, who

represented active and reserve service members from all military branches, including a large contingent of Nebraska Army and Air Guardsmen, were invited to the game as part of the university's special commemoration to the state's veterans.

The University of Nebraska also formally recognized eight veterans of conflicts ranging back to World War II, who served as honorary gate sentinels prior to the start of the game. Several of the veterans were escorted by current members of the military, including several National Guard officers.

The university also honored 35 Gold Star Children and their mothers who became widows when their husbands died in wars waged in Iraq and Afghanistan.

According to Bosland, he came away from the game as a fan of the program.

"This is a mecca of College Football," he said. "It is also such a family-friendly environment. They really do things right."



**Marching:** Members of the University of Nebraska Reserve Officer Training Corps carry the colors of the various branches of the U.S. military during the Veterans Day recognition ceremony before the start of the Nebraska-Michigan State football game.



**Balloons:** The children and spouses of fallen Nebraska service members release golden balloons in memory of their lost family members, Nov. 11. The balloon release was part of a day-long recognition for the "Gold Star" family members.



**Salute:** Veterans of the U.S. military representing past conflicts ranging from World War II until the current operations in the Middle East salute during the playing of the National Anthem, Nov. 11.