

Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Nebraska City, families give hearts to Army Guard military police unit

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Valentine's Day has long been known as a day for showing one's affection toward loved ones.

That emotion was definitely on display this year when hundreds crowded into the Nebraska City Middle School gymnasium to show support for the approximately 45 Soldiers and their families who were mobilizing for a year-long overseas mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – now called Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

The fact that their mobilization was taking place on an annual holiday dedicated to love wasn't lost on the Soldiers, families or those leaders who traveled to Nebraska City to wish the members of the 192nd Law and Order Detachment well as they prepared to mobilize for the second time in approximately five years.

"It is very fitting that we do this today (Feb. 14) from the heart of the community in which the 192nd is staged and where they trained," said Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, who



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Lend a Helping Hand: Lt. Col. Eric Hunsberger, commander of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 402nd Military Police Battalion, takes a photo as Master Sgt. Jesse Biltorf and his family pose with Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts following a Feb. 14 sendoff ceremony for the 192nd Law and Order Detachment in Nebraska City, Neb.

joined Gov. Pete Ricketts and U.S. Senator Ben Sasse in thanking the Soldiers and families as the unit prepared to begin a mission that would ultimately take them to a base in the Persian Gulf. "The National Guard is Nebraska's connection to America and the 192nd represents that connection very well – a connection to the com-

munity that helps make America proud."

While overseas, the Nebraska Army National Guard military police officers will be responsible for providing internal law and order operations and other support functions at the base. It's a similar mission to the one the unit

See **SENDOFF** on 3.

Guard students hit by tuition assistance program shortfall

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Editor

For decades, the Nebraska National Guard state tuition assistance program has helped Nebraska Soldiers and Airmen reach their educational goals while also serving as a major recruitment and reenlistment tool for the organization.

Recently, however, Nebraska Guard officials were forced to cut back significantly on the amount of Guard Soldiers and Airmen who were able to receive the education benefits due to an unforeseen increase in usage caused by unforeseen changes to the Army's federal tuition assistance program in January 2014 that caused the state program to reach its appropriation limit early this year.

"The Nebraska National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program has seen increased usage during this state fiscal year," said Maj. David Cooper, Nebraska Army National Guard education services officer. "So much so, that the program reached its appropriation limit at the start of the spring semester."

"Unfortunately, we were unable to support many requests for State Tuition Assistance this year," added Cooper.

Nebraska National Guard officials believe the primary cause are the changes to the Federal Tuition Assistance policy.

"The Army Continuing Education System now requires Soldiers to complete one year of service after finishing initial entry training in order to receive federal tuition assistance through GoArmyEd," said Cooper.

"This has caused more of our Soldiers to rely on State Tuition Assistance in order to fund their education," added Cooper.

It's a big problem, said Guard officials, that doesn't have any 'quick fix' solutions. That's why senior Nebraska National Guard leaders worked closely with state governmental leaders and higher education officials to fix the problem for the future while also helping lessen the impact on those Guardsmen who had hoped to utilize the state program this year.

"Although lack of current fund-

See **TUITION** on 9.

Former Nebraska adjutant general named new Army Guard director

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Former Nebraska National Guard Adjutant General (Maj. Gen.) Timothy Kadavy was confirmed by the U.S. Senate March 27 to the rank of lieutenant general and service as the director of the Army National Guard.

As the incoming director, Kadavy – who served as the adjutant general for Nebraska from November 2007 until August 2009 – will be responsible for formulating, developing

and coordinating all programs, policies and plans affecting the Army National Guard and its more than 350,000 Citizen-Soldiers nation-wide.

"I would like to add my congratulations to Lt. Gen. Kadavy and his family as he assumes this incredibly important post and begins charting the future for our Army National Guard," said Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, the current adjutant general for Nebraska. "Having worked with and for Lt. Gen. Kadavy in numerous capacities,

I know that he has the skills and the expertise to take on this vital mission and help shape our Army National Guard for the future."

"The entire Nebraska National Guard is thrilled by his selection and we all wish him and his family well," Bohac added.

A native of Omaha, Neb., who received his commission through the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Kadavy had most recently served as special assistant to the vice chief, National Guard Bureau.

He succeeds Lt. Gen. William E. Ingram Jr., who retired in early 2014.

In the interim, Maj. Gen. Judd H. Lyons, who succeeded Kadavy as the Nebraska National Guard adjutant general from August 2009 until July 2013, has served as the acting director of the Army National Guard.

The Army National Guard Directorate is part of the National Guard Bureau, which is led by Gen. Frank J. Grass, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Kadavy will be

the 20th director and fourth three-star general to fill the position.

A 1982 graduate of Millard South High School, Kadavy's military career began shortly after receiving his commission through ROTC in 1984. He served in a number of positions within the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1-167th Cavalry including tank and scout platoon leader with Fremont's Troop A, executive officer and commander of Omaha's Troop B, and assistant operations officer and personnel

See **KADAVY** on 8.

Enlisted Soldiers compete among best for Nebraska's highest honors at annual Best Warrior Competition

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock and Pfc. Anna Pongo

Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers from across the state came together to compete for the Nebraska Army National Guard Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year titles during an intense and grueling multiday contest called the Best Warrior Competition.

The March 20-22 competition, which was conducted at the Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Nebraska, started with five enlisted Soldiers and four noncommissioned officers competing against each other in 22 physically and mentally demanding events designed to ultimately find the "top" enlisted Soldier and NCO in the state.

Meet the competitors

Enlisted Category:
Spc. Robin Cauthon, a carpentry and masonry specialist with Wahoo's 623rd Vertical Engineering Company, has eight years of military service;

Spc. Alexander Gould, a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear specialist with Omaha's 402nd Military Police Battalion, has one year of military service;

Sgt. Scott Kuzminski, an infantryman with Beatrice's Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron (Reconnaissance and Surveillance), has seven years of military service;

Spc. David Mueller, a motor transport operator with Kearney's 1195th Transportation Company, has two years of military service;

See **BEST WARRIOR** on 10.



Almost There: Spc. David Mueller sprints the last 100 yards of the 10-mile ruck march during the 2015 Nebraska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition, March 21, at Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Big Guns: Sgt. Scott Kuzminski performs a function check on a M2A1 .50 caliber heavy machine gun during the Best Warrior Competition at Greenlief Training Site, March 21.

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NEWS DIGEST

■ Experts say more needs to be done to fight assaults on males

TYSONS CORNER, Va. (DoD News) — Experts urged Army leaders to reach out to male victims of sexual assault, saying people must not look at sexual violence as exclusively a women's issue.

Jim Hopper, a psychologist and researcher, and Russell Strand, a retired Criminal Investigative Service special agent, spoke about an aspect of sexual violence not often discussed: sexual assaults on men. The men spoke during the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Program Summit, Feb. 19.

The numbers of males sexually assaulted in the military are sobering, they said. "(About) 10,800 men are sexually assaulted every year in the military," Strand said. "(Roughly) 8,000 women are assaulted."

It is a bit of apples and oranges comparison. Men make up about 85 percent of the military, so this works out to about 1 percent of males are assaulted, but about 5 percent of females are.

"Number-wise, we've had more men assaulted in the military than women," Strand said. "And everywhere I go to talk the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Air Force and Coast Guard, it doesn't sink in. It doesn't internalize."

It is seen as primarily a women's issue, even by women, Strand said.

A large number of men are affected, and being men, few ever report the attacks, Strand said. Only 1,134 men reported attacks - roughly 13 percent of those attacked. With women, 39 percent reported attacks.

So 87 percent of men attacked are not reporting it and "these are real men in real pain," Hopper said. The pain is compounded by shame. Being sexually assaulted brings additional levels of shame to a man because it works against the ideal of what it means to be a man, he said.

And it brings fear. "There's fear of those memories, there's fear of being violated, there's fear that someone might know what happened to them," Hopper said.

Men who have been assaulted believe they are not worthy of respect, Strand said.

The men who are assaulted are overwhelmingly heterosexual and so are those doing the assaulting. "Most people who sexually assault adult men are heterosexuals," Hopper said. "And those same heterosexual men, who are assaulting men, are often the same men assaulting women."

Many males would not get help because they feel they would not be believed, understood or supported. "Part of that is they know most people don't expect men to be assaulted, that this can't really happen to 'a real man,'" Hopper said.

They are also truly afraid of their friends or teammates finding out what happened to them, Hopper said. They believe they will be looked at as less than a man, that they will be ostracized and shunned. Finally, many see this as the death knell to their careers.

The military services need to begin marketing on the issue specifically to men, the experts said. A safe anonymous helpline could

be the beginning for getting many of these men the help they need and deserve. The services also need to market programs aimed at commanders, health care professionals, police investigators and prosecutors, informing them of the problem and assets available to help their Service members.

■ Sanctions having mixed effect on Russia, Defense officials say

WASHINGTON (DoD News) — U.S. and European sanctions imposed on Russia for its support of Ukrainian separatists and the annexation of Crimea are having a significant impact on Russia's economy, but have not curtailed Moscow's continued intervention in the region, two senior Defense Department officials told Congress, Feb. 25.

"We are hearing, for example, more dissatisfaction of the oligarchs, who to date have been very supportive of (Russian President Vladimir) Putin," Christine E. Wormuth, undersecretary of defense for policy, told the House Armed Services Committee during a hearing on security threats to Europe that focused largely on Russia's threat to Ukraine and Eastern Europe.

Regarding the sanctions, the Russian oligarchs "are concerned about the impact it is having on their businesses, on their own financial holdings, but it has not changed so far what Russia has been doing on the ground, and that is the great concern," Wormuth said during her testimony.

She added, "That is where there is the need again to look at the overall package of cost-imposing strategies toward Russia and also support to Ukraine to see if we can change the calculus."

In addition to ongoing military exercises and a stepped-up NATO presence in Eastern Europe, the Obama administration has committed \$118 million in nonlethal aid and training to the Ukrainian government in Kiev and a similar amount for fiscal year 2015.

Ukraine's government, which has lost control of significant portions of the eastern part of the country to Russian-backed rebels since fighting began a year ago, has asked allies - including the United States - for lethal aid.

"There is various discussion of providing defensive lethal assistance in an effort to again raise costs on Russia, not from the perspective at all of being able to fundamentally alter the military balance ... but to try to give Ukraine more ability to defend itself against the separatist aggression," Wormuth said in answer to legislators' questions. In fact, Wormuth and Air Force Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and commander of U.S. European Command, both told lawmakers they did not know how Putin would respond if the West began supplying lethal aid to the government in Kiev. However, "what we're doing now is not changing the results on the ground," Breedlove said.

Wormuth said pressure should continue on all fronts and that stepped-up economic and financial isolation of Russia could prove more effective than providing lethal aid to



Courtesy Photo

Lincoln East High School receives leadership award

Job Well Done: Representatives from the softball and volleyball teams from Lincoln East High School receive the 2014 Nebraska Army National Guard Leadership Award from Staff Sgt. Roberto Vega, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac and Maj. Jeff Searcey prior to the Lincoln East vs. Lincoln North East Basketball game in Lincoln, Neb., Jan. 16. This award was created after Searcey approached the adjutant general in hopes of developing a leadership program through sports in schools.

the Ukrainian government, a move that she said could lead Russia to "double down" on its support for Ukrainian separatists and thereby escalate the conflict.

Ultimately, Breedlove said, he does not think the Ukrainian military is capable of stopping further Russian advances and that the best resolution to the year-old conflict remains a diplomatic one. Even so, neither he nor Wormuth expressed confidence that a cease-fire agreement reached earlier in Belarus - the second such agreement in five months - would hold.

■ DoD Salutes Guard, Reserve family readiness programs

WASHINGTON (DoD News) - The war on terrorism that began with the 9/11 attacks has meant that unprecedented numbers of reserve troops have been called to active duty. Feb. 27, the Department of Defense, as it has done for the past 15 years, honored the top unit in each reserve component for its outstanding programs that support unit missions and family readiness.

Richard O. Wightman Jr., principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, hosted the Pentagon's Reserve Family Readiness Awards. He expressed the department's gratitude for family readiness support programs around the country that allow Soldiers, sailors, Marines, Airmen and Guardsmen to serve around the world without having to worry about the challenges of life on the home front.

"To these unsung heroes, we owe much," Wightman said. "They have given their time, freely, without any guarantees of accolades or reimbursements, yet they sacrifice their evenings, weekends, and time with family in the selfless service of others."

Representatives of the seven reserve components accepted the award, co-sponsored by

the Military Officers Association of America.

■ President Obama sends commission's pay, retirement recommendations to Congress

WASHINGTON (DoD News) - President Barack Obama sent the recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission to Congress, May 1.

In the letter accompanying the report, Obama thanked the commission members and said their recommendations "represent an important step forward in protecting the long-term viability of the all-volunteer force, improving quality of life for service members and their families and ensuring the fiscal sustainability of the military compensation and retirement systems."

The president is prepared to support specific proposals for 10 of the Commission's 15 recommendations.

Since the commission released its report to the president in January, DoD officials have been over the recommendations with a fine-toothed comb. The department and the White House want to move slowly on four of the commission's 15 recommendations and will begin executing the remaining 10.

The four that require more study are: the proposal for a blended retirement system, reserve component duty statuses, exceptional family member support and commissary and exchange consolidation.

The 10 recommendations the president is prepared to support either in toto or with modifications are: the Survivor Benefit Plan, financial education, medical personnel readiness, DoD and Department of Veterans Affairs collaboration, child care, service member education, transition assistance, dependent space-available travel and the report on military-connected dependents.

Air Force secretary says sequestration harms readiness

WASHINGTON (DoD News) - The Air Force's readiness edge could slip away if sequestration is not lifted permanently, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James told members of a Senate panel at a fiscal year 2016 defense appropriations hearing, Feb. 25.

Appearing with Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, James said sequestration "threatens everything" if the law to force budget cuts is not lifted.

The Air Force is under duress, James told the panel.

"Our Air Force is unquestionably the best on the planet, but we are strained," she said. "We are the best because our men and women who execute the mission each and every day are doing the very best job possible. But we mustn't take this for granted."

James said her priorities are taking care of people, striking the right balance in preparing for today's and tomorrow's national security challenges, and making every dollar count.

During her travels last year, James said, Airmen have told her

their biggest concern is downsizing the force.

Today's Air Force is the smallest it's been since it was established in 1947, and the average aircraft is 27 years old, James said.

"This is at a time when the demand for our Air Force services is absolutely going through the roof," she added.

The Air Force instead needs to modestly upsize, James said, with a total force of 492,000 active duty, National Guard and reserve troops to execute the defense strategy.

Such an increase would help relieve operational strain, deployment and bolster the force's nuclear enterprise, the secretary said. A force plus-up, she added, would also increase the cyber teams the Air Force is trying to build and "shore up" existing unmanned fields, such as maintenance.

The Air Force strives to make every dollar count, James said, adding that the service is progressing in numerous areas, including cutting headquarters by 20 percent, mostly in personnel. The service also is proposing to retire A-10

Thunderbolt "Warhog" aircraft, and will ask for another round of base closures, she said.

But if sequestration returns in fiscal year 2016, she said, "The choices will be more dire," and "very important systems would perhaps have to be shelved."

Cutting force structure would risk that the Air Force becomes too small to accomplish its missions, Welsh told the Senate panel.

And reducing Air Force research and development costs to save money would hurt future readiness, he said.

"The option of not modernizing isn't an option at all," the general said. "Air forces that fall behind the technology curve fail," Welsh added. "And joint forces without the full breadth of air space and cyber capabilities that modern air power brings will lose."

If funding remains at Budget Control Act levels, the Air Force's short-term readiness recovery will stall, he said.

"The casualties will be Air Force readiness and capability well into the future," the general said.

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.

The views and opinions expressed in this newspaper are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the Military Department of Nebraska or the U.S. Department of Defense.

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Air Force responds to commission's report on structure

WASHINGTON (AFNS) — The Air Force responded to the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force's recommendations in a report to Congress, March 4.

Of the Commission's 42 recommendations, Air Force officials disagreed with only one and are already in the process of implementing 25, as well as developing plans or pilot programs for another 16.

"The body of work that came out of the commission will help us advance the ball toward an even stronger total force," said secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James, "and I'm convinced the future of the Air Force includes a greater reliance on our Guard and Reserve components."

The disestablishment of the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command was the only recommendation in which the Air Force disagreed with the commission.

Elimination of the AFRC would not result in substantial savings, as nine different major commands would have to assume the roles and responsibilities currently accomplished by the Headquarters AFRC. Additionally, the current structure allows the Chief of the Air Force Reserve to manage authorized and appropriated reserve resources as required by key statutory obligations.

Over the last two years, the Air Force has made significant progress toward improving collaboration and cooperation between the components to strengthen and institutionalize relationships across the total force.

All three components have participated in the Air Force's budgetary discussions and planning from start to finish beginning with the fiscal year 2015 President's Budget. This process enables an integrated approach to maximize capability and capacity in times of increasing fiscal constraints.

Transformation during wartime is difficult and the Air Force is short of warfighting capacity in nearly all mission areas.

Even though the NCSAF report identified possible cost savings associated with moving approximately 36,000 active

Airmen into the reserve component and related savings of roughly \$2 billion, Air Force analysis does not support this concept.

Based on secretary of defense-mandated dwell rates, the Air Force has capacity shortfalls across almost all mission areas, assuming approximately a 12 percent risk to meeting deployment demand and other requirements; shifting the 36,000 to the reserve component would exacerbate this risk to nearly 20 percent.

To effectively meet requirements and maintain the active component's 1-to-2 and reserve component's 1-to-5 dwell times, the Air Force needs to grow both the active component and the reserve component.

"No one is more invested in total force integration than the Air Force," said Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, the chief of Air Force Reserve. "Going forward, there is no doubt that our Air Force is going to rely more, not less, on our Reserve and National Guard forces. It is essential to leverage our reserve components more effectively in the current global security environment."

The Air Force has spent the last year thoroughly analyzing 80 percent of the Air Force mission-sets and taking a close look at the active component and reserve component balance.

Over the course of the next year, the Air Force will continue evaluating the remaining 20 percent of the mission areas, as well as re-look at major mission areas that need further examination, they said.

The overall assessment so far resulted in changes to the Air Force's fiscal 2016 budget.

Nearly 3,000 positions were added to the reserve component's end strength. The Air Force bought back F-15C Eagles for Air National Guard units and actively associated them; re-established a classic association with the RQ-4 Global Hawk; made some adjustments in the space positioning, navigation and timing system; and grew reserve component in the cyber mission area.

"The evolution of our total force over the years is a great success story, but much of that story has yet to be written," said General Mark A. Welsh, III, the chief of staff of the Air Force.

"We need to be as good at the headquarters level as our Airmen are at the operational and tactical levels. Those Airmen, who've been fighting side-by-side for years, don't see the difference between an active component member, Guardsman or a Reservist. And those who benefit from American airpower really don't care. They just know that without it ... you lose," added Welsh.

The NCSAF was established by Congress in 2013 to determine how the Air Force's structure should be modified to best fill current and future mission requirements, and the commission first presented their findings on Capitol Hill in January 2014. During the same period, the Air Force initiated a comprehensive review of the Air Force total-force enterprise.

Upon completion of the Air Force's internal review and the commission's report, the Air Force established the Total-Force Continuum, or TF-C, an organization led by a brigadier general from each component.

The TF-C is charged with pursuing legislative, policy, educational, operational and organizational changes to more fully integrate the three components into "One Air Force" and identifying the optimal balance of Active, Guard and Reserve across all mission sets.

Subsequent recommendations continuing the Air Force's efforts at integrating across the components will be presented in future budget proposals.

"One unified Air Force needs to be the way we do business without even thinking about it," said Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke, III, the director of the Air National Guard. "We are committed to ensuring we evolve in our total-force integration with a synchronized team always ready to deliver unparalleled airpower anywhere in the world."



All Cammo'ed Up: Sgt. Brandon Waltemath and his family pose for a photograph following the Feb. 14 sendoff ceremony for the 192nd Law and Order Detachment. The entire family attended the emotional ceremony decked out in camouflage clothing as a way to honor Waltemath who was deploying for a second time on an overseas mission.

SENDOFF continued from page 1.

conducted during their last mission in 2010-11 when it deployed to Iraq.

The Soldiers said they're ready for whatever comes their way, despite the fact that they know they will be missing their families during their time away.

"I'm excited to go," said Sgt. Brandon Waltemath, a military policeman who is a veteran of the first deployment. "I love the military, but I don't want to have to leave my kids and my family."

Waltemath's wife, Sarah, echoed those comments, saying that their family worked hard to prepare for this latest deployment, which was made even harder by the fact that they now have three kids, versus the two they had during the first mission.

"It's been a lot of craziness," said Sarah Waltemath about the family's preparations. "(The kids) are a little older, so it's going to be a little tougher this go around."

In order to prepare for that challenge, Sarah said she has attended the unit's Family Readiness Group meetings and plans on trying to stay busy and keep the kids occupied "to keep their minds off things."

The same goes for Master Sgt. Jesse Bilttoft, an operations sergeant with the 192nd Law and Order Det. This will mark his fourth

deployment, which makes him a veteran of preparing himself for a mission. This time, however, he has a family to consider. He said he still hopes he did enough to prepare his wife and their three children for the months of separation.

"I hope that I prepared them for what to expect," he said. "We had quite a bit of notice that we were going to deploy. We worked on it up until the deployment. From everything (my family) have told me, they're ready, but there are always unknowns about a deployment and I think there will be some hard times."

That additional stress being shouldered by each of the 45 Soldiers' families was not lost on the leaders who spoke during the half-hour ceremony in Nebraska City. In fact, the majority of each of the leaders' comments were directed toward the families, often followed by vows of support.

"We know that you have a tough year ahead of you," said Sasse, "but there are a lot of people in this state who will lift you up in prayer. We recognize the sacrifices you are about to make and we appreciate you."

"I know that the citizens of Nebraska all across the state are very proud of you and proud of your service," said Ricketts, speaking to the Soldiers for the first time as



Photos by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Words of Encouragement: Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts spends a few moments chatting with 1st Lt. Eric Otte and his wife Courtney. Otte is the commander of the 192nd Law and Order Detachment, which was deploying to provide military police support in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.



Lean On Me: Master Sgt. Rachel Stafford shares a light moment with her niece, McKenna Twilp, before the start of the Feb. 14 sendoff ceremony for the 192nd Law and Order Detachment in Nebraska City, Neb. Stafford serves as the unit's detachment sergeant.

Nebraska's commander in chief of the Nebraska National Guard.

Ricketts, who spoke about a family member who is also in the military and has experienced the stress of deployments, said he understands the pressures many will feel during the separation. He added that they will be constantly in his and his family's thoughts and prayers.

"I want you to know how proud I am and I know that Nebraskans all across the state feel that way as well for your service and sacrifice for our state and nation."

According to Bohac, the Nebraska National Guard has a duty to help families deal with the pressures of the deployment. "Families

are called to duty, too," he said. "We are fully committed to supporting you."

The unit's commander, 1st Lt. Eric Otte, said the Soldiers are ready to accomplish their mission.

"I'm ready to deploy," he said after the ceremony, during which he challenged the unit's Soldiers to live up to the Army's creed. "I'm ready to head overseas and accomplish our mission and make sure that I get each and every one of these men and women back to their families."

"We trained very hard. We worked really hard to get to this point," Otte added a short time later, his wife Courtney standing by his side, holding his hand as he talked with various well-wishers including

Governor Ricketts and his family. "Everyone is pretty antsy at this point.... (we want) to get going."

Later, Courtney Otte said that she feels ready for the deployment, even though it will be a first for both her and her husband.

"This is a new experience for me," she said. "I've never been through a deployment.... so I'm just taking it day by day and making sure that I'm good at home so that I can support him in his job."

Still, does having to say goodbye on Valentine's Day weekend make it just a little tougher?

"Fortunately, I don't really celebrate Valentine's Day," Courtney said with a laugh. "(So), it's not too bad."

Borinqueneer Response 2015



Photos by Master Sgt. Shannon Nielson

Are You Ok? Members of the Nebraska National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package evacuate simulated casualties during Operation Borinqueneer Response, a training exercise in Camp Santiago, Puerto Rico, March 18.



Safety Precaution: A member of the Nebraska National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package marks his equipment before entering into the simulated casualty site, Camp Santiago, Puerto Rico, March 17. Members mark their equipment with their start time to prevent exceeding the allotted time in gear.

■Nebraska, Iowa Guard team travels to Puerto Rico for major disaster response exercise

By Master Sgt. Shannon Nielson
Staff Photojournalist

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

The operation was sponsored by U.S. Northern Command and National Guard Bureau.

Realistic training is conducted annually to ensure the Nebraska National Guard is prepared to respond to a variety of situations.

Units traveled to Puerto Rico to hone their skills by assisting in the recovery operations following a simulated natural disaster and chemical spill. The consolidated units are known as Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, or CERFP.

CERFP is responsible for responding to CBRNE incidents or other catastrophic events and assisting local and state officials in performing mass patient/casualty decontamination and providing treatment as necessary to stabilize patients for evacuation.

According to Lt. Col. Tom Mortimer, commander of the CERFP, the team operates with approximately 199 people and Nebraska brought a full package, which consists of four elements: casualty search and extraction (45 people), medical triage (45 people), decontamination (75 people), fatality and search and recovery (11 people from Iowa), and a small command cell of about 15-20 people.

"We are down here working with the members of the Puerto Rico National Guard and other state agencies and we do this because this is a great opportunity to test our system," said Mortimer.

"We have a packing list and when we get here we can only use what we brought," he added. "So, if we forgot something then we know where we need to fix our system."

The exercise started with Nebraska being notified of an incident at Puerto Rico involving a simulated major earthquake and a possible tsunami. The disaster caused a variety of injuries and medical conditions, with some of the casualties becoming trapped under debris. This caused local responders to become overwhelmed.

"Our responsibility is to come in and fill in to help with a mass casualty incident," said Master Sgt. Michael Roth, medical logistics specialist for Nebraska's CERFP. "In this case, the scenario is an earthquake, where there was a chemical that was found or spilled; civilians are trapped inside what is simulated as a coliseum."

"There are about 400-500 (people) that we are assuming are still inside," added Roth.

Roth said the exercise was especially realistic because it involved supporting a different Federal Emergency Management Agency region than they typically support.

"In a FEMA region there is a CERFP and a Homeland Response Force Package (HERF) that are to respond to major mass casualty and catastrophic events. Our role is to fill in the three-day period, the 72 hours in which the local responders are overwhelmed."

After the CERFP is notified, they have six hours to get ready and leave their homestation with 90 percent of their personnel.

"We are giving them time to get a response together based off the size of the catastrophic event," added Roth. "As we go through this exercise, trucks roll in a line getting ready for the actual set up."

Operation Borinqueneer Response 2015 was created to make the scenario as real as possible to provide a realistic training environment.

"Typically your technician lines where your CERFP team members process through the decontamination line are on the far side, and then in the middle you're non-ambulatory and your ambulatory," said Roth. "All focus is away from



Aid on the Way: Members of Nebraska's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package team moves in to care for wounded victims during a simulated earthquake and chemical spill, March 17, in Puerto Rico. Casualties are triaged and moved to the warm zone for additional care.

Movin' On Up: (Left) Master Sgt. Shea Harkness, 155th Medical Group, helps extract a member of the search and extraction team from a two story building during a simulated building collapse, March 17, in Puerto Rico.



Ahhh: Airmen First Class Tiffany Reimers from the 155th Air Refueling Wing takes a temperature of a Nebraska Army National Guard Soldier at Camp Santiago, Joint Maneuver Training Center in Puerto Rico, March 17. Soldiers of the CERFP must have their vitals checked before they don their chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear suits for the exercise.

the casualty site. We are trying to get patients out of the chemical area and go through the process called the hot zone, warm zone, and cold zone."

"The hot zone is the zone with patients being contaminated, warm zone being the area in which they are cleaning them and taking them through decontamination process, and cold zone where we consider

them clean," added Roth. "During this process we take contaminants off of the person by scrubbing them down, taking off their clothes and assisting to any injuries we have identified, cleaned and treated. We have triaged them and moved them on to the next level of care."

From afar, the grassy area at Camp Santiago looked like a swarm of ants that just took over an ant

hill. Less than 90 minutes later the empty field transformed into a fully functioning military facility, complete with tents, machines, and medical equipment as Soldiers and Airmen prepared to respond to a simulated natural disaster.

"Our whole purpose is to contain what has happened here and

See PUERTO RICO on 5.

Transporting: A Soldier of the Nebraska National Guard CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package carries a simulated casualty out of the hot zone for decontamination and triage before being transported to a local hospital or treatment center.



Medical Checks: A member of the 155th Medical Group, checks the vital signs of Nebraska Guardsmen to establish a baseline before they don their gear and participate in the simulated exercise, March 17.



Photos by Master Sgt. Shannon Nielson

Teamwork: Members of Nebraska's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package transport a wounded victim following a simulated earthquake and chemical spill at Camp Santiago, Puerto Rico, March 17. Casualties were extracted from the hot zone and taken to a decontamination area where they received medical treatment and were released.



Working Together: Members of the Nebraska National Guard CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) collaborate with Puerto Rico National Guard to decontaminate simulated casualties, while participating in Operation Borinqueneer Response, a training exercise held March 16-20 at Camp Santiago, Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico continued from page 4.

prevent it from going out to the emergency rooms, hospitals and treatment facilities," said Roth. "If we have a chemical, biological, nuclear, sort of event we don't just want it spreading throughout the country."

"Our presence is supposed to be as short as possible. We are here to help the civilians; we are not here to take over. We are just another tool or resource for them to help with the incident," he added.

Exercises like Operation Borinqueneer Response are designed to help members of the CERFP maintain their readiness to take on unexpected and often monumental challenges. Nebraska has been training in Ashland, Nebraska, and Salina, Kansas, where they are used to their surrounding area.

For the vast majority of the CERFP Soldiers and Airmen, this is not their sole occupation, so frequent additional training is required.

"Individual training is required and it involves both online and distance learning training. They also have at least two major events

and two individual events we do each year," said Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Hansen of the Nebraska CERFP. "This is in addition to their normal Air Guard and Army Guard role they have to maintain as well."

"All military occupation specialties (MOS) are involved in CERFP, it's not a specific Air Force specialty code (AFSC) or MOS," said Hansen. "Most of the medical on the Air Guard side are medical folks. On the Army side, we have communication, chemical folks, and mechanics... just about everything in our force structure."

Hansen said the dynamic nature of domestic missions require CERFP Soldiers and Airmen to understand how to operate within the domestic incident management system, which civilian first responders use, versus the way that military operations normally are conducted. The goal, he added, is to "have that common ground when we show up."

That also goes with the equipment that the CERFP uses.

"As far as the individual training on the equipment goes, all



Vital Check: Capt. Ryan Becker and 2nd Lt. Aaron Chalstrom, 155th Medical Group, check the vital signs on a simulated role-player during Operation Borinqueneer Response, a training exercise at Camp Santiago, Puerto Rico, March 17. Becker is preparing the individual for possible transport to receive additional medical treatment if needed.

the equipment that we have for missions like this is are commercial equipment off-the-shelf, not military that we use when we go to Iraq or Afghanistan or anything like that," Hansen said.

That's why training in realistic situations like Operation Borinqueneer Response 2015 are key to being ready to assist when the governor calls.

"To know that you are not only a Soldier or an Airman, you have to be ready to deploy and engage

enemies in the United States. When you do an exercise like this, you're doing something that very few people are doing. Out of the approximately 200 Soldiers out of the entire Nebraska National Guard, that is a small fraction that has to do two missions," added Hansen. "They have to be ready to do two missions within days' notice. Very few units have to do that."

This training proved that they would be able to help with a real world event if they were called upon.

"One of the most important reasons that we have to go to other places and do this is so we don't get complacent and set up in the same place all the time and meet and work with the same people all the time and this gives us an opportunity to work with people from other agencies," said Moritmer. "These are agencies that we will (support) if we ever end up in a real disaster. It's extremely important that we aren't exchanging business cards for the very first time at the scene of an accident."

Virtual tornado exercise tests state's response

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

When it comes to preparing for a natural disaster, it's never too early to begin.

Preparations are exactly what Nebraska National Guard and state emergency management officials hoped to accomplish when they participated in a day-long virtual table top exercise at the state emergency operations center located within the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency in the Joint Force Headquarters building.

The exercise, which was conducted via video teleconference with officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Management Institute and similar state officials from Indiana, was designed to help Nebraska officials develop the processes they need to respond to devastating tornado outbreaks, said Lt. Col. Troy Paisley, Nebraska National Guard director of military support.

Paisley said there were essentially two goals that Nebraska officials wanted to accomplish during the March 5 exercise.

"One was to prepare for the upcoming severe weather season and two, to build our interagency relationships," said Paisley, adding that the exercise involved

"an eclectic group" of state emergency managers, local officials, law enforcement, fire and health providers, and other officials who would be called to work in the state emergency operations center.

Paisley said that during the course of the exercise, the officials looked at how to create better lines of communication between the emergency support functions while also better coordinating response and recovery operations among several agencies.

According to Douglas M. Kahn, the FEMA training instructor who conducted and moderated the training, that is exactly what the exercise is designed to do.

"The purpose of the exercise was to gauge who partners in preparation, response and recovery from a tornado that took place within their jurisdiction," Kahn said, adding that the exercise would be broadcast six times over a two-month period to help local and state officials across the country better prepare for natural disasters.

Kahn said he hopes those who participate in the exercise take away tools that can be extremely useful before and after a natural emergency occurs. This includes agencies opening up their emergency management plans, reviewing them and then making updates,

while also becoming familiar with those other officials who they may be working with during an emergency situation.

"We are expecting the participants to walk away feeling better about their processes, but if they notice a process is broken, it can be reviewed, updated and changed while it is not affecting any survivors," he said.

This marks the third year that FEMA has broadcast this exercise to state and local officials.

Kahn said the exercise has had some significant national impacts. "With the VTTXs, we have agencies throughout the U.S. taking part. Ideas toward prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery are free-flowing between agencies that have never talked to each other. Copies of response plans are shared and lessons learned (are) presented to all of the participating agencies through these new contacts."

Paisley said that seemed to be the case during the Nebraska exercise, which focused on a group of tornados striking several communities and the impacts that would be felt as local and state agencies attempted to recover from the disasters.

"This prepares us well for the possibility of severe weather this



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Preparing for a Disaster: Nebraska National Guard, state and county emergency management officials walk through the procedures they would use following a tornado strike on a Nebraska city during a day-long Virtual Table Top exercise at the state emergency operations center in Lincoln. The March 5 exercise was designed to help Nebraska emergency management officials prepare for the upcoming storm season.

year," said Paisley, adding he feels that those who attended took away a better understanding of how to prepare for bad weather and a better understanding of other agency's capabilities.

"95 percent of the feedback was very positive," said Paisley. "Everyone wants to do more or incorporate (this exercise capability) into their own area training." "This was good stuff."

Airmen overcome claustrophobia to keep planes flying

By Senior Airman Marshall Maurer
Staff Photojournalist

At 5 feet, 9 inches tall and 170 pounds, Airman 1st Class Zachary Allen is too big to squeeze through the gas tank opening of his Ford Mustang. But when the petroleum specialist at the 155th Air Refueling Wing needs to inspect the fuel tanks of a KC-135 Stratotanker aerial refueling airplane, he simply raises his right arm above his head, reduces his shoulder width, cranks his left arm up and in, and shimmies up the rest of the way with ease.

Once inside the tank, all is quiet—almost like a cocoon, said Allen. He performs his maintenance wearing a visor with a full-face respirator as fresh air is pumped into his mask.

According to Allen, the darkness is calming—but it wasn't always that way. The first time Allen climbed into a tank, during technical school at Shepherd Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, he got pinned between two of the tank's ribs.

"I was freaking out," Allen said, "I just calmed down, thought about how I wedged myself in and reversed my steps."

Those steps, and other aspects of Allen's training, stay fresh in his mind by constantly paying attention to the shop's technical orders, studying aircraft schematics and solving mock scenarios. As a result, Allen and the 10 other Airmen in his shop are

ready at a moment's notice to troubleshoot and repair mechanical failures discovered by maintenance personnel on the flight line.

Once Allen is inside the tank—which is baffled to prevent fuel sloshing and attached with laces to the wall to keep the fuel cell stable—he checks oxygen levels, which must be rich enough to support life, but still remain non-explosive. He also samples the atmosphere to detect the presence of volatile organic compounds.

Airmen can sometimes get cramped while in the tank, said Allen, which is why the shop constantly switches people out to maintain a fresh set of hands inside.

Tanks are everywhere in the KC-135—in fact, they account for nearly one half of the plane's cubic feet and can hold up to 220,000 pounds of fuel. It is that number, more than 100 tons, which Allen finds most impressive. Fuel is held in the wing's four main tanks, reserve tanks and surge tanks near the wing tips. While the tanks vary in size, the upper deck bladder is spacious enough to set up a poker table and still have room to shuffle, said Tech. Sgt. Marty Watts.

For Fuels Shop Airmen, the typical day begins with waiting for word from the flight line as crew chiefs complete their hourly post-flight inspections. A day earlier, members of the shop repaired a valve that stripped out, while others stayed busy with required training.

Varying maintenance checkups are re-

quired after different flights and Airmen follow the strictest checklists when the aircraft are deployed.

Allen may be relatively new to the shop, but he's spent enough time there to know his responsibilities are unique.

"The most enjoyable part of the job is being so young and still being able to work on something of this magnitude with a multimillion dollar aircraft," said Allen. "It's a pretty great feeling."

Before jet fuel ever reaches the flight line, however, every drop of it passes through a rigorous testing process. The fuel, which is trucked in, is kept in two 300,000-gallon holding tanks. Then it streams through an underground hydrant system, via a pair of 600-gallon-per-minute pumps, to the flight line. The shop also has fuel trucks, each of which is capable of transporting 6,000 gallons. The fuel is filtered, tested, and separated, all of which is monitored by Senior Airman Dylan Exstrom and the rest of the Fuel Operations Shop.

Exstrom is joined in the compound by a dozen or so other Air Guard members. January marked the Lincoln native's third year with the 155th as a fuels lab technician. Each day, Exstrom runs a long list of tests—checking the fuel's additives, temperature, flashpoint, and impurities.

By now, his various duties are second nature, said Exstrom, but the job's complexities were a shock to him in the beginning.

"I think the biggest thing was I had never been around fuel and didn't know much about the systems or tests," said Exstrom, who added a solid shop structure was integral in his development. "... (We) have a really good sergeant who keeps us motivated and in line, and we are very strict with (technical orders) and (Air Force instructions)—we hold strong to them. We keep the fuel clean." That task may seem simple, but Exstrom said things can go wrong in a hurry if dirty fuel reaches the aircraft. Impurities, even at the smallest level, lead to mechanical issues or even engine failure once a jet is airborne. Planes have crashed in the past due to such oversights.

"One of the things we are most attentive of is making sure the fuel is clean," said Exstrom. "It's completely on us if something happens to the aircraft."

But because of the work the fuels specialist perform, which is mostly unknown and rarely understood, the 155th ARW has a great reputation and remarkably safe flying culture. And performing that work, literally in the darkest, most remote spots of the aircraft is a thankless job.

Whether they are squeezing through the opening of an integral tank to inspect it, or squeezing every last drop of a thousand gallons through a separator and filter, Airmen work behind the scenes, hours before the tank is filled and long after it's emptied, to keep the mission moving forward.

Local communities, families welcomed to airborne jump

By Pfc. Anna Pongo
Staff Photojournalist

Soldiers from Omaha's 195th Forward Support Company (Airborne) and the 165th Quartermaster Company out of Mead, conducted a scheduled airborne jump on Feb. 7 at Husker Drop Zone near Mead, Nebraska.

The jump was opened up so that the local community and Soldiers' family members could come watch. Snacks and hot chocolate were provided.

The event was organized as a way to give back to the families and communities who work hard all year to support their Soldiers, said 1st Lt. Paige Glynn, the officer-in-charge of the event. Airborne Soldiers are required to jump once a quarter to keep up their certification. The day's jumpers were participating for this certification.

Four container delivery system bundles were dropped from 500 feet prior to the Soldiers jumping from 1,250 feet, said Sgt. 1st Class Sean McMahon, drop zone safety officer with the 195th FSC.

Gene and Milly Kros from Weston, Nebraska, saw the notice in the Wahoo newspaper and brought their grandkids, Jared and Josie



Photos by Pfc. Anna Pongo

Look At That: Local community members enjoy an airborne jump, Feb. 7, at Husker Drop Zone near Mead, Neb. The jump was opened up so local communities and family members were able to come watch Soldiers jump.



Dropping in Mid-Air: Four container delivery system bundles were dropped from 500 feet during an airborne jump, Feb. 7, at Husker Drop Zone near Mead, Neb.

to watch the Guardsmen jump.

"Twenty years ago we lived in Gretna and would watch the planes fly over from our front porch," said Gene. But this event was the first time they had the opportunity to see the jumpers in action.

After reading a flyer about the event, Luke and Kelli Brase decided to bring their son Rainan to watch the Soldiers. Rainan

declared he wanted to jump out of planes. But said he wasn't "big enough yet."

Pfc. Joshua Mertens of the 165th Quartermaster Company was one of the first Soldiers to land. Mertens has been in the Army for three years. In that time he has had eight jumps from C130 and five from Chinook.

"It was a good jump," said Mertens. "The pilot did a good job and we made it safely."



Photos by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Big Crowd: Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody addresses the Airmen of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing during a unit training assembly, Feb. 21, in Lincoln, Neb. Cody and his wife, Athena, a retired Air Force chief master sergeant, visited the Nebraska Air Guard base for an open forum for Airmen to address questions and concerns.

Top enlisted Airman visits Lincoln

By Staff Sgt. Mary Thach
Staff Photojournalist

The Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing welcomed Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody, and his wife, retired Chief Master Sgt. Athena Cody, to visit with wing Airmen Feb. 21-22, during a unit training assembly, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Nebraska Guardsmen gathered for an Airman's Call with Cody to hear where the Air Force is headed in the future. He also opened the floor for Airmen to ask him questions directly.

Cody said he was grateful for the opportunity to visit the Nebraska Airmen and thank them for their continued effort to support the nation, especially after a large portion of the 155th ARW had just returned from deployments.

"It was great to see everyone come back (from deployment) because it is a spirited time of everyone reconnecting," said Cody. "I see great attitudes in our Airmen. There is a lot of pride in what they do in their mission, but also an acknowledgement that there has been quite a bit of tempo."

Cody said the Air Force's high deployment tempo brings stress not only to the deployed member, but also to their family and employers who are trying to keep everything going in their absence.

Cody said he views the Air Guard like every other component of the Air Force, whether it's Guard, Reserve, active duty or civilian. He feels it's a necessity for the United States to blend the three uniformed components together. Air power is not possible without Air Guardsmen, he added, because the force has become operational at all levels, deploying worldwide.

All enlisted Airmen enter through the gates of Lackland Air Force Base for basic military training and start at the lowest ranks. The Airman is referred to as "trainee" until he or she has earned stripes by enduring eight-and-a-half weeks of rigorous training and exhausting routines.

Cody's advice to new Airmen applies at any level, officer or enlisted.



Scrub-A-Dub: A maintenance specialist with the 155th Maintenance Squadron shows Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody the ropes during his visit to the Nebraska National Guard air base, Feb. 22, in Lincoln, Neb.

Cody said simply do your best and strive to mentor the Airmen under your charge.

"Our young Airmen are thirsty for motivation and inspiration, and that should be coming directly from those front-line supervisors in a very positive and uplifting way," said Cody. "To do that with this generation of Airmen, we need to understand them. We continue to learn as we go."

The Air Force has adapted (basic military training) to understand and capitalize on young Airmen's unique skill sets and the fresh perspective they bring, said Cody. It's important that the Air Force ac-

knowledges these young people for who they are and use those talents to make the next generation of Airmen a cut-above past and current generations.

"You cannot leverage (Airmen) into the future if you are trying to make them like yourself," said Cody. "They will never be you. They will be better than you if you do it right."

Preparing the next generation of Airmen for the future Air Force begins with the Airman's supervisor building a professional relationship based on trust with each individual Airman.

Cody said there are parts of the Air Force's culture every Airman



Cheese: Members of the 155th Maintenance Squadron pose for a photo with Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody during his visit to the Nebraska National Guard air base, Feb. 22, in Lincoln, Neb.

must follow, such as understanding what it means to treat one another with dignity and respect, and embracing the core values: integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all you do.

The challenge noncommissioned officers may face with the next generation of Airmen is learning how to motivate and inspire them, said Cody.

"How do you give them the right level of supervision, but empower them to change the Air Force?" said Cody. "Your job is less about you and more about the people you are leading. You have to help those people grow. You should be excited when a young person comes to you to seek your input."

"They want to know how to do things and they will ask 'why' a lot," added Cody. "Why means they really are interested in what they

are doing. The reality is, they are smart enough to find a better way to do it, if they understand why they are doing it. What will continue to elevate our force in the future is how we capitalize on their talents, not how we suppress them."

Cody said he believes professional relationships with meaning and purpose are what the Air Force uses to build a firm foundation of mutual trust and respect for one another, not just the position someone holds within the organization.

"You have to have a level of dignity in the relationship, and over time, you show people that you care, which builds trust," said Cody. "All those little challenges that come up along the way are no longer challenges, because you have a strong foundation. Every SNCO's job is to help each and every Airman they touch to reach their full potential."

Nebraska's Three Star General Odierno: New Army Guard director brings 'unparalleled' experience to national post

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton
Staff Photojournalist

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

Until April 14, Kadavy was special assistant to the vice chief of the National Guard Bureau, following his service as commander, Combined Joint Interagency Task Force in Afghanistan.

Before his Afghanistan deployment, Kadavy served as the Army National Guard's deputy director, assisting the director in formulating, developing and coordinating all programs, policies and plans. He previously served as Nebraska's adjutant general and director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

"I can't think of a better way to train somebody and get them the experience to take over the job as director of the Army National Guard, representing the adjutants general, the governors, the Army, and to serve in support of 350,000 Army National Guardsmen," said Army Gen. Frank Grass, chief of the National Guard Bureau, thanking Kadavy and his family for their dedication and service.

In his new position, Kadavy is responsible for formulating, developing and coordinating all programs, policies and plans affecting the Army National Guard. He succeeds Army Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, who has served as acting director since his Jan. 18, 2014, appointment by Grass following the retirement of Army Lt. Gen. William E. Ingram Jr.

Kadavy is the fourth three-star general to fill the position.

"Lieutenant General Kadavy's experience

"I am very proud of the fact that he (Kadavy) is going to run the Army National Guard. I'm proud to be here to witness the promotion of Tim Kadavy to lieutenant general and director of the Army National Guard."

— Gen. Raymond Odierno
Chief of Staff
U.S. Army

is unparalleled," said Army Gen. Raymond Odierno, Army chief of staff.

Assignments at the National Guard Bureau, in tactical units in the Army National Guard, as adjutant general of Nebraska and during three deployments in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan give Kadavy the background and capability to understand all facets of his challenging new assignment, Odierno said.

"I am very proud of the fact that he is going to run the Army National Guard," Odierno said. "I'm proud to be here to witness the promotion of Tim Kadavy to lieutenant general and director of the Army National Guard. I wish you nothing but the best of luck – and congratulations to you."

"It is a tremendous honor to have two members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff here for my ceremony," Kadavy said, thanking Generals Grass and Odierno. "The strength of the nation is the Army, the strength of the Army is its Soldiers, and the strength of our



Three Stars: Lt. Gen. Timothy J. Kadavy, the director of the Army National Guard, is promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General by his family at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., April 14. Kadavy served as the adjutant general of Nebraska from November 2007 to August 2009.



Good Friends: Lt. Gen. Timothy J. Kadavy, the director of the Army National Guard, poses for a photo with Chaplain (Capt.) Steve Thomlison after Kadavy's promotion ceremony at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., April 14. Kadavy asked Thomlison to do the invocation at the ceremony.

"Soldiers are our families," Kadavy said, quoting Odierno after receiving his third star.

Kadavy, who received his commission through the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln in 1984, was sworn into his new position by Secretary of the Army John McHugh in a separate ceremony following his promotion.

"We can embrace the changes and work

through these challenges," Kadavy said. "We have done it before, and I know the Army National Guard is up for that task again as we move forward in these challenging fiscal times. The Army National Guard has a proud legacy, and I'm honored to serve this exceptional organization – and I look forward to what we will achieve together in the future."

KADAVY continued from page 1.

officer.

In 1994, Kadavy switched from traditional, part-time National Guard service to become an active duty Guardsman when he accepted a position as operations officer with 5th Army at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where he served for two years before transferring to other posts within the U.S. Army and National Guard Bureau in Georgia and Virginia.

Kadavy returned to Nebraska in 2001 to become commander of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1-167th Cavalry Squadron, leading the organization during its eight-month deployment in support of peacekeeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Following the deployment, he returned to Virginia where he completed a U.S. Army War College fellowship with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency before returning to National



Kadavy

Guard Bureau.

Following several additional assignments, including a deployment to Camp Victory, Iraq, in 2006, Kadavy was selected by then-Gov. Dave Heineman to succeed retir-

ing Maj. Gen. Roger Lempke as Nebraska adjutant general, beginning in November 2007.

During Kadavy's tenure as adjutant general, he oversaw the deployment of Nebraska Army and Air National Guard Soldiers and Airmen to such places as Iraq, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Greece and Kosovo.

He also oversaw deployment of Nebraska Guardsmen for such domestic emergency operations as tornados in Kearney and Omaha, the California wildfires, and the deployment of more than 1,000 state Guardsmen for duty in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi for the Hurricane Gustav and Ike relief operations.

Along with Kadavy's numerous military awards, he is a recipient of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Alumni Association's Trailblazer Award.

Kadavy was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General on April 14, in Washington, D.C.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Governor signs proclamation

Military is Family: Military families and children were recognized by Gov. Pete Ricketts when he signed a proclamation declaring April 2015 as Month of Military Child, April 8, at the State Capital Building in Lincoln, Neb. In attendance were Brig. Gen. Richard Dahlman, Nebraska National Guard assistant adjutant general-Army; Nebraska National Guard, U.S. Army Reserve and Offutt Air Force Base family support personnel; a Nebraska National Guard family, an U.S. Army Reserve family and other Nebraska National Guard officials.

Bonus information for Nebraska National Guard Army Soldiers

Nebraska National Guard State Incentive Office

The State Incentives Office would like to make sure Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers are aware of new information relating to bonuses. Please spread the word in units and to anyone that is interested in joining the Nebraska Army National Guard.

Effective Feb. 10, major changes, as listed below, will occur with the Reenlistment Bonus (REB), Enlisted Affiliation Bonus (EAB), and the Prior Service Enlisted Bonus (PSEB).

Reenlistment Bonus:

•\$4,000 for a 2-year reenlistment is now being offered
•\$12,000 for a 6-year reenlistment (increased from \$10,000)

•The 3-year, \$5,000 reenlistment bonus has gone away

Estimated time of separation change:

****The extension window for bonuses is now between

365 days and 1 day prior to the Soldier's estimated time of separation date****

Enlisted Affiliation Bonus:

•No longer follows Tier Level scoring; tied to a specific MOS list

•\$10,000 for a 3-year affiliation, Duty MOS Qualified (DMOSQ)

•\$20,000 for a 6-year affiliation, DMOSQ

•\$20,000 for a 6-year affiliation, Non-DMOSQ

Prior Service Enlisted Bonus:

•\$15,000 for a 3-year enlistment into a Tier Level 1 or 2 vacancy

•\$10,000 for a 3-year enlistment into a Tier Level 3 vacancy

•\$30,000 for a 6-year enlistment into a Tier Level 1 vacancy, DMOSQ

•\$25,000 for a 6-year enlistment into a Tier Level 2 vacancy, DMOSQ

•\$20,000 for a 6-year enlistment into a Tier Level 3

vacancy, DMOSQ

•\$15,000 for a 6-year enlistment into a Tier Level 4 vacancy, DMOSQ

•\$10,000 for a 6-year enlistment into a Tier Level 5 vacancy, DMOSQ

•\$30,000 for a 6-year enlistment into a Tier Level 1 vacancy, Non-DMOSQ

•\$25,000 for a 6-year enlistment into a Tier Level 2 vacancy, Non-DMOSQ

•\$20,000 for a 6-year enlistment into a Tier Level 3 vacancy, Non-DMOSQ

•\$15,000 for a 6-year enlistment into a Tier Level 4 vacancy, Non-DMOSQ

•\$10,000 for a 6-year enlistment into a Tier Level 5 vacancy, Non-DMOSQ

Please contact readiness noncommissioned officer, retention noncommissioned officer or a recruiter for specific information regarding qualifications.

Best of the Best

Certified ethical hacker earns major Nebraska Air Guard honor

By Maj. Pat Ryan
Staff Photojournalist

In a room full of buzzing and humming computers, a hacker sits down at a terminal and begins his ritual of probing cyber firewalls and security fortresses one after another. He is looking for a hole that could bring a person fortune via bank accounts or private emails, thus breaching the illusion of safety and security in the cyber world.

Account after account is hit and tested for weaknesses, but he is unable to get through to wreak havoc. Computer code flashes past his eyes on screen after screen as he looks for that one account password he can breach.

This is not just any hacker, though; this is Staff Sgt. John "Dave" Pinos, a "certified-ethical" hacker and cyber-security craftsman with the 155th Communications Squadron.

Pinos is also the 155th Air Refueling Wing's 2014 Outstanding Airman of the year in the noncommissioned officer category.

Born to missionary parents in the South American country of Ecuador, Pinos had the unique experience of living abroad the majority of his life. Throughout his upbringing, Pinos was fascinated with computers. Having essentially taught himself the inner workings of computers, he began to master cyber-related programs via gaming, which led to him to building and repairing computers.

"It just kind of came to me pretty naturally," said Pinos. "When I eventually went on to college, it never crossed my mind to go into computer programming or computer science - funny, huh?"

Majoring in Psychology, it was not until he began working on his master's degree that he thought to go into a cyber-related field such as information security and assurance.

At the age of 14, he accompanied his parents upon their return to the United States and continued his education. When he completed high school, he took a year off and worked in construction to save money for tuition.

When he did finally attend college, he was shocked only to find out that the tuition money he saved quickly dried up in his first year. Not sure what to do next, he followed his friend's advice and joined the South

Dakota Air National Guard's 114th Fighter Wing in Sioux Falls, taking advantage of the tuition assistance and signing bonuses.

Following graduation from college, a myriad of jobs followed. Beginning work as a certified financial planner then led to clerical work in a hospital. Nothing seemed to fit until he landed an information technology position.

"I kept coming back to the IT field; there was just something about it," said Pinos. "For a position that I thought was only going to be temporary, it turned into six years."

Pinos moved to Nebraska following opportunities to get deeper into cyber challenges he was seeking. This quest for a real challenge led him to United States Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha, where he now evaluates and tests STRATCOM's Host Base Security System for vulnerabilities within the McAfee software.

Eventually, Pinos said he would like to build his own business working with companies on cyber-penetration analysis and vulnerability assessments with the goal of assessing networks to determine how to be more efficiently compliant with elements such as Privacy Act, HIPPA, and the payment card industry, as well as ensuring information is going securely where it needs to go.

Pinos said these systems can become compromised relatively easily.

"Once hackers get into these systems, they are called 'zombies' or 'botnets,'" said Pinos. "They attach themselves there and flood all the traffic to one connection and they'll quickly take it down."

Pinos said it's happened to some well-known companies and it may not end there.

"It would be catastrophic to think what a well-placed zombie could do, say the United States Government," said Pinos.

When Pinos is not fighting cyber villains for the U.S. military, he can be found in the Lincoln community reaching out to members of the Latino community through his work with El Centro, where he serves as board member.

El Centro, a Latino community-based outreach program, aids individuals in the areas of financial literacy, job placement, and computer skills with the goal to further their education and guide them toward being successful in the work force,



Pinos

through financial planning and job stability.

Pinos said he was humbled to be named the 155th ARW's 2014 Outstanding Airman of the Year in the Noncommissioned Officer Category and had some advice for those who would like to follow in his footsteps.

"Work hard, be driven," he said. "If no one knows the answer to something, go find it... find out how to do it well, how to do it efficiently and also how to train others."

And although the word 'hacker' usually carries a negative connotation, the cyber security of the Nebraska National Guard and possibly the defense of the nation relies on this "certified ethical hacker."

"World War III, I think, is going to be all about cyber warfare," said Pinos. "If they can hack into our power grid... they'll be able to take down our country, our stock market, all of which is run by computers."

"They can take us down with one swoop - and they try all the time," he added. "They're looking for holes and trying to find places to attack us."

Pinos has identified cyber attacks before and continually looks for additional vulnerabilities. But ultimately, he said, the end user is the biggest vulnerability out there. Something as simple as clicking a link within an email can end up doing a lot of damage.

"I don't think a lot of people paid much attention previously," said Pinos. "I would send out reports to the leaders of different units and they wouldn't pay much attention to it or not look at it. But now, because of all the stuff that's going on, we're pushing more for cyber security. That's good for me and my industry - and I don't see it stopping."

Miss Kansas U.S. 2014 enlists into Nebraska Army National Guard

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Editor

Charity Stowers has always been familiar with the military ever since she was a little girl. She knew one day that she would most likely follow after her father's footsteps and join the military as well.

Her father, Rocko Stowers, was a colonel in the active Army where he served as a military police officer.

"I've always wanted to join the military," said Stowers. "I came from a military background, but I wanted to wait until I finished school."

Stowers has a bachelor of arts degree in Human Biology and minor in business from the University of Kansas, in Lawrence, Kansas, and she competed as a Division I athlete for the University of Kansas Track and Field program for four years. Stowers then went on to earn a masters degree in Healthcare Services and Administration from the University of Kansas Medical Center.

Stowers then decided to try something new and compete in pageants. During her third pageant she won Miss Kansas United States 2014.

"The first reason I decided to compete in pageants was for the community involvement aspect of it," said Stowers. "And then again it was a challenge and something I have never done before, but always something I was always interested in."

Stowers knew she had accomplished a lot in her life so far, but only a few months after winning Miss Kansas United States 2014 she knew it would be a good time to join the military.

"With the reign with Miss Kansas, I dedicated a majority of my time with giving back to the community and traveling," said Stowers.

"I know that with the military the training will help build mental toughness that I need again to get back in the books and studying."

According to Stowers, joining the Army National Guard was a shock to a lot of people.

"Initially when I joined, people did not believe me," said Stowers. "Just because there is kind of a stigma that goes along with pageants that we don't like to get down and dirty."

"I'm a tomboy at heart and I'm not afraid of hard work," added Stowers. "I love anything that's a challenge."

With her fiancé, Max Onyegbulé accepting a coaching position for the University of Nebraska football team, Stowers decided to look into the Nebraska Army National Guard.

"The active duty route wasn't going to coordinate with my fiancé's goals since he's a coach and they move around a lot," said Stowers. "The National Guard was the best fit for us."

"I also love the mission of the Guard," added Stowers. "They have that state responsibility."

Specialist Stowers joined the Nebraska Army National Guard in October 2014 and shipped for basic training in February. After completing basic training, Stowers hopes to enroll into the Traditional Officer Candidate Program.

"I want to work in a hospital gear towards improvement of quality care of our nation's Soldiers," said Stowers. "My goal is to specialize and make it in to the Medical Corps in the military and work my way up on the administration side."

"My whole thing is I think you should never limit yourself," said Stowers. "You should always dream big in whatever you see yourself accomplishing. Fight through those obstacles and go for it."



Stowers

TUITION continued from page 1.

ing for the program was caused by increased usage due to cuts in the federal program, our state elected leaders considered how they can help if funds become available," said Brig. Gen. Richard Dahlman, deputy adjutant general who is leading a Nebraska Military Department group that was tasked to better understand the problem and make suggestions to the adjutant general and other leaders on how it could be fixed. "It has been a tough year financially across the entire Department of Defense, but locally there is a great deal of interest in helping this program."

"For all of our Airmen and Soldiers that this has affected, I recognize you have had to practice a great deal of patience and resourcefulness in dealing with this tough fiscal year," added Dahlman. "We are doing all we can to gain ground where possible and your patience coupled with great attitudes make a big difference to me."

In order to understand the problem, one must first understand the underlying issues. In the mid-2000s, the Army expanded its federal tuition assistance program to the

National Guard. Up until that point, the National Guard's State Tuition Assistance Program, which by state statute is capped at \$900,000, was the primary educational benefit open to members of the Army National Guard. However, as more Soldiers switched to the federal program, the organization saw a significant decrease in the usage of the state tuition program, to the point that the Nebraska Legislature tightened the appropriated funds due to the fact that Soldiers and Airmen weren't using the full amount.

According to Nebraska Guard officials, the State of Nebraska funded the Nebraska National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program at a fairly level rate each year since the mid-2000s. For example, this year's appropriations are at similar levels to last year. What officials could not anticipate was the increased level of state tuition assistance requests received in response to the tightened federal program requirements.

By December 2014 it was clear that the state program's funds were drained to the point that the Nebraska Military Department would not be able to fill the majority of the

requests it expected to receive for the early 2015 school periods.

"When we sent our notifications to Soldiers and Airmen, telling them that the State Tuition Assistance was exhausted, we included a list of resources they could use to attempt to find financial support through other means," said Cooper.

The Nebraska Guard's education office has communicated with colleges and universities across Nebraska to ask for leniency in billing, waiving late fees and allowing Guard students to enroll in future terms though they may not be current on payments.

"The impact of the funding deficit has been fairly significant," said Cooper. "We were only able to provide funding for a little under one third of our applicants for the spring semester."

According to Nebraska Guard officials, they spent the last 10 months working with the Nebraska State Legislature and asking for assistance. "We were able to give testimony to increase our future years state tuition assistance and in that testimony the adjutant general also asked if we could have some

help this year," said Dahlman. "We communicated to the legislature committee that we could use some more help and we were given another \$175,000 to add to our about \$500,000 that we currently started the year with."

"We are also rewriting the State Tuition Assistance Program policy. The rewrite should make eligibility criteria, definitions and processes clearer."

According to the Guard's education office, it is difficult to say if this program will go back to what it was previous to the Federal Assistance changes, but they are happy with what help they have received this year and are continuing to look into everything they can to assist the Soldiers and Airmen of the Nebraska National Guard.

"July 1, 2015, is the start of the new state fiscal year and money will be available for courses beginning after that date," said Cooper. "Not only should students submit their applications on time, they should submit their applications as early and accurately as possible."

Cooper added, "It is important for Soldiers and Airmen to continue

to apply for state tuition assistance in order for us to accurately predict needs."

Cooper and Dahlman said that they understand the impact that the shortfall has created. They said that they're also extremely thankful for the investment that Nebraska has been making for decades to ensure that Guard Soldiers and Airmen can reach their educational and professional goals.

"The State Tuition Assistance Program has made a significant difference in the professional and personal lives of many thousands of Airmen and Soldiers," said Dahlman. "Higher education was made available to (Airmen and) privates as they served our proud Nebraska National Guard."

Many of those Airmen and Soldiers continued to serve well after college was over, added Dahlman, helping create a Nebraska National Guard that has historically been ready and able to meet what mission the state or nation has put in front of it. "In the formations today are senior enlisted (E9s) to senior officers (O6-O8) that are grateful (to have benefitted from) this program."

2015 Best Warrior Competition



Good Form: Sgt. Scott Kuzminski, Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron (Reconnaissance and Surveillance), knocks out push-ups during the Army Physical Fitness Test portion of the 2015 Nebraska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition, March 20, at Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb. Kuzminski competed in the Soldier category of the competition since he was promoted to sergeant just prior to the competition.



Nice Stride: Spc. Jerry Rhein, 313th Medical Company, strides out during the running portion of the Army Physical Fitness Test of the 2015 Nebraska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Greenleaf Training Site on March 20. The APFT was the first event of the competition.



Ready, Aim, Fire: Competitors qualify with the M9 pistol during the third event of the Best Warrior Competition at Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb., March 20. The Best Warrior Competition was a three-day event to select the best qualified noncommissioned officer and Soldier to represent the Nebraska at the regional competition.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Test Time: Spc. David Mueller, 1195th Transportation Company, reads a question during the second event of the competition, a 50-question exam, March 20, at Greenleaf Training Site.

BWC continued from page 1.

Spc. Jerry Rhein, a health care specialist with Lincoln's 313th Medical Company, has seven years of military service.

Noncommissioned Officer Category:

Sgt. Manuel Molina, a supply specialist with Lincoln's Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron (Reconnaissance and Surveillance), has six years of military service;

Staff Sgt. Ryan Pella, a motor transport operator with Omaha's 195th Forward Support (Special Operations) (Airborne), has eight years of military service;

Staff Sgt. Josiah Smith, a transportation management coordinator with Kearney's 734th Transportation Battalion, has six years of military service;

Staff Sgt. Jason Winer, a small group leader with Camp Ashland's 1st Battalion, 209th Regional Training Institute, has 16 years of military service.

Day 1: A Physically, Mentally Demanding Evening

The 2015 Nebraska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition started on Friday, March 20, with in-processing, a welcome brief, and a height and weight check. About an hour and half passed and it was time for the first event of the competition: the Army Physical Fitness Test to begin.

With breezy winds pushing and pulling against them, the Nebraska Soldiers pushed themselves around the Greenleaf Training Site track

as they completed the final, two-mile run portion of the event, each Guardsman pushing himself to put as many points as they possibly could on to the board. They knew that in an event like this, every single point would count.

That attitude, despite the winds, contributed to the fact that many of Soldiers achieved record scores on their APFTs.

After a quick change of uniforms, the Soldiers then moved on to Building 711 for the written examination event. Before starting the exam, the Soldiers were given their written essay assignments, which would have to be written during free time between the events and be ready for submission the next morning. That accomplished, the competitors then had an hour to complete the 50 question exam.

And then it was onto a bus for the quick trip out to the Greenleaf Training Site's 9 mm range. There, the Soldiers received a range safety briefing before moving onto the pistol range where each and every bullet contributed to the overall competitor's score.

For some of the Soldiers, this was the first time they had been able to shoot at the 9 mm range, which made for a good learning experience as well as some added stress.

After the Soldiers completed the range, they traveled to Building 710 where they were scored on their ability to call for fire and quickly identify potential enemy targets from friendly civilians – called the



Frag Out: Staff Sgt. Josiah Smith, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 734th Transportation Battalion, throws a training grenade during the employ hand grenades station of the Best Warrior Competition at Greenleaf Training Site on March 21.

Shoot/No Shoot event – on a pair of simulators.

By the time all the events were done for day one of the competition it was dark outside and the Soldiers were ready to hit their bunks for a few hours of sleep before waking up bright and early the next morning.

According to Command Sgt. Maj. Eli Valenzuela, the first day was very intense and reflected how the rest of the competition was scheduled.

See BEST WARRIOR on 11.

Soldier Competitors	Noncommissioned Officer Competitors
Spc. Robin Cauthon 623rd Engineering Company	Sgt. Manuel Molina Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron
Spc. Alexander Gould 402nd Military Police Battalion	Staff Sgt. Ryan Pella 195th Forward Support Company
Sgt. Scott Kuzminski Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron	Staff Sgt. Josiah Smith Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 734th Transportation Battalion
Spc. David Mueller 1195th Transportation Company	Staff Sgt. Jason Winer 209th Regional Training Institute
Spc. Jerry Rhein 313th Medical Company	



This Way: Staff Sgt. Jason Winer, 209th Regional Training Institute, moves his squad through the mystery event of the 2015 Nebraska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb., March 21. The mystery event included a combination of different skill sets including squad movement, combat lifesaver skills, react to fire, 9 line medical evacuation and other Army Warrior Tasks.

2015 Best Warrior Competition



Always Ready: Sgt. Manuel Molina, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron, finishes clearing a building of a military operations in urban terrain site during the mystery event of the Best Warrior Competition, March 21, at Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock



Photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Disassemble: Staff Sgt. Ryan Pella, 195th Forward Support Company, disassembles an M240B machine gun as part of the Army Warrior Tasks event of the Best Warrior Competition, March 21, at Greenleaf Training Site.



Photo by Pfc. Anna Pongo

I Got You Battle: Sgt. Scott Kuzminiski, Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron (Reconnaissance and Surveillance), pulls an "injured" Soldier to safety during the mystery event of the Best Warrior Competition, March 21, at Greenleaf Training Site. The mystery event combined several different Army Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills, squad movements and other skills into one event.



Photo by Pfc. Anna Pongo

Breaking Out The Big Guns: Staff Sgt. Jason Winer, 209th Regional Training Institute, disassembles an M240B machine gun during the Army Warrior Tasks portion of the 2015 Nebraska Best Warrior Competition, March 21, at Greenleaf Training Site. This station was one of many different weapon stations following the 10-mile ruck march that involved clearing, disassembling, assembling and performing a functions check as part of the standard.

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uled to go.

"The whole competition is intended to inflict the most stress on the Soldiers," said Valenzuela, the state command sergeant major. "It is designed to be physically, mentally and emotionally challenging."

Day 2: In it to win it.

All too quickly, it was time to wake up, rub and stretch achy muscles and begin the day.

In this case, the day started extra early as the competing Guardsmen woke up long before the crack of dawn in order to turn in their written essays by 4:30 a.m. The Soldiers then shrugged into their ruck sacks for a 10-mile ruck march, conducted through near inky-black conditions that began at the barracks and ended at the ranges.

According to competitors, their feet took the brunt of the march as the constant pounding of their feet against pavement, gravel and grass with the extra weight on their backs caused painful and uncomfortable blisters. In order to lessen the risk, every Best Warrior candidate was required to have a medical check before moving on to the next event.

Once again, the Soldiers quickly realized that the Best Warrior Competition was as much a mental contest as it was a physical one.

"I know a lot of peoples feet were pretty sore after the road march and then having to continue on with the other tasks made it a lot more difficult," said Staff Sgt. Jason Winer, 209th Regional Training Institute.

After the ruck march, Soldiers moved to

four Army Warrior Task stations that focused on the 9mm pistol, the M-16 or M-4 rifles, and the M-240 and M-2A1 machine guns. Fortunately, the stations were placed inside the weapons cleaning building at the ranges to help the Soldiers warm up after the cold morning.

During the stations, Soldiers had to assemble, disassemble and perform a function check.

Each of the Army Warrior Tasks was timed just in case there was a need for tie-breakers at the end of the competition.

In addition to the four Army Warrior Tasks, the competitors also completed the 'KIMS' event, otherwise known as 'Keep in Memory.'

During this event they had to recall information that was given to them.

According to Smith, studying for the competition was difficult.

"Study all of the material they put out," advised Smith. "And study it well in advance. Memorize it, get to know it, and don't just study what they put out. You need to study on your own too."

The Soldiers then moved to the M4/M16 rifle zero range to ready their assigned weapons for both the day and night rifle qualification events that lie ahead. After zeroing weapons, the Guardsmen moved to the modified record fire range for the day rifle qualification event.

The modified record fire range is used to train and test individual Soldiers on skills

See **BEST WARRIOR** on 12.



Photo by Pfc. Anna Pongo

Watch Your Lane: Spc. Robin Cauthon, 623rd Engineering Company, watches his lane during the M16 rifle day qualification event of the 2015 Nebraska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition as his sponsor, Staff Sgt. Brett Yochum, coaches him during the competition at Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb., March 21.

2015 Best Warrior Competition



Photo by Pfc. Anna Pongo

Standing Tall: Sgt. Manuel Molina, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron, stands at the position of attention in front of the Command Sergeant Major Board event of the Best Warrior Competition at Greenlief Training Site, near Hastings Neb., March 22. Each competitor had to go in front of three command sergeant majors and answer a variety of questions during this event of the competition.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Left Eye Dominant: Spc. Alexander Gould, 402nd Military Police Battalion, zeros his M16 rifle prior to the M16 day qualification on March 21 at Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb. The 2015 Nebraska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition consisted of both day and night M16 qualification.

BWC continued from page 11.

necessary to identify, engage, and defeat stationary infantry targets for day qualification requirements with the M16 and M4 rifles.

"I would probably say my favorite event was the rifle qualification," said Winer. "That was one of the events I scored very well on."

"I normally do okay, but this event proved that I did a little bit better at the competition than at regular weapons qualification," added Winer. "It was pretty awesome to be able to score high on that."

After a busy morning, the Soldiers prepared to take on the land navigation event at Greenlief Training Site.

Here, the Soldiers put their map reading skills to the test on a day land navigation course, which involved locating seven different points, even though only five points were required in two hours.

"I personally enjoyed the land navigation because I always enjoy the land navigation courses," said Sgt. Scott Kuzminski, Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron (Reconnaissance and Surveillance). "I like to walk around and its quiet out there all by yourself."

"It's just you and your map," added Kuzminski.

For most Soldiers, this might have seemed like a pretty busy day. For the Nebraska Best Warrior Candidates, the day was barely half over. No time for a break, the competition rolled into two more Army Warrior Task events.

This time, the tasks involved clearing, disassembling, assembling and performing a function check on an M19 40 mm grenade machine gun and employing hand grenades.

Finally, it was time for a short break, allowing the Soldiers to finally collect their thoughts from all they had accomplished while preparing mentally for what was still to come. However, that was probably easier said than done as it was hard to prepare for what Guard officials were calling the competition's "Mystery Event."

The mystery event was designed to test the Soldiers' ability to make sound and timely decisions while using a multitude of warfighting skills in a tactical environment," said Command Sgt. Maj. Monte Kerchal, operations sergeant major of 92nd Troop Command and a key planner in the mystery event.

During the mystery event Soldiers had many different Army Warrior Tasks to complete, including performing a request for medical evacuation, operating a SINCGARS (Single-Channel) radio, performing first aid on a stricken comrade, and moving under direct fire.

"It was defiantly exhausting, but very rewarding," said Smith. "It feels good that I completed a very difficult challenge."

After completing the mystery event, the Soldiers moved to the modified record fire range for M4/M16 rifle night qualification, weapon cleaning and maintenance, and finally night land navigation.

According to the competitors, day two of the competition was the most physically and mentally demanding day of them all.

"I would have to say the most difficult part of the competition was going through the 10-mile road march and having all the competition events focused in that one day

after the road march," said Winer.

After a long and exhausting day, the competitors finished the night land navigation course by the light of their flashlights and returned to their barracks.

Finally, after constant hours on the go, it was time to get a few hours of sleep before the final day of the competition.

Day 3: Hard Work Pays Off

The competitors woke up on the last day of the competition, sore but determined to finish strong.

The first event of the morning was a five-mile run. This wasn't a typical five mile run, however. Along with completing the course, the Soldiers had to complete various tasks that were unexpected thrown at them while they were running.

The Guardsmen said the run was a lot more physically challenging than they expected because of all the physical events in the two days prior.

"I would have to say my least favorite was the five-mile run at the end," said Winer. "It's just after having taking a toll on your body from all the other events before that and still having to come out and do another hard physical event at the end made it a lot more difficult."

Following the run, the competitors quickly broke and headed off to the barracks to prepare for the long-anticipated Command Sergeant Major Board.

Then, taking one last look at their dress uniforms, the Army Guard Soldiers marched into the board after the long and draining weekend where they were challenged to quickly answer a wide array of questions presented to them by the state's senior non-commissioned officers.

Following the board, the competitors went straight into the military form writing event, which was the last event of the competition.

Finally, after hours of physically and mentally exhausting tasks, the 2015 Best Warrior Competition was in the books. All that remained for the Soldiers was to wait for the Sunday afternoon announcement of the final results.

For those who won, it was a moment to reflect on all that had been accomplished in an extremely short amount of time.

"I know I am a little sore and things like that, but I am look forward to representing my unit, 209th Regional Training Institute at the regional competition," said Winer, the winner of the noncommissioned officer category. "I know they were really pulling for me to come out with a victory so it feels good to do so."

According to the competitors, they couldn't have done completed all the events without training for the competition and recommend to anyone that wants to compete in next year's competition to study and train hard for it.

"Make sure you study a lot and keep up on your personal fitness," said Kuzminski, who won Soldier of the Year.

2015 Best Warrior Competition Results

Soldier Category

- 1st Place- Sgt. Scott Kuzminski
- 2nd Place- Spc. Robin Cauthon
- 3rd Place- Spc. Alexander Gould
- 4th Place- Spc. Jerry Rhein
- 5th Place- Spc. David Mueller

Noncommissioned Officer Category

- 1st Place- Staff Sgt. Jason Winer
- 2nd Place- Staff Sgt. Josiah Smith
- 3rd Place- Staff Sgt. Ryan Pella
- 4th Place- Sgt. Manuel Molina



Photo by Pfc. Anna Pongo

Congrats: Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Burch presents Sgt. Scott Kuzminski and Staff Sgt. Jason Winer with coins after winning the Nebraska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition, March 22 at Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb.



Photo by Pfc. Anna Pongo

Job Well Done: Competitors are recognized during the awards ceremony of the 2015 Nebraska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition. Pictured from left to right are Spc. Jerry Rhein, Spc. David Muehller, Spc. Alexander Gould, Spc. Robin Cauthon, Staff Sgt. Josiah Smith, Staff Sgt. Ryan Pella and Sgt. Manuel Molina.

Winer couldn't agree more.

"Make sure you prepare yourself for the events," said Winer. "Obviously you can't take it lightly. Sometimes people might not realize how important it is to properly train for those events."

"And by doing that I think that will help them be successful," added Winer.

After winning the Soldier and non-commissioned officer of the year, respectively, Kuzminski and Winer both said they were excited to move on to regionals and pass on all the information they've learned to the Soldiers at their units.



Kuzminski



Winer

Civilian first-responders, Guardsmen train together

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Editor

Being prepared, trained and ready to deploy to assist local first-responders is what the 72nd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team is all about.

Local first-responders and the 72nd Civil Support Team took a big step toward those goals, March 27, when they came together for the 2015 Nebraska Hazmat Challenge at Greenlief Training Site.

According to 72nd CST officials, it is important for the team members to be prepared to work with the local first-responders when they are called upon. So, the Nebraska Hazmat Challenge was started to get them working together in a non-emergency setting.

"Basically our teams are broken up within their teams so we can all work together and go through the different response capabilities that we have," said Sgt. 1st Class Jeramey Anderson, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the 72nd CST's survey section.

The 72nd CST members are experts in weapons of mass destruc-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Team Effort: Two members of the 72nd Civil Support Team (in orange suits) and a local first-responder (in green suit) learn cargo tank emergency response during the 2015 Nebraska Hazmat Challenge, March 27, at Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb.

tion effects and nuclear, biological or chemical weapons defense operations. They are federally resourced, trained and exercised, and employ federally approved CBRN response doctrine.

"The challenge is nice because the local responders are from different areas of Nebraska, (from) Scottsbluff to the Omaha metro area," said Anderson.

"It's nice to put faces with names and for them to know who we are and what capabilities we can bring as an asset for them if they need it."

The challenge was important for the CST as well because the team members learned a lot, they said.

"We don't deal with some of the types of hazmat responses that fire (departments do)," said Anderson. "But if we go to assist on the scene, we know exactly what they are doing and what safety precautions we need to take or what equipment we need to bring."

According to Sgt. 1st Class Jason Schiermeyer, operations noncommissioned officer/modeler for the 72nd CST, the group worked with such things as spill kits and radiation modeling software.

"A big advantage of this is the training. We all train all the time but there are certain things we don't train on enough and you kind of lose your familiarity with it," said Schiermeyer. "So, (this is) really just making sure the entire (emergency medical service) community within the state is on the same page and same standards."

"Working in events like this, we can come together and build that partnership," added Schiermeyer. "It also opens up a lot of different resources available for training."



Valve Off: Sgt. 1st Class Jeramey Anderson, the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the 72nd Civil Support Team's survey section, stops a leak during the cargo tank emergency response event of the 2015 Nebraska Hazmat Challenge at Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb., March 27.



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Now Open: Nebraska National Guard and Army Air Force Exchange Service officials cut the ribbon to the new Camp Ashland troop store at Camp Ashland, Neb., April 23.

Newly updated, Camp Ashland troop store opens

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Nebraska National Guard and Army Air Force Exchange Service officials cut the ribbon to the new Camp Ashland troop store on April 23.

The newly updated store will be open from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m., Mondays through Sundays, whenever classes are in session at Camp Ashland's 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute). The 209th RTI hosts several noncommissioned officer leadership and military occupational specialty courses.

The troop store was renovated by the Nebraska National Guard. It now offers a Snack Avenue, more frozen and chilled foods, a health and beauty care section and Military Clothing. An attached dayroom will also be open 24-hours-a-day.

According to Nebraska National Guard officials, the newly remodeled exchange store, which is housed in Building 56, is a welcome addition to Camp Ashland.

"Everybody knows the AAFES store," said Command Sgt. Maj. Eli Valenzuela, state command sergeant major for the Nebraska Army National Guard, adding that AAFES has been committed to serving American service members for 120 years.

"Now we assume that wherever we go, whatever military post or installation, we're going to find a PX or a BX... we take that for granted sometimes, but they're always there," said Valenzuela, adding

that the students who attend Camp Ashland's multiple course will now be able to have their individual needs met.

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Forster, the Nebraska Air National Guard's state command chief master sergeant, agreed saying that AAFES has long served as a testament of America's promise to its military service members. "I would like to thank the AAFES team that came down," he said. "It's a little store, but it means a lot especially when you're out here and this is your whole world... You're not going into town to get something, you're getting it from an AAFES store, so I appreciate the effort that (AAFES) is putting into this store and the one in Lincoln."

Speaking on behalf of the store was Chief Master Sgt. Sean Applegate, the senior enlisted advisor for AAFES.

"This is great... what a great partnership that we've got with the Guard here to not only renovate our facility, but also to be able to continue to extend our goods and service to you so that we can continue to extend our benefit," said Applegate.

According to Applegate, for every dollar earned, historically 67 cents comes back to the military community through the Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Air Force Services dividend, Chief Applegate said. "Every time shoppers buy from the Exchange, they are making life better for their entire military community."

Joint medical evacuation training benefits officer candidates, aviation

By Capt. Erin Hanson
Prairie Soldier Contributor

For the officer candidates of 2nd Battalion, 209th Regional Training Institute, located at Camp Ashland, Nebraska, their 18 months of training is rigorous, but also exciting.

On Feb. 7-8, Officer Candidate Class 58 took part in a joint two-day live medevac exercise with Company C, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion providing training for both units on either side of a rescue operation.

The two-day event started with 'Medevac 101' taught by Sgt. Lynda James, a flight medic with Co. C, 2-135th GSAB, during which the officer candidates experienced the chaotic environment created by the presence of rotary wing aircraft.

James, who has 16 years experience as a medic and has been flying since 2008, said the class informs Soldiers of the safety aspect and to take guidance from someone when the helicopter comes. "You can't really communicate on the ground, so it works out smoothly if they've had the class before."

"It gives Soldiers an aspect of what we do and why we ask them to do things in a certain way. They see the amount of space we have," she added.

Anytime the unit supports another in a combat zone, time is taken to conduct a class prior to beginning operations and, if possible, prior to individual ground convoy missions, said James.

The Officer Candidate School program is constructed to continually and purposefully pursue realistic and relevant training for

officer candidates.

"Anytime our officer candidates get to include things related to the operational environment, this being one of them, and apply it to realistic training is a good thing," said Lt. Col. William Prusia, 2nd Bn., 209th RTI, commander.

Prusia indicated another benefit of working with units outside the RTI is the awareness gained by the officer candidates of the opportunities within Nebraska.

Training alongside functional units not only exposes the future officers to opportunities, but also shows them the standard of professionalism and the intensity of training they will one day be expected to keep.

Officer Candidate James Ethier had a very realistic experience in the role of a casualty suffering serious wounds. While treated in the medevac, Ethier witnessed the whole process by which a casualty is evacuated from the battlefield. He was transferred from one litter to another, given oxygen, monitored with an EKG machine and received an I.V. all while in flight.

Within minutes the process was complete.

"I was really surprised with the amount of work they put in for it being practice... I was very impressed with how efficient they (the crew) were and how the crew chief and medic worked together," said Ethier.

Ethier said if he ever had to evacuate for real, he knows he would be in great hands.

"I have a lot more confidence seeing the skill level they have," said Ethier. "I would feel very comfortable being in their care just seeing how seriously they took the training."

A portion of Co. C is scheduled to mobilize in May for a mission in overseas. In prepara-



Photo by Capt. Erin Hanson

Teamwork: (From left) Officer Candidates Bryan Campbell, Joshua Maguire and James Ethier exit an UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter as a team while medic Sgt. Lynda James oversees their safety at Camp Ashland, Neb., Feb. 7. Office Candidate School Class 58 and Company C, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, worked in tandem during February drill to complete a two-day live medevac exercise.

tion, the unit has conducted 29 extra hours of medical training and the realism of the exercise extended to benefit medics, aviators and operations personnel who were given the opportunity to practice their skills in triage and in-air treatment, combat landing and medevac dispatch.

Because of the upcoming deployment, more emphasis has been placed on perfecting these skills.

"It's good that multiple groups of our unit were trained," said Capt. Aaron Fisk, Co. C, 2-135th GSAB, commander. "It's good to go

out and work with other units so we don't become complacent."

Sgt. Lawrence Lind, a medic and flight instructor with Co. C, 2-135th GSAB, said, "We made the training hard and realistic."

"Anytime you can intermix your skill set with another unit's mission, even if they are not similar, you get to see second and third order effects like in the real world," he added.

He was glad to have the opportunity to participate in the training and said, "I look forward to integrating our capabilities with others for the benefit of everybody."



Guard Family NEWS You Can Use



Everyone's duty to prevent child abuse

WASHINGTON (DoD news) – The Defense Department observes April as the Month of the Military Child, and also recognizes this time of year as it pertains to a more sobering topic: National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

In a recent DoD news interview, Barbara Thompson, director of DoD's Office of Family Readiness, stressed that anyone aware of red flags and potential cases of abuse has an obligation to bring the concerns to light.

Learning how to support parents, identify risks and mitigate those risks are critical elements in child abuse prevention, she added.

"We have a role, each and every one of us, to support children's health and safety," Thompson said. "Parenting is one of the hardest jobs and responsibilities that we'll ever have, and the one that also has the most love."

Multipronged Approach

DoD has taken a multipronged approach to help parents provide a safe, healthy, nurturing environment for their children, Thompson said. Through military treatment facilities, she added, perinatal nurses and doctors can support military families' unique needs. Pediatricians are among the most trusted sources of information for parents, she noted.

Thompson also discussed the New Parent Support Program, in which parents can seek help through family advocacy and even in-home visits to reinforce safety and help them avoid risks of neglect or abuse.

"You're moving every two to three years," she said. "You're away from your extended family,

or service members are deployed, which means we now have a stay-at-home parent who's by himself or herself, and we want to make sure the resources are available to strengthen their parenting skills."

The National Center for Telehealth and Technology's website offers tips and tools to help military and veteran parents during different stages of their children's growth and development, Thomson said.

Military OneSource offers confidential, nonmedical counseling that helps parents learn communication skills to better identify and understand behavioral changes in their children, particularly those in the toddler stages, she added.

'The Terrific Twos'

"(That phase) is sometimes called 'The Terrible Twos,' but I like to call it 'The Terrific Twos,' because children's budding personalities are developing," she said, acknowledging "it can be challenging when they're saying 'no' to you all the time."

But parents equipped with skills to offset children's challenging behaviors often develop confidence and openness to additional resources that will foster readiness and flexibility in reacting to their child's personality, Thompson said.

"Children are very different," she pointed out, "so what works for one of your children will not necessarily work for another one."

Parents who return from deployments with visible or invisible injuries may particularly benefit from DoD and Military OneSource resources tailored to their specific needs, Thompson said.

Evidence Supports Protec-



Photos by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

On Your Marks, Get Set... Dozens of pint-sized kids take off in search of brightly-colored eggs during the Operation: Hidden Egg military family event held at the East Campus Readiness Center in Lincoln, Neb., on March 28. The event included the annual egg hunt, a number of hands-on activities and the opportunity to talk with a variety of military family support specialists.



On the Hunt Military children invade Lincoln for Easter fun

It's So Soft: A young military family member stops by the bunny station to meet the largest rabbit on display. The station gave kids of all ages the opportunity to pet and hold bunnies of various sizes.

tive Factors

Research and empirical evidence indicate that certain protective factors buffer and mitigate risks military families could experience, and working with schools, pediatricians, chaplains and child development staff members is key to keeping those avenues of communication open, Thompson said.

"We want to make sure that... parents are aware how important it

is to foment a nurturing, attached relationship with their young children ... and manage expectations from both the child's perspective as well as their perspective," she said.

"We know [having this information] reduces the risk of committing abuse, because you have these tools to help you catch yourself before it happens," she added.

Officials are seeking to eradicate the stigma behind identifying and

reporting child abuse, Thompson said, and to promote communities' greater familiarity with the National Child Abuse Hotline and other resources designed to help parents who may be struggling with appropriate nurturing and disciplinary roles with their children.

"Each one of us has to take a stand to protect not only military children, but all children," Thompson said.

This month's focus: updating your information, job search

Hello retirees. Spring is here and we're welcoming back many of our 'snowbirds.' We're glad you had a great winter and looking forward to a good spring in Nebraska.

Many of you have asked us about the bills in the legislature concerning military retirement exemptions, and we're anxiously awaiting news. Make sure you contact your state representative to ask for their support of the bills.

To that end, we hosted a retiree briefing on April 15 at the Kearney Legion Club in Kearney, Nebraska. We were able to hear the latest news from the Nebraska National Guard and veteran services.

For others, we are working with the Army Guard personnel office to hold a retiree briefing in the eastern area of the state later this year. As soon as we have a firm date, we'll notify everyone.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us at (402) 309-7303 or (402) 309-7305. We'll get you pointed in the right direction to ensure you start receiving your retirement benefits on time. We strive to ensure all our members receive quality information and service. We look for suggestions and comments to make our product better.

Check the expiration date on your ID card. Have you updated your ID card? Your Retired ID Card is your identification for Tricare,

Tricare for Life, and to validate your Medicare eligibility.

Still searching for that perfect retirement job? Check out job opportunities at www.ne.ng.mil. Many Nebraska based companies who want to hire military service members and veterans are listed there. Who knows? You might find that perfect part time job to keep you occupied!

Have you moved, changed a phone number or added an email address? Please contact us to update your information so we can keep our information current.

As always, thank you for your dedicated military service. The Nebraska National Guard is rightfully proud of its heritage and you were part of that legacy.

For the early birds, here's the breakfast site information as we know it:

Lincoln:

Army National Guard retirees: **FIRST** Monday of each month, 7:00 a.m., Virginia's Travelers Café,

3820 Cornhusker Highway, Lincoln
Air National Guard retirees: **LAST** Monday of each month, 7:00 a.m., Stauffer's Café, 5600 S. 48th St, Lincoln

North Platte area retirees: **SECOND** Saturday of each month, 8:00 a.m., Airport Inn, North Platte

If any other towns have retiree breakfasts and want to share that information, please let us know and we'll add you to the list so others can join you.

From the desk of Sgt. 1st Class Ed Luhn. Hello retirees. An important website which provides good up to date information on retirement is www.soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement. This site is the U.S. Army's official newsletter for retired Soldiers, surviving spouses and their families. We've found the Army Echoes a very good source of new information on retirement.

Reminder, if there are any major life changes in your life, such as divorce or death of spouse, please

contact me as soon as possible. You may need to adjust or rework your survivor benefit plan elections. Plus, we'll need to make sure you contact DFAS as well at 1-800-276-9472.

I look forward to assisting you with your retirement processing

Nebraska National Guard Retiree News & Notes

By retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 William Nelson

DEERS/ID Card Stations

- G1 – 2433 N.W. 24th Street, Lincoln, NE 68524: (402) 309-8167/8168/8169;
- "Spirit of 1776" Armory 1776 N. 10th St. Lincoln, NE: 68508 (402) 309-7359/7373;
- Penterman Armory 2400 N.W. 24th St. Lincoln, NE 68524: (402) 309-1724/1719;
- Air Guard (Lincoln Air Base) Bldg 600 Room E209: (402) 309-1542;
- Norfolk Armory 817 S. 1st St. Norfolk, NE 68701: (402) 309-8900/8908;

- Kearney Armory 5710 Airport Road Kearney, NE 68847: (402) 309-7758/7752;
- 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), 220 County Road A, Bldg. 508, Ashland, NE 68003: (402) 309-7148/7160;
- Offutt Air Force Base: (402) 294-2374;
- The number for DEERS is 1-800-538-9552.

Remember, you need two forms of ID when you arrive for your appointment.

Behind the scenes: Military spouses hold down fort

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Staff Photojournalist

Before Cara Loken met her future husband, she had little experience with the military. In the 15 years since she and her husband have been married she has learned a lot.

There have also been a lot of challenging times.

Cara's husband, Maj. John Loken, is deputy commander of the 155th Maintenance Squadron. He has been a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard for more than 16 years and a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard for nine years before that.

During that time, Loken has deployed multiple times for varying amounts of time, often leaving Cara home with her son from a previous relationship and the couple's youngest son.

Cara has learned firsthand the challenges military spouses go through. Each experience – good or bad – has prepared her to support her family and other military spouses regardless of the situation.

For that strength and dedication, Cara was recently named the Nebraska National Guard's "Military Spouse of the Year."

Cara said her husband nominated her for the award based on all she's done for their family and their extended 155th Air Refueling Wing family.

"I help base-wide. I volunteer mostly for maintenance, but I've been everywhere," said Cara. "People call me and they know I will help. I started a family orientation to maintenance... for new families

coming to the area who were kind of scared when they got here – like I was.

"It's still overwhelming when you walk in here. It's huge and you don't know anybody," she added. "We want their families to come join us and to give them a little brief intro to what we do."

According to militaryspouse.com, Military Spouse magazine founded the Military Spouse of the Year award in 2008 to honor military spouses of all ranks and branches of service. More than a million military spouses support and maintain the home front while service members defend the United States. The Military Spouse of the Year award recognizes military spouses' important contributions and unwavering commitment to the military community and the entire country.

When Cara heard she had won, she knew she could use her new platform to help even more spouses and families.

"I was surprised," said Cara. "I didn't want to look, but was hoping I won.... It was exciting. I was nervous. Now I can use that title to help military families, to get the word out."

Cara said most people know about what service members do, but they don't realize there are often family members left behind holding families together however they can. To finally be recognized for her sacrifices behind the scene means a lot to her, she said.

"There's a lot of work, I'm glad I was recognized," said Cara. "There's a lot of work volunteers do without recognition. So, I like

that there are people here to help that aren't military members, but that can tell the families, it is okay. We also need more people here to help. I'm grateful I won. I'm glad I can represent everyone."

In addition to the challenges of a spouse in the military, Cara's son spent time in the Army and also deployed. Thanks to those deployment experiences, the Yellow Ribbon reintegration program holds a special place in Cara's heart.

"Coming back, for spouses or children, it really is a hard adjustment," said Cara. "People don't realize that. But even when my husband came back, it was a struggle... we originally didn't know what to expect."

"I help with Yellow Ribbon, that's my favorite way to help," she added. "I pass that information on to people at the base..." she added. "When my son was deployed, I had a mother whose son was deployed along with mine. She called me for support often. Well, her son was injured overseas. So I set her up with Yellow Ribbon and continued to help her. I still go to the Yellow Ribbon meetings. I still learn a lot."

In the end, the deploying military member may have the easier end of the deal than those left behind, she said.

"Military members get a lot of recognition, and it's great," said Cara. "But a lot of stuff we do goes unrewarded. We take care of everything when the guys are gone. People don't understand that. We are the husband, wife, mom, taxi – everything – when members deploy. That's hard to do. They need more support when



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Family Photo: Cara Loken poses for a photo with her family after her husband, Maj. John Loken, deputy command of the 155th Maintenance Squadron, returned to Lincoln from Kuwait, Dec. 17. Cara was recently named the Nebraska National Guard's "Military Spouse of the Year."

loved ones are gone. It's easy for you (military service members); you're just doing your same job. It's hard for us because we take on more stress. No one really talks about what we go through. And I think people are afraid to talk about it."

Cara said asking for help when a loved one is deployed, or following a deployment, is a way of showing strength.

"There were times I would sit then and cry, not really for any real reason," said Cara. "I would cry. I would get over it. And I'm a pretty

tough person. I don't like to ask for help. But I know when I need help."

And Cara's advice to first-time deployers is to know their support system and rely on those people.

"That first deployment, if something broke, I didn't know who to call until my husband came back – when I went to a Yellow Ribbon meeting," said Cara. "I tell people to go to Yellow Ribbon, even if they don't want to. It's an all-day thing, but you may get that one little piece of information that you end up passing on to others to help them."

92nd Troop Command welcomes new commander

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Editor

The Nebraska Army National Guard's 92nd Troop Command welcomed a new commander to its organization, April 11, during a change of command ceremony at the Penterman Armory in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Accepting the colors of the 92nd Troop Command from Brig. Gen. Richard Dahlman, assistant adjutant general-Army, was Col. Lynn Heng. Heng replaces departing 92nd Troop Command commander, Col. Anita Curington who had served as commander of the Lincoln-based organization since Aug. 11, 2013.

The 92nd Troop Command is made up of over 1,600 Soldiers assigned to 20 units located across Nebraska. It is the largest major subordinate command in the Nebraska National Guard.

In saying farewell to the organization, Curington said it was an experience of a lifetime.

"I will truly miss everything about Troop Command," said Curington. "The Soldiers have exceeded all expectations and because of your efforts I had a successful command, and I know I am a better person because of it."

Curington received her commission through the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets ROTC program in 1987 and was assigned to the U.S. Army Reserve control group. She joined the Wyoming Army National Guard

in 1990 before transferring to the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1993.

Curington deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Enduring Iraqi Freedom as the commander of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion from 2007-08. Curington will now serve as the state human relations officer for the Nebraska National Guard.

In assuming command, Heng said he was extremely excited to lead the 92nd Troop Command, an organization within which he has spent the majority of his military career.

"It is really a dream come true to take over Troop Command," said Heng. "We all have aspirations and this is definitely one of them."

Heng said he expects the units within the 92nd Troop Command to continue to meet their future challenges in the same professional manner that has become an organizational trademark.

"For Troop Command we have a lot of challenges ahead of us," said Heng. "Colonel Curington set the bar very high, but I am going to push you and challenge you just like Colonel Curington did. And we are going to do wonderful things."

Heng enlisted as a private in the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1986 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1990 at the Nebraska Military Academy.

Heng served in Bosnia in 1999 in support



Photo by Pfc. Anna Pongo

New Boss: Col. Lynn Heng receives the colors of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 92nd Troop Command from Brig. Gen. Richard Dahlman, assistant adjutant general-Army, during a change of command ceremony, April 11, at the Penterman Armory in Lincoln, Neb. Heng took command from Col. Anita Curington.

of Operation Joint Forge and in Kosovo in 2003-04 under Operation Enduring Freedom. Heng has also completed two combat tours in Afghanistan in support of Operation Endur-

ing Freedom in 2008 and 2011-12.

"We are going to keep moving and keep getting better," added Heng. "And I look forward to working with all of you."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

No Hero Forgotten: Guests view a traveling display of 'Remembering Our Fallen from Nebraska' during the Honor the Fallen Ceremony at Cabela's, April 13, in Lincoln, Neb. Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, the adjutant general of Nebraska, spoke at the ceremony.



Photo by Master Sgt. Shannon Nielsen

New boss takes helm at Offutt unit

Col. Mark Hopson, 170th Group commander, stands next to Lt. Col. John Von Osterheldt, the new commander of 170th Operations Support Squadron during a change of command ceremony, March 7, at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb. Von Osterheldt took command from Lt. Col. Joseph G. Conrad.

Nebraska's Citizen Soldiers and Airmen

Making A Living ~ Making An Impact



Lights, Camera, Action: Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson, a Nebraska Army National Guard broadcast journalist, video tapes the 2014 National Connelly Competition at Camp Guernsey, Wyoming, last year. Jacobson uses her civilian job skills to help tell the Guard's story.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Big Design: Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson, the senior designer at the University of Nebraska-Kearney, shows off the banner she designed in the UNK Health and Sports Center in Kearney, Neb., Feb. 11. Jacobson uses her knowledge of graphic arts in conjunction with her job as a broadcast journalist in the National Guard to tell the story of the Nebraska National Guard.

Creative Touches

Nebraska Army Guard broadcast journalist combines military, civilian skills to tell Guard's story

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Editor

Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson isn't your average traditional Guard Soldier.

Jacobson is the Nebraska Army National Guard's only public affairs broadcast specialist.

With the times changing in this highly digital generation, Jacobson's job in the Nebraska Army National Guard has become increasingly more important as information, videos and news can be loaded onto websites and be seen across the world within minutes.

Jacobson is a member of the Lincoln-based 111th Public Affairs Detachment. There she has an important role in producing stories and other informational videos about the Nebraska National Guard.

"There are a lot of great stories in the Nebraska National Guard that can be told visually through videos," said Jacobson.

As an Army public affairs broadcast specialist Jacobson

creates, films, reports, and edits news programs and videos. But Jacobson doesn't just rely on the military training she gained from the Defense Information School at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, she also uses her civilian skills in graphic design to enhance her video products to make them more visually appealing.

She also uses her talents from her civilian job to design posters and graphics for her unit and the Nebraska National Guard's Public Affairs Office.

Jacobson has a bachelor's degree of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design from the University of Nebraska-Kearney and works as the senior designer at the University of Nebraska-Kearney Creative Services in Kearney, Nebraska.

"I joined the National Guard after graduating from college," said Jacobson. "It offered a great opportunity to do something different than my day-to-day life and would help pay back my student loans."

Even though broadcast journal-

ism is different than graphic design for Jacobson, they also share a lot in common.

"Framing a video or photo is a lot like design, using the rule of thirds to frame a subject in a camera or the layout of a poster share similarities," said Jacobson. "Having an open mind and thinking about different angles that would work better is used in both video and design."

"Most importantly, broadcasting in the National Guard and designing for the university relies on communication. That is the basics of both jobs," added Jacobson. "Communicating ideas, stories and emotions."

But being the only broadcast journalist and being a traditional Soldier can be a little challenging for Jacobson as the demand for videos telling the Guard's story is significant. Jacobson said she makes sure she balances her time to fit everything in and accomplish the mission.

But according to Jacobson's unit mates, she is a very dedicated and talented Soldier that will complete a mission. Even if she has to do some work away from drill on her own time.

"I rely a lot on the support from my family, friends and civilian job," said Jacobson. "Maintaining a healthy outlook on any situation is key and taking time out for myself."

"If I end up working for three or four weeks straight due to drill, training, and extra work at my civilian job, I find a way to take a day off and recharge," added Jacobson.

Jacobson knows she couldn't do her job in the Guard without the support of her civilian job.

"The University of Nebraska-Kearney and the Creative Services specifically have been very supportive in my career as a Soldier from going to basic training, advanced individual training and various training they have been great in letting me accomplish the duties I have with the Guard," said Jacobson.

In addition to the support from her family, friends and civilian employer, Jacobson has a passion for her work.

"Communicating an idea and making sure the intended audience can relate and be informed is what I strive for," said Jacobson. "It's about getting the client what they need rather than what they want sometimes to ensure their ideas are



Layout and Design: Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson shows how she designed one of the 2014 Loper Football programs, Feb. 11, in Kearney, Neb. Jacobson uses her talents from her civilian job to provide training to the Soldiers in her unit on the Photoshop and Indesign computer programs.



Music and Art: Posters created by Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson hang on a wall at the University of Nebraska-Kearney in Kearney, Neb., Feb. 12. Jacobson is the senior designer at UNK and also a traditional Nebraska Army National Guard Soldier.

visually communicated with the best possible solution."

Jacobson knows there is a lot of responsibility in her job, but handles it the best she can. "It's a great responsibility and as long as I can produce videos where there may not have been any is a good feeling," said Jacobson.

"I look forward to having an additional broadcaster when the time comes," added Jacobson.

According to Jacobson having another broadcaster would give her the opportunity to train and mentor them and increase the number of videos released to ensure information and stories are getting out to the intended audiences.

No matter what, Jacobson said she knows that communicating the message in a visually appealing way, whether in graphic design or in videos, is important in both of her careers.

"Some people may think they don't need a good looking poster

for their event, or a Soldier may think that no one wants to listen to them, but both are important," said Jacobson. "I just visually communicate that importance through design and video."

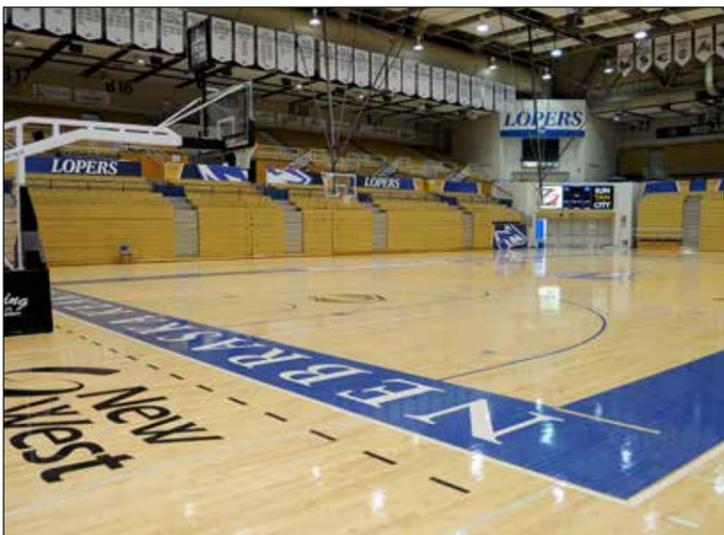
Jacobson said she is glad she can bring her civilian skills to her military career to help tell the story of the Soldiers of Nebraska.

"My experience as a broadcast journalist in the Guard has been great," said Jacobson. "I have met so many people and been to many different places."

"The best experience is meeting and telling the story of Nebraska's Soldiers."

Check out some of Jacobson's videos on the Nebraska National Guard YouTube channel- NENationalGuard.

Editor's Note: If you know a Soldier or Airman that has made an impact and you would like their story to be told please email ng.ne.neang.mbx.pao-public@mail.mil.



Custom Banners: Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson, a public affairs broadcast specialist with the 111th Public Affairs Detachment and senior graphic designer at the University of Nebraska-Kearney, designed the Lopers banners that the around UNK Health and Sports Center in Kearney, Neb.

Historian's Corner

Preserving the legacy of Nebraska's Citizen Soldiers & Airmen

Museum update

Construction progress on track for July 4th building dedication

By Jerry Meyer
State Historian

The Nebraska National Guard Museum Phase II is in full swing with construction and getting the building ready for the building dedication of the new Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward, July 4 at 10 a.m. Construction is on schedule for the ceremony and will give patrons an opportunity to see the Phase I and II upgrades and modifications that will allow the museum staff to install exhibits in Phase III.

The museum will be open for educational tours after the dedication on July 4, 2016.

Exterior Update:

The removal of the metal storage shed and leveling of the landscape to the west of the museum building is complete as is the new handicap drive in the front. This will also allow for bus drop off in the future.

Tan colored concrete forms the ring in the front of the museum. The tan concrete will also work its way along the north side of the building to the west parking lot.

New windows were put in all around the building. The south staircase and deck were poured as well. The south entrance was widened and framed and the new porch was poured for the double door entrance in the front.

Interior Update:

The biggest change to the interior has to be the framing and finishing of the alcoves. These shrouds serve a dual purpose; block direct sunlight and provide more vertical space for projects and murals.

Behind all the dry wall is an elaborate and extensive system of HVAC and electrical and plumbing



Dust in the Air: A construction worker cuts stone at sunrise at the new Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward, Neb. Great work has been done to preserve the outside of the 1956 armory with matching brick work.

systems.

The 1956 armory has had a total make over on the interior. The design of the interior was to have a modern museum with the mission of education and outreach.

Most visitors that have toured during the construction are amazed at the transformation of the interior of the building. The behind the scenes work that will keep the building within temperature and humidity levels has been extensive.

Visitors can see the large HVAC piping behind the alcoves and can get an idea of the large scale system need to keep the building under climate control.

Plumbing for new female and



Photos by Jerry Meyer

Making Progress: The old drill floor is currently receiving a major face lift with the framing and finishing of alcoves at the Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward, Neb. Construction is on schedule and the building dedication is planned for July 4th during Seward's Forth of July celebration.



Fresh Concrete: Construction workers smooth out tan concrete in front of the Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward, Neb. The circle sidewalk was designed to go around the 70th Anniversary Air Guard Memorial.

family restrooms has been extensively modified. Electrical and data lines are bringing the building up to modern standards. New lights and control systems are making this a real state of the art facility.

What's next?

Technicians will finish pouring sidewalks around the facility with the culmination being the new park-

ing lot on the west side. The 70th Anniversary Air Guard Memorial will be going up in front within that large circle near the flag-pole. This was designed and built by Hughes Brothers Manufacturing in Seward and given to the museum in honor of the Nebraska Air National Guard (1946-2016).

Also grading and landscaping in

front around the M-4 Sherman is on its way to appear that it is coming out of a hedgerow. Additionally, interior work is being completed for the July 4th dedications.

For more information, check out the museum online via Facebook: Nebraska National Guard Museum or on the web: www.NNGHS.org (currently under construction.)

Nebraska served as home base for noted aviation pioneer

By Jerry Meyer
State Historian

Ralph McMillen came of age with the Wright Brothers in 1903 and had an early liking for aviation.

McMillen was raised in Iowa and was able to purchase his first aircraft at age of 23 in 1912. The Curtiss Model D "Pusher" he purchased from the Hammondspport, New York factory cost around \$6,000 then, which is equivalent to over \$150,000 today.

McMillen earned a pilot rating from the Federation Aeronautique Internationale with his license #111. He took his plane on the road and traveled around the country promoting aviation at county and state fairs. On May 13, 1912, McMillen was involved in an accident near Frog Creek outside of Perry, Iowa, which left both of his arms and legs broken.

After recovering from his injuries, McMillen joined the Nebraska National Guard, commissioning as a captain in 1913. He was assigned to the Fremont, Nebraska, unit of the Signal Corps. At the time, balloon and airplane types were put in the Signal Corps as reflection of the earliest aviation missions of visual and photographic.

In 1914, McMillen and his fellow Soldiers in Fremont, raised money to purchase an upgraded version of the Curtis Model D for the unit.

The Fremont unit fell under the chief of Aviation for the Nebraska National Guard, Castle W. Schaffer, who formed an Aviation Corps in the state (two aircraft, pilots and crew.) Schaffer, also a pilot, was soon involved in a serious accident and grounded. That left McMillen and members of the Fremont

unit to fly around the state "brainstorming" to promote aviation and raise funds for the advancement of the technology.

Nebraska's adjutant general had asked that McMillen donate the earnings from the travels to further promote aviation in the National Guard.

McMillen experimented with many cutting edge ideas involving the airplane before legendary aviator Billy Mitchell proved their value years later. He experimented with aerial bombing of street cars and other targets in Lincoln, Nebraska, much to the chagrin of local residents. Ultimately he proved that precision bombing from a stable aerial platform was possible.

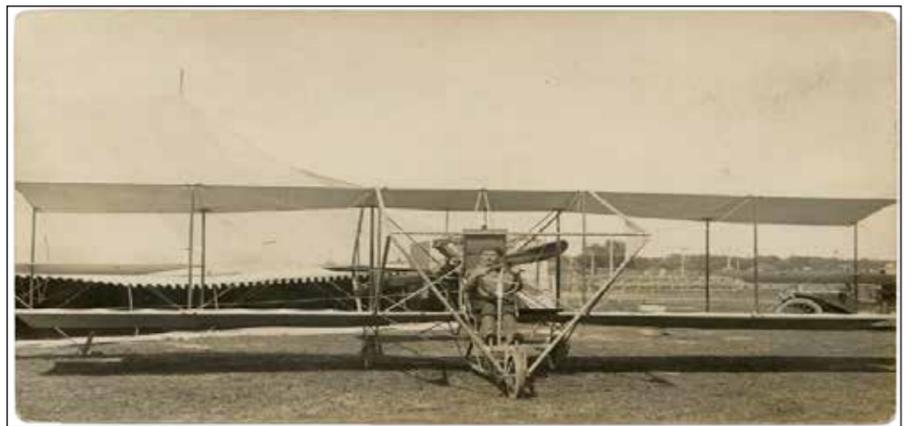
He also worked with Guard members to design simple fuses for his aerial bombs (utilizing automotive cigarette lighters).

Other pioneering ideas were the use of cameras to provide accurate aerial reconnaissance information to troops on a military exercise, delivery of near-real time data to influence a major simulated battlefield exercise, the use of lights on an aircraft and dealing with night navigation issues.

McMillen and Lt. Edgar Bagnell were chosen to attend the Curtiss school for pilots, but the National Guard did not have adequate funding to send them. The Aero Club of America paid for the licenses for both aviators from Nebraska. McMillen was such an experienced pilot that he licensed within a month and returned to Nebraska to promote aviation in the Midwest.

Bagnell spent 1916 -17 on the east coast flying around promoting aviation.

McMillen later purchased a Curtiss "Jenny" to fly around and promote aviation. On Sept. 2, 1916, while flying the Jenny, his



Courtesy Photos

Take Off: (Above) CPT Ralph McMillen, Nebraska National Guard aviation pioneer at the controls of his 1911 Curtiss Model D at a county fair promoting aviation.

Read all about it: (Below) Handbill from a fair promoting "The World's Greatest Aviator," Ralph McMillen of the Nebraska National Guard.

plane nosedived into the ground and he was killed. He is buried at Violet Hill Cemetery in Perry, Iowa.

The Aero Club of America recognized him for his efforts in organizing an aviation section in the Nebraska National Guard and considers him an early pioneer of American aviation. The 100th Anniversary of the founding of the "heavier than air" Aviation Corps and the flights of McMillen both occur during the summer of 2015.

The Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward hopes to honor this pioneer aviator with a replica 1911 Curtiss Model D Pusher hanging from the ceiling near the entrance to the new facility (opening in 2016.)



PROMOTIONS

Army National Guard

Lieutenant General
Timothy J. Kadavy

Colonel

Shawn R. Edwards

Major

Brett J. Carranza

Chief Warrant Officer 2

Heath C. Blackwell
Russell W. Kuhlman
Troy R. McCormick

First Sergeant

Jason P. Sharp

Master Sergeant

Carl K. Dehling
Jeffery A. Holbrook
Patrick J. Marik
Cecilio T. Roman

Sergeant First Class

Kyla M. Boersma
Jessica L. Jackson
Teresa M. Lenz
Christopher M. Niles
Brandon J. Robinson
Jessica A. Zimbelman

Staff Sergeant

Mitchell L. Adkins
Keri A. Bensheimer
Justin J. Eickmeier
Brycen L. Gillming
Bryce D. Hinrichs
Michael A. Kimmet
Dustin J. Knoell
Carsen J. Kuehl
Eric J. Maschmeier
Philip J. Merino
Brandon G. Modlin
Ellen M. Ross
William J. P. Schlote
Joshua E. C. Sladky
Aaron T. Smith
Kimberly M. Smith
William C. Stollberg
Paul D. Willman
John W. Winterfeld
Dustin G. Wondercheck

Sergeant

Zachary J. Bachmeier
Creighton B. Booth
Jason L. Buethe
David W. Capps Jr.
Robin N. Cauthon
Nathaniel C. Czaplak
Thomas R. Deall
Austin R. Fisher
Lance M. Harvey
Jonathan E. A. Hedges
Kayilyn N. Johnson
Adam W. Koehler
Kelson S. Kurtzer
Coleman J. Lonergan
Reed M. Lukow
Matthew C. Mccart
Max T. Mchane
Joseph C. Pace Jr.
Dillon J. Prather
Sean A. Riensche
Riley J. Ruzicka
Jerrod J. Silver
Brian L. Smith
Zachary M. Smith
Jonathan R. Steager
James A. Struss Jr
Jeremy J. Sudbeck
David N. Vicich
Devin H. Wilson

Specialist

Demetrius S. Alexander
Kayla B. Ambrose
Jimmy Barajasmorales
Christopher A. Bartlett
Kevin A. Blanch
Zachary J. Bowlin
Peyton A. Briggs
Richard J. Burtwistle
Samantha I. Cardenas
Micah G. Carsten
Sean M. Carey
Marisela Castillonegrette
Joseph R. Couch
Nathan S. Davis
Logan L. Fay
Taylor J. Filkins
Zachary R. Foreman
Cole H. W. Freudenburg
Kelsey N. Gaukel
Alexander S. P. Gould

Chad N. Harrison
Darby L. Haugen
Andrew J. Hemenway
Claudia P. Hernandezpedraza
Grant J. Hewitt
Kaylee M. Hoffman
Gregory J. Homewood
Anthony B. Hostler
Lance R. Jarzynka
Aaron S. Johnson
Levi D. Kaiser
Jacob N. Kamphaus
Jenipher R. Kargle
Dallas J. Kimminau
Trenton J. Kuhn
Anthony J. Kusek
Jeffrey D. Lechner
Jeffrey P. Linscomb
Allison J. Martin
Austin T. McKeone
Ashley M. Miller
Braden A. Moody
Abdulaay S. Ndiaye
Brian L. Smith
Austin M. Noldtaylor
Frederick P. Nuffer
Jonathon L. Oehm
Brett A. Olmsted
Dylan J. Olmsted
Jeffrey S. Ostwald
Dustin R. Payne
Steven W. W. Powell
Dayton C. Rasmussen
Alec S. Record
Zachary C. Rief
Ryan L. Rogers
Fernando Sanchez
Brandon L. Scodris
Austin D. Schrodt
Jacob H. Shindollar
Brian T. Stodola
John P. Sullivan
Jeffery I. Thompson
Jacob P. Viox
Kalirenea Weishaar
Dylan R. Wilson
Marraina A. Wilson
Levi J. K. Witz
Parker V. Wren
Ian Dannatt Wulf
Tyler J. Wurdeman

Private First Class

Shane T. Bateman
Erika Cardosaperez
Ashley K. Chinana
Samuel M. Crane
Ira Deleon
Alexis D. Dougherty
Jake B. Eden
Wesley A. Frederick
Arthur J. Hansen II
Michael J. Helmers
Aaron E. A. Jaapar
Dylan R. Johnson
Jose D. Leonibarra
Jordan E. Marescalco
Blake E. Mark
Danielle M. Martin
Gregory S. Miller
Jacob B. Miller
An Phuon D. Nguyen
Bao H. Nguyen
Drake H. Otto
Elias K. Rodriguez
Eric W. Roe
Dylan J. Samway
Morgan L. Saylor
Lance J. Schmidt
Bailey A. Schoenhofer
Hailey R. Sletten
Jaiden B. Thomas
Christopher N. Vasquez
Alexander J. Webster
Christopher A. Will
Kenyon L. Williams
Tanner Allen H. Woodward
Muhsin A. Younis

Private Two

Jordin R. Brice
Paul M. Ferguson
Tam T. Le
Andrew M. Nelson
Owen M. Prettyweasel
Alexis E. R. Rowell
Garrett A. Smith
Samuel R. Vanderheiden

Air National Guard

Lieutenant Colonel

Bryan S. Clifton

Major

Joey L. Meyer

Captain

Bryan E. Allebone
Jonathan K. Berggren
Bettina M. Bugat

First Lieutenant

Kevin M. Lindsey
Brian L. Obermeier

Chief Master Sergeant

Mark E. Fusco

Senior Master Sergeant

Michelle C. Laframboise

Master Sergeant

Suzanne E. Glover
Justin G. Johansen

Technical Sergeant

Edward C. Cope
Kyle J. Eddy
Ashly L. Johnson
Matthew J. Kobza
John D. Pinos
James E. Smoyer

Staff Sergeant

Devin J. Alt
Nathan T. Camp
Andrew T. Cookston
Joey C. Cumpston
Kyle S. Duensing
Dillon J. Horne
Blake A. Reistroffer

Senior Airman

John J. Brunk
Matthew P. Grimm
Austin G. Hans
William J. Johnson
Wade M. Kellett
Jakob R. Lansman
Tyler L. Peterson
Jase R. Stevens

Airman First Class

Selena M. Sermeno

AWARDS

Army National Guard

Meritorious Service Medal

Lt. Col. Jeffrey M. Kilgore
1st Sgt. Mathew T. Wagner
Sgt. 1st Class Jay D. Hanna
Sgt. 1st Class Richard L. Rynes Jr.

Army Commendation Medal

Lt. Col. Robert J. Kadavy
Maj. Kyle O. Lythgoe
Maj. Jason Palatas
Capt. Aaron M. Lee
Capt. James M. Seibert
1st Lt. Mark F. Vaughan
1st Sgt. Jonathan C. Panipinto
1st Sgt. Ryan E. Sullivan
Master Sgt. Jeremy J. Preister
Sgt. 1st Class Tarissa R. Batenhorst
Sgt. 1st Class Chad A. Couillard
Sgt. 1st Class Eric J. Martin
Sgt. 1st Class William M. McClure
Sgt. 1st Class Joseph G. Serkiz Jr.

Sgt. 1st Class Gregory F. Smithburns
Staff Sgt. Jason J. Winer
Staff Sgt. Christine L. Baack
Staff Sgt. Keri A. Bensheimer
Staff Sgt. Michael A. Kimmet
Staff Sgt. Gale A. Maberry
Staff Sgt. Andrew M. Siemek
Staff Sgt. Craig D. Worley
Sgt. Scott D. Kuzminski
Spc. Jeffrey D. Downey
Spc. Brian R. Jackson
Spc. Christopher M. Manhart
Spc. Stephen E. W. Powell

Army Commendation Medal with Distinguishing Device "V"

Spc. Christopher M. Manhart

Army Achievement Medal

Capt. Johanna M. Missak
1st Lt. Nathanael J. Rutherford
1st Lt. Mark F. Vaughan

2nd Lt. Nikolaus M. Statz
Master Sgt. Martin R. Misener
Sgt. 1st Class David Godoy
Sgt. 1st Class Stephen J. Stanislaw
Staff Sgt. Jared S. Wiehn
Sgt. Owen P. Karre
Sgt. Jason T. Lawrence
Sgt. Benjamin M. Smith
Spc. Travis M. Borchardt
Spc. Trenten A. Bruntz
Spc. Christopher M. Manhart
Spc. Jesse A. Pfeifer
Spc. Stephen E. W. Powell
Spc. Damian J. Schneider
Pfc. Khristofer J. Kuhlmann

Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

1st Lt. Mark F. Vaughan

Combat Action Badge

Spc. Stephen E. W. Powell

Combat Infantry Badge

Spc. Christopher M. Manhart

Nebraska National Guard Legion of Merit

Col. Anita K. W. Curington

Nebraska National Guard Individual Achievement Medal

1st Lt. Ryan E. Thompson
1st Sgt. Jason P. Sharp
Sgt. 1st Class Sean R. McMahon
Staff Sgt. Dustin R. Anderson
Staff Sgt. Sean M. Buckels
Staff Sgt. Lillie D. Chambers
Staff Sgt. Ryan A. Pella
Sgt. Samantha J. Kraft
Sgt. Benjamin M. Moyer
Sgt. Ryan A. Yarnell
Spc. Abdoulaziz Amadou
Spc. Bradley V. Anderson Jr.
Spc. Thomas A. Brown
Spc. Dillon M. Cadwallader

Spc. Mitchell I. Erickson
Spc. Jesse A. Pfeifer
Spc. Nathan J. Vodicka
Spc. Jordan M. White
Pfc. Ali J. Taylor

RETIREMENTS

Army National Guard

Col. Byron L. Diamond
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Douglas A. Shively
Comm. Sgt. Maj. Dennis G. Byrne
1st Sgt. Jonathan B. Brown
Sgt. 1st Class Timothy D. Alberry
Sgt. 1st Class Christopher R. Apley
Sgt. 1st Class Leslie M. Araujo
Sgt. 1st Class Polly D. Wacker
Sgt. 1st Class Derek L. Whisenhunt
Staff Sgt. James E. Iske
Staff Sgt. Christopher A. Linneman

Shorttakes

Prairie Soldier, Guard journalists earn national awards for work in 2014

Nebraska National Guard Public Affairs Office

The "Prairie Soldier" and its staff were honored recently when the 2014 National Guard Bureau Media Contest results were announced.

The "Prairie Soldier," the official newspaper of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard, took third place in the Digital Media Competition of the Army National Guard competition held in Washington, D.C.

Nebraska National Guard journalists also competed well during the individual print competition.

In the Army National Guard, Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock of the 111th Public Affairs Detachment took top honors in the Army National Guard's Photojournalism Category with her article and photos on the 2014 Nebraska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition and placed runner-up in the Print Journalist of the Year contest with five different articles, biography,



Melton



McClintock

photo and letter of recommendation.

In the Air National Guard, Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton of Joint Force Headquarters added to the list by placing second in the Air National Guard's Feature Article Category with his article and photos on Staff Sgt. Lillie Chambers giving back.

McClintock's photojournalism submission, which involved coverage of the 2014 Best Warrior Competition, was forwarded to the next level of the competition, the Department of the Army, where her entry will compete submission from all components of the Army.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Cabela's thanks Guard for service

Alan Beyke and David Luton of Cabela's presented Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac and the Soldiers and Airmen of the Nebraska National Guard with a thank you banner, April 17, at Joint Force Headquarters that was signed by Cabela's employees during the company's "Remember Our Fallen" tribute which was conducted April 13-17 in Lincoln, Neb.

Street Talk

“What are you looking forward to the most about spring time?”



Spc. Emily Mayfield
92nd Troop Command

“I am looking forward to the warm weather so I can take my daughter to the park.”

Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Ingwersen
155th Civil Engineering Squadron

“I’m looking forward to being outdoors; camping, fishing and four-wheeling at the North Platte River.”



Staff Sgt. Matthew Smith
155th Air Refueling Wing

“I’m looking forward to less sub-zero temperatures.”

Pfc. Roxanna Mora-Ogle
92nd Troop Command

“I am looking forward to warmer weather because I hate the cold. I also love the spring rains.”



Senior Airman Joseph Naumann
155th Air Refueling Wing

“I’m looking forward to lilacs blooming and the spring equinox.”

Sgt. Christopher Preister
67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade

“I am going to ride my motorcycle and I’m getting married.”



I am Living the Dream

I am living the dream, my dream. I am humbled for the opportunity I was afforded. I enjoyed my journey thru life with family and friends.

And I am happy and healthy as I reflect on retirement as a step from one chapter and a step into a new chapter.

Everyone must have a dream, seek opportunities, enjoy their life journey and take time to reflect on each step along the way.

When was the last time you took time to think about these things in your life?

The most important personal relationship you have in your life is with the person you wake up to each morning looking back at you in the mirror. You cannot have a positive and healthy relationship with anyone else, if you do not have a positive and healthy relationship with yourself.

It is important to respect your own dreams, opportunities and journey thru life as well as to periodically reflect on those things important to you, to assess and redirect as appropriate to you.

Then, and only then, can you have positive and healthy relationship with others to include your family and friends. Respect yourself as well as respect all others especially your fellow servicemen and servicewomen.

As I reflect back on my dream, I was lucky enough to figure out I wanted to be a pilot when I was a teenager living in Northeast Nebraska. My parents advised me my best opportunity to fulfill my dream was to join the military and pursue my dream of flying airplanes.

Using a network of family and friends, I heard about the opportunities of the service academies.

After some planning and a little

Another Voice

Assistant Adjutant General-Air

Brig. Gen. Jon Fago



to join the Nebraska Air National Guard. Step Three!

The Nebraska Air National Guard not only allowed me to fly the KC-135, but also afforded me the opportunity to command as a flight commander, squadron commander, group commander, vice wing commander and presently as the state air commander.

In command is where missions comes first followed closely by the people you command. As a commander, you quickly realize you are an Airman first, an officer second and a pilot last.

Command is a privilege and a good commander works tirelessly to earn the respect of those he commands every minute of every day. The commander must have a dream for the unit, provide opportunities for unit members, enjoy the journey and spend time reflecting on yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Step Four for me is to retire in June and I have been doing a lot of reflection on my dream, the opportunities afforded me, the family and friends who have touched me in my journey and assessing where tomorrow will take me.

My service to my community, my state and to our country will not end as I step out of uniform and into the retiree’s ranks.

I hope I have had a positive and healthy influence on the Nebraska Air National Guard and the United States Air Force.

I also hope I left the Nebraska Air National Guard just a little bit better than when I joined and made it a place where all Airmen were glad to come to work and serve their community, state and nation.

God bless the United States of America!

“Everyone must have a dream, seek opportunities, enjoy their life journey and take time to reflect on each step along the way.”

— **Brig. Gen. Jon Fago**
Assistant Adjutant General-Air

hard work in high school, Senator Roman Hruska afforded me the opportunity to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy in my pursuit of my dream to become a military pilot. Step One.

After graduation from the Academy, I was afforded another opportunity to go to undergraduate pilot training, graduating with my silver wings and an assignment to KC-135s at Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota.

Five years later, the U.S. Air Force procured the KC-10 and again I was afforded the opportunity to fly the new tanker at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana both on active duty and in the Air Force Reserves.

Another opportunity was afforded me in 1988, with employment with Delta Air Lines as a commercial pilot. Step Two!

In 1993, another opportunity was presented when I was offered

Let’s talk about change

Since my last commentary in the November 2014 Prairie Soldier issue a lot has changed in my life. And when my mother always told me growing up that change happens in threes, she wasn’t joking.

Becoming a Mom

I have accomplished a lot in my military career. I feel grateful for every opportunity I have had in the Nebraska Army National Guard, but I always knew there was something that could top all the awards, promotions and wonderful memories of my career so far and that is being a mom.

In late October my husband, Mason, and I were expecting our first child. Better late than never we welcomed our first child, Beau Liam McClintock into the world on Nov. 5. Beau weighed eight pounds, one ounce and was 20 and one-fourth inches long.

The moment when I saw Beau for the first time was hands down the best moment of my life. I still remember thinking I can’t believe Mason and I made such a beautiful and healthy baby boy.

It is a memory I will never forget.

But for me the scariest part of having Beau was becoming a mom. Becoming a mom was something I had always dreamed of. But I wondered if I could be as good as a mother as my mother was to me.

And when everyone says your motherly instinct sinks in right away, they aren’t joking.

I either knew what I was doing, seemed to know who to ask for help or had to learn by trial and error. But being a mom is even better than I ever expected it to be.

Having Beau made me realize how lucky I was to have him in my life, have a wonderful and

supportive husband, and have an amazing career.

Promotion to staff sergeant

Just a few days after returning back to work from maternity leave, I found out that I was getting promoted to staff sergeant. Reaching staff sergeant was a goal I had set for myself when I initially joined.

It was definitely one of the proudest moments in my life next to the birth of Beau.

I couldn’t have done it without the support of my family, friends, and coworkers. Especially the boys in my life, Mason and Beau.

I never thought I would be able to get promoted after having a baby, but I was able to have all my military schooling, height/weight and Army Physical Fitness Test done prior to finding out I was pregnant.

I would recommend to anyone, not just females that are planning to have children, to always be one step above where you need to be in your military career.

For example, have your next level of schooling done so you are ready to be promoted or slotted for a new assignment. With anything in life, I feel you should always be prepared in some way because it will help out in the long run. And I am a big advocate for being prepared and planning ahead.

With having a new baby and getting promoted came a lot more responsibility, but it was nothing that I couldn’t handle. I just

Editor

Staff Sergeant

Heidi McClintock



have to use my time wisely and prepare for things in advance.

I am excited to be a staff sergeant in the Nebraska Army National Guard and I am looking forward to the opportunities ahead of me in my career.

Newspaper Editor

As a surprise to me, just a few short weeks after I returned from maternity leave, fellow co-worker and deputy state public affairs officer, 1st Lt. Alex Salmon left our public affairs section for an opportunity near his hometown with his wife.

Sir, I wish you the best with this opportunity and your work for the Nebraska National Guard Public Affairs Office will be missed.

With Salmon leaving, a lot of change is happening in our PAO. But the change is something I am not afraid of and I am looking forward to all the change that will happen the next few months.

I plan to ‘ease’ into the new so we don’t lose any of our readers or followers.

But I am excited for the opportunity to take on this newspaper and bring it up-to-date with the times. But the overall importance of this newspaper will continue to tell the stories of Nebraska Soldiers and Airmen.

But the Prairie Soldier is not the only additional duty I am taking on, so stay tuned with the Prairie Soldier, Nebraska National Guard Social Media, and my commentaries to see where the Nebraska National Guard Public Affairs Office is going. I hope we will be able to reach more Soldiers, Airmen, family members, retirees and the public with the changes that will happen in the next few months. So please stay tuned.

Soldiers passing functional fitness skills on

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Editor

Sergeant First Class Christopher Niles and Maj. Theodore Hanger took their love of physical fitness and commitment to overall wellness by developing a functional fitness program for the Nebraska National Guard.

Hanger, the Nebraska National Guard's command group executive officer, wanted to be able to provide the Soldiers and Airmen of the Nebraska National Guard the opportunity to experience the benefits of functional fitness.

According to Niles, Nebraska National Guard's command group administrative assistant, Hanger asked him if he wanted to help with the functional fitness gym.

"I was honored that he asked me," said Niles. "Major Hanger has been instrumental in my continued improvement in regards to functional fitness."

"He's the type of guy that will always go out of his way to help out," added Niles. "Because of that mentality, Major Hanger secured unutilized funds to purchase equipment needed to start a functional fitness gym."

In December, Hanger and Niles received the approval to place their equipment for the functional fitness gym in the Penterman Armory at the Lincoln Air Guard Base in Lincoln, Nebraska. The functional fitness gym is located on the northwest side of the drill floor.

"After working with Staff Sergeant Dean Martin, we secured space and necessary resources to get the program started," said Niles.

"Beginning in January 2015, we offered a 'Functional Fitness 101' class," he said. "This is necessary to ensure that the individuals participating in the program were performing the movements correctly and safely."



Functional Fitness 101: Nebraska National Guard Soldiers and Airmen attend the Functional Fitness 101 class taught by Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Niles and Maj. Theodore Hanger at the Penterman Armory in Lincoln, Neb., Jan 14.



Good Form: Maj. Theodore Hanger shows Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jennifer Fotinos how to properly do functional movements during Functional Fitness 101 class, Jan. 14, at Penterman Armory in Lincoln, Neb.

"We focus most of our efforts on proper form and execution of movements and lifts."

— Sgt. 1st Class
Christopher Niles

Functional Fitness 101 Instructor

The Functional Fitness 101 classes that Hanger and Niles teach focus on the basic functional movements and lifts needed to successfully and safely perform the workouts.

"There are three introductory classes that take about an hour each to complete," said Niles. "We focus most of our efforts on proper form and execution of movements and lifts."

"We also teach the scaled down versions



Photos by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Demonstration: Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Niles and Maj. Theodore Hanger teach Functional Fitness 101 classes to Nebraska National Guardsmen at the Penterman Armory in Lincoln, Neb., Jan 14. The class teaches functional movements and lifts that you use in everyday life.

of the movements in order for beginners to successfully master the movements and eventually progress to the specific skill," added Niles.

Since the Functional Fitness 101 classes started in January, Hanger and Niles have successfully trained over 80 individuals. According to those individuals who have participated in the Functional Fitness 101 classes, they are grateful that Hanger and Niles teach them how to properly use the equipment and conduct the basic movements and lifts with the equipment.

"Major Hanger and Sergeant 1st Class Niles were incredibly knowledgeable in functional fitness...true professionals," said Sgt. 1st Class Maren Stewart, a successfully trained Functional Fitness 101 Soldier. "They made it motivating and a fun experience, especially for those that were interested in learning but had some reservations going into it."

Niles said he couldn't believe all the positive feedback he's been receiving so far from everyone that has attended the Functional Fitness 101 classes.

"We have a strong following so far and

they are all reaping the benefits of functional fitness," said Niles.

"I had a Soldier tell me that when he went to his doctor for a check-up his doctor said 'I don't know what you've changed in your day-to-day life, but keep it up,'" said Niles.

"In my opinion the positive results are because of the individual efforts," added Niles. "We just facilitate the classes and they do the work."

Niles and Hanger continue to improve the program with the feedback they have received.

"I hope that our functional fitness classes play a role in each individual's fitness successes," said Niles. "Functional fitness is different, but it correlated to everyday life."

"The movements we master in the gym can be translated into everyday tasks," added Niles. "The overall goal Major Hanger and I have is to continue to help Soldiers and Airmen reach their fitness goals."

For more information on the functional fitness program, contact Maj. Ted Hanger at (402) 309-8110 or Sgt. 1st Class Chris Niles at (402) 309-8113 or check out their Facebook page- Warrior Functional Fitness.

Wilderness Ridge hosts free golf clinic for military children

By Pfc. Anna Pongo
Staff Photojournalist

April is 'The Month of the Military Child.' It was established to underscore the important role that children play in the lives of their military family members.

On April 11 the families of local military members attended the Military Child Salute, a free golf clinic at the Wilderness Ridge, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

For the sixth year in a row Wilderness Ridge hosted the event with golf professionals providing instruction for children of all ages and skill levels.

"Junior golf is a big part of what we do here at Wilderness Ridge," said Chris Thomson, director of Golf for Wilderness Ridge. "It's one of the best ways to give back to the kids. It is a way to say thanks for the kids who support their parents who serve."

Around 35 kids attended the clinic ranging from age 3 to age 14. The event consisted of three event stations: striking, putting and chipping at Gary the Hippo, a large purple blow-up hippo who is new to the event this year.

According to Chief Warrant Officer 2 Heath Blackwell, it's a great opportunity for the kids. The kids who know a little bit about golfing can get better and the kids who never have golfed can learn.

Grant Lannin, age 14, is the son of Master Sgt. Thomas Lannin, currently plays golf



Swing: Carter Kuklis, son of Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jeffry Kuklis, works on his swing during the free golf clinic at Wilderness Ridge in Lincoln, Neb., April 11.

almost every day after school, but he said he still learned from the golf instructors how to make his swing better.

Carter Kuklis, age 11, is the son of Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jeffry Kuklis. Through the event Carter said he learned how to hold the club correctly and hit the ball far.

Golfing techniques weren't the only things learned on the course. The kids also learned about building teamwork and relationship with other military families, said Blackwell.

Several different community organizations came together to make this event pos-



Photos by Pfc. Anna Pongo

Group Photo: Brig. Gen. Jon Fago and the Wilderness Ridge staff pose for a photo with the military kids and their family members at the 6th Annual Military Child Salute, April 11, at Wilderness Ridge in Lincoln, Neb.

sible. Lincoln Sysco donated the barbecue lunch that was provided for the kids and their families. Members of Doane College's NAIA Champions of Character program volunteered their time as instructors.

"Golf is a game for a lifetime," said Thomson. "You can start at any age. With football you can't keep playing when you're 70. With golf you can. I hope it sparks something in the kids."