

Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Governor Ricketts authorizes increased security at facilities

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Governor Pete Ricketts authorized Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, to take whatever measures deemed appropriate to include arming of additional personnel to ensure that Nebraska National Guard facilities and personnel remain safe.

The July 21 proclamation was in response to a July 16 shooting rampage in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in which Muhammad Abdulazez opened fire on a recruiting center located in a strip mall before attacking a nearby U.S. Navy operations support center where he killed four Marines and one Sailor before being killed himself by local police officers. "Susanne and I send our condolences to the families who lost their loved ones in last week's tragic shooting in Tennessee. This authorization extends additional protections to our servicemen and women who need every resource we can provide them to defend themselves and our National Guard installations," said Ricketts in a July 21 news release.

"As a part of our efforts to constantly evaluate our state's security measures, the Nebraska National Guard continues to look at what

we might do differently, so that our state takes appropriate steps to protect our military members, their families, and the public."

According to Bohac, the governor's authorization was a necessary step that allowed him to take whatever actions are deemed appropriate – including the arming of additional National Guard personnel – to ensure that Nebraska Military Department staffs and facilities are made secure and safe.

Actual details are not being released as to how, when and where the Nebraska National Guard further secured its facilities and three local recruiting stations. In a July 28 message to the Nebraska Military Department, Bohac said changes have been and will be made as the organization continuously evaluates the security environment.

"I and the rest of your Nebraska National Guard leadership consider the safety and security of you and your families to be of the utmost concern," said Bohac in the statement.

"As such, we are continuously evaluating the threat environment to ensure we provide the best possible security for our people. The authorization by Governor Ricketts is the latest of these efforts and is a necessary step to allow us to con-

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Under Water



Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Shane Martin

Underwater: Muddy flood water fills a hallway in the newly refurbished Training Center Command headquarters at Camp Ashland, Neb., after a May 7 thunderstorm caused significant flooding.

Camp Ashland flood one for history book

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Throughout its history, the Nebraska National Guard has taken significant pride in the role it often plays in assisting victims of a natural disaster, such as when a group of Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers were called to provide traffic assistance after Dewitt, Nebraska, was struck by a major flash flood, May 7.

What many probably didn't know at the time was, the same storm that prompted the flooding in Dewitt would also cause members of the Nebraska National Guard to become victims of flooding as well when Camp Ashland was filled like a bowl by a branch of Salt Creek that was inundated by the aftermath of

a storm that dumped between 5 and 12 inches of rain across southeastern Nebraska.

"I was amazed," said Sgt. 1st Class David Nanfito, who heads up maintenance at Camp Ashland as a member of the state Training Center Command after much of the installation was filled with up to four feet of water, which spilled into more than 30 buildings with grungy, smelly flood water late on the afternoon and evening of May 7. "It was like, 'What happened here? Where did all of this water come from?'"

To understand the significance of the flood that occurred at Camp Ashland, one must first understand the geography that helped create it.

Camp Ashland sits on the western shores of the

See FLOODS on 6.

Guard helicopter units wished farewell before overseas missions

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Editor

Nearly 100 Soldiers assigned to two Nebraska Army National Guard helicopter units and several detachments were wished good luck prior to the start of their overseas missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield during two separate sendoff ceremonies,

May 29, in Lincoln and Grand Island, Nebraska.

The Soldiers are assigned to a portion of the Nebraska Army National Guard's Company C, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, in Lincoln and Grand Island's Co. B, 2-135th GSAB, which is deploying with additional Soldiers from Grand Island's Cos. D and E, 2-135th GSAB.

The Soldiers were given their

deployment notice earlier this year and have been doing all they can to get ready for the mission with lots of hard and realistic training.

"Typically we have a whole year to train up before any deployment, but that is not the cause with this deployment," said Maj. Thomas Traylor, commander of Co. C, 2-135th GSAB. "But that is okay. No matter what conditions are given to (us), we pull it together and execute

at a high level."

According to unit officials, the units are always trained and ready to respond, whether it's to a state or federal mission.

"The (troops) we are bringing with us are the best at their jobs," said 1st Lt. Gregory Graham, officer-in-charge of Co. C while deployed. "Everyone is absolutely a professional in their trade."

During the deployment, the

troops will provide a variety of aviation support.

Co. B, 2-135th GSAB's commander, Capt. Paul Proctor, said, "We can do troop transportation, cargo movement, and general combat support missions, so we'll kind of run the gambit."

Co. B will be utilizing their CH-47 Chinook helicopters to provide this support while deployed.

See SENDOFFS on 4.

Guard unveils new museum complex

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

The Nebraska National Guard couldn't have hoped for a more picturesque setting to officially dedicate its new Nebraska National Guard Museum, July 4, in Seward, Nebraska.

Standing beneath a breathtakingly blue sky, the sounds of distant fireworks exploding in the distance while red, white and blue bunting fluttered in the gentle early summer breeze, officials from the Nebraska National Guard, the Seward community and other organizations officially dedicated the new Nebraska National Guard Museum in a building that just a year earlier had served as an armory for a local parachute rigger unit.

According to Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, the dedication of the new museum building serves as a historic transition point as the Nebraska National Guard prepares to tell its continuing story of service

See MUSEUM on 5.



Photo by Jerry Meyer

Full House: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac (center), Nebraska National Guard adjutant general, addresses the crowd during the July 4 dedication of the new Nebraska National Guard Museum building in Seward, Neb.

Blue Angels team to perform in Lincoln during May airshow

By Maj. Pat Ryan
Staff Writer

The Lincoln Municipal Airport's west ramp area will become a hub of activity, May 6-8, as Lincoln is celebrated during the "Guardians of Freedom – A Salute to Lincoln" airshow, hosted by the 155th Air Refueling Wing and the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce.

Scheduled acts, such as the U.S. Navy's flight demonstration team, the Blue Angels, will make their much awaited return to Lincoln to dazzle and amaze the crowd with their spectacular aerial display.

Static aircraft and equipment displays from across the Defense Department, including the Army and Air National Guard will be open to the public to tour and ask



questions of the crews.

While the final list of acts has not been finalized yet, organizers say spectators can expect high intensity air and ground performances as have been seen in past airshows in Lincoln, say air show organizers. It is set to be an extremely fun filled event for all who come out and attend.

Lt Col. Christopher Hesse, the 173rd Air Refueling Squadron commander, is the 155ARW's coordina-

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Inside



Nebraska Army National Guard cooks compete in regional competition

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Nebraska Guard marathon team finishes ninth

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NEWS DIGEST

■ Carter praises U.S., Kurdish efforts in fight against ISIL

WASHINGTON (DoD News) – Following a meeting with Kurdish senior military leaders, July 24, Defense Secretary Ash Carter visited U.S. and coalition troops in Irbil, Iraq, to encourage them and offer insight regarding Kurdish peshmerga fighters and their efforts to thwart Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant insurgents.

The secretary acknowledged the complexity of enabling Kurdish forces to sustain victory against ISIL with U.S. help.

“The trick isn’t just to beat ISIL,” Carter said. “That’s not the strategic outcome we’re trying to get. We’re trying to get a defeat that sticks – a lasting victory, and that can only be delivered by the people who live here.”

Carter noted that with combined U.S. and Kurdish peshmerga fighters’ efforts through training, advice, equipment, air support, intelligence, the Kurdish can “hold and provide for a decent way of life” for themselves.

Absent an enduring victory, Carter said, the region’s inhabitants are subject to another cycle of uprising, violence, and barbarianism. “So to make the victory stick, we have to have local forces – that’s the secret sauce here.”

Sustain a Victory

The secretary also outlined similar capabilities and the strategic approach in other parts of the Iraqi and Syrian security forces. “We are trying to build up a force throughout the territory of Iraq, and then someday, because it’s a very different situation in Syria that can do that... sustain the victory you help with here,” he said.

Carter described peshmerga as the “model” of U.S. and coalition efforts against ISIL throughout the area of responsibility.

“You guys are in a sense the pathfinders for all of us,” Carter said. “What you learn here and the tradecraft that you develop, the ability you have to work together... to work with your partners... that’s something that’s going to benefit all of us and also benefit all of the other forces that are building themselves up here in Iraq and Syria.”

■ Defense Department, United Kingdom Defense Ministry sign reserve forces memorandum

WASHINGTON (DoD News) – The U.S. Defense Department and the United Kingdom’s Defense Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding, July 27, that officials say signifies expanding international relationships while serving a valuable role in security cooperation.

Maj. Gen. John Crackett of the British army who serves as the assistant chief of the defense staff for reserves and cadets, and Paul D. Patrick, deputy assistant secretary of defense for reserve readiness, training and mobilization, signed the Military Reserve Exchange Program memorandum.

“This memorandum of understanding between the U.S. and United Kingdom provides ongoing proof of our continued dedication to our long-standing international relationships,” Patrick said. “The Foreign Resident

Program strengthens the partnership between our two nations and plays a key role in maintaining individual readiness of reservists and their contribution to national defense.”

The signing ceremony formalizes a unique agreement between the two nations to allow reservists residing overseas to train with a host-nation unit. Training this way allows reservists to stay engaged and meet their service commitments while opening up opportunities they may have not had in the past, officials said.

First of Its Kind

“This is the first arrangement of its kind,” Patrick said. “It demonstrates commitment to our people and their employers by providing more flexibility to meet their requirements and offers unique training opportunities.”

In addition, the ceremony recognized the 30th anniversary of the countries’ Military Reserve Exchange Program. Since the program’s memorandum of understanding was signed in 1985, almost 3,000 reservists from both nations have participated in the program.

■ Defense Department sends blended military retirement proposal to Congress

WASHINGTON (NGNEWS)—A Defense Department proposal submitted to Congress on June 10 would create what Pentagon officials called a “blended defined benefit and defined contribution” military retirement system.

Pentagon spokesman Army Col. Steve Warren told reporters that the proposal includes elements the department believes are necessary to promote retention, to maintain the all-volunteer force and to protect service members who retire due to disability.

“The department carefully reviewed proposals offered by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission as well as Congress,” Warren said. “And in crafting its final recommendation, the department considered all elements of current and potential retirement plans and built a blended system that — in the military judgment of the Department of Defense — best enables us to maintain the readiness of the all-volunteer force.”

Officials believe the proposal will help to give the department the flexibility it needs to manage the force into the future, the colonel said, while helping to ensure that 85 percent of service members will start long-term retirement savings.

Proposal highlights

Highlights of the proposal include:

- Creating a defined contribution element through the Thrift Savings Plan for service members;

- DoD automatically contributing an amount equal to 1 percent of a service member’s basic pay to the Thrift Savings Plan account from entry into service through separation or retirement, with vesting after completion of two years of service and additional matching contributions of up to 5 percent of basic pay starting after completion

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tinue to make these changes where and when appropriate.”

“In the following days, you may see some of these changes, which will include both active and passive measures; some changes may not be readily apparent. As these changes are implemented, I ask that you remain patient and vigilant. While there have been no localized threats against members of the Nebraska National Guard, we must carefully protect our connection to our fellow citizens and our communities.”

Bohac said the latest incident, while seemingly random, seems to be part of a continuing pattern of targeting uniformed military personnel in the United States.

Some of these attacks have been openly encouraged via social media methods by a “cunningly ruthless enemy,” while other groups and individual have targeted U.S. military personnel for a wide array of different reasons.

Although there have been no localized threats against Nebraska National Guard service members, Bohac said the unpredictable nature of the national security environment shows there is a need to be even more attentive.

“I ask all of you and your families to maintain your vigilance,” said Bohac.

“If you see something suspicious or out of the ordinary, please do not hesitate to inform your chain of command and contact local law enforcement authorities who are our trusted partners and the lead for community safety.”

Baker new state command sergeant major

By Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen
Staff Photojournalist

The Nebraska Army National Guard’s senior enlisted leadership saw a changing of the guard, Aug. 8, during a State Command Sergeant Major Change of Responsibility Ceremony in the Joint Force Headquarters Building.

Soldiers and Airmen, senior Guard command staff, family and friends assembled to say goodbye to outgoing Command Sgt. Maj. Eli Valenzuela and to welcome Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker, the newly appointed state command sergeant major. The state command sergeant serves as the principle advisor to the Nebraska adjutant general and senior Nebraska Army National Guard leaders on all matters affecting the state’s enlisted Soldiers.

The incoming state command sergeant major, Marty Baker, is a Nebraska native with more than 34 years of military service. His recent positions include serving as command sergeant major for the 92nd Troop Command and 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade.



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

New Job: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, presents Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker with the state command sergeant major sword during a ceremony at the Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb.



Baker

“Soldiers of the Army National Guard, we are a part of an organization with remarkable history. The future holds new challenges, but the opportunities that lay there are even greater.”

“First and foremost, I would like to thank (Major General) Bohac for the opportunity to serve as the 8th State Command Sergeant Major of the Nebraska Army National Guard,” said Baker. “Soldiers of the Army National Guard, we are a part of an organization with remarkable history. The future holds new challenges, but the opportunities that lay there are even greater.”

Baker has been awarded several awards and decorations including the Bronze Star Medal and Meritorious Service Medal, and he is a graduate of the U.S. Army Airborne School in Fort Benning, Georgia. He is a veteran of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

of four years of service and continuing through separation or retirement; and

- Each service having the ability to offer a bonus, called Continuation Pay, to members with eight to 16 years of service, with each service setting the rate of Continuation Pay.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen, a Defense Department spokesman, said under the plan, about 85 percent of service members who enter the force will receive some form of a portable retirement benefit.

Future service members would receive 80 percent of the current defined benefit — retirement pay, which effectively is a pension — if they serve for 20 years, and would have the opportunity to achieve nearly equivalent or better retirement benefits when they reach retirement age, he added.

■ World War I Commission seeks national memorial

WASHINGTON (DoD News) – Members of the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission met July 21 with members of Congress to bolster support for commemorating the war through education and enduring observance of Americans’ sacrifices that shaped the modern world.

Retired Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey, three-time Purple Heart recipient and the commission’s senior advisor for development, noted that while some 2.5 million veterans served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the armed forces have a much longer, storied journey and

a seminal role in American history.

“This nation is primarily (one) of business, human rights, families and religious groups,” the retired general said. “But at the end of the day, the only reason it persists after 200-plus years is the armed forces. (They) were created before the country existed.”

Core Project

The commission’s core project is to establish and manage the design, competition, selection and construction process for the World War I Memorial in the nation’s capital, with a goal to break ground on Veterans Day 2017 and hold the official dedication in 2018.

“Many decades have passed since the guns fell silent,” said retired Army Col. Robert J. Dalessandro, the commission’s chairman and the host for yesterday’s event. “The parades and the memorials have become a dim memory in many cases — and before long, the doughboys themselves and the folks back home became a forgotten generation of Americans.”

In some cases, Dalessandro said, World War I service members’ lives were sold cheaply and their notions of idealism became seemingly quaint by today’s standards. “But they bridged the gap between the Gilded Era and the Jazz Age,” he said. “They watched the fall of empires in bewildered awe and they dreadfully witnessed the rise of communism, of fascism, of Nazism, while birthing that Greatest Generation.”

McCaffrey estimated the memorial would cost between \$20 million and \$25 million.

AIRSHOW

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tor for the event.

Hesse said the airshow will mean a lot to the community. “The main goal of the airshow is to enhance public awareness of the Armed Forces’ preparedness and to demonstrate modern weapon systems and capabilities and to promote positive community relations by showcasing our Airmen and Soldiers, and to support armed forces recruiting and retention,” said Hesse.

“This is also a great way to build community relations through collaboration with the Lincoln Airport Authority and the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce,” he added.

The airshow is currently on a five-year cycle for Lincoln. Organizers feel that this coming year’s show may be better than previous ones. The show itself will take place on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The Friday performance will be for the special needs audience, while Saturday and Sunday’s show will be open to the general public, as well as the members of the Nebraska Air and Army National Guard and their families.

“The final line up is still in the works at this stage of the planning, but it is going to be a memorable show for all,” said Hesse.

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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Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Ready: Senior Airman Jordan Perkins, a member of the 155th Maintenance Squadron's commander support staff, stands ready to take on aggressors during the National Guard Reaction Force training at the Nebraska National Guard air base, June 4, in Lincoln, Neb.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

The More You Practice...: Airmen from the 155th Air Refueling Wing practice front line and extraction team control tactics as rioters attempt to break through their front line during National Guard Reaction Force training at the Nebraska National Guard air base, June 4, in Lincoln, Neb. The Nebraska Army National Guard trained approximately 100 Airmen during this training weekend, and 300 Soldiers over the course of the year, creating a Tier 1 NGRF team of 400 personnel.

Nebraska Airmen train to answer governor's call

By Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Staff Photojournalist

The front line moves seamlessly to the sound of batons striking shields in battle rhythm, shouting "Get back," as uniformed National Guardsmen cross a field, peppered with aggressors tirelessly trying to breach their formation.

Suddenly, a pair of aggressors stray too close to the line while trying to coax their fellow demonstrators to become more aggressive. With that, the Guard line suddenly parts as extraction teams break through the front line to snatch the instigators, pull them through the line and apprehend them. There, teams wrestle the instigators to the ground using pressure points before handcuffing and turning them over to law enforcement officers to make the arrest.

This was just one of the many scenes that occurred as humidity, sweat, dust and mosquitoes mixed to challenge 100 Nebraska Air National Guardsmen as they suited up in body armor to fend off mock protestors during a training exercise at the 155th Air Refueling Wing, June 4-6, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Airmen volunteered from duty sections across the air base to become a part of the Tier One Nebraska National Guard Reaction Force, a team of 100 Airmen and 300 Soldiers from units located across Nebraska that is trained and prepared to respond to civil unrest within 24 hours of a call from the governor.

According to unit officials, National Guard Bureau requires annual re-certification for Airmen and Soldiers assigned to state NGRFs.

The training involves two to three days of hands-on education. To facilitate the Air Guard's training, the Nebraska Army Guard's 402nd Military Police Battalion sent 10 Soldiers to the air base to train new Airmen and re-certify veterans of the voluntary force on individual tasks to assist in a civil disturbance. The training included instructions on riot batons and shields, the use of force, and how to use less lethal ammunitions, such as pepper ball guns.

The Airmen also learned about



Photo by Master Sgt. Shannon Nielsen

Standing Ready: The Nebraska National Guard Reaction Force closes in on a group of rioters during a training exercise, June 4, at the 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, Neb.

apprehending and detaining instigators, and moving as a group in a riot formation.

Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Connelly, non-commissioned officer-in-charge of training of the 2015 NGRF Airmen, said the training is about readiness.

"When civil authorities are in a time of need, or they feel that they cannot handle the situation, such as a riot ... they will put in a call through Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, which in turn contacts the governor to get permission to deploy National Guard troops."

"Once the National Guard troops are called out, they have eight hours to respond to their armories, and 24 hours to be on scene to support whatever law enforcement agency is requesting their assistance," Connelly added.

Connelly said there are three different tiers of reaction forces: Tier 1 is a 400-person team, Tier 2 is a 300-person team, and Tier 3 is a 100-person man team. Nebraska is a Tier 1 state, which means that it can be deployed as an entire unit across the region.

Connelly said recent national events have shown how the National Guard can expect to be utilized when civil demonstrations turn violent.

"There was a time where we were training and amongst the instruc-

tors we would talk about how we can train until we are blue in the face, but we will never see this," said Connelly.

"Well, currently with the situations going on nation-wide, it's becoming more and more of a reality for us.... When the National Guard does come in, it sends the public or the criminals rioting out on the streets a huge message that we are not going to mess around with them...there is not going to be civil unrest in the streets."

The entire riot force is armed with eye protection, helmets, body armor, shin guards and face masks. Those that serve on the front line are also equipped with batons and shields. Additionally, several others are armed with less-lethal munitions (pepper ball guns).

According to Connelly, the pepper ball guns are like paintball guns, but fire at a higher velocity. He then described how a pepper ball is used.

"The pepper ball itself is not malleable like a paint ball, it's actually hard and it breaks. Once it breaks it disbursts Capsaicin II (chili-pepper) powder. It gets in (the rioters') eyes and mouths and it helps drive them back and disperse the area."

Senior Airman Devin Davila, 155th Fuel Systems distribution worker, has volunteered to be on the NGRF squad for two years. He said



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Riot Control: Nebraska National Guard Reaction Force Airmen struggle to form a front line against aggressors prying into the formation during a training exercise, June 4, at the 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, Neb.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Got 'Em: Senior Airman Joseph Naumann, a member of the 155th Communications Flight, is apprehended as a rioter during the 155th Air Refueling Wing's National Guard Reaction Force training, June 4, in Lincoln, Neb.

his favorite part of being a member of the NGRF is bonding with people from the unit.

"Everyone is working hard, sweating, miserable. It's a good time," said Davila. "You all embrace it together and it brings you together."

Davila added: "We are simulating riots and learning how to handle them in a professional manner. Once we are called in, we try to tame everything down and make it manageable. We have some extraction teams who go in front of the lines to try to apprehend the individuals that are causing a threat."

Connelly explained how the front line works in combination with extraction teams to apprehend rioters and looter, before turning them over to the local law enforcement.

"As we are moving up on a riot and we have actively aggressive rioters that are pushing on the shields... our team leaders and commanders designate those people as people to be brought back behind the line to be arrested by local law enforcement," said Connelly. "Those extraction teams will push out in front of the line, within typically one arm's length away from the

shields. They will try to snatch that person up and bring them back behind the line."

"What they do behind the line: they will get (the aggressor) down and put into handcuffs. We detain them, we do not arrest them."

Connelly said the reaction force will then turn the individuals over to law enforcement officials who will make the actual arrest, unless martial law has been put in affect.

In recent national events, the National Guard was called in to assist with local law enforcement to sustain peace and protect both people and property.

"There are only so many cops in Lincoln and only so many people who can do this job, so in the event that they do become overwhelmed, it helps to have more numbers to help," said Davila. "The Army and Air National Guard come together for this to help reach numbers."

Connelly added, "I feel like this is a very important mission for the National Guard. It gives our law abiding citizens (security to know) that we are there to support them. We are actively training in order to protect them if we need to or if we are called out."



Family Picture: Sgt. Brad Wardyn, a flight medic with Company C, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, holds his 3-week-old son Lucas as his wife, Sheridan, stands nearby. Wardyn was preparing to leave for a deployment to the Middle East, May 29, at the Army Aviation Support Facility #1 in Lincoln, Neb.



Photo Op: Sgt. Maxwell Maguire poses for a photo with his family following the May 29 sendoff ceremony for Company B and detachments from Cos. D and E, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, at the Heartland Event Center in Grand Island, Neb. Approximately 75 Soldiers from the units are deploying with their CH-47 Chinook helicopters to provide aerial movement of troops, supplies and equipment for maneuver, combat support and combat service operations while deployed.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

SENDOFFS

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While the approximately 20 Soldiers from Co. C will be providing medical evacuations with the unit's UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. Both of the units' missions are expected to last up to a year.

Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, ensured that the Soldiers' loved ones would have support while they were away. "Your National Guard family stands ready to help," said Bohac. "To support and to serve you while your Soldiers are gone. We are committed to you, the Soldiers and families."

"We're here for the families, to help them get through this time, and some of the things that we do is offer support groups and have a family readiness group that will have activities all through the time that they're gone to help them feel connected," added Bohac.

According to Jessica Manley, wife of Sgt. Zach Manley a CH-47 helicopter repairer who's deploying with Co. B, it will be hard to have her husband away and especially hard on their two kids.

Still, she said she knows she will have support if she needs it.



Proud Nebraskans: Lt. Gov. Mike Foley speaks to the members of Company C, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, their family members and friends, May 29, during their sendoff ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility #1 in Lincoln, Neb.

In addition to Nebraska's adjutant general wishing the Soldiers good luck was Lt. Gov. Mike Foley, U.S. Senator Ben Sasse and U.S. Representative Adrian Smith.

"It's very important for us to be reliable partners to our allies, saying that we're going to be in this for the long haul, making sure that they don't bring terror attacks to our homeland, and that's what these folks are ultimately deploying to do. They're going to protect us," said Sasse.

Bohac echoed those comments, saying



I Got Your Nose: Sgt. Aaron Dickey of Company B, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, has some fun with his fiancée and nephew following his unit's sendoff ceremony at the Heartland Event Center in Grand Island, Neb., May 29. Nearly 100 Soldiers assigned to two Nebraska Army National Guard helicopter units and several detachments are deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom - Spartan Shield.

he is proud of the Soldiers and what they have accomplished in their careers and what they are going to accomplish during the deployment.

"You stand ready. Ready and available to answer that call," said Bohac. "You prepared

yourself without fail to serve in faraway places in harm's way."

"God bless you in your willingness to serve in defense of our nation," added Bohac. "You can trust that we have your back here at home."

Warrant Officers celebrate birthday with team building events

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Nearly 100 Nebraska Army and Air National Guardsmen and Nebraska Military Department employees gathered at the Nebraska National Guard air base, July 9, for a 2-mile run/1-mile walk and other teambuilding activities as part of the Nebraska National Guard's celebration of the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Corps' 97th Birthday.

The U.S. Army's Warrant Officer Corps draws its lineage back to July 9, 1918.

According to Chief Warrant Officer 5 Teresa Domeier, command chief warrant officer for the Nebraska Army National Guard, the event was designed to help build teamwork throughout the Nebraska National Guard and Nebraska Military Department.

"We want to build our team... to make it stronger," said Domeier. "And we also want to meet people (and) talk to other people that



Photos by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Front of the Pack: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Hunter Isley leads the pack of runners during the 2-mile run/1-mile walk, July 9, in Lincoln, Neb.

we never talk to (and) get to know them."

Along with the run/walk that started at the Nebraska Air National Guard parade field and wound around the Guard's Joint Force Headquarters, the event also included such activities as four-person plank walks, dizzy bat



Fun in the Sun: Members of the Nebraska National Guard and employees of the Nebraska Military Department have a little fun during the four-person plank walk event during the Warrant Officer Corp's 97th birthday celebration, July 9, in Lincoln, Neb.

relay races, a quiz and rucksack equipment relay races.

Participants were encouraged to wear their "Favorite Throwback t-shirt" from a previous military school or unit deployment.

The celebration also included a birthday cake cutting ceremony later that afternoon at the Nebraska National Guard Joint Force

Headquarters.

According to Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jennifer Kramer, assistant force integration readiness officer, the event went extremely well.

"This was the second year we have celebrated the warrant officer birthday, but the first time we have opened it up to the entire organization," she said, adding that the

goal was to build organizational camaraderie and morale, while also recruiting individuals who might be interested in becoming future warrant officers.

"We felt this was an opportune time to contribute to all three areas," she said. "We had a great turnout. Next year will be even better."

Sparkling new memorial honors Nebraska Air Guard

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Members of the Nebraska Air National Guard now have a sparkling new sculpture to call their own.

Entitled "Prairie Trails: The 70th Anniversary of the Nebraska Air National Guard Memorial," the sculpture consists of six shiny steel spires and aircraft silhouettes – one for each of the six main aircraft flown by the Lincoln-based organization since its founding in 1946 – which was officially dedicated on July 4 in Seward, Nebraska, following the Nebraska National Guard Museum building dedication ceremony.

The sculpture, which soars to peaks of roughly 15 feet tall, stands in front of the new museum building. According to Mark Forster, displays manager for the Nebraska National Guard Historical Society who also serves as the Nebraska Air National Guard's command chief master sergeant, the new memorial is filled with symbolism.

"The memorial uses representations of aircraft and the theme of flight to symbolize 70 years of Nebraska Air National Guard aviation, but its purpose is not to memorialize the aircraft, rather to pay tribute to the sacrifice of our Citizen Airmen," he said during the dedication ceremony. "Men and women who serve in the Nebraska Air National Guard – ready to answer their state or nation's call at a moment's notice."

The memorial was designed, built and donated by Hughes Brothers, Inc., a Seward-based manufacturer that produces a number of different steel products including infrastructure for the electrical utility industry. The company has a history of working with the military, said John Hughes, president of Hughes Brothers.



Photo by Jerry Meyer

Getting It Right: Volunteers from Hughes Brothers Inc. in Seward, Neb., put up a wooden mock-up of the "Prairie Trails" sculpture to get a feel of what it will look like during the construction process of the sculpture.

Back in 1942, the company was approached by officials from the U.S. War Department who informed the owners the plant was being "commandeered" to make products for the war effort.

"From 1942 until 1945 we made ammo boxes, anti-tank war mines, giant airplane hangar trusses and davits for naval vessels, that look surprisingly similar to the shape of the structure here – kind of a hexagonal tubular tapered arm," said Hughes.

So, he said, when he was approached with the idea developing a memorial for the new museum, "It took me about two-and-a-half second to say, yeah, we would love to do that."

Hughes said the company developed ideas for the memorial with inputs from



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

New Artwork: John Hughes, president of Hughes Brothers, Inc., talks to the crowd about the design process his Seward-based company went through to create the new "Prairie Trails" sculpture that honors the upcoming 70th anniversary of the founding of the Nebraska Air National Guard.

members of the Nebraska National Guard and the Nebraska National Guard Historical Society to create a sparkling memorial made of galvanized steel that looks similar to the Air Force Memorial in Washington, D.C., with some notable differences, such as the aircraft silhouettes that were taken from the Air National Guard patch.

"It turned out to be a great project," said Hughes. "We were absolutely thrilled to be involved."

According to Forster, a number of other individuals and organizations volunteered time and resources to complete the project. This included the City of Seward, which dug the footings for the memorial and Gerhold Concrete, which donated the materials for

the footings. Other volunteers – including Forster, Forster's son Will and Lt. Col. Shane Martin – helped finish the footings by manually digging "tons" of dirt out of the six four-foot-deep cylindrical holes, installing the forms and building rebar cages to give strength to the memorial.

Overall, said Forster, the finished products was far better than he hoped.

"I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the team at Hughes Brothers for taking our concept and turning it into a one-of-a-kind sculpture," he said. "A sculpture fitting the museum we're determined to make worth of its location in the 4th of July City and the patriotic citizens of Nebraska."

MUSEUM continued from page 1.

and heroism to a new generation of audiences.

"This is a great morning for us in the Nebraska National Guard as we dedicate the building that will house the museum," said Bohac. "It's in memory of all the Nebraskans who have served, continue to serve or will serve in support of their state and nation in times of peace, in times of natural emergencies and in times of war."

"It's an important venture because this building has two missions. It has the mission of memorializing those services and dedication of our state's citizens who chose to serve in the Nebraska National Guard. It also has the mission to educate the public about what we do, what we have done and what we will do," he added. "So it's a great opportunity for us."

The building, which is located just to the west of downtown Seward, was originally dedicated in 1956 as a Nebraska Army National Guard armory. It housed a variety of units over the decades.

Approximately 19 months ago, the Nebraska National Guard began to remodel the facility to house the Nebraska National Guard Museum, which had been located in the State Arsenal Building on the Nebraska State Fair Grounds in Lincoln since the mid-1980s. The State Arsenal Building was vacated to make room for the new University of Nebraska Innovation Campus.

According to officials from the Nebraska National Guard's Construction and Facilities Management Office, the renovation took place in two stages. The first stage focused on recreating storage and rehabilitation space for the museum's artifact collection. The second \$2 million phase focused on rehabilitating the main floor of the armory for the exhibits that will be created in the third phase.

The new facility consists of more than 20,000 square feet of space that will be utilized for historical displays that will tell the story of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard since its founding in 1854 when acting Territorial Governor

Thomas Cuming issued a proclamation "recommending that the citizens of the territory organize in their respective neighborhoods into volunteer companies," which were then formed into two regiments: one north and one south of the Platte River.

Bohac said dedicating the new building on the 4th of July in Nebraska's 4th of July city was fitting.

"We celebrate the 239th anniversary of our nation's founding while Nebraska National Guardsmen continue to serve overseas today in harm's way in support of our nation's continuing fight against those terrorists who wish to do us and our allies harm," he said.

"So, in that way, what these Soldiers, what these Airmen are doing is part of a continuing story that stretches back to 1854."

It's a story, said Bohac, about those "brave and committed Nebraskans" who departed their homes to serve in the Civil War, the Spanish American War, in the Philippines, the trenches of World War I, the hedgerows of Normandy and the snowy fields of Bastogne during World War II, the deserts of Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and during peacekeeping duties in the former Yugoslavia up until the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It's also a story about right here at home," said Bohac. "It's a story about those Nebraska National Guard members who were there when their state needed them during blizzards, tornadoes, civil strife, floods and wildfires."

"This building is their building. This building is our building. This building is your building," Bohac told the estimated crowd of 500. "It's about preserving the memory of what they did, time and time again, against incredible odds and overwhelming difficulties because their stories are our stories... because their stories are Nebraska's stories... and they deserve to be preserved."

In thanking the various organizations and staffs that helped turn the building into a reality –



Photos by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

All Together Now: Officials cut the ribbon to the new Nebraska National Guard Museum building, July 4, in Seward, Neb. The ribbon-cutting marks the end of a \$2.2 million rehabilitation of the building, which was built in the 1950s and housed a number of different Nebraska Army National Guard units during its history.

including Lt. Col. Shane Martin, Dale Wallman and the Nebraska National Guard CFMO staff; BVH and Lacey Construction; the members of the Nebraska National Guard Historical Society, the community of Seward and numerous other volunteers – Bohac said the new museum is an example of the power of public-private collaboration.

"This building represents and what the museum will come to represent when it comes into full force over time is a great relationship between the public and private sectors," said Bohac. "I believe that is when we're at our best."

Seward Mayor Joshua Eickmeier echoed that sentiment, saying that he and the Seward community are excited about the efforts being done to turn the museum into reality.

"This will be a museum that I believe the community will be very proud to call their own in the sense that because of all of the volunteers,

many of whom are here today, who make something like this a reality," said Eickmeier. "We're just truly honored and blessed to become the new home to the Guard museum. It's just a great opportunity for our community to showcase all of the other wonderful attributes that we can always be very proud of moving forward."

That's particularly evident in the amount of work being done between the members of the Nebraska National Guard, the Nebraska National Guard Historical Society and the many Seward organizations that are already working together to make the museum and its operations a success.

"This has taken a lot of work and a lot of effort by many people who have made this possible," he said, "and because of that, we are very proud and excited to be able to tell people who come to Seward to make sure to see the museum, to tell people how proud we are of our military tradition and history."



Unveiling: Seward Mayor Joshua Eickmeier and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac unveil the plaque that officially dedicates the Seward armory as the new Nebraska National Guard Museum.

"This will be one of those very special places that Seward will become known for," the mayor added, saying that it will also become an important tool in helping educate students from Seward and across Nebraska about the role that the National Guard has played in the state's history while also being able "to visit and see a piece of history up close."

Camp Ashland damage estimates exceed \$3 million

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

The flood that filled Camp Ashland like a soup bowl, May 7-9, not only left in its wake a smelly mess, it also resulted in a hefty price tag to repair the damaged buildings, many of which were filled with between two and four feet of water.

According to officials at the Nebraska Army National Guard's State Construction and Facility Management Office, it will cost approximately \$660,000 to rehabilitate the approximately 50 buildings that were damaged in the flood and another \$3 million to remediate 33 buildings once the remediation activities are completed.

Capt. Dustin Young, CFMO Design Project Management Branch chief, said remediation activities have already begun on those buildings that sustained water damage. These activities including tearing out such things as carpets, tiles and wall boards that were destroyed by the flood and then beginning mold remediation efforts. He said the rehabilitation effort should be completed by October.

Once that's concluded, the remediation efforts will begin. These will include repairing the affected buildings, replacing damaged mechanical and electrical systems, and then creating additional flood control measure to combat the effects of any future flooding.

So, how does the Nebraska National Guard deal with such a large and unexpected

disaster? That was a question that members of the CFMO staff had to deal with very early on as the flood just began to make its damage clear, said Lt. Col. Shane Martin, state construction and facility management officer.

"The leadership was very supportive," said Martin, "and (National Guard Bureau) moved at an extremely quick rate to get us Act of Nature funding."

"Fortunately, NGB was extremely responsive," he added.

According to Young, Act of Nature funding is a type of disaster response and recovery funding that National Guard Bureau maintains to assist states that have infrastructure destroyed or damaged during natural disasters. In the past, it has helped such organizations as the Guam and Texas National Guard to rebuild following storms.

Nebraska, however, had never applied for such funding, so it took significant research to find out how to quickly and accurately apply for it, said Martin. "We had nothing on record on how to even apply for this funding," he said.

Young also said National Guard Bureau was extremely responsive to Nebraska's emergency. "We actually got a very large portion of that contingency funding that they have set aside for disasters... we got everything that we were asking for," Young said. "We are very happy for that support."

A look at the request that the Nebraska National Guard CFMO made to National Guard Bureau is extremely informative as

to the extent of the damage incurred during the three-day flood. For example, Nebraska Guard officials listed a total of 49 buildings and facilities that had experienced some level of damage, with many being listed at having experienced in excess of \$150,000 in damage, to include restroom fixtures, HVAC systems, flooring, drywall and door replacements. And those estimates do not include the furniture and external equipment that were destroyed by the water.

Probably the most significant damage, according to request, was incurred at Building 23, a barn-like structure that was recently rehabilitated to serve as the Camp Ashland Training Center Command's headquarters. Damage there was estimated at in excess of \$230,000.

And those estimates don't include the amount of personnel costs that it took to begin the initial clean-up of the buildings and the accounting for all of the equipment that was lost or damaged, nor does it take into effect the loss of productivity that was caused by the loss of access to buildings used by the Camp Ashland Chapel, Officer and Warrant Officer Candidate Training Schools and the transient barracks utilized by the 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute).

Yet, despite those difficulties, Martin said he is pleased at the rate that recovery operations are taking place.

"We are all hoping that we will have the bulk of these projects completed by the end of next May," he said.



Photo by: Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Cleaning Up: Spc. Aaron Pohman uses a power washer to clear the muck and debris left from a May 7 flood from a building at Camp Ashland, May 14. The flood waters caused damage to over 50 buildings on Camp Ashland which will cost over three million dollars to repair.

FLOODS continued from page 1.

Platte River between Omaha and Lincoln. To the south of the camp, which serves as the primary educational complex for the Nebraska Army National Guard and is home to several regional noncommissioned officer, warrant officer, and officer training schools and a truck drivers course, a small branch tributary of Salt Creek cuts through on its way to the Platte River.

So, flooding has always been an issue at Camp Ashland.

However, over the years, much has been done to remediate the flooding dangers through the construction of buildings that sit on massive concrete pillars and the improvements made to the protective Platte River levees.

The storm of May 6, however, was one for the record books and exceeded many expectations about how the floods could affect Camp Ashland.

"The runoff filled Salt Creek to above the floodplain," said Lt. Col. Shane Martin, state construction and facility management officer for the Nebraska Army National Guard.

According to Martin, Salt Creek cuts through Lincoln before traveling toward the Platte River near Ashland. The creek was actually flooding so quickly that water began to back up into branch tributaries, including the one that cuts through Camp Ashland, at a far higher and quicker rate than hydrology experts expected it to.

Martin said initially Guard officials at Camp Ashland were informed that the tributary creek would probably overflow around noon on May 7 with about four to eight inches of water that were expected to flow onto the grassy areas of the south camp without causing any major problems.

It was a prediction that sounded a lot like similar flooding Camp

Ashland had experienced during the decades since a 1993 flood that caused significant damage, said several of the Soldiers who work at the camp at the state Training Center Command.

"Salt Creek was high when I drove into work, (but) there wasn't any flooding on the camp that morning," said Sgt. Brandon Pedersen, an operations and training specialist at the Camp Ashland TCC.

Pedersen and Nanfito were among four TCC specialists at Camp Ashland that day. Both said the predictions they received from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials called for a flood crest that would occur roughly around noon and last for several hours. That meant that water would probably cover one of roads leading into Camp Ashland while also causing slight lowland flooding.

"It didn't sound like it was going to get real bad," said Pedersen. "We didn't get into a panic or start rushing around. We weren't worried about it because we've seen small floods before."

As the morning stretched on, however, those predictions began to change slightly to the point that Nanfito said camp officials made the decision to move those Soldiers currently attending the 88-M truck driver course - fortunately the only class in session that day - to facilities at the Mead Training Site, located roughly 15 miles north of Camp Ashland, as a precautionary measure.

According to Martin, what the Soldiers at Camp Ashland didn't know was that the flood waters flowing through the Salt Creek watershed had now reached the Platte River where they were running into problems with "huge" flood gates that are designed to allow large amounts of water to flow into the river.



Hip Waders: Staff Sgt. Rodney Svoboda, Nebraska Army National Guard's Training Center Command, wades through waist-deep water to "rescue" his unit's radios following a May 7 flood at Camp Ashland, Neb.

"Those things hit maximum capacity and overwhelmed the flood tributaries that push water into the Platte River," said Martin. This caused the additional water to flow into the branch stream that flows through Camp Ashland.

"Ultimately... it overlapped that and went over the top of our fence line and started filling Camp Ashland up like a big bowl because the levee that was protecting us from the Platte River held the water in," Martin said.

Initially, Martin said the Corps of Engineers tried to use a backhoe to remove the sand fuse from the levee. Soon, however, they realized that this wouldn't be enough and they began removing the levee altogether.

According to Nanfito, by 4:30 p.m. water was already entering the TCC's headquarters in Building 23. This now put what had been an orderly evacuation effort into overdrive.

"It obviously caught us off guard," Nanfito said, adding that the four Soldiers began scrambling to save whatever equipment they could. "I was amazed. It was like, 'What happened here? Where did all of this water come from?'"

"It got really bad, really fast," added Pedersen. "We really didn't have any time once it really started flooding."

Pedersen and one other Soldier were released to go home around 5:30 p.m. while Nanfito and Staff Sgt. Timothy Harper remained on site to finish up whatever salvage operations they could.

By 7:30 p.m. it was time for those two to leave as well. In fact, it probably past time.

Nanfito said that as he attempted to drive his pickup off post, he ran off the main road and into the ditch, causing his truck to stall out. He had to leave it there.

Despite that, Nanfito said he never felt that the conditions were extraordinarily dangerous due to



Photos courtesy of Lt. Col. Shane Martin

When the Flood Waters Came: A row of single-story buildings stand submerged in the muddy waters of Salt Creek after a nearby tributary of the stream overflowed its banks and filled a significant portion of Camp Ashland like a bathtub.

the fact the water wasn't rushing in, but rather was more like water filling a pool.

"I wasn't worried about personal safety," he said. "We were more worried about the equipment."

According to Martin, the Camp Ashland staff did an amazing job, all things considered.

"They did a darn good job considering they had only a few hours and only a few people," said Martin. In particular, Martin credited the Soldiers with ensuring that damage in such buildings as the dining facility was kept to a minimum.

Arriving back at Camp Ashland the next morning, Nanfito and Pedersen said they were both amazed by what they saw.

"I was at a loss for words," said Pedersen. "We came in on the north end of camp and stopped on the levee and it looked like a lake with buildings sticking out of it. Everything was under water."

Among those buildings was the TCC's headquarters building, which had just completed a major rehabilitation project approximately six months earlier. That building now stood with approximately four feet of dirty, foul-smelling water in it.

Other buildings, such as the row of single-story white buildings, also had various levels of water within them as well.

Fortunately, Camp Ashland's Memorial Hall weathered the flood as the water reached the top step to the building but had not risen any higher. The new dining facility had also been spared.

"That would've been a hard building to fix," said Martin about Memorial Hall. "And the (dining facility) would've also been difficult to repair. Those are two big benefits

because those would've both been challenging to replace."

Still, said Pedersen, it was hard to see his headquarters under water. "When I went into my office, I was just blown away. I had no idea that it would flood like this."

"I kept thinking, 'What a shame,'" said Nanfito. "A brand new building... what a waste."

For the rest of the day, the Camp Ashland Soldiers worked to save what they could. For Pedersen and Nanfito, this meant strapping on hip-wader boots and pulling a small john boat, which they filled with computers, radios, and whatever printers they could.

In the end, Pedersen said they were lucky that the water reached the tops of most desks, but did not cover them. That meant that most, if not all, of the computers, printers and radios were saved.

Within a few days, the water had disappeared from Camp Ashland. The remains of the flood will disappear much more slowly, however.

For Nanfito and Pedersen and the rest of the TCC staff, this meant moving into the upstairs of Memorial Hall, where they will continue to operate until their headquarters is once again repaired and reopened. Other operations have been also moved to other locations, including off of Camp Ashland while their original buildings are cleaned or repaired, and lost equipment accounted for and replaced.

It's going to be a long process, Nanfito said. Still, there has been a significant bright spot: the entire Nebraska National Guard as well as National Guard Bureau have rallied to lend assistance.

"It's been a great team effort," he said. "It's going well."



Far Reaching Waters: The flood waters that struck Camp Ashland, May 7, stretched to cover a significant portion of the camp, including the hangar and rappelling wall facilities located on the western side of the installation.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson

Tasty Rice Pilaf: Spc. Christopher Mercure, a cook with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, spoons rice pilaf from the cooking pot to the serving container during the regional level of the annual field cooking competition, June 19, at Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb.



Chopping Skills: Pvt. Md Hossain, prepares to chop red peppers for the spring salad during the regional level of the 47th Annual Philip A. Connelly Competition at Greenleaf Training Site near Hastings, Neb., June 19.

Army chefs compete in regional cooking challenge

By Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Editor

Soldiers from the Nebraska Army National Guard's Lincoln-based Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, franked up the heat, June 19, when they competed in the regional level of the 47th Annual Philip A. Connelly Competition.

The Soldiers battled against seven other units from other states in the regional level of the National Guard Field Kitchen Category in hopes of moving on to the Department of the Army level at Greenleaf Training Site, near Hastings, Nebraska.

According to unit officials, the June scenario revolved around the HHD, 110th MMB being to deployed to provide humanitarian support and medical aid to a village in the 'Republic of Hastings.' The kitchen staff was responsible for keeping those hungry Soldiers fed.

Fortunately, this wasn't the first time the Soldiers had cooked this particular meal, which included savory baked chicken, spicy brown rice pilaf, herbed broccoli, spring salad, pineapple upside down cake, dinner rolls, tomato soup and assorted beverages. The Guard cooks said they had cooked this meal a few times during practices and the state level competition.

Still, the heat of the summer and the pressure from the regional



Hot Chicken: Staff Sgt. David Cook, head cook for Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion, checks the chicken to see if it's done, June 19.

evaluators watching their every move made it a little more challenging.

"The prime reason for being here is to ensure that the troops are fed," said Daryl Moss, an evaluator of the Philip A. Connelly Award Competition. "So, the cooks' responsibility is to see that that happens."

During the competition the evaluators watch the cooks' process of how they produce a meal to feed 50 troops. They evaluate everything from supervision, training, field

food safety, kitchen site selection/layout, command support, use and maintenance of equipment, and food preparation and quality.

"The bottom line is taking care of the Soldiers," said Moss. "That's what logistics people do. Cooks are an important part of the logistics team."

Even though the Soldiers are competing, they don't think of it as a competition, but rather as simply doing their jobs.

"To us, it's really not a competi-



Fresh Veggies: Vegetables for the spring salad wait to be cut by Nebraska Army National Guard cooks during the 47th Annual Philip A. Connelly Competition, June 19.



Water Check: Staff Sgt. Jacob Krause and Sgt. 1st Class Heather Davey check the chlorine level of the water buffalo, June 19.

tion," said Staff Sgt. David Cook, HHD, 110th MMB's head cook. "It's our daily work routine."

1st Lt. Travis Kirchner, unit commander said the goal is primarily to receive some excellent training and to continue to develop job skills.

"Competing for the region is great, but having the Soldiers get out (to the field) and train, know what they are doing, see them take ownership in their areas and become experts is the greatest part of what we do and what we see,"

said Kirchner.

According to the unit, regardless of how they do, they are proud of their accomplishments. Still, that doesn't mean that they wouldn't like to compete at the national level and represent the state of Nebraska.

"I feel great (about the competition)," said Sgt. Evan Winey, a sanitation specialist with HHD, 110th MMB. "It's nice to be competing at the regional level. And we are hopeful to make it on the national stage."

Former air refueling wing commander earns second star at U.S. STRATCOM

By Staff Sgt. Mary Thach
Staff Photojournalist

Richard J. Evans III, a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard assigned to the U.S. Strategic Command, was promoted to the rank of major general on May 20 during a ceremony at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, presided over the ceremony, attended by about 150 family, friends and coworkers.

Bohac praised Evans for his dedication in a career spanning more than 31 years. Among specific accomplishments mentioned, Bohac singled out Evans' fast start in the military as a distinguished graduate from his officer training course and exemplary flight record that includes a number of distinguished graduate awards and numerous examples of special recognition or achievement.

Bohac highlighted Evans' successful

command assignments, including leading the Nebraska Air National Guard's two major units, the 155th Air Refueling Wing, based in Lincoln, Nebraska, and 170th Group, based at Offutt AFB, Nebraska.

Bohac also noted Evans performed well in leadership roles during a number of combat operations around the world.

Evans used the occasion to thank his family for their strong support and encouragement throughout his career. He also thanked the members of the various military organizations he has led or been affiliated with during his career, highlighting that "it is an extreme



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Two Stars: Richard Evans III, a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard, is promoted to the rank of major general, May 20, during a ceremony at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Evans currently serves as mobilization assistant to the deputy commander, U.S. Strategic Command. In this capacity, he is the principal advisor to the deputy commander on

honor to serve in my home state as a senior military officer in the Nebraska National Guard and U.S. Air Force and to work at the U.S. Strategic Command."

Evans also remarked on how honored and humbled he was to attain the rank of major general in the U.S. Air Force and how he never expected reach this rank, adding that "it really is more reflective on those I have served with, than on me personally."

reserve component and various operational matters related to the various command's global missions.

This is Evans' third assignment at U.S. Strategic Command since arriving in 2012. He previously served as the mobilization assistant to the director of global operations and as deputy commander for the joint functional component command for global strike, both at Offutt.

Looking ahead, Evans told the audience that he hopes to continue contributing positively to the very important missions assigned to U.S. Strategic Command for the time remaining on his current assignment.

He also said he plans to remain active as a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard, assisting Bohac when and where required.

Evans closed his remarks by thanking the attendees and those who helped plan and execute the promotion ceremony.

PROMOTIONS

Army National Guard

Colonel
David S. Rasmussen

Lieutenant Colonel

Judd M. Allen Jr.
Steven Collins
Thomas W. Golden
Brian P. Kane

Major

Jeffrey C. Boyden
Christopher J. Hansen
Christopher D. Lopes

Captain

James P. Cole
Nicholas E. Curto
Benjamin J. Faltys
Mathew A. Field
Reba A. Grovijohn
Benjamin C. Harper
Luke A. Holland
Steven J. Jacobs
Veronica L. Jones
Michael J. Koch Jr.
Ryan M. Lemke
Joshua Metcalf
Bridget D. Pettaway
Natalia M. Preston
Daniel S. Sauer
Ryan E. Thompson
Erik A. Zlomke

First Lieutenant

Edward D. Bosland
Nathan L. McGruder

Chief Warrant Officer 5

Carrie L. Hancock

Chief Warrant Officer 4

Todd C. Sumovich

Chief Warrant Officer 3

Bradley W. Adams
Troy V. Montanez

Master Sergeant

John D. Bates
Shawn M. Burton
Gene A. Hendricks
Marc A. Sheehan
Corey J. Vavra

Sergeant First Class

Kyle D. Demaree
Tate J. Petersen
Clifford D. Poessnecker
Ear R. Rawls III
Walter R. Shumate

Staff Sergeant

Lane L. Barnason
Mary B. Beave
James B. Benal
Ethan D. Dodd
Jennifer L. Good
Shantel G. Humphrey

Jason T. Lawrence
Brody J. Mayberry
Joshua J. Michaelson
John C. Moore
Caleb G. Morehead
Shaun W. Nichols
Timothy M. Vogel
Eric L. Wilford

Sergeant

Andrew J. Adler
Bradly V. Anderson Jr.
James G. Berger
Matthew R. Brown
David W. Burruss
William S. Cornish
William P. Cozad
Parker J. Gilbert
Dylan J. Hergenrader
Cameron J. Hopwood
Donald R. Hunt
Justin M. Keeton
Michael P. Manske II
Mark A. Marta
Andrew D. Norton
Edward K. Ochan
Elizabeth A. Purdham
Chase A. Quinn
Jose A. Ramos
Kenneth C. J. Salisbury
Thomas J. Shupe
Maui O. Slindebrodgen
Raymond S. Smith
Arron J. Svoboda
Sonny M. Swanson
Brandon A. Taylor
Jason W. Trumble

Specialist

Dustin W. Acker
Adrianna H. Araujo
Cole R. Batenhorst
Megan S. Brooks
Hunter R. Brummer
Lucas R. Canfield
Esther C. Christianson
Chad D. Comeau
Thomas J. Curry
Connor A. Deines
Michael S. Escamilla
Derick T. Gansbom
Ryan T. Green
Nathan J. Hanson
Tarin J. Hanson
Christian J. Hatch
Darby L. Haugen
Jade J. Hetzler
Nicholas S. Holley
Shaun E. Hooley
David A. Huismann
Jonathan R. Jackson
Marlena L. Jackson
Andrew T. Jensen
Andrew A. Kessler
Spencer C. Kort
Shane E. Kuntz
Jeffrey M. Landholt
Jeffrey D. Lechner
Sesly N. Lorincz

Christopher Matiasantos
Kraiton M. Matson
Amie D. Maxwellking
Joshua D. Moser
Austin D. Niemann
Winston A. Norris
Ian M. C. Oldenhuis
Levi S. Pawaters
Adam M. Pierce
Preston M. Raymond
John M. Reining
Elias K. Rodriguez
William F. Schneider
Michael B. Shaw
Thomas M. Springhower
Rochelle K. Sukup
Ruben Tagorda Jr.
Robert J. Tramp
Brodrick W. Vandeburg
Brandon L. Walker
Brittany M. West
Brandon C. Wion
Shelby A. Ziegler
Lucas K. Zulkoski

Private First Class

Kevin N. Boyle
Harrison G. Bourne
Javier G. Buendiarodriguez
Shawn M. Fleischman
David M. Foley
Mahlon L. Gingerich
Cody A. Heller
Diana L. Lopezherrejon
Samuel L. Helm
Justin D. Hillebran
Tristan M. Hinrichs
Damian R. Hort
Brandon K. Husted
Randy H. Juarez
Jose O. Martinez-Hernandez
Perry J. Pierce
Hunter M. Prettyweasel
Austin R. L. Roach
Ryan J. Roberts
Alexis E. R. Rowell
Gregory L. Salnicki II
Morgan L. Saylor
Tyler J. Sjoval
Hailey R. Sletten
Garrett A. Smith
Jack B. Smith
Angela K. Spencer
Broderick L. Tyrrell
Jared C. Washa
Anthony E. Weber
Lorenzo B. William
Jesse A. Windham

Private Two

Matthew E. Cullum
Thomas J. Fox
Edem K. Gunubu
Jonathan J. Janick
Taylor J. Mckeeman
Phillip M. Oden III
Trent W. Ostendorf
Oleg Petrushev

Luke A. Robinson
Hector Rodriguez Jr.
Andrew J. Soliz

Air National Guard

Chief Master Sergeant
Paul R. Buss

Senior Master Sergeant

Jason A. Freeman
Lisa C. Tupper

Master Sergeant

Nicholas J. Bethune
Joel T. DeBauche
Kasey L. Korth
Scott M. Sokolik

Technical Sergeant

Ryan P. Cain
Trevor N. Erickson
Christian F. Knapp
Fred J. Myers
Randy W. Prine
Winston L. Sanniola
Christopher J. Sautter
Eric J. Streeter
Christine L. Tewes

Staff Sergeant

Matthew D. Cook
Erica J. Daugherty
Nicholas J. Grossi
Joshua D. Koraleski
Chauncey A. Moore
David M. Rachwalik
Daniel M. Schieffer
Brent J. Schiermann
Justin D. Singer
Levi J. Sullivan
Benjamin J. Wright
Cody J. Wyatt

Senior Airman

Dana P. Alt
Leilani M. Beal
Samuel D. Eddings
Amanda M. Hohnstein
Tyler D. Johnson
Dillon C. Kruckman
Makael M. Lanum
Zachary L. Olson
Dominic E. Pasquinelli
Garrett E. Peterson
Brent M. Potter
Sean A. Pozehl
Kyle A. Winkenwerder

Airman First Class

Timothy R. Aulner
Brett J. Fulton
Nathan R. Goering
Trevor L. Halstead
Cydne J. Howell
Benjamin B. Hudson
Andrew M. Riley
Shea J. Shannon
Chase R. Vanis
Christian Weeks

AWARDS

Army National Guard

Meritorious Service Medal

Lt. Col. James E. Murphy
Lt. Col. William J. Prusia
Lt. Col. Craig W. Strong
Maj. Sean P. Oneill
Maj. Chad E. Thomson
1st Sgt. Curtis J. Talbot
Sgt. 1st Class Michael K. Benorden
Sgt. 1st Class Kyla M. Boersma
Sgt. 1st Class Colby L. Mccoey

Army Commendation Medal

Maj. Daniel L. Behn
Maj. Raymond P. Phillips
Capt. Timothy M. Buskirk
Capt. Cory N. Huskey
Master Sgt. Shawn M. Burton
Master Sgt. Shawn E. Vater
Sgt. 1st Class Gerald D. Buska
Sgt. 1st Class Christine L. Gonzales
Sgt. 1st Class Christopher P. Herndon
Sgt. 1st Class Daniel R. Jamison
Sgt. 1st Class Jason W. Priksat
Sgt. 1st Class Christine L. Raftery
Sgt. 1st Class Jarrod J. Schmoker
Staff Sgt. Gary M. Broski
Staff Sgt. Mathew M. Brown
Staff Sgt. Joshua D. Ommert
Staff Sgt. Jason B. Palmer
Staff Sgt. Nicholas A. Province
Sgt. Michael W. Iverson
Sgt. Kenneth C. J. Salisbury
Spc. Lucas R. Canfield
Spc. Jeffrey A. Hergenreder
Sgt. Michael W. Iverson
Spc. Kristian D. Magnuson
Pfc. Ali J. Taylor

Army Achievement Medal

Capt. Tony J. Woodruff
1st Lt. Avery L. Walker
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brian L. Anderson
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dale L. Dishman
Sgt. 1st Class James R. Bussen
Sgt. 1st Class Eric R. Fahrlander
Sgt. 1st Class Joshua R. Loos
Staff Sgt. Dustin R. Anderson
Staff Sgt. Reggie D. Barent
Staff Sgt. Jacob D. Foutz
Staff Sgt. D. J. Johnson
Staff Sgt. Andy J. Kallhoff
Staff Sgt. Daniel R. Malizzi
Staff Sgt. Michael D. Rieke
Staff Sgt. Andrew M. Siemek
Staff Sgt. Eric L. Wilford
Sgt. William S. Cornish
Sgt. Mary V. Crandell
Sgt. Amber J. Gralheer
Sgt. Paul B. Greenwell
Sgt. Alexander F. King
Sgt. Brison G. Kuhn
Sgt. Michael S. Ronk
Sgt. Kenneth C. J. Salisbury
Sgt. Thomas M. Shirey
Sgt. Britni J. Sullivan
Spc. Jared D. Archer

Spc. Nicholas J. Boatright
Spc. Lucas R. Canfield
Spc. Jeffrey A. Hergenreder
Spc. Mitchell B. Hunt
Spc. Andrew T. Jensen
Spc. Jacob A. Kirchoff
Spc. Kristian D. Magnuson
Spc. Andrew J. Neumann
Spc. Ian M. C. Oldenhuis
Spc. Leslie V. Roman
Spc. Amy M. Schneider
Spc. Michael S. Thomson

Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

Lt. Col. William J. Prusia
Sgt. 1st Class Chad E. Sample
Spc. Jeffrey A. Hergenreder

Combat Infantry Badge

Spc. Kristian D. Magnuson

Nebraska National Guard Commendation Medal

Master Sgt. Marc A. Sheehan
Sgt. Anna C. Knopes
Sgt. Anthony W. Noyes

Nebraska National Guard Individual Achievement Medal

Maj. Scott R. Henrickson
Maj. Christopher D. Lopes
Capt. Viola L. Raschke
1st Lt. Nathan L. McGruder
2nd Lt. Sarah C. Filiaggi
Warrant Officer Amanda L. Hillgren
Sgt. 1st Class Christopher S. Deters
Sgt. 1st Class Lindsay S. Goodrich
Sgt. 1st Class Jenna M. Schneider
Staff Sgt. Justin J. Eickmeier
Staff Sgt. Jennifer L. Good
Staff Sgt. Randy A. Graves
Staff Sgt. Laurie E. Maley
Staff Sgt. Kyann M. Sheets
Staff Sgt. Robert B. Thompson
Staff Sgt. Paul D. Willman
Staff Sgt. Matthew S. Wonder
Staff Sgt. Gregory S. Wortman
Sgt. Johnathon A. Albaugh
Sgt. Aaron S. Hensley
Sgt. Joel G. Jones
Sgt. Mark A. Marta
Sgt. Timothy A. Peterson
Sgt. Thomas J. Shupe
Spc. Lindsey R. Bright
Spc. Eric M. Holmes
Spc. James B. Ruffin III
Spc. Tyler P. Schmitt
Spc. Pablo Solorio
Pfc. Michael A. Lindgren
Pfc. Joshua M. Mayer

RETIREMENTS

Nebraska Army National Guard

Lt. Col. Christopher M. Ferdico
Lt. Col. Kevin L. Garner
Lt. Col. Henry M. Person

Capt. Daniel S. L. Claessens
Sgt. Maj. Jason C. Grams
1st Sgt. Reynold J. Castaneda
1st Sgt. Terry J. Johnson

1st Sgt. Michel J. Larrew
1st Sgt. Randall L. McHugh
Sgt. 1st Class Jeremiah R. Bretthauer
Sgt. 1st Class John P. Hartig

Sgt. 1st Class Charles S. Hiatt
Sgt. 1st Class Christopher D. Rathe
Sgt. 1st Class Raphael A. Razuri
Sgt. 1st Class Matt J. Rubenthaler

Sgt. 1st Class Justin L. Schmitt
Sgt. 1st Class Matthew A. Talbert
Staff Sgt. Ronald O. Barnes
Staff Sgt. David R. Iverson

Staff Sgt. Troy D. Vanheufeln
Staff Sgt. Gregory S. Vaughn
Sgt. Casey A. Popp

Shorttakes

Nebraska Air Guard general retires after 35 years of service

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Staff Photojournalist

A retirement ceremony presided over by the adjutant general of the Nebraska National Guard, Maj. Gen. Daryl L. Bohac, honoring Nebraska Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Jon F. Fago, was held at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska June 6, celebrating his more than 35 years of military service.

"Jon never complained about what he was given to do or where he was asked to go," said Bohac applauding Fago for his 36-year time in service.

Fago, the outgoing assistant adjutant general for the Nebraska Air National Guard, was commissioned as second lieutenant after graduating from the Air Force Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering in 1979.

Fago graduated from the undergraduate pilot training then completed his initial KC-135A Stratotanker training in 1982. He flew the KC-135 until 1985 when he was board-selected as one of the first crewmembers for the KC-10 program.

He separated from active duty in 1988 and joined Air Force Reserves serving six years before joining the Nebraska Air National



Photos by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Pinned: Cindy Fago pins a U.S. Air Force Retired pin on her husband's uniform as Brig. Gen. Jon Fago marked his final day in the Nebraska Air National Guard, June 6, during a ceremony at the Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb.



Award-Winning Career: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, presents Brig. Gen. Jon Fago with the Legion of Merit during Fago's retirement ceremony, June 6. Fago, who served as the assistant adjutant general, Air, retired with 35 years of military service.

Guard in 1994 as a KC-135R pilot. He assumed duties as the Chief of Training in the 155th Operations Support Flight in 1996 and took command of the 173rd Air Refueling Squadron in 2001.

In 2004, Fago took command of the 155th Operations Group and deployed to the Pacific and European theaters in support of

the Global War on Terrorism. He served as vice wing commander of the 155th Air Refueling Wing in 2005 deploying to the Combined Air Operations Center in the Central Command area of responsibility as the deputy director of mobility forces in direct support of operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa in June 2008.

He went on to become chief of staff of the Nebraska Air National Guard at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln and took on the dual-role assignment as the director of operations of Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, December 2010 to December 2013. Fago has served in his current position since December 2013.

During closing remarks at his ceremony, Fago reflected heavily on the longevity of his career and those who helped him along the way. "I am humbled, honored and overwhelmed that you all are here," he said.

"I salute all of you," Fago added. "God bless the Air Force and God bless the U.S.A."

Street Talk

“What is your favorite movie of all time and why?”



Maj. Darin Durand
155th Air Refueling Wing
“*Gladiator*, because it is a movie about courage and sacrifice of self for the good of others.”



1st Lt. James Tiehen
110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion
“*Matrix*, because it was groundbreaking for the time as an action flick.”



Capt. Cody Hollist
155th Air Refueling Wing
“*Bourne Series*, movies because the character (Jason Bourne) is unsuspectingly brilliant and knows a lot.”



Sgt. Brett Clark
92nd Troop Command
“I like *Saw* because it was an original idea for the horror scene or genre. It was the victims doing it to themselves. I actually thought the message was pretty good.”



Senior Airman Melinda Burbach
155th Force Support Squadron
“*Bridesmaids*. There is so much humor in it. I like to watch movies that make me laugh.”



Spc. Ryan Scobey
313th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance)
“*Pain and Gain*. You put Mark Wahlberg and Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson as muscle heads in a movie together and its hilarious. They are so dumb its funny and great.”

Heartfelt thank you to all who made my tenure successful

On Feb. 7, 2010, I had the privilege to assume the position of state command sergeant major for the Nebraska Army National Guard.

A few weeks ago, I passed the Joint Force Headquarters Command Sergeant Major Sword to Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, who in turn presented it to Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker. The day was marked with, family, friends, special guests, retirees and most importantly by the members of this great organization. It was an exciting day for Command Sgt. Maj. Baker as he assumes his new responsibility and a bitter-sweet day for me as I...let go.

I want to thank all of those involved for making the change of responsibility ceremony the success it was in commemorating this change in senior noncommissioned officer leadership.

As I reflect back on the last five years, I recall day one when I received the JFHQ CSM Sword from then Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons and thought to myself, “What have I gotten myself into?” At the time it felt like a decision not fully staffed. However, I have been fortunate to have had true professionals who have provided me sound advice and counsel.

I realize there is not enough space in this column to list those who have contributed to the office, suffice it to say that I am eternally grateful.

As I was visiting the Nebraska National Guard Museum recently, a retired Soldier walked by and said, “You know you’re old when your stuff is displayed in the museum.” I walked away thinking to myself... Wow, I’m old. My stuff has been on display for several years now. Reality really sets in when I think that I have served two adjutants general, three chiefs of staff and three state command chief warrant officers.

A well-known commercial advocates knowing when it’s time to say when. Well for me, it’s when.

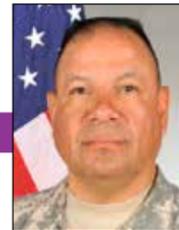
This job has been filled with great and not so great days.

The great days are when our force is recognized for great things. Accomplishments in SEA, AAME,

Another Voice

Command Sgt. Maj.

Eli Valenzuela



If you have visited my office, you will see a coin holder that displays dog tags instead of coins. There are 32 in all. That reflects the number of Soldiers lost from my commands since becoming a battalion command sergeant major in 2004.

Connelly awards competitions as well as Institution of Excellence recognition for the 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) are but of a few examples of outstanding performance.

NCOs have been, are and will continue to be the backbone of the Army and are in no small measure directly responsible for organizational achievements. I was proud to have begun an NCO slating program that provides lateral experience to our AGR force before moving up the ranks. We are now seeing the fruits of that labor.

A major subordinate command’s command sergeant major told me once that I would be remembered as the “Ceremony CSM.” I do believe that NCO traditions play an important part of in remembering where we come from and the importance of doing things professionally.

That is why I have always encouraged NCO Induction Ceremonies, Change of Responsibility Ceremonies, National Guard Birthday Ceremonies and so on. Often, military events and ceremonies are the only exposure civilians have to the military. I recall the adjutant general saying that a friend attended his change of command ceremony said, “Wow, You guys do it right.”

Tough days were also had. A particular tough day was the day we lost Staff Sgt. Patrick Hamburger, the last Nebraska National Guard fatality to combat operations.

Since becoming the state command sergeant major, I (we) have lost a total of 23 Soldiers of all status’ that range from combat operations, illness, vehicle accidents and suicides. I have attended more military funerals than I would have ever imagined. I have placed “dog tags” over the necks of next of kin and told them I was proud of their loved ones service. All were tough days.

It serves as a visual reminder of those lost and the price of service to our state and nation as well as the responsibility I have do whatever I can to prevent that display from growing.

When I walked into the Scottsbluff armory in September 1979 as a 20-year-old ready to enlist, I had no idea that one day I would have the honor and privilege of serving as state command sergeant major. I’m quite certain that I wasn’t even aware of what the state command sergeant major was let alone who my battalion command sergeant major was.

You never know where life will take you, but I was fortunate to have had great civilian, NCO and officer mentors along the way. I know for a fact that I owe my deepest thanks to my family and the Soldiers who serve in our Guard force.

I would be remiss if I didn’t mention my appreciation to the former state command sergeants major who have paved the way for me and now Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker. A special thanks goes out to Command Sgt. Maj. Thurlow Noble, Command Sgt. Maj. John Clyne, Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Linz, Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Johnson, Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Shunk and Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Burch.

As I depart for the position of Senior Enlisted Guard Advisor (SEGA) to the National Guard at the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, I recall the ol’ Army adage of “Always leave it better than when you got it.” I hope history will be kind to me and my efforts. I do know one thing for sure and that is that I leave with the firm belief that you all will continue to excel, personally and professionally, and in doing so make Nebraskans proud of their National Guard.

I have been honored to have served as your state command sergeant major.

Amping up social media for Nebraska National Guard

Irecently finished a class over business communication and I learned so much about the relationship between communication and social media.

They really go hand-in-hand.

With technology in this day of age, social media is becoming more and more prominent in our lives. Social media has dramatically changed how we communication around the world.

Social media helps people have a say. It also helps people be engaged in meaningful dialogue, be listened to, connect with others, and shape exactly what they are looking for.

It plays a big part in people’s lives, whether that is talking to their friends, posting the latest news, seeing deals or specials from their favorite businesses, or just seeing what’s new.

I, personally, start and end my day by checking social media to see what is going on. It drives my husband, Mason, crazy that is the first thing I do in the morning, but hey, that’s where I get my news.

I would say I get three-fourths of my news and information from social media rather than online news sites, television or newspapers.

And I would assume that a lot of people are just like me and get their news from social media sites like Facebook and Twitter.

With social media being such a

huge communications tool today, the Nebraska National Guard is putting extra efforts to make their presence known on social media.

The Nebraska National Guard Facebook and Twitter pages are currently used to post up-to-date news, information, and photos from both the full-time and traditional force.

The social media pages are great ways for the Soldiers, Airmen, family members and friends to stay connected with the Nebraska National Guard.

But my class really got me thinking... ‘What can the Nebraska National Guard social media pages do different, how can they be used to be more beneficial to our followers and what else would the public and the Soldiers and Airmen of the Nebraska National Guard like to see?’

So I’m asking for your help.

Would you like to see the current job announcements on the social media pages? What about a contest between the three different Nebraska National Guard public affairs staff sections competing for photo of each drill weekend?

Editor

Staff Sergeant

Heidi McClintock



How would our fans like an opportunity to have a twitter question and answer session with the adjutant general? What about using our current street talk formula from the *Prairie Soldier* and posting the

questions for you to answer on social media?

These are just a few of my different ideas and would love to hear feedback on them.

Do you have ideas? We would love to hear them.

In order to better serve our Facebook fans and our Twitter followers, we would love to receive feedback and suggestions on the social media pages as well as what you would like to see or see more of on the social media pages.

You can email your suggestions to ng.ne.neang.mbx.pao-public@mail.mil using the hashtag, #NENGmediaAmpUp, in the subject line or use the same hashtag, #NENGmediaAmpUp, on social media.

One last thing, if you don’t like or follow the Nebraska National Guard already, please go ahead and like us at ‘Nebraska National Guard’ and follow us @NENationalGuard.

Also check out the Nebraska National Guard YouTube channel, ‘NENationalGuard’ and the Flickr page, ‘NE National Guard.’



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

And They're Off: The first wave of the approximately 12,500 runners begin the 38th Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon held May 3 in Lincoln, Neb. More than 170 Guard runners representing nearly every U.S. state and territory used the annual race to attempt to qualify for the 40 male and 15 female spots on the All Guard Marathon Team.

2015 Lincoln National Guard Marathon

Once, twice, three times champ

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton
Staff Photojournalist

The third time was the charm for a pair of National Guard distance runners competing at the 38th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Nebraska, on May 3.

First Lieutenant Kenneth Rayner, a platoon leader with the Massachusetts Army National Guard, held true to the superstition when he sprinted under the finish line arch at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Memorial Stadium in an official time of 2 hours, 37 minutes 9 seconds. This marked Rayner's first championship after finishing in the Guard's runner-up position the past two years.

"I'm happy to finish first this year," said Rayner who completed the 26.2-mile course three minutes ahead of his time last year. "I am still a bit tired from the Boston Marathon two weeks ago, and the heat was a bit of a challenge, but I felt good overall. Right now, I want to find my other teammate and have a little fun tonight." That fun, however, will be short-lived as Rayner said he graduates with a master's degree in international affairs next week and still has a final exam to prepare for.

Placing second in the National Guard men's category was Sgt. Javier Torres Rolon, a medic in the Puerto Rico Army National Guard, who finished with a time of 2:49:43.

The number three was also on the mind of this year's top woman Guard runner. However, in this case, it was about completing a rare three-peat. Staff Sgt. Emily Shertz, an oboist with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard's 553rd Band of the Mid-Atlantic, earned her third consecutive Guard woman title while sprinting across the finish line in an official time of 2 hours, 55 minutes, 56 seconds.

Shertz maintained a comfortable lead over Maj. Varinka Ensinger, a medical services officer with the Kentucky Army National Guard, who placed second in the National Guard woman's category with a time of 3:11:33.

"I feel really good all things considered," said Shertz. "It's defi-



Photo by Spc. Anna Pongo

Finishing With A Smile: 1st Lt. Kenneth Rayner, a platoon leader with the Massachusetts Army National Guard, finished first out of all the full marathon Guard runners at the 38th Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3. This was Rayner's first championship after finishing second the past two years.

nately a lot warmer than we are used to and a bit breezy, but I tried to go out conservatively and I ran with a good group of guys the first half. We slowed a bit on the out, but once we hit the turn around and got the wind at our back it felt a lot better. My time was five minutes slower than last year, but I expected that based on a lack of training."

Shertz said she hurt her sciatic nerve during a marathon in October and only started running again in January. Holding true to her long-held post-marathon tradition she will celebrate by eating ice cream with her fellow athletes.

This year's Lincoln National Guard Marathon attracted nearly 13,500 athletes. Among these runners were approximately 185 of the Army and Air National Guard's top distance runners representing 42 states and two U.S. territories who took to the Lincoln pavement to compete for positions on the National Guard's "All Guard" Marathon Team and a chance for their state to steal the traveling

trophy from the defending national champion Pennsylvania National Guard marathon team.

Registration time this year decreased by more than half leaving eager athletes only seven hours to register a reflection of the professionalism and efficiency of the Nebraska National Guard, its co-host, the Lincoln Track Club, and thousands of volunteer members from the community.

A combination of several elements make the Lincoln National Guard Marathon a great place to run, said Sgt. 1st Class Christine Raftery, National Guard Bureau Marathon Coordinator. She cited Nebraska's central location, reasonable registration fees and professionalism of the Nebraska National Guard. "A lot of people —athletes and fans—want to come and show support for the National Guard."

Many marathon fans and bystanders echoed her sentiment including Omaha resident, Christopher Nelson, who came to cheer

See MARATHON on 11.

Nebraska Guardsmen provide support for marathon runners

By Maj. Pat Ryan
Staff Photojournalist

A breeze was blowing gently as squinting eyes searched up the road for their first customers of the morning as participants of the 38th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon moved near their station, May 3, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

This particular support station sits just yards from where the full and half marathon splits. The runners coming by this station would be well on their way to completing the full 26.2 miles of the course spreading throughout the Lincoln area.

Four collapsible tables were set up with a variety of goodies to keep the runners hydrated and fed: orange slices of Gatorade, to water, and 'GU.' To top it all off, an Army brigadier general pumped up the National Guardsmen who volunteer supporters like a high school cheer leader.

One could not help but get sucked into the positivity and excitement that was to come.

Within this tightknit group it seemed there was no rank, just Guardsmen pulling their own weight and going out of their way to cheer on the sweat glistening strangers who ran by. The scene was so positive and encouraging.

A few of the volunteers, specifically Spc. Thomas Brown, and Pfc. Ally Taylor, both members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 313th Medical Company, eagerly stood leaning out in the path of the participants with cups of water and Gatorade eagerly awaiting the first of the runners.

"I'm actually nervous, just because people are running and I view them as superior because they have the courage to come out here and do it," said Taylor. "I want to help in any way I can, I just don't want to mess up. I want to make sure that they get everything they need. What they're doing is pretty remarkable. I know that I could not run a full marathon. No way."

According to Brown, a veteran



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Water, Get Your Water: Spc. Thomas Brown grabs water to hand out to runners of the 38th Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3. Nebraska Guardsmen provided a variety of support to the marathon.

to working the aid stations at the marathon, it's amazing how the Guard comes together for the marathon.

"It's great to see how many people actually come out and run the entire thing. Just look around, all these Guard folks," said Brown. "(They are) from all over, from California to Vermont. It's quite extraordinary."

The first of the runners begin to appear as 2nd Lt. Tessa Harding, a member of the 313th Med. Co., armed with two cups of water in one hand and two cups of Gatorade in the other called out to everyone present: "Here we go folks, lets cheer them on."

According to Harding, the marathon is a good community involvement event.

"It's great for the Guard," said Harding. "There are a ton of people who see us working out here, it's good that they see us out in the community, helping out."

As the runners arrived, the group came alive. It seemed that

See GUARD SUPPORT on 12.

Nebraska Guard marathon team runners take ninth

By Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Staff Photojournalist

Twelve thousand five hundred runners hit the pavement of downtown Lincoln, Nebraska, on a humid May morning to compete in the 38th annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon, May 3.

The Lincoln National Guard Marathon is what determines if a Guardsman qualifies for the All-Guard marathon team, a team of devoted runners who travel throughout the country to participate in races of varying lengths to represent the National Guard, often a tool used as a recruiting and retention tool.

First time runners and veterans alike joined together to endure the strenuous 26.2 miles on a warm, breezy spring morning. Of those who came out to run, were 175 members of the Air and Army National Guard, representing 44 states and two territories, including four members of the Nebraska National Guard marathon team.

The Nebraska National Guard marathon team consisted of four Army National Guard personnel, Spc. Ryan Linder of Kearney, Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Yates of Lincoln, Capt. Robb Campbell of Papillion, team captain, and 1st Lt. Travis Kirchner of Omaha.

Together, this team of runners took 9th place out of the participating Guard teams, with an average time of 3 hours 20 minutes.

Every runner has a story to tell. Each person who commits to training for a marathon fights their own battles, whether it is an injury, finding time or motivation to train, bad weather making training dangerous, or personal conflicts.

Each of those who choose to wake up at 4 a.m. to sign up for this marathon four months ago have their own reasons why they chose to commit to the grueling training to represent the National Guard, rain or shine.

In order to qualify for the Nebraska Guard Marathon team, participants must run a marathon within 18 months of the Lincoln Marathon. Men under the age of 40 must have recorded a time of four hours or less with a mile pace of 9:09. Men's Masters Division, age 40 and over, must have run a race in 4 hours, 15 minutes, with an average mile pace of 9 minutes 43 seconds.

Women of all ages much com-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

Representing Nebraska: The Nebraska National Guard Team consisted of four individuals (from left) Spc. Ryan Linder, 1st Lt. Travis Kirchner, Capt. Robb Campbell, Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Yates and Sgt. 1st Class Tarissa Batenhorst, who is the team coordinator.

plete the marathon in 4 hours 30 seconds, with a mile average of 10 minutes, 31 seconds.

The youngest member of the Nebraska marathon team, Linder, started running nearly 9 years ago, while still attending middle school. Coming from a family who values running and physical fitness, it took little thought to continue his running regimen and contact the Nebraska team coordinator for details on qualifying for the team.

Linder ran the marathon in 3:32:53. Being his second year on the team, he said he feels like the team is bonding and developing together.

Linder said running is a part of his life and that it helps him sort through his thoughts, unwind after a long day, and juggle between homework, college classes, and work.

"I love wearing that jersey that one day of the year because everyone says 'congratulations' and 'go Guard,'" said Linder.

"I like that aspect of it, there are so many people in the Guard and in this day and year, you really are one of the few. I like representing Nebraska and the National Guard."

The newest member of the team, Yates, started running when he was a child. He said he has been involved in athletics his entire life.

He qualified to be a part of the marathon team in 2014, and ran his first marathon as part of the Nebraska National Guard team this year, with a time of 3:29:23. Yates said his interest in marathon running did not peak until a few years ago.

"I really didn't get started with marathon running or any distance running past 10K until about three to four years ago," said Yates. "There was no real reason why I got started, just a new challenge. I thought it would be interesting, as I get older. I started to notice my 10K and 5K times were starting to slow down, so I thought I could still be competitive as an old guy."

At age 33 and a 16-year veteran of the Guard, Yates said it means a lot for him to represent the National Guard at this point in his career.

"It really means a lot to represent the service that I have spent so much time in and truly love. And to be placed in a higher category within the military, being able to represent my unit and the state of Nebraska."

Yates said his motivation to keep running is for his family and from his competitive nature.

"I run for my family and myself, too," said Yates. "I am really internally driven to run, but I think about my kids and wanting to be in shape so I live a long life for them. A lot of it is just the competitive spirit that I have. I always have to try to win, so that's a big part for me too. When I am running the longer



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Striding Out: Spc. Ryan Linder, the youngest member of the Nebraska National Guard Marathon Team, runs the 38th Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3. Linder was one of only four members on the Nebraska marathon team. The team hopes to have more runners next year.

distances, I try to find someone ahead of me, and catch them, or at least not let people behind me pass me," added Yates. "That is what motivates me. It's the little things towards the end, when you are really tired that help."

Capt. Robb Campbell, the Nebraska National Guard team captain, is the veteran runner of the Nebraska Guard Marathon team, having participated in most Lincoln National Guard marathons since 1999. Running the marathon in 3:16:37, with an average mile of 7:31, Campbell placed 5th for the Master's division. His finishing time allowed him to qualify for the All-Guard Marathon team.

After being in the National Guard for more than 20 years, Campbell said being a part of the marathon team is what has kept him in the military past his 20 years of service.

"Making the All-Guard team is really awesome and special because you get to travel to other parts of the country and run races around the country to represent the National Guard and your state," said Campbell. "This is a very good program and I am really glad that the National Guard has this program. It's good for morale as well as recruiting tool. This is what has kept me in past 20 years."

Marathon training can be draining and injuries often occur if an individual trains too hard, too fast. Campbell said there have been times where he has lost motivation



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Running Buddies: Capt. Robb Campbell and 1st Lt. Travis Kirchner of the Nebraska Army National Guard run side-by-side for most of the 26.2 miles of the Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3. Campbell and Kirchner finished within a minute of each other and both qualified for the All-Guard marathon team.

to keep running, but quickly regains his drive.

"There have been times over the years that I have been not as motivated and was losing interest, but I would attend drill and I hear people saying good things about me, 'There's Captain Campbell, he's a running machine,'" said Campbell. "Then I think, 'Wow, I've got to keep my reputation going.' It's time like that that I get motivated."

"I have a lot of pride and honor, to be a member not only of the Nebraska Guard, but the National Guard, to represent my country," added Campbell. "I take a lot of pride in it."

1st Lt. Travis Kirchner, a member of the Nebraska Marathon team for the second year in a row, recently participated in the Boston Marathon, April 20. This was Kirchner's first Boston marathon he has participated in, and said it was harder than he thought it would be, but the experience itself was worth it.

Having less than two weeks to recover, Kirchner said he was apprehensive about running the Lincoln marathon, unsure if he had given his body enough time to recover. Several days after the Boston marathon, he said he felt fairly well and went on a few shorter runs, helping him regain confidence that he could, in fact run the Lincoln marathon.

After the race, however, he explained how much of a toll running a marathon, or two, can take on one's body.

"I definitely feel like I ran two



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Finishing Strong: Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Yates, the newest member of the Nebraska National Guard Marathon Team, finishes the 38th Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3.

MARATHON

continued from page 1.

on his sister and his show support for the National Guard. "It was awesome to see all the military members participating, he said. "Seeing all the men and women in uniform was inspirational."

Washington took possession of The Cobb traveling trophy for earning the best overall time of their top three runners.

Despite high temperatures humidity, hard work and perseverance paid off for a few other members of the All Guard Team. Placing third in the female Guard division and seventh over all was CW3 LL Buckley of the Texas Army National Guard. Colonel Christian Stewart of the Kentucky National Guard placed third in the male Guard division and a notable tenth-place over all.

"I was concerned about the heat conditions," said Raftery. "It was a rough day for people to try and PR and a good day for the athletes to just enjoy the race and take it easy."

The Lincoln National Guard Marathon continues to demonstrate the synergy between the community and the Guard about fitness," said Maj. Gen. Daryl L. Bohac, Adjutant General of the Nebraska National Guard. "It keeps us in front of the community where we need to be."

paces in two weeks. My body wasn't quite ready for Lincoln's race," said Kirchner.

Despite feeling weak after running two marathons in two weeks, Kirchner ran his Lincoln marathon in 3:17:43, qualifying for the All-Guard Marathon team his second year in a row.

Kirchner said marathon running is a physical and mental game. If a person starts listening to thoughts about wanting to quit, one's body will begin to believe one's mind. The battle is whether a person listens to mind or body.

"It usually starts mentally at mile 18. My thoughts take over my physical body," said Kirchner. "Once you break down mentally, your mind tells you that you want to walk, stop, take a break. Then your body starts listening to that and you have that mental battle, 'Do I continue or do I stop and walk?'"

"Once I hit that mental wall I try to set little goals for distance," said Kirchner. "I set small goals I can reach in three to four minutes. Those small goals keep me going."

The Nebraska National Guard Marathon team, being the host state, is looking to recruit more runners to build upon their team. If interested in running for the Nebraska National Guard marathon team, please contact Nebraska team coordinator, Army Sgt. 1st Class Tarissa Batenhorst. She may be reached via email: tarissa.r.batenhorst.mil@mail.mil, cell: 402-326-6351, or office: 402-309-8157.

Through the Viewfinder



Photo by Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Water Spill: 1st Lt. Jimmy Mann of the 20th Special Forces Group, Alabama National Guard, accidentally spills his water as he tries to get a drink during the 38th Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Pre-Race Help: A member of the Nebraska Army National Guard holds a pace sign for marathon runners of the 38th Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon to find their place in line before the race starts, May 3, in Lincoln, Neb.



Photo by Spc. Will Schneider



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Peace, Love, Run: Maj. Laura Johnson of the New Mexico Air National Guard poses for the camera near mile marker 20 of the 38th Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon, May 3. Johnson took first place in the Guard women's 35-39 age group.



Photo by Spc. Anna Pongo

Smiling Faces: (Above) Four National Guard marathon runners' smile for the camera during the first half of the Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3. Over 170 Guardsmen represented the National Guard in the marathon.

Water Station: (Left) Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Jacobsen hands out water to passing Guard runners during the Lincoln National Guard Marathon, May 3.

Guard Soldier, spouse put together to passions to create race to help charity

By Sgt. Jason Drager
Staff Photojournalist

Service members dedicate their time, effort and in some cases, their entire life to the military. They deploy to war-torn countries, risk their lives, and make sacrifices that others couldn't imagine because they feel it is their duty. Service members deserve to be honored.

However, there are many others, behind the scenes, that do not receive the recognition they deserve.

Military spouses dedicate just as much time and make just as many sacrifices as their service member. Although, spouses may not have joined the military themselves, they are just as much apart of the military. In some cases, spouses go above and beyond their duties.

Julia Kysela is a military spouse. Her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Kysela, is a member of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. Julia has been with Daniel through deployments and knows how important it is for her to be supportive of not only Daniel but of all service members.

Due to her work in the community and helping veterans, Julia was named the 2015 Armed Forces Insurance National Guard Military Spouse of the Year.

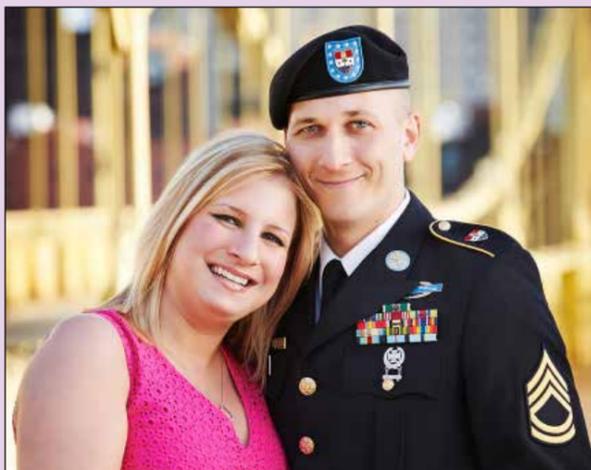
Daniel nominated Julia for the award. "She does a lot of stuff and doesn't expect any recognition for it," said Daniel. "I often forget or don't get the opportunity to thank her so I thought this would be a nice thing to do."

Julia's work doesn't stop at just being a supportive spouse. Julia is an active member of the community and helping veterans' transition to a civilian life. In 2012, Julia and Daniel organized a 6K race to raise money for the Valor Clinic Foundation, a charity in Pittsburgh that helps veterans. Since then, the race has grown to a yearly event, ran in four locations. The race, known as the "I've Got Your Six 6k and Memorial Mile," has raised over \$20,000 for the charity.

The 6k race is a way to combine Julia's love of helping others and her husband's love of running. In addition to combining the couple's passions, it is a great way for them to grow closer together.

In addition, Julia also serves on two boards. The first is for a veterans networking group at her work. The second is for the Bee Squad, an organization that coordinates events and donates the proceeds to charities that help veterans. Julia also volunteers her time helping post-9/11 veterans connect with each other.

"I think it's important to recognize veterans and its good for them to find a sense of community when they retire," said Julia. "I think there needs to be a focus on helping veterans



Courtesy Photo

Happy Couple: Julia and Daniel Kysela pose for a photo for the 2015 Armed Forces Insurance National Guard Military Spouse of the Year contest. Daniel nominated his wife Julia as a way to gain recognition of everything she does to support National Guardsmen.

transition from the military to the civilian world, specifically, in regards to employment. Its hard for anyone to get a job right now, especially for veterans who may not know how to apply their military talents in the civilian world."

Julia's biography went through several rounds of voting before she was eventually named the National Guard military spouse of the year. Both Julia and Daniel were surprised Julia won. Not because Julia hadn't done enough but rather because of all the great things other spouses are doing as well.

"I was shocked," said Julia. "There are a lot of other spouses doing amazing and unique things. I thought it would have been cool just to have won Pennsylvania."

Both Julia and Daniel were in Lincoln on May 3 for the Lincoln National Guard Marathon. Daniel has been a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard marathon team for the past six years. Julia has accompanied Daniel on his yearly trip to Lincoln and decided this year to run the half marathon.

Julia enjoyed the opportunity to learn from and train with her husband for the half marathon. Looking forward in her community involvement, Julia wants to expand the 6k and continue to work with veterans transitioning into the civilian life.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Hands Full: Staff Sgt. Jacob Krause of the Nebraska Army National Guard, hands out water at a water station during the 38th Annual Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Lincoln, Neb., May 3.

GUARD SUPPORT

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the refreshments were going out so fast to the runners that those who were replenishing the supplies were working as hard as those running.

The volunteers were hollering encouragement and offering their goodies.

"Go, go, go! You're doing great! Over here! I have ice," yelled a Guardsman holding two cups of ice in each hand.

Another Guardsman could not give out enough water and Gatorade. As they ran back to resupply, you could see the smiles and hear the comments, "Isn't this fun?"

Throughout the race there was excitement and creativity that not only the Guardsmen demonstrated, but the civilian spectators showed as well. Enthusiasm for the marathon was everywhere.

The lengths to which the public, friends and family went to helping to keep the motivation up were awesome, from polka bands to rattling cowbells and screaming "Go!"

By the end, this was truly a combined celebration between the Guard and the community. Everyone appeared to have a great time.

Pvt. Amber Holly of the 313th Med. Co. said, "Look at all this. It's a good way to show everybody what (The Guard) is and that we're supporting them. It's great."