

BRIDGING THE

GAP

Through Knowledge, Education, Understanding & Insight

October / November 2008, Issue 12



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PUBLISHER

Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez

EDITORS

MSgt Paul Dion

Pam Makovicka

SFC Troy Redl

LaVonne Rosenthal

Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez

ASSISTANT EDITORS

Peggy Brown

Sharon Rezac

The SEP Group provides opportunities for positive exchange among diverse groups through community outreach, education and cultural diversity awareness.

GETTING THERE...

By LTC Michael Deger

Prior to writing this article on diversity, I was a bit challenged with determining what to say that might be of interest to the ever-growing audience of *Bridging the Gap* readers. Previous cover articles have focused on topics ranging from cultural differences found both at home and the work place, to the very unique and unusual deployment dynamics encountered during overseas deployments where international differences, beliefs and cultures vary broadly. Many of these previous articles have provided significant perspectives from which to derive ideas, opinions and feedback, ultimately lending additional direction for this article. Now having said this, it's still a bit challenging to place one's words and opinion on paper, particularly when addressing such a popular subject like diversity, but I'll give it a shot just the same...



For me, understanding the subject of diversity has been a process of *Getting There* and ultimately taking a self-measurement of my own willingness to understand what diversity means. I must admit, my limited knowledge of the topic several years ago focused primarily upon issues surrounding cultural and ethnic differences between people in a given setting or environment. Over time, however, I have expanded my awareness to understand that diversity really centers on recognizing that which is unique. Moreover, I believe building upon those characteristics of uniqueness to attain increased levels of success and satisfaction has and continues to be a primary

focus for me as a leader and manager.

I am proud to say that because of friends, co-workers and a few select mentors, I have recognized that there is indeed genuine value that comes from understanding differences in people's opinions and attitudes. Bottom-line: while I won't cite sources to impress readers with quantifiable data to support my position, I feel quite confident in telling you

that the subject of diversity is and continues to be an extremely important component from which to define organizational growth and development. If you buy into this premise, then how does each of us get to that place where we are recognizing unique differences in a manner which enables us to take action? My answer is to be a steward...

While I lack the statistical background and experience for measuring/sampling our organization (Nebraska Military Department) from the perspective of understanding diversity in the workplace, I continue to challenge myself both professionally and personally with the task of meaningful stewardship as a service member in the Nebraska National Guard. Stewardship has a number of definitions, but when applied to the subject of diversity, I feel the phrase; "taking responsibility for the survival and well-being of something that is valued" applies most fittingly. If we genuinely believe diversity has value, regardless of where it is discussed or practiced, then developing a drive and

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CHOICES OF THE JOURNEY

By Paul Ha Le

Paul Le spoke at the 2008 Asian-American Heritage Celebration event. This article is the first of several telling his family's story from March 1975 through their orientation into life in Omaha, Nebraska.



Paul Le and his Dad Hoa Quy Le

One of the most significant, yet commonly untold stories of the Vietnam war happened after April 30, 1975. That monumental day created over two million Vietnamese refugees with only a handful (over 100,000) making it to the United States. Each refugee has their own incredible story of escape. Although their struggles and journeys may be different, they share one common element: their choice for freedom. My story begins with one of many critical choices in my life: a choice my father had to make that would set the path for his family's freedom.

Most of the time when you hear about the Vietnam War, you hear about how it was a waste of time, and how SO many American lives were taken because of this war. It's a war that "we shouldn't be in" or a war that "we can't win." Yet there is another side to this war. There are many Vietnamese families with similar stories like mine, but yet so many of those go untold. So I want to share with you my family's story, about me and about our journey to America after the Vietnam War.

I was born in DaNang, Vietnam on March 7, 1975, just about two months before the fall of Saigon. My father was a chief criminal investigator for the military and was stationed at the United States Navy base on the shores of DaNang (on the north side of China Beach). About one month after I was born, in

early April, the escape plan was for my family to fly from DaNang to Saigon. However, my father decided to stay back in DaNang, primarily because he felt it was his duty to stay. Well, needless to say that didn't last too long. As soon as he stepped foot into the base where he worked, the Lieutenant (and close friend to him) told him he needed to "get out NOW." You see, if he was captured by the communists, he would most certainly go to a re-education camp, which meant slavery and torture, or he would have simply been killed like the hundreds of thousands of others that were imprisoned.



DaNang Navy Base

For his own safety, he was instructed to wait until that night to leave. However, that's exactly when the missiles from the communists began hitting the Navy base. As these large explosives began exploding onto the base, my father quickly ran to the dock to find whatever boat was available in order to flee the shore. The plan was to make his way to Saigon, where he would meet up with our family to complete the escape. As he was running, he was literally jumping over dead bodies, all casualties from the missile attack. There was shrapnel, debris, trees and boulders in his path. At one point a missile landed at what felt about fifteen yards away from him. It was so close that it almost knocked him to the ground and he immediately covered his head and laid in the fetal position, face down. He was awaiting his turn, just like all the other bodies around him. However, when the

explosion passed, he got up, in disbelief, eyes wide open, scanning over his arms, his chest, his body for any wounds, and surprisingly found NOT EVEN ONE scratch. Maybe this was a sign. He got up and ran across the dock and dove into the last transporter boat available.

He and about 90 other soldiers made it safely onto a transporter boat and set their course down the coastline of Vietnam to temporary safety. The communists were making their charge south and anyone trying to escape was fleeing south. The crew he was with proceeded to slowly maneuver down the coast, and after about a week, made it to Cam Ranh Harbor. From there he and a few of his partners found a driver to take them to a small military base in Phan Rang a few hours south of Cam Ranh Bay. There he would find another boat, about the size of a regular fishing boat and with about nine other military personnel, made their way down the coast line again toward Saigon. On their journey the weather was not about to cooperate.

It was night time and a tropical storm had arrived, making it very difficult to navigate. A few days went by, on a boat with limited water rationing, while the people on board were just trying to survive and make it somewhere safe.

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Bridging the Gap welcomes your submissions of article ideas and written articles.

To have your upcoming event published in Bridging the Gap, please notify us by November 3, 2008 for the December 2008/January 2009 issue.

All submissions, due October 13, 2008 for the above issue, will be considered for publication. We reserve the right to edit submitted material.

Please send your submission to Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez at m.schmidtrodriquez@us.army.mil



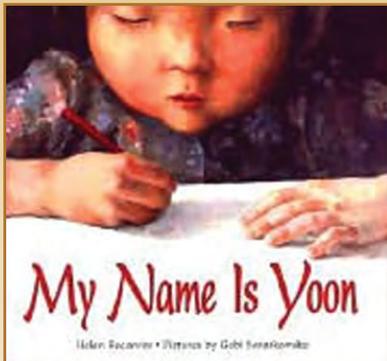
CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW: MY NAME IS YOON

Written by Helen Recorvits, Illustrated by Gabi Swiatkowska;

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Published: April 2003

Book Review by Denise Anderson

While returning my daughter's almost overdue library books, I decided to pick out some new ones for her. While selecting out the Rigby Reader Books she likes, I found a wonderful new book to read called *My Name is Yoon*.



This book is about a little girl who moves from Korea to the United States. Her name means Shining Wisdom and she loves to write it in Korean because it looks happy and the symbols dance. She thinks her name in English, which is made from just lines and circles, looks as if the letters are all alone, which is how she feels in this country. Her father

tells her that this is her home and she needs to know how to spell her name in English. Yoon isn't sure she wants to be Yoon anymore.

On the first day of school her teacher explains the word "CAT" to the class and Yoon decides she will change her name

to Cat. On the second day her teacher explains the word "BIRD" and Yoon then decides she will change her name to Bird. On the third day she meets a little girl with pigtails who gives her a cupcake and she decides she will change her name to Cupcake. She has finally made a friend and decides she likes America, and starts to write her name Yoon in English. The

last two sentences of the book are, "I write my name in English now. It still means Shining Wisdom."

The pictures in the book are beautifully done and quite expressive. Personally I believe my daughters would have a hard time moving anywhere because they are so familiar with their home and neighborhood, and they do not do well with change. Yoon is a very courageous little girl because she moves from Korea to the United States and must learn a new language. This is extremely hard to do for anyone especially for someone so young. I asked my daughters Anna and Emma what they thought of the book. Anna said she liked the book and wanted to know how to write her name in Korean and Emma took the book to bed and read it for herself. Quite a ringing endorsement.



Choices of the Journey Continued from Page 2

To further their hardships, the massive storm caused the ship's rudder to break, basically rendering the boat inoperable and at the mercy of the sea. During this rainy, windy storm, my father sat on the edge of the boat and looked up only to see a dark wave, about thirty feet high, hovering over their boat, ready to take more casualties into its powerful jaws. It was then my father told himself, "I am ready to die, and I accept my fate." However, his divine angel was not ready to let him go. Somehow, some way, the wave swept back down and underneath the boat. Maybe it was another sign; but the water was still treacherous, leaving some of the crew in a panic. One of the soldiers had a grenade in his hand, and he shouted that "This is not the way to die! We should die quickly in honor!" So he raised his arm, with his grenade in his hand and before he could pull the pin, one of the other soldiers grabbed his arm and several others seized him before he could seal their fate. Luckily, there was a supply bag on the boat, which contained a flare gun they

shot in the air in hopes that someone would spot them.

Moments later, two Special Forces rescue boats from a nearby island called Mui Ne, saw the flare and came out to tow my father's boat to shore. As his boat reached closer to the shore, my father saw a campfire and he jumped out, wading through the water, trying to reach land. The closer he got the more exhausted he became. He finally crawled to the fire where others like him surrounded the pit. He collapsed with his face into the ground, passing out. Two soldiers helped him to his feet as he came to and when he realized there was fresh water he knew there was hope.

At this point my father had one thing on his mind...he needed coffee. He and his crew searched the island for anything they could find. He finally found an old canvas filter and used it to make, after what he had been through, the "best" coffee he had ever tasted in his life. They also found some siding that was used for roofing houses, as a way to protect them from the rain and flooding. So they laid

the siding up against the large boulders as shelter and then fell asleep standing underneath it because they didn't want to drown from the flooding if they laid down, and they didn't want to get drenched from the rainfall.

Thankfully, about two days later there was a Navy vessel that arrived at the island and picked up nearly 100 people, including my father. That large vessel took the passengers south to the city of Vung Tau, about 120 miles away from Saigon. An hour later my father finally reached us in Saigon, and we all were able to breathe. It had taken my father two weeks to reach us in Saigon. Everyday during those two weeks, my concerned mother would go to the main military base in Saigon and check to see if my father had arrived. Everyday, they basically told her to assume that he, like many others, was presumed dead. There was no way that would be a good enough answer for her. He was finally there with us, ready to continue the journey that began with the big decision that changed the path of our lives forever... 



PART 2: BECOMING CITIZENS OF THE WORLD – ONE COUNTRY AT A TIME! CUSTOMS IN GERMANY

By Colonel Roma Amundson



The second article in our series on unique customs and courtesies of different countries is Germany. To remind us of Socrates' statement quoted in the previous article about the Czech Republic, he said, "I am not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world." His statement really came to the forefront when we experienced the recent Olympics in China. Citizens of the world came to watch and marvel at the feats of highly trained athletes.

If there was ever a moment when citizens of the world were unified in one thought, it was at this time with this one unifying thought -- "Would Phelps beat Spitz's record of eight gold medals?" When he did, people around the world rejoiced with him and acknowledged his amazing achievement! When the Romanian gymnast edged out the United States' young 16-year-old girl in the floor events, there were nevertheless congratulatory hugs from all the competitors as they walked off the floor. Finally, when Horton achieved a silver medal in the high bar gymnastics event, a German

gymnast came over and gave him a handshake and pat on the back.

Germany is a country that many people have visited and because many of us have a Germanic heritage, it is a country in which many of us feel comfortable when we travel there. Yet there are differences in the ways of doing things that we should understand in order to improve our relationships while there.

Business Practices

- In Germany, the dates are written as day/month/year. For example, October 1, 2008, would be written 1.10.08.
- Although English is widely spoken in Germany, many businesses prefer to conduct discussions in German, which is a normal expectation. Inquire in advance so that you will be prepared with an interpreter.
- As a courtesy, make appointments well in advance. Allow two weeks notice for an appointment made by telephone and four weeks for appointments made by mail.
- Address business letters to the firm, not to individual executives. Germans usually take at least four weeks of vacation per year, and if your letter is addressed to an individual who is on vacation, you won't be getting a quick response.
- If two Germans sign a business letter, this indicates that both of them make decisions and that both must agree on the decision.
- Avoid scheduling appointments on Friday afternoons,

and be aware that the preferred times for business appointments are between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. or between 3:00 and 5:00 p.m.

- Remember that little work is accomplished during regional festivals, such as Oktoberfest or the three day carnival before Lent.
- Work and personal lives are strictly divided and are subject to serious planning. If you take work home from the office, this indicates to others that you failed to plan your day properly. You are expected to finish your work at the office.

Negotiating

- Decision-making occurs more slowly than in the United States. Slow, methodical planning with the involvement of many executives is the practice. Every aspect of the deal you propose will be pored over by many executives.
- While Germans promote punctuality, they do not extend it to delivery dates. Products may be delivered late with neither explanation nor apology.
- Germans converse longer than we would do in the United States before getting down to business. Talk about

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*Customs in Germany Continued from Page 4*

your flight, accommodations, your impressions of the country, etc. before turning to business. Sports, such as soccer, ice hockey, hiking, cycling and music are excellent small talk topics.

- Business is serious. Germans do not appreciate humor in a business context.
- Privacy is very important to Germans. Always knock on a closed door and wait to be admitted.
- Germans tend to like more distance between people than do Americans. Positioning of furniture tends to reflect this. Do not move your chair closer to the executive. Rearranging a German's office furniture is highly insulting.

Business Entertaining

- Although business lunches are becoming more common due to American influence, be aware that business may be discussed before and after a meal, but rarely during it. Breakfast meetings do not occur.
- If you are invited out, you may offer to pay, but expect your host to decline your offer. If you have made the invitation, insist on paying.
- Germans do not often entertain business associates in their homes. If you are invited to a home, consider it a great honor.
- Always use utensils when eating. Very

few items are eaten with the hands, so plan to slice up your sandwich (belegtes Brot) and eat it with a fork.

- Cut as much food with the fork as possible, as this compliments the cook by indicating the food is tender.
- Follow the lead of the hostess, let her place her napkin in her lap before you do.
- Finish everything on your plate.
- Do not cut your dinner rolls; break them apart by hand.
- Table manners are Continental – the fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating.
- Do not cut lettuce in a salad. Fold it using your knife and fork.
- Arrive on time and never arrive early.
- Never arrive more than fifteen minutes late. If you are going to be late, telephone to let the host know that you will be delayed.
- The host gives the first toast. With wine, the toast is "Zum Wohl!" with beer, it is "Prost," both meaning "Good health!"

Greetings

- Always shake hands when introduced and always shake hands upon arriving or departing from any meeting.
- Never keep your left hand in your pocket while shaking hands with your right.

Titles/Forms of Address

- Most business people you meet will prefer to be called by their title or surname.
- Traditionally, only family members and close friends address each other by their first names. You may never establish a close enough relationship with your German colleague to get to a first name basis.
- When speaking to persons who do not have professional titles, use Mr., Mrs., or Miss. and the surname. Mr. = Herr; Mrs. or Ms. = Frau; Miss. = Fraulein.
- Fraulein is used only for very young women (under age 18). Any

businesswoman you meet should be addressed as Frau whether she is married or not.

- It is very important to use professional titles, as Germans respect education very much. Be sure to know the correct professional title, e.g. Herr Professor Schmidt.

Gestures

- To get someone's attention, raise your hand, palm facing out, with only the index finger extended. Avoid waving or beckoning.
- Germans tend to get quite close to one another on the street before offering a greeting. Only the young and the impolite wave or shout at each other from a distance.
- Don't talk to someone with your hands in your pockets or while chewing gum.
- However, expect rude gestures and comments from drivers, as Germans are dangerously manic and obsessed with their right to drive fast. They love their cars!! Germans can be extremely impatient and aggressive drivers. Difficulties or delays in negotiating for a parking spot, reacting to a green light or permitting pedestrians to pass can send Germans into a tail spin!

Gifts

- Appropriate gifts include good-quality pens, pocket calculators, cigarette lighters and imported wine or liquor.
- When giving flowers, the flowers should be unwrapped and an uneven number of flowers (but NOT 13). Red roses are reserved for romantic situations and calla lilies are for funerals. Even numbers of flowers are reserved for funerals. Heather should





Customs in Germany Continued from Page 5



Traditional Dancing in Westphalia, Germany

never be included in a bouquet in Northern Germany, as it is often planted on graves and is deemed to bring bad luck to a household if it is brought into the home.

- Gifts are opened when presented.

Dress

- When going out for the evening, a German is more likely to dress up than an American counterpart, even if the event is simply a concert or dinner. Business wear is appropriate for most formal social events such as parties, dinners and the theater.
- Business dress tends to be conservative; businessmen wear dark suits, ties and white shirts, and businesswomen dress in dark suits or dresses and white blouses. Khaki and seersucker are not acceptable.
- Women dress conservatively in dark suits and white blouses.
- Follow the lead of your German colleague with regard to removing your jacket or tie in hot weather; do not be surprised if he/she remains fully dressed in sweltering heat.
- Casual wear is essentially the same as in the United States. Most German men wear sandals (and socks) during the summer.

Nice/unusual-things-to-know:

- Move quickly through the checkout line at the supermarket. The cashier will start swiping the next customer's stuff through, even though you may not have yours all packed. Remember that Germany is a "time-dominated" culture.
- Although eye contact during introductions is serious and direct, do not expect direct eye contact to initiate conversation between strangers. Germans are not cold and unfriendly; they just don't initiate conversation as readily as we Americans do.
- Although Germany is usually a very formal, law-obeying society, pushing and shoving and other displays of impatience in lineups are not uncommon.
- Queuing and waiting your turn are not strong traits in present day Germany. You may observe people butting into line ahead of you.

Sources

Morrison, Conaway, Borden. Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands, Adams Media Corporation, 57 Littlefield Street, Avon, Massachusetts, 1999. pp. 75-82.

COL Roma Amundson, J7, former student and tour guide in Germany.

*Getting There... by LTC Michael Deger
Continued from Page 1*

passion for supporting it becomes far more than palatable, but rather quite tasty! Conversely, if it is one's position that diversity is simply another politically correct (PC) term that must be endorsed as important in public but practiced in private when convenient, then the entire concept is quite notional at best.

How do we get there when we aren't quite sure where we are going? I have asked myself this question in the past and typically arrive at the same answer each time. My conclusion simply put: the path is different for each of us. Whether you make a self-assessment of your own or welcome feedback from others, each of us must determine the relevance of diversity in our lives and no amount of training, emphasis or persuasion will bring about true awareness if it is at the expense of personal and professional beliefs. My recommendation is to start with the basic premise that everyone has value and move to the action of knowing what to do once you have recognized it. Failure to recognize value more than likely resides in the hands of the assessor, so work harder to find the seam that leads to that something special in each of us. Like data-mining, these seams of value render the kind of nuggets that open doors to cooperative endeavors and shared ideas and this is where the appreciation for differences can flourish!

To date, I am still in the process of *Getting There* and writing this article has been just one more step towards arriving at a place where I can say, I get it, I believe it and I mean it. As readers, I would challenge similar thoughts of self-assessment and buy-in, because organizational emphasis for a concept that is hollow in the minds of its members will likely remain empty in the words of its mission statement. Ultimately, I believe each of us must make a conscious decision to get involved whenever possible with a focus on the stewardship of recognizing that differences have both value and capacity within our organization. If we can achieve this mentality, then personal and organizational growth and satisfaction are clearly a vision that becomes reality.



PART 1: A SHORT HISTORY OF NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES IN NEBRASKA

By Peggy Brown

This is the first of two articles outlining the history of Native American tribes in Nebraska.

In the June/July issue of the newsletter, I did a trivia article titled "How Well Do You Know Nebraska." As I am not a native Nebraskan, I received an education on the history of Nebraska and how the Native American cultures have influenced the present day landscape.

Normally, I would not volunteer to write beyond the trivia and recipe articles that I do for each issue, but I decided that I wanted to share a small part of the Native American story in Nebraska.

History is most often defined as the written record of a time period. Tribal groups, however, preserved their cultures through an oral tradition – stories told and passed on from generation to generation; occasionally through pictorial records – paintings on hides or pictograms on rocks.

It is during the late 1500's and early 1600's that, for the first time in the archeological record, we recognize cultural complexities that ultimately gave rise to the historic tribes we still know today. During the period from 1500 to 1850, people moved into, through and out of the Nebraska region. Archaeology and historical documents now give us a better understanding of historic tribes including the Omaha, Ioway, Oto-Missouria, Sioux, Cheyenne, Pawnee and Arapaho.

The Lower Loup cultural group left an impressive archaeological record in Nebraska. Many village ruins remain along the Lower Loup and Platte River valleys from Howard County to Saunders County. Lower Loup groups raised maize (corn), beans and squash. Their gardens or farms were tended by the women. They lived much of the year in villages with large circular earthlodges. Hunts were planned once the crops were planted and then they returned to the village in time for the harvest. A winter hunt was planned after the harvest in late fall.



Pawnee Earthlodge

The economic patterns and the pottery, tools and other materials they produced strongly suggest the Lower Loup culture descended into the Pawnee.

The Pawnee was one of the earliest Native American tribes to be described in the European historical record, and they were one of the largest groups to live and roam across the territory. The Pawnee all spoke a Caddo language, which is very different than the language of other Nebraska tribes. They were divided into four individual bands - the Chaui or Grand Band, the Kitkehahki or Republican, the Pirahauerat or Tappage and the Skidi or Wolf.

Contrary to what many people think a Native American village would look like, the earliest descriptions of the Pawnee indicate they lived in earthlodges. These earthlodges were circular with the floor dug slightly below the surrounding ground level. There were four or more central posts holding up the roof rafters. The framework was covered by earth. There was a central smoke hole in the roof with a fireplace directly below and a covered entrance that usually extended to the east or southeast. On the west side an altar was built on which a sacred bison skull usually rested. The lodges were

constructed by the women of the tribe. The women were also responsible for planting, cultivating and harvesting the gardens that surrounded the villages.

The Pawnee were one of the most religious tribes on the plains. At the head of their deities stood Tirawa, the creator of the universe. Tirawa was a purely spiritual being and had other heavenly gods helping him and guarding the people. These heavenly gods were identified with stars. The most important were the Morning and Evening Stars, which represented the male and female principles in Pawnee religion. Other gods were earth gods and they were, for the most part, identified with animals. Earth gods were the special guardians of individuals and secret societies.

The Pawnee were also the most populous tribe to live in Nebraska and they lived here longer than any other group. It was estimated that there were about 10,000 Pawnee living in Nebraska by 1800.

Early in the 1800's, their good fortune began to change as smallpox and other diseases, for which they had no immunity, reduced their numbers by half. Their villages on the Loup River were being raided by the nomadic Lakota (Sioux). Ultimately they gave up most of their lands in Nebraska and many eventually moved to a reservation in Oklahoma.

The Redbird culture in northeastern Nebraska left an archaeological record similar to the Lower Loup culture (Pawnee). The



Pawnee Warrior

Native American Tribes Continued from Page 7

Redbird sites were made up of smaller villages and the pottery was of a slightly different style. Ponca and Omaha oral history suggests that the Redbird people immigrated into northeastern Nebraska in about 1700. Some archaeologists maintain that evidence shows the Redbird culture descended into the Ponca. Others feel they are more likely ancestral to the Pawnee. With that being said, it is difficult to determine what the ethnic identification of the Redbird phase was with any degree of certainty.

Another group to settle in the northeastern part of Nebraska was the Oneota culture. It is believed they were also closely related to the Redbird and Lower Loup cultures. Unfortunately, very little work has been done on this culture in Nebraska and little can be said about their settlement patterns. The Oneota culture probably contributed to the development of the Ponca, Omaha and Oto tribes in Nebraska.

The Omaha and Ponca Native American tribes are closely related. Both speak a language called the Dhegiha division of the Siouan language. They spoke a language that was similar to that spoken by several tribes that lived further south – the Osage, Kansa and Quapaw tribes.



Omaha

These language facts and historical stories told within the tribes suggest that all of these groups were part of one tribe that once lived near the mouth of the Ohio River. The name Omaha is generally interpreted to mean “those going against

the current.” Oral tradition has it that one group moved downstream from the Ohio and became known as the Quapaw. The second group moved up the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. By the mid-1700’s they had settled along the Missouri River in villages that stretched from the mouth of the Platte to the Cheyenne River in what is now South Dakota. This group became known as the Omaha tribe.

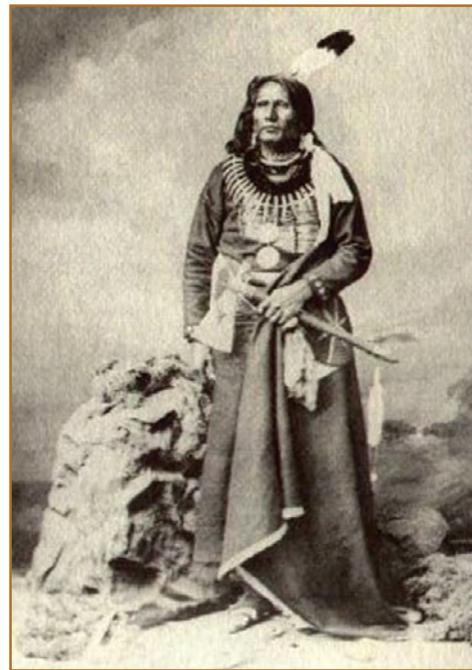
After Nebraska became a territory, the Omaha settled on a reservation in Thurston County. Many in the tribe felt the best way to survive was to adopt the outward appearance of the white peoples’ world. The LaFlesche family shared this view. Susan LaFlesche became the first Indian female physician. Her sister Susette (Bright Eyes) LaFlesche* played a major role in the trial of Standing Bear in 1879.**

It is also said that the Omaha and Ponca tribes quarreled, causing the Ponca to break away from the group and form a new group that settled along the Niobrara River. The Ponca faced difficult



Omaha

photos, documents, letters, video



Standing Bear

times in the 1800’s and eventually lost most of their land in Nebraska. They were forced to live on a reservation in Oklahoma. In 1875, Ponca Chief Standing Bear was involved in one of the most important legal struggles over the rights of the Indian people.

This is just a brief overview describing some of the history of the Native American tribes that settled in Nebraska. The website www.nebraskastudies.org offers teachers, students and history buffs access to archival

segments, maps and much more. This website captures the life and history of Nebraska from pre-1500 to the present.

You can also learn more about the other Native American tribes that lived in Nebraska by visiting www.accessgenealogy.com/native/nebraska/index.htm.

*http://www.nebraskastudies.org/0600/frameset_reset.html?

http://www.nebraskastudies.org/0600/stories/0601_0107.html

**http://www.poncacity.com/history/bits/ponca_chief.htm; <http://www.geocities.com/pegmibedu/standingbear.html>



2008 VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES HELD IN OMAHA

By LaVonne Rosenthal

Omaha was bustling with activity July 25 to 29, as it hosted the 28th National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Disabled veterans came from across the United States, Puerto Rico and Great Britain to compete in this annual event. More than 500 veterans with disabilities took part in competitive sports such as basketball, swimming, track, weightlifting, softball, bowling, handcycling, wheelchair slalom and power soccer. A kid's day was also held on July 27th where local children with disabilities met the athletes and learned about wheelchair sports.

I was able to assist at the welcome center

It was ability that mattered, not disability, which is a word I'm not crazy about using.

Marlee Matlin

on Friday the 25th. This entailed waiting for someone to ask a question and direct them to the right place.

While watching the crowd, one of my co-volunteers commented to a young man in a wheelchair who was working with us that most of the wheelchair veterans passing by were smiling and laughing. The young man replied that it was because they were in the majority during this weekend and they found many friends from past events that they had formed bonds with. This gave many an opportunity to reach out to others and to test their own abilities that have been impacted by spinal cord injuries, amputations or neurological problems.

In addition to my work at the welcome

booth, over 40 National Guard members provided support to the wheelchair games. Some of their support came through greeting veterans at the airport, assisting them in getting into and out of buses at various locations and providing escorts. The 43rd Army Band also performed during opening ceremonies at the Qwest Center. According to Brigadier General Timothy J. Kadavy, The Adjutant General for Nebraska, "Being able to support these games is a great opportunity for the Nebraska National Guard to show our support to our great disabled veterans who have given so very much to our nation so that all Americans can enjoy the freedoms we do today."

As the veterans returned home, many of them were looking forward to next year's events with the challenges and possibilities of competing and winning a gold medal. 

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIVIA

Compiled By Peggy Brown

- What region was the Cherokee from?
 - Eastern Woodland
 - Southeast
 - Plains
 - Great Basin
- Which tribe was the first to have a written history?
 - Navajo
 - Cherokee
 - Sioux
 - Kiowa
- What region was the Potawatomi from?
 - Sub-arctic
 - Eastern Woodland
 - Plains
 - Southwest
- Who originated the term "Indian"?
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Amerigo Vespucci
 - Christopher Columbus
 - George Catlin
- What revered animal was essential for the survival of many Native American tribes on the Plains?
 - Salmon
 - Pronghorn Antelope
 - Elk
 - Buffalo
- Which tribe is known for their Kachina dolls?
 - Kiowa
 - Navajo
 - Hopi
 - Apache
- What region was the Labrador Inuit from?
 - Sub-arctic
 - Southeast
 - Northwest
 - Plateau
- What region was the Yokuts from?
 - Great Basin
 - Southwest
 - East Woodland
 - West Coast
- The tradition of making fry bread originated on reservations.
 - True
 - False
- What region was the Shoshone from?
 - Southeast
 - West Coast
 - Great Basin
 - Eastern Woodland

RESTAURANT REVIEW: VINCENZO'S RISTORANTE ITALIANO

808 P Street, Haymarket, Lincoln, Nebraska; 402-435-3889

By MSgt Paul Dion

Since the Special Emphasis Program group started the restaurant review articles in the *Bridging the Gap* publication I was eager to contribute an article. I chose Vincenzo's Ristorante Italiano in the Haymarket as the restaurant for my article. I enjoy Italian food very much but don't take many opportunities to actually go out and sit down at a nice restaurant and indulge. I will openly admit this is not my first time at Vincenzo's. Whenever my wife and I have the craving for some delicious Italian food we choose Vincenzo's. Not only is the food wonderful but the atmosphere is elegant and romantic yet casual at the same time. I can only guess that the décor is a reflection of Old Italy. The service is outstanding, too. We were immediately seated and our food came fast and hot.

Neither my wife nor I are wine drinkers, so I am not able to provide any information about their wine list other than the fact that there are a lot of choices. As with most reputable Italian restaurants, there is plenty of variety in their wines.

Our meal started with an appetizer called Pane



Pane Pomodoro

Pomodoro which is a simple thin crusted flatbread topped with olive oil and garlic, provel cheese, scallions and sun dried tomatoes, and served with sun dried tomato pesto. If you like pesto and garlic look no further, you will love this appetizer.

I could have eaten the tomato pesto all by itself; it will make your mouth water. Most meals come with a house salad and fresh baked rolls. I could easily fill up on just the salad and rolls. The rolls came in handy while I was eating the rest of the tomato pesto.

There are so many delicious sounding items on the menu it was very difficult to decide what to have. The menu consists of many different pasta dishes, shrimp dishes, salmon dishes, baked pasta, chicken, pork, veal, steak, salads and even pizza. I can't imagine an Italian restaurant without pizza. And of course they have very delectable desserts. Most items on the menu are reasonably priced, at least to me, except the steak. All of the steak dishes are \$22.95,

but I'm sure they are well worth the price.

I chose my usual favorite, the Penne Bolognese Fiorno, which consists of pepperoni and spicy Italian sausage sautéed in cabernet and sugo sauce then tossed with penne pasta and baked with provel and parmigiana cheese. If you like your food slightly spicy you will like this dish. I was very close to choosing "The Hill" which they claim is for big eaters. If you like linguine, mostaccioli, cheese tortellini with Italian sausage and meatballs then this is the dish for you. I wanted to save room for dessert, especially since I had already eaten a salad, rolls and an appetizer. My wife ordered the Fettuccine Alfredo con Pollo. She loves fettuccine alfredo and is never disappointed at Vincenzo's. I could give or take fettuccine alfredo but this particular dish is very tasty. As I mentioned earlier, there are so many tasty sounding dishes on the menu I'm afraid

I am going to have to go back quite a few times to try different dishes, but I'm willing to do it for the greater cause of our Air and Army Guard personnel.



Baked Lombardi

The desserts are not disappointing either. I have tried several of the desserts and enjoyed them all. They have Italian gelato on the dessert menu, which is like ice cream only much, much better. This is my daughter's favorite and it doesn't matter what flavor as long as it's gelato. Their crème brulee is so good, I have not had a crème brulee that even comes close. But my absolute favorite dessert at Vincenzo's is the Giau Mia; I'm sure I spelled it wrong. It is a caramel,

Continued on Page 20



LET'S TALK ABOUT THE OBVIOUS!

By *COL Roma Amundson*

As members of the Nebraska Military Department we can take pride in the fact that the military is one of the most inclusive of all organizations in the good ol' USA. Military people really DO focus on recognizing and respecting the time-honored protected classes such as race, ethnicity, gender, marital status, age, physical capability, religion and familial organizations. We use these categories to determine if equal opportunity exists in the employment field and if discriminatory practices are found in the workplace. If we find a lack of equal opportunity and/or the presence of discriminatory practices, we swing into action to remedy the situation and bring it back into "compliance."

While discussing these categories, a brainstorm suddenly occurred to me, which sometimes happens at my age (remember, I've been in the Nebraska National Guard (NENG) for 30 years!). While these time-honored categories point to the main focus of equal opportunity and discriminatory practices, I think other categories exist within the military workplace that maybe we don't see or recognize as "classifications." One category applies to the employment status of the military members of the NENG such as technicians, Active Guard and Reserve (AGR), traditional, federal and state civilian employees and contractors. Additionally, rank is a type of classification inherent to the military, and is expected to be strictly observed with respect given to the position, as well as the person. In short we may be missing obvious categories within the Nebraska Military Department, and I respectfully bring this to your attention.

Why do I do this respectfully? I have tremendous respect for all of the employees within the Nebraska Military Department, and I believe that we are a very close-knit group of people who support and help one another in our work. This work is directed to a common goal – to provide the organization, the state and the nation the best service



Front Row: WO1 Robrenna Redl (Traditional), Denise Anderson (Air Guard - Traditional), COL (P) Roma Amundson (Officer - Traditional), Kari Holman (State Civilian), Peggy Brown (Contract Employee) Back Row: OC Rafael Lantigua, Jr. (Enlisted), Pam Makovicka (Federal Civilian), ILT Juan Vidal (Officer - Full-Time)

that we possibly can. If you look at your own families, each member is a little different, maybe in focus, interest, skills and capabilities. Each member does, nevertheless, bring valuable assets to the whole. Differing perspectives make the aggregate stronger.

Let me ask you this question: Have you ever heard a negative or disparaging comment directed to an entire group of employees within the Nebraska Military Department -- to the Army Guard, Air Guard, Traditional, AGR, technicians, contractors, federal and state civilian employees, officers, enlisted and/or warrant officers – and said nothing to contradict that generalization? That generalization could potentially affect how an entire group of people is viewed by others, and as a result, is discriminatory in practice if not in intent.

If you're honest, I daresay that your answer is "yes," because I have heard a comment or two in my 30+ years within the NENG, and that, my friends, is the reason for this article. I feel compelled to point out the richness of the human potential and experiences existing within all groups engaged in the Nebraska Military Department.

We are a unique group of military members and civilians, all affected by differing regulations and budget

restrictions and with our employment status determining specific objectives and missions. These differences bring a type of "checks and balances" to the whole system where internal monitoring occurs. To illustrate what I mean, maybe the military wants to buy something, but the federal and/or state regulations and budgets don't allow it, and the military is told "No." In short, then, the military is being kept in check by the system's restraints exercised on it by another entity within the military department.

To say it again, the Nebraska Military Department has an overall mission – to offer its resources in terms of manpower and material to support the organization, the State of Nebraska and the United States of America. That's a pretty big mission, and no one group of employees within the Military Department can do it all alone. We need each other, and because of that need, we must recognize and work with the variances in restrictions and interpretations of law, resources and capabilities. We're all human, and sometimes we say things that we really don't mean. Just as in your own family, sometimes you say things that are hurtful and then you're sorry afterwards. So it is in our organization; sometimes frustrations just slip out, and once verbalized, the comments can't be taken back.

We are all unique members of the Nebraska Military Department; we all share the same overall goal, and so it follows that we should be focused on building one another up and supporting one another. Let's be thoughtful about the manner in which we discuss the various categories of rank and employment status and be conscious of the contributions each member brings to the whole organization.

Thank you ALL for your service to the Nebraska Military Department, the State of Nebraska and the United States of America! 

GERMAN-AMERICANS, AN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

By COL Roma Amundson

In 1980, when the United States Bureau of the Census asked people about their ethnic heritage, Americans chose from more than 100 groups. While the ethnic group with the largest response to this census was English (49.6 million), the second largest group was German with 49.2 million people responding that they were of German descent.

The contributions of German immigrants over the course of our nation's history are unfathomable in scope, when one considers their influence in music, art, dance, science, education, literature and social concerns. As all immigrants do, Germans brought new ways of doing things and inserted new customs into their surroundings. The new ways are now considered part of "The American Way."

For example, Germans built the first log cabins in the middle Atlantic in colonial America and demonstrated the way they built cabins in the German forests. They cut a V-notch and fit the logs together, then filled the cracks with cement. This became the custom.

Christmas has many German traditions, from the Tannenbaum (Christmas tree), Kris Kringle (Santa Claus) and wonderful German carols.

Picnic food is chiefly German in origin – frankfurters, hamburgers, sauerkraut and potato salad. And let's not forget "bier" and "wein" – two beverages that were "must-haves" when the Germans came to America.

There's no way all the contributions can be condensed into a single article, so let's focus on some specific individuals and their contributions to our nation.



On the Principle of Free Speech: John Peter Zenger came to New York City in 1710 and was apprenticed to the printer, William Bradford. Zenger rose from apprentice to paid

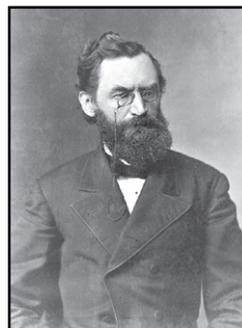
employee to partner, and eventually, in 1733, established the colony's first independent newspaper in which he criticized everything that the British government did. In 1735 he went on trial for his "radical" viewpoints about the British. Because of his lawyer Andrew Hamilton's impassioned defense of him, it was affirmed that the criticism of public officials, if true, is not illegal.



Mencken

On the Power of the Press: Henry Louis Mencken set a standard for American journalists through his wit, intelligence and ability to expose any subject or personage. He wrote books on democracy, philosophy and religion, as well as a book of poetry and many volumes of memoirs and diaries. His most famous work was *The American Language*, which was an unsurpassed study of the American culture and language.

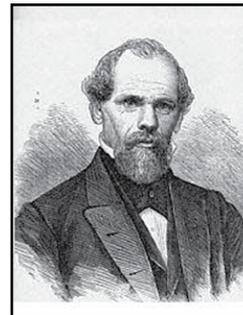
In Scientific Disciplines: Abraham Jacobi is considered the originator of the profession of pediatry. Bernard Eduard Fernow introduced the practice of forestry and wilderness conservation. Franz Boas' work spurred on further development of the science of anthropology through his teachings at Columbia University.



Carl Schurz

In Politics and the Military: Carl Schurz became involved in American politics through his commitment to securing justice for Black Americans. He became involved in American politics through opposing slavery. He campaigned for Abraham Lincoln, was appointed an ambassador to Spain and later counseled President Lincoln on how to avoid foreign intervention in the Civil War. He

became a brigadier general of volunteer Union troops. He was totally devoted to the causes of political reform, social improvements and conservation, and in 1869 became the first German-born citizen to be elected to the Senate. He organized the Bureau of Indian Affairs, set up educational programs for the young Indians and instituted a policy to conserve forests and lands.



Roebling



Brooklyn Bridge

In Construction: John Augustus Roebling emigrated in 1831, and in 1837, became an engineer for the State of Pennsylvania. He became a builder of suspension bridges, the most famous of these being the Brooklyn Bridge which is considered to be the most graceful span ever built. In 1983, New Yorkers celebrated the centennial of this massive structure.



Frankenburg

Margarethe Meyer Schurz receives the honor. The idea of private kindergartens spread across the United States, and by 1873, their value in the education of young children was ascertained and marked by the first kindergarten opening in a public school.



Schurz

Continued on Page 13



German Americans Continued from Page 12

On the Brain Gain: Educators and other professionals in Nazi Germany came to the United States to escape persecution. They formed a very prominent group of highly educated men and women that became known as the “Brain Gain” to the United States from Europe. They contributed to every discipline within the United States.



Albers

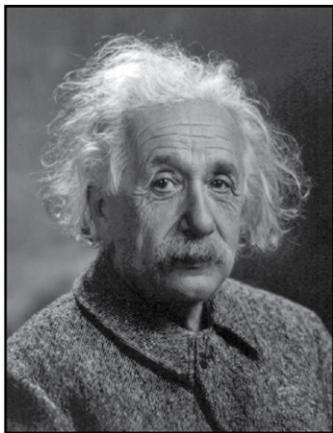
Josef Albers was an artist and educator who came from Germany in 1934. He taught at Yale University with a focus on color theory, the intensity of pigments and how they function.

Walter Gropius was a designer, architect and educator who asked his students to consider the social implications of architecture. He founded the Bauhaus, the house of building.



Gropius

Albert Einstein helped to harness atomic power which led to the success of the American war effort. He became a strong advocate for the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. He, of course, is remembered also for his theory of relativity which altered the way physicists thought about time and space. As an educator, he promoted free thinking, encouraging his students to “think out of the



Einstein

box.” His achievements allowed him to be selected as a Nobel Prize winner.

Werner von Braun came as a willing prisoner of war to the United States in 1945 under the program of “Project Paperclip,” the purpose of which was to persuade German scientists to come to the United States. His lifelong interest was developing a rocket that could



von Braun

And finally, for all of us in the Nebraska National Guard, how can we forget Dwight D. Eisenhower? Although not an immigrant himself, Eisenhower came from German stock who settled in Kansas. His career as an Army officer and later as President of the United States is a clear indication of the deep impact German-Americans have had on the history of the United States.

This is only a brush stroke, and a thin one at that, of the magnitude of the contributions German-Americans have made to our nation. Check out the books written on German Americans and their contributions.



Eisenhower

These were two that I read:

Adams, Willi Paul. The German Americans, An Ethnic Experience. Max Kade German-American Center, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN, 1993.

Galicich, Anne. The German Americans. Chelsea House Publishers, New York, 1996.

http://inventors.about.com/od/nstartinventions/a/Nuclear_Fission.htm

fly to the moon. His work and that of colleagues resulted in the first United States satellite being put in orbit in 1958. He later devised the launch vehicle for the Apollo space program.

J. Robert Oppenheimer, son of German-Jewish immigrants, headed up the Manhattan Project which led to the development of an explosive based on nuclear fission.



Oppenheimer

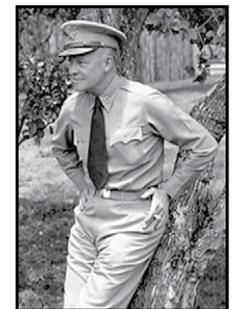
Hedy Lamarr, often called the most beautiful woman in film, was one of the most popular actresses during the 1940's and 1950's. Born Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler in 1913, she starred in her first film in 1930, “Geld Auf der Strasse.” Married to a Nazi



Lamarr

sympathizer, she left him after four years because of his involvement with the Nazis, went to England, and later signed a contract with MGM. She changed her name to Hedy Lamarr and played opposite such actors as Spencer Tracy, Clark Gable and Jimmy Stewart. She also patented an idea that later became the crutch of both secure

military communications and mobile phone technology, leading to our present cell phone industry. She is known as the most beautiful woman in film as well as one of the most interesting and intelligent women in the movie industry.



Eisenhower



ISLAMIC CENTER OF OMAHA SUMMER PICNIC - 09L PROGRAM

By 1LT Juan Francisco Vidal

The North African, Middle Eastern and Southwest Asia Communities are a close-knit community whose access is generally guarded by community leaders and influencers. Therefore, on July 5, 2008 for the first time the foundation was laid to build a strong relationship with the Muslim Community in Omaha and Lincoln. This step was supporting the Islamic Center of Omaha (ICO) with their Annual Summer Picnic, which took place at Zorinsky Lake Park, Omaha.

The importance of this picnic was to raise awareness and build positive perception of the

Nebraska Army National Guard (NEARNG) and the Language and Cultural Specialist Program (09L) with Middle Eastern communities, as well as bridging the cultural gap between target communities and the NEARNG. Establishing channels of communication, building relationships and developing trust with the community will help promote a positive image of the 09L program with target communities, as well as enhance 09L marketing and advertising strategies.

The 09L program is the newest and one of the most diverse Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) in the Army National Guard. The majority of the Soldiers being recruited for cultural and translator duties are native-born, or from first generation, usually native speakers of North African, Middle Eastern and Southwest Asia languages and dialects. The 09L program will provide the NEARNG with soldiers



having valuable skill-sets including

language and cultural expertise. These soldiers will directly strengthen the NEARNG's ability to effectively operate and successfully complete missions in locations where English may not be the language of the community. 09Ls are a vital asset to units deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq, and have repeatedly proven their effectiveness in the field. Whether it be briefing and advising leadership on culture and traditions of local populations, translating important documents, day-to-day interpreting of conversations from target languages to English and vice versa, teaching unit Soldiers basic language skills or educating troops on local cultural nuances, customs, traditions and religions, the 09L is there, ensuring maximum situational awareness.

The 09L program brought to this picnic a number of special items including the marksmanship trailer, climbing wall, blazer, spider tent, two highly

mobile (high-mobility) multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWV) and two light medium tactical vehicles (LMTV). The climbing wall received quick attention from the attendees. Children and adults were lining up to get harnessed and be the first ones to get to the top of the climbing wall and ring the bell. It became a challenge among peers of different age groups.

The marksmanship trailer kept some of the attendees entertained while mastering their shooting skills. The spider tent was used by the attendees to make their early afternoon and late afternoon prayers. The HMMWV's and the LMTV's caught the attention of the people and the blazer was used to play prerecorded Islamic prayers.

Based on the feedback of Mr. Fa'iz Rab, ICO Public Relations Board of Directors, he did not expect the more than 400 people to show up for this event as there were only about 200-400 people at their last picnic. "Instead, over 700 people came out to enjoy the festivities!" writes Mr. Rab. "My initial feelings are that everybody who came enjoyed the event. I have received a lot of positive e-mails so far." The 09L program's first contact with the local Muslim community was positive. A good percentage of the attendees were pleased with our presence and support. I would say the 09L program made a good first impression to the leadership as well as to the community members. 



MOVIE REVIEW: NANKING

Directors: Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturman

Review By Kari Foote

When I was a teenager, my father took my sister, brother and me to see "Schindler's List" one Saturday afternoon. I will always remember his demeanor before we walked into the theater when he said to us "This is not going to be an easy movie to watch, but I think it's important for you to see it." I would say the same thing about the documentary "Nanking." This was a very powerful film for my husband and me to watch and I would definitely not recommend it for young children.

This film documents the invasion and occupation of China by the Japanese Imperial Army in 1937-38. The story is told by first person accounts from Chinese citizens, most of whom were children at the time of the invasion, as well as dramatic interpretations of letters and diaries kept by individuals during the assault.

In 1937, Nanking was a prosperous, cosmopolitan city, home to 600,000 citizens as well as a few thousand Western missionaries, businessmen and medical personnel. Nanking was the capital of China and situated approximately 186 miles west of Shanghai. One survivor in the film recalls that her parents always knew that "Japan wanted China" as it is a large country, rich in natural resources. In August of 1937, those predictions came true when Japan invaded Shanghai. Shortly thereafter, aerial attacks began in Nanking and continued without ceasing until December. Anyone that could afford to leave the city did, leaving only the poorest and most vulnerable of the Nanking people to face the Japanese Army when it invaded the city in December of 1937.

However, a small band of Westerners led by John Rabe, a German Nazi, stayed behind and petitioned the Japanese Army command to allow them to establish a "safety zone" within the city limits of Nanking. While officially denied by the Japanese Army, Rabe and his helpers



established the safety zone nonetheless, hoping that although the Japanese Army didn't officially recognize it, they might respect it based on the alliance between Japan and Nazi Germany in WWII. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese refugees fled into this small safety zone and were given meager rations, medical care and lodging.

The film documents the horrors of the invasion and occupation of the city. Arson, looting and extreme violence were commonplace. While the establishment of the safety zone is thought to have saved 250,000 people, it is estimated that 200,000 to 300,000 civilians and prisoners of war (POWs) were killed; 20,000 rapes of Chinese women were reported in one month. The worst of the occupation is known in China as the "Rape of Nanking" and lasted approximately six weeks. This period ranks among the worst genocides of the 20th century.

After the initial occupation, many of the westerners went to their respective

home cities to spread the news of the dire situation in Nanking. The world had no idea of the atrocities being committed, and sadly, little was done even when first-hand accounts and film evidence were presented to individuals in positions to intercede. The individuals who shared their knowledge of the invasion of Nanking insisted that they did not

want to portray the Japanese Army as villains, but wanted to demonstrate the horrors of war in general. John Rabe, believing that Germany would never endorse such actions by an ally, sent a letter to Adolph Hitler upon his return to Germany describing the Japanese actions during the invasion, and was arrested by the Gestapo days later. He was reduced to poverty and until

he died his only financial support was a result of donations from the citizens of Nanking whose lives he worked to save.

After WWII, the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal found 25 Japanese leaders guilty of war crimes. The film "Nanking" is an important testimony of this terrible period because many people are not aware of this history. This period is sometimes referred to as the "forgotten Holocaust." Just as there are extremists who do not believe the Holocaust took place, there are small groups of Japanese nationalists who downplay the war crimes that were perpetrated by the Japanese Army during the invasion and refer to this period as the "Nanking Incident" rather than the massacre that it was. While it is not an easy film to watch, I believe documentaries such as this are important to view, to ensure that ours and future generations will not forget. 





STATE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AWARD

By Kari Foote

In 2001, the Governor's Diversity and Affirmative Action Awards program began as a way in which the State Affirmative Action Committee could recognize State employees, departments, divisions and teams who demonstrated leadership in promoting the State's equal employment opportunity and affirmative action efforts. This year, the Nebraska Military Department was recognized for both group and individual efforts to support the State's diversity goals. The agency was honored to host a ceremony on August 5, 2008 in which Governor Dave Heineman presented awards recognizing these achievements.

The ceremony was kicked off with a welcome from Brigadier General Timothy J. Kadavy, the Adjutant General, followed by comments from Rico Bishop, an attorney who is the chairperson of the State's Affirmative Action committee. Ms. Bishop is from a family with a strong history of military service and she was honored to be a part of this awards presentation ceremony. Ms. Bishop described affirmative action as "active steps" in a deliberate and sustained effort to eliminate barriers within the workplace. (Please read Ms. Bishop's remarks beginning on this page). Ms. Bishop's remarks were followed with words by Governor Heineman, who praised the work of the Nebraska Military Department in its proactive support of the State's motto: "Equality before the law."

The agency received awards for both group and individual efforts. The Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group was



Front Row: Denise Wald, LaVonne Rosenthal, Governor Dave Heineman, Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez, SGT Adrian Velez, MSgt Jody Schmidt; Middle Row: Kari Foote, Ann Reicks, WO1 Robrenna Redl; Back Row: SSgt Casey Svitak, MSgt Paul Dion, CPT Dale Burrage, SFC Melissa Oehm, Pam Makovicka, CPT Richard Jones, BG Timothy Kadavy, Rico Bishop

honored for its work in identifying barriers to recruitment and advancement of underrepresented groups and providing solutions to those barriers. Some of the most visible examples of the group's work are the frequent diversity heritage luncheons that are held throughout the year and the *Bridging the Gap* newsletter that is published bimonthly. The SEP Group promotes affirmative action by actively working to educate our workforce in issues related to culture and diversity.

In addition to the group award, the Nebraska Military Department also had an individual recognized for

outstanding personal achievement. Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez is an integral part of the SEP Group and has taken on the duties of publisher of the *Bridging the Gap* newsletter. Mary's efforts guarantee that an informative, attractive and enjoyable newsletter is published in a timely manner. She recently worked to include the newsletter on www.neguard.com, the Nebraska National Guard's internet site, which ensures the widest

possible circulation. Mary also uses her tremendous creative graphic skills to design advertising materials for the SEP Group diversity heritage events to encourage attendance. Mary's efforts help to make sure that SEP Group activities are visible and promoted.

The Nebraska Military Department is committed to the promotion of diversity at all levels of the organization and the employees that were recognized for their achievements are very deserving. Congratulations, SEP Group members, and Mary, for all of your hard work. 

WELCOME REMARKS

By Rico Bishop

On behalf of Nebraska's Affirmative Action Committee, I extend sincere congratulations to the Department of Military for its efforts to maintain a diverse and cohesive workforce through efforts such as those made by Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez and the Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group who we are specifically honoring today.

Thanks – Governor Heineman for taking

time to be here to personally present awards to our recipients.

Thanks – General Kadavy and Department of Military for hosting this awards ceremony.

Thanks – Mike McCrory and Charles Roberson (State Personnel Office) for organizing the event.

Continued on Page 17



Welcome Remarks Continued from Page 16

Having spent my entire childhood living on or near military bases, when I look out and see uniforms, it feels like home. There is a sense of family among military personnel and there has to be. Defending our country and fighting alongside and protecting fellow Soldiers requires acceptance, camaraderie and trust beyond expectations elsewhere. There is no room for prejudice or suspicion or hostility because of someone's race or ethnicity, gender, religion or disability. Respect for the men and women with whom you serve is of utmost importance. And when you take time to learn about and understand some of the historic cultural and societal differences amongst your fellow Soldiers and take an active interest, that demonstrates respect. And to take that a step further and take active steps to promote that respect amongst your colleagues to create a unified working environment, as the award recipients today have done, is to be commended.

Active steps, affirmative steps, affirmative action. What does it mean?

I think our Legislature stated it well when our Affirmative Action laws were passed in 1979. Our legislature statutorily defined affirmative action to mean a "deliberate and sustained effort to identify and eliminate barriers to employment and advancement which may discriminate against various groups." NEB. REV. STAT. §81-1356.

The Nebraska Legislature's policy statement on this issue states:

"It is declared to be in the best interest of the State of Nebraska to insure that historic and any present patterns of sex and racial discrimination are eliminated and that each agency pursue a course of action in all areas of its operations to insure that all citizens are provided with fair and equal opportunities for employment and advancement regardless of race, color,

religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or physical or mental disability. Affirmative action shall be taken to insure the implementation of a policy in statement government employment which provides equal employment opportunity."

Equal employment opportunity is defined by statute as "the right of all persons to work and to advance on the basis of merit and ability without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or physical or mental disability."



Governor Dave Heineman, Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez, Rico Bishop, BG Timothy Kadavy

Paraphrased, it says, let's don't be passive about potential discrimination in our public workplaces, let's take active, affirmative steps to ensure equal employment opportunities for everyone.

The need for taking affirmative steps to ensure equal opportunities in education and employment stems from a long history of discriminatory acts and attitudes towards minorities and women who were considered "inferior" or "property," and without equal rights in many important areas. The mere passage of laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race or gender does not eliminate the underlying discriminatory attitude that continues to fuel unfair treatment in these areas, nor does it immediately remove the adverse impact such discrimination has had on the self-perception and self-esteem of those

seeking to overcome discriminatory barriers. Taking affirmative action to remove such barriers, as well as support individual growth and increase self-worth in the process is critically important in the continued growth of our great country.

Examples of past discrimination and attitudes:

In 1978, Justice Thurgood Marshall, in his dissenting opinion supporting affirmative action in the landmark California v. Bakke case reminded us of the impact of past discrimination, stating *"the Negro was dragged to this country in chains to be sold into slavery... and was deprived of all legal rights. It was unlawful to teach him to read; he could be sold away from his family and friends at the whim of his master; and killing or maiming him was not a crime. The system of slavery brutalized and dehumanized both master and slave... The legacy of years of slavery and years of second-class citizenship in the wake of emancipation could not be so easily eliminated...."*

1885, Orestes A. Brownson*: *Woman was created to be a wife and a mother; that is her destiny. Her proper sphere is home, and her proper function is the care of the household, to manage a family, to take care of children and attend to their early training. She was born to be a queen in her own household and to make home cheerful, bright and happy. Revelation asserts, and universal experience proves, that the man is the head of the woman, and that the woman is for the man, not the man for the woman. She has all the qualities that fit her to be a help-meet of man, but as an independent existence, free to follow her own fancies and vague longings, her own ambition and natural love of power, without masculine direction or control, she is out of her element, and a social anomaly, sometimes a hideous monster, which men seldom are, excepting through a woman's influence.*

*<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/brownson/>



Continued from Page 9

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. b – The Cherokee were located close to where the Muskogee Creek and the Catawba were in the Southeast. They were close to the modern day Carolinas and northern Georgia. It was also the largest of the five civilized tribes in the Southeast.
2. b – The Cherokee was the first tribe to have a written history.
3. b – The Potawatomi were located in modern day Michigan between the Great Lakes – Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. By 1865 they were living in Wisconsin, near Green Bay, because the French moved in. After the Iroquois were driven out of southern Michigan by the French, the Potawatomi moved back around the southern point of Lake Michigan and into Indiana.
4. c – Christopher Columbus was sailing to find the Indies (a.k.a. The Orient). He came to the Americas by mistake and called the people who lived there “Indians.”

5. d – The buffalo. From each buffalo that was killed, every part was utilized in some way, not just for food, but also for clothing, sinew, needles and robes.



6. c – Authentic kachina dolls are made only by Hopi artists. Kachina (or katsina) dolls come in a wide range of different sizes. They are traditionally believed to be supernatural beings and are used for ceremonial purposes.
7. a – The Inuit people were Eskimos. The Labrador Inuits were located between the Hudson Bay and the Labrador Sea.
8. d – The Yokuts were one of the few Native American tribes in the California area (West Coast region). They have notable pictographs and basketry.



9. a – True. Fry bread began its life as a food from United States government rations. After the Indian Relocation Act, Indians were given rations by the government, like flour, shortening, salt – the very basic foods, and that is where frybread came from.



10. c – The Shoshone were located around what is modern-day Utah. They are also known as the Snake Nation. They lived in teepees and hunted buffalo.

www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/history/us_history/native_american.html

WEBSITE REVIEW:

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>

by Denise Anderson



I wonder how many people, when they were growing up, had parents who subscribed to the National Geographic magazine. I remember flipping through the pages and looking at the pictures. Every so often there would be an interesting article that I just had to read that

dealt with far away countries and people from different cultures. Some were happy, some were scary, but all kept me wanting to visit a far away place.

Nowadays you only need to go to the internet to learn about far away countries and cultures. National Geographic Kids has different tabs that deal with animals, games, videos, stories, activities, people/places and photos.

The photo tab from August 2008 shows pictures of people from all over the world participating in different Olympic sports. You can also see animals in their own habitats and learn interesting facts about them. The stories tab has an article about the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. There is a picture of the



National Stadium, which is called the “Bird’s Nest” because it looks just like a giant nest made of sticks. There is also an article about Scout Bassett, an orphan from China, who lost her leg above her right knee as a child and was later adopted by a family from Michigan. She received a high-tech artificial leg and is now competing in track and field. She has a quote that says, “No matter what it is, you can overcome that obstacle. Everything you need is inside your heart. Take small steps. As time goes by, the steps will get bigger and you will reach your dream.”

In the activities tab there are recipes such as how to make fortune cookies and Molletes, which is a yummy treat from Mexico. Since I love to read and try out new recipes this is my favorite area on the site. My daughters’ (Anna and Emma) favorite area is the activities tab/just joking site. QUESTION: What does George Washington, Christopher Columbus and Abraham Lincoln have in common? ANSWER: They were all born on a holiday. Be prepared to hear some tacky jokes.



EUROPEAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION RECAP

By Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez

You asked for an event to celebrate European heritage and the SEP group delivered a fun and scrumptious luncheon. We began with an amusing polka prayer by Chaplain Smith that set the festive mood for the rest of the hour.



Chaplain Smith and his wife Sue

Smith, and his wife Sue, are real polka fans and they entertained us by dancing the polka to several songs. They are very good.

The food included tasteful selections from a select few European countries. Runzas (German) led the meal with Greek Salad from Ali Baba's, Dutch Potato Salad and French cookies from Hy-Vee (recipes provided by the SEP group) and authentic homemade kolaches (Czech) from Marlene Fujan (Maj Brenda

Fujan's mother-in-law). The meal was excellent and very filling!

Some of the comments we received about the luncheon included "Excellent food," "Awesome music," "Band was awesome-brings back memories of my childhood," "Beer tasting" and "Cheese samples if you

As part of the luncheon we had a European Food Trivia contest. The questions and answers to the



contest are in Issue 11. The people who had the most correct answers were entered into a drawing for a free lunch to a future Heritage Event. The people with the most correct answers were: MSgt Kathy Claypool, SFC Teresa Flynn, Kari Holman, LtCol Wendy Johnson and Capt Melissa Link. Each had six correct answers. Congratulations ladies for doing so well with food trivia.

The winner is: LtCol Wendy Johnson! Congratulations! LtCol Johnson will be able attending the Hispanic American Heritage Month luncheon on October 8, 2008.

can't have beer." We may be able to do something with cheese in the future, but I doubt the beer will be approved.

As one comment put it "We should have more European events. Czech's are the friendliest people in the world." Do look for more European heritage events in the future. Thank you to all who helped put this event together and to all who attended. Both groups are what help make our events so successful. 



The Jim Kucera Polka Band



SFC Melissa Oehm, Karen Hall, MAJ Glenn Wattier

Kolache Recipe

By Marlene Fujan

10 teaspoons dry yeast

1 cup Water (warm)

1 tablespoon sugar

Let set for a few minutes

until bubbly

In another bowl, combine:

4 cups potato water

1 1/3 cups potato flakes

1 1/3 cup oil

2/3 cup sugar

5 teaspoons salt

Heat above mixture. Combine the two mixtures together. Mix and stir in about 10 cups flour and 4 egg yolks. Beat vigorously. Let rise about one hour until doubled. Remove to floured board and form into balls.

Put onto greased cookie sheets. Let rise until double. Punch center down and fill with desired fillings. Bake in hot oven (460 degrees) for 7 minutes.



Peggy Brown, MSgt Kim Davila, Maj Brenda Fujan, LaVonne Rosenthal



DIVERSITY CHAMPIONS IN NEBRASKA

LaVonne Rosenthal



July 21-23 was a time of transformation for a group of thirty individuals from the Nebraska Air National Guard (ANG). They were given the opportunity to learn more about themselves and diversity through a training program called "Diversity Champions."

Although many of the details of the training program remain guarded for those who have yet to attend, outsiders are aware of a transformation occurring in the classroom. Participants are challenged physically and mentally throughout the three days. Prior to the event held in Lincoln, several Guard members had attended courses in other states. As a result of their enthusiasm, the Nebraska ANG was able to host the course in Lincoln. It is hoped the momentum gained with the additional graduates from the July course will result in more courses being conducted in Lincoln.

What's so special about Diversity Champions? Respect and dignity for others' uniquenesses is the heart of the course. A no-holds-barred examination of biases and prejudices opens participants' eyes to challenge their own and others' perceptions. One of the activities in the course brought this to light as we formed two circles and selected two people who would be rescued from a sinking ship. The process of selection entailed facing each person individually in the circle,

looking them in the eye and saying either "you live" or "you die." This powerful experience made each of us realize the value of admitting another person's dignity and worth.

Early in our discussions we talked about the different personalities and behaviors of those we worked with each day. Many of us could identify someone who we would call a "vampire." This is a person who sucks the life out of co-workers and ultimately the organization. One way to deal with a vampire is through our own conscious effort to be positive and optimistic.

As a participant in the course, I was able to fully experience learning how to focus on an individual and bring them into existence simply by speaking to them. Often, people become invisible through our lack of recognizing them and allowing them to hide in the shadows. My co-workers may have noticed a difference when I arrive in the morning, as I make more of a point to greet them.

Thanks to CMSgt Barb Gossage, SMSgt Dallas Bartlett and CMSgt Bob Huttes for being true Diversity Champions in bringing this fantastic course to Lincoln. Recognition is also given to MSgt Frank Albrecht, MSgt Gail Henning and MSgt Donna White for their work behind the scenes and in the classroom. I look forward to assisting with future courses!! 

UPCOMING EVENTS

Native American Heritage Celebration
November 6, 2008 Spirit of '76 Armory
Guest Speaker - Mark Awakuni-Swetland, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Native American Studies at UNL. Menu will include buffalo as the main entrée.

African-American Heritage Celebration
February 12, 2009
Guest Speaker - Fire Chief Niles Ford, City of Lincoln Fire & Rescue Department.

Irish-American Heritage Celebration
March 2009

Women's History Month Celebration
April 2009

Asian-American Heritage Celebration
May 2009

European Heritage Celebration
Summer 2009

Vincenzo's Continued from Page 10



Chicken Asiago

chocolate torte, cheesecake-like dessert that is drizzled with raspberry sauce.

If you are looking for a great Italian restaurant that is not a mainstream franchise, you need to visit Vincenzo's. They also have a lunch menu which is pretty much the same as the dinner menu with smaller portions. I didn't realize that there are three Vincenzo's locations, one in Lincoln and two in Omaha. One is on North 144th in West Omaha and the other is in the Old Market. I also just recently learned that Vincenzo's was voted "Best of Omaha" in 2006 and 2008 by Omaha Magazine and also voted "Lincoln's Top Italian Restaurant" by the Lincoln Journal Star. So I'm not just making this up, it truly is a fabulous place to dine. 



SEP MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

MSgt Kim Davila, Crew Chief KC-135R Tanker, 155th Air Refueling Wing

I like airplanes to say the least, but just as much and more, I like the job I have because it gives me the opportunity to serve my country and travel globally. I have always wanted to know more about what is outside my neighborhood of Lincoln (where I was born and raised). I think I inherited the travel bug from my father, who also



had the opportunity to travel with the Air Force during a thing called the Korean War. I joined the Air National Guard in 1984 as a traditional Guard member not only to do the above mentioned, but also to take advantage of the tuition assistance the Guard offered and to learn a skill you couldn't learn anywhere else. I started out as an assistant crew chief on the RF-4C (Reconnaissance aircraft) and attended the University of Nebraska as a Political Science and History major.

While at the University I accepted a full-time position as Director of Security

at the University of Nebraska State Museum. During this time the museum underwent a major renovation to update the facility and help maintain the proper level of accreditation. I had the opportunity to work with a diverse group of people, from university personnel to contractors, architects, engineers, professors and students.

It also afforded me the opportunity to meet and learn from people all over the country, and some out of the country, in the field of museum security through a Smithsonian Institution Museum Security Conference held in Chicago. Attendees were from all types of museum, which could be anything from art, natural history, regional history, technology and science. It was an eye opening experience to hear and compare notes with such a diverse but dedicated group of professionals. Most, if not all, were very passionate about the preservation of their subject from the smallest museum

to some of the largest, like the Prado in Spain. It was the first real learning experience I had to hear many different views, opinions, levels of knowledge and approaches to similar problems and or practices.

In 1997 I became a full time member of the Air Guard working on the KC-135R Tanker. This has provided a greater chance to travel and see the world and hear how people from other countries view the United States and its people. I greatly value the chance to hear people freely give their view of us or themselves and their country; how they would do this or that, or about what is going on in the world. I accepted an invitation to join the Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group because I was not only curious about what it was trying to do but also what it could accomplish. I think it's important to know that there is more behind that green camouflage or desert camouflage uniform; that we are not all the same although we are working for the same goals, and that the military recognizes the importance of diversity and what it will do for the future of the armed forces. 

DIVERSITY DATES: OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2008

October..... Italian-American Heritage Month
 October 1-2 Eid al-Fitr (Islamic)
 October 1..... Mehregan (Iran)
 October 1..... National Day (China)
 October 1..... Independence Day (Nigeria)
 October 2..... Gandhi Jayanti (India)
 October 3..... National Diversity Day (U.S.)
 October 3..... Tag der Deutschen Einheit (South Korea)
 October 3..... Tangun Day (Iceland)
 October 4.... Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (Christian)
 October 6..... Armed Forces Day (Egypt)
 October 7..... Chung Yeung (China)
 October 8-9 Yom Kippur (Jewish)
 October 9..... Hangul Day (South Korea)
 October 9..... Independence Day (Uganda)
 October 9..... Leif Eriksson Day (Norwegian American)
 October 10..... Double Tenth Day (Taiwan)
 October 11.... Casimir Pulaski Memorial Day (U.S.)
 October 12..... Cirio de Nazare (Brazil)
 October 12..... Nossa Senhora de Aparecida (Brazil)
 October 13..... Columbus Day (U.S.)
 October 13-14 Sukkot (Jewish)
 October 13..... Thanksgiving Day (Canada)
 October 16..... National Boss's Day (U.S.)
 October 18..... Independence Day (Azerbaijan)
 October 18..... Karva Chauth (Hindu)

October 19-20 Birthday of the Bab (Baha'i)
 October 20..... Alaska Day (U.S.)
 October 20 National Heroes Day (Jamaica)
 October 20-21 Shemini Atzeret (Jewish)
 October 21-22 Simchat Torah (Jewish)
 October 22..... Abu Simbel Festival (Egypt)
 October 23..... Chulalongkorn Day (Thailand)
 October 24..... United Nations Day (U.N.)
 October 26..... National Day (Austria)
 October 27..... Labour Day (New Zealand)
 October 27..... October Bank Holiday (Republic of Ireland)
 October 28..... Diwali (Hindu)
 October 28..... Ochi Day (Greece)
 October 29..... Cumhuriyet Bayrami (Turkey)
 October 31 Halloween (U.S.)
 October 31 Samhain (Celtic, Pagan)
 November 1 All Saints' Day (Christian)
 November 1 Dia de Muertos (Mexico)
 November 1 Revolution Day (Algeria)
 November 2 All Souls' Day (Christian)
 November 2 Daylight Savings Time Ends (U.S.)
 November 2 Dzyady (Belarus)
 November 3 Bunka-no-Hi (Japan)
 November 4 Election Day (U.S.)
 November 3 Independence Day (Panama)
 November 6 Constitution Day (Dominican Republic)

November 9 Independence Day (Cambodia)
 November 9 Remembrance Day (U.K.)
 November 10 ..Ataturk Remembrance Day (Turkey)
 November 11-12 Birthday of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
 November 11 Independence Day (Poland)
 November 11 Remembrance Day (Canada)
 November 11 Veteran's Day (U.S.)
 November 12 Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
 November 13 Guru Nanak's Birthday (Sikh)
 November 14 Children's Day (India)
 November 15 Haile Selassie's Coronation Day (Rastafarian)
 November 15 Proclamation of the Republic Day (Brazil)
 November 15 Shichi-Go-San (Japan)
 November 17 National Revival Day (Azerbaijan)
 November 18 Fete de l'Independence (Morocco)
 November 19 Discovery Day (Puerto Rico)
 November 20 Revolution Day (Mexico)
 November 22 Independence Day (Lebanon)
 November 23 Kinro Kansha-no-Hi (Japan)
 November 25-26 Day of the Covenant (Baha'i)
 November 27 Thanksgiving Day (U.S.)
 November 28 Independence Day (Albania, Panama)
 November 30 Advent (Christian)
 November 30 Bonifacio Day (Philippines)
 November 30 St. Andrew's Day (Scotland)

This month's recipe takes you to Iraq. I have read that Iraqi food is strongly influenced by its neighboring countries, Turkey and Iran. Like the Turks, Iraqis like to stuff vegetables and eat a lot of lamb, rice and yogurt; and like Iranians, they enjoy cooking fruits with beef and poultry. I found a few websites that feature Iraqi recipes, but rather than using one of them, I went to a local source.



SGT Alkhafaji, a recruiter with the Nebraska Army National Guard, was gracious enough to share this recipe with me. Kufta is a traditional Iraqi dish and is very easy (and delicious) to make.

Thank you very much, SGT Alkhafaji! We look forward to many more recipes from you.



- 3 lbs. ground beef, lamb or turkey (or combination)
- 1 large onion
- 3/4-1 cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- 4 garlic cloves

TOPPING

- 3-4 tomatoes (any size)
- 3-4 potatoes

- seasoning salt or salt (1 tsp)*
- allspice (1/2 tsp)*
- black pepper (1 tsp)*
- garlic powder (1 tsp)*

*There were no quantities given for these spices; the amounts in parenthesis are what I used. You may need to experiment once or twice to get the taste you are looking for.

1. Start by chopping up your parsley in a food chopper until fine (do not use dried parsley). Set aside in a large mixing bowl.
2. Cut onion into pieces – small enough to fit into a food processor or chopper. Combine the garlic with the onion and chop until fine (but not pasty).
3. Put the onion/garlic mixture in a bowl with the parsley and add the ground meat, salt, allspice, pepper and garlic powder. Mix with your hands until everything is well blended.
4. Pat the meat mixture down in the bottom of a 9x13 baking pan and broil in the oven until the top is browned (this helps enhance the flavor). Once browned, carefully take out of the oven.
5. Peel potatoes and rinse. Slice potatoes into quarter inch slices. Also slice tomatoes into quarter inch slices and layer – potatoes first with tomatoes on the top layer.
6. Sprinkle with a little salt and cover with foil. Bake at 425 degrees Fahrenheit for approximately 45 minutes to one hour.



THE NEBRASKA MILITARY DEPARTMENT VALUES DIVERSITY

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

SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM (SEP) GROUP MEMBERSHIP

MSgt Paul Dion	paul.dion@us.af.mil	Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez ..	m.schmidtrodriquez@us.army.mil
Pam Makovicka	pam.makovicka@us.army.mil	LaVonne Rosenthal	lavonne.rosenthal@us.army.mil
COL (P) Roma Amundson	1Lt Amy Johnson	WO1 Robrenna Redl	
Denise Anderson	MSG Colin Jones	Ann Reicks	
Jessie Bockelman	CPT Richard Jones	TSgt Clashaud Robbins	
Peggy Brown	MSgt Anne Krotz	SrA Winston Sanniola	
CPT Dale Burrage	SFC Kim Moore	SSgt Casey Svitak	
1SG Reynold Castaneda	SFC John (Jack) Murphy	2LT Carlos Van Nurden	
MSgt Kim Davila	SFC Melissa Oehm	Denise Wald	
Kari Foote			

Interested in becoming a member of the SEP Group? Please contact one of the members with an email address listed above.