



NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD

NEWS RELEASE

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**OMAHA'S 126TH CHEMICAL BATTALION
WELCOMES NEW COMMANDER DURING
JANUARY 13 CEREMONY AT CAMP ASHLAND**

**Released by
Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes**

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For Immediate Release

LINCOLN, Neb. – The Nebraska National Guard's 126th Chemical Battalion welcomed a new commander, Jan. 13, during a change of command ceremony held at the Camp Ashland Training Site.

Accepting the 126th Chem. Bn.'s organizational colors from Col. Todd Stevens, 67th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade commander, was Lt. Col. Charles McWilliams. He replaces departing battalion commander Lt. Col. Brian Medcalf, who has served as the commander of the Omaha-based organization since June 2016.

The 126th Chem. Bn. is made up of 130 Soldiers assigned to two Omaha-based units: Headquarters and Headquarters Company and the 754th Chemical Company.

In saying farewell to the organization, Medcalf said it was a tremendous privilege to lead the battalion during a time of change.

"I have excellent memories from this command," Medcalf said. "We've been busy."

Medcalf's departing words of advice for the chemical Soldiers were to never stop improving and to always enjoy the ride.

Medcalf was commissioned as an engineer officer in May 1998 through the University of Nebraska. He was initially assigned to the 588th Engineer Battalion (Combat), 4th Infantry Division, at Fort Hood, Texas. He transferred to the 111th Engineer Battalion (Combat), 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard in 2001, where he took command of the organization's Company A in 2004. He later served as the commander and deputy chief of the Multi-National Force – Iraq Joint Visitors Bureau, where he was responsible for providing security and transportation for distinguished visitors in and around Iraq during a yearlong deployment in 2005.

Medcalf transferred to the Nebraska Army National Guard in 2008 and has served in Guard's 92nd Troop Command, Joint Force Headquarters and the 126th Chem. Bn. In civilian life, Medcalf works as a design engineering manager for the Kiewit Corporation.

He lives with his wife and four children in Highlands Ranch, Colorado.

In assuming command, McWilliams said he's been blessed throughout his military career with supportive family, civilian employment and military leadership opportunities. He added that it means a lot to have the opportunity to lead the battalion as it moves forward.

"Thank you for all the hard work you've done through the years," McWilliams told his new battalion's Soldiers. "Thank you in advance for the hard work we're going to be doing going forward as well. And thank you for the privilege to be able to lead you as your next commander."

McWilliams was commissioned as a chemical officer in August 2004 through the Nebraska Army National Guard Officer Candidate School. He was initially assigned to the 754th Chemical Company before transferring to the 755th Chemical Company for a yearlong deployment to Iraq in 2007.

On the civilian side, McWilliams works as a meteorologist for the Omaha District of the U.S Army Corps of Engineers. He lives with his wife and three children in Omaha.

-30-

Note: Photo attached.

Caption: Lt. Col. Charles McWilliams (left) accepts the colors of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 126th Chemical Battalion during a change of command ceremony Jan. 13 at the Camp Ashland Training Site. McWilliams replaces outgoing commander Lt. Col. Brian Medcalf who has commanded the unit for the past two and half years. (Nebraska National Guard photo by Spc. Daniel Balkovic)