

Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

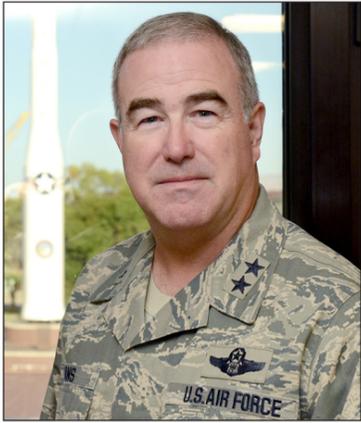
Nebraska general makes history at U.S. Strategic Command

By Lt. Col Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

A Nebraska Air National Guard major general made history recently when he completed a tour as the first Air National Guard officer to serve as the acting deputy commander for the U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) at Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha, Nebraska.

Maj. Gen. Rick Evans, an Omahanative and graduate of both Omaha Northwest High School and the University of Nebraska-Omaha, still remembers touring the historic Strategic Air Command (SAC) headquarters and visiting the venerable command's underground operations center as a 14-year-old. Now, even though Strategic Air Command has long-since been inactivated to make way for USSTRATCOM, visions of that history are all around him, each day, as heads to his office at the command's headquarters.

"Through these doors have pretty much walked all of our nation's greatest strategic thinkers, as far as the nuclear mission goes, for the last 70 years," Evans said. "We're reminded of that every day by the portraits of all of those senior leaders that hang outside of the office here dating back to the



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Lovelady
Strategic Command View: Maj. Gen. Rick Evans poses for a photograph from his office at the U.S. Strategic Command Headquarters at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

establishment of the U.S. Air Force and the Strategic Air Command.

"Being a local guy, having been here in the 70s and knowing about the prominence of SAC and the importance of the Air Force base here... to be able to serve here each and every day is really an honor," Evans added.

As the acting USSTRATCOM deputy commander, Evans was responsible for helping Adm. Cecil D. See **EVANS on 4.**



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

New Colors, New Brigade: Brig. Gen. Kevin Lyons stands at attention as Col. Craig Strong and Command Sgt. Maj. Shawn Griffith unfurl the colors of the new 67th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Nov. 5, at the Spirit of '76 Armory in Lincoln.

67th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade stands up in November

By Spc. Lisa Crawford
Acting Editor

The colors of the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade were permanently cased in exchange for the debut uncasing of the 67th Maneuver Enhancement Bri-

gade, Nov. 5, at the Spirit of '76 Armory in Lincoln.

The inactivation ceremony for the 67th BfSB capped the nine-year history for the Nebraska Army National Guard brigade that served in a critical capacity for higher level commands by managing ground

and air reconnaissance assets and providing a robust military intelligence and analysis function. The colors of the 67th BfSB were originally uncased on Sept. 1, 2007, when the brigade was formed from the 67th Area Support Group, which has direct

See **67TH MEB on 9.**

Nebraska Army Guard's largest battalion sees mission change

By Lt. Col Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

The Nebraska Army National Guard's largest battalion – by both personnel size and geographic area – underwent a major change in its century-plus history, Sunday, Sept. 11, when the 734th "Prairie Steel" Transportation Battalion was inactivated during a ceremony at the Kearney

Armed Forces Readiness Center, which was then followed by a ceremony activating the new 734th Brigade Support Battalion.

The transition marks a major milestone for the Kearney-based unit, which traces its lineage back to 1892 through war-time service during the Spanish-American War, World War I and II, and a deployment to Iraq in 2006-07.

The transition is part of a state-

wide transformation of Nebraska Army National Guard units that affect roughly one-in-three Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers. The changes are due to the transformation of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade into the new 67th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. It affects roughly 1,100 Nebraska Soldiers located across the state.

According to Col. Eric Teeger-

strom, commander of the 92nd Troop Command to which the 734th Transportation Battalion had formerly been assigned, the ceremonies bring both sadness and excitement. "I think there are some sad folks here today," Teegerstrom said. "The 734th (Trans. Bn.) has been a great unit since it came around in 2001. There have been some fine officers (non-commissioned officers) and Soldiers who

have come through this unit."

Change, however, is nothing new for the unit, said Lt. Col. Chris Weskamp, former 734th Trans. Bn. commander, and Lt. Col. Andrew Collins, new 734th BSB commander. Over the course of the Kearney unit's history, Soldiers have gone through 11 separate transitions in missions ranging from infantry, artillery and armor organizations,

See **ACTIVATION on 8.**



Photo courtesy of Warren Buffett

1950s Annual Training: Warren Buffett (far right) and two other members of the Omaha-based Headquarters Company, 34th Infantry Division, pose for a photo during a summer training camp in the 1950s.

Before there was an 'Oracle of Omaha,' there was a Corporal Warren Buffett

By Lt. Col Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Long before he became the "Oracle of Omaha", he was simply "Corporal Warren Buffett," one of around 70 members of the Omaha-based 34th Infantry Division Headquarters Company, who spent his "very, very slow" train rides to summer camp at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, battering hundreds of potatoes into mash with a large wooden pole.

Even though the future Berkshire Hathaway founder spent just six years as a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard as – of all things – a pay specialist, the memories,

friends and experiences Buffett gained during that time are still treasures he remembers fondly with smiles and hearty chuckles.

"It was as good of a group of guys that you could've found," Buffett said, laughing as he recalled his fellow 1950s-era Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers.

Recently, Buffett sat down for an interview about his Nebraska National Guard service with the staff of the Nebraska National Guard Public Affairs Office for several Nebraska National Guard Museum projects in Seward, Nebraska. During the course of a nearly 30-minute interview, Buffett touched on a number of things including how

See **BUFFETT on 10.**

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Two Nebraska teams begin overseas deployments

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NEWS DIGEST

■ Carter announces deterrence, defense buildup in Europe

BRUSSELS (DoD NEWS) – As NATO faces new challenges from the east, south, north and from within, the United States will continue to strengthen deterrence by sending troops to Europe, Defense Secretary Ash Carter told reporters in Brussels, Oct. 26.

Carter was attending a conference of NATO defense ministers during the last stop on an overseas trip that also included visits to Turkey, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates and France.

“We are contributing a persistent rotational armored brigade combat team,” the secretary told reporters at NATO headquarters. “It’s a major sign of the U.S. commitment to strengthening deterrence here.”

Noting that the United States also is positioning an armored brigade combat team’s worth of equipment in Europe in addition to two brigades already in Europe, Carter said, as part of the European Reassurance Initiative. “The \$3.4 billion of funds in this fiscal year, ... that’s quadruple what we had allocated last year,” he said.

The first rotational brigade will come from Colorado and will deploy to Europe in February, he said.

“It will have an initial exercise in Poland. After that, the brigade will send company-sized units to Bulgaria, Romania and the Baltic states,” Carter told reporters. “Companies will then remain in the Baltics until the NATO battalions arrive.”

In June, the brigade will conduct exercise

Saber Strike in Poland and throughout the Baltic states, and in July, it will move to Bulgaria and Romania for exercises Swift Response and Saber Guardian, during which one tank company will transit the Black Sea to Georgia to participate in exercise Noble Partner, he said.

The secretary said he appreciates the countries that will host the brigade. “Together, we’re strengthening deterrence here,” he said. Carter said the United States will also lead a battalion in Poland as part of NATO’s new enhanced forward presence.

“This was a decision made by the alliance leaders in Warsaw,” he explained, referring to NATO’s July summit meeting in the Polish capital. “The United States will lead a battalion in Poland and deploy an entire battle-ready battalion task force of approximately 900 soldiers from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, which is based in Germany. It will have a headquarters element; three Stryker-equipped maneuver companies with a mobile gun system; an artillery battery; and anti-tank, explosive ordnance disposal, and engineer capabilities.”

Romania and the United Kingdom will provide companies that enhance the U.S. battalion’s combat power and its survivability as it performs its forward-stationed deterrence mission in Poland, he added.

The U.S. battalion will arrive in Poland in April and will be positioned near the city of Orzysz in northeastern Poland, Carter said.

■ Guard chief says Guard in position to contribute in cyber realm

DETROIT (NGNEWS) – The civilian-acquired skills of its members enable the National Guard to make unique contributions in the cyber realm, Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel said Oct. 17.

Guard members work in the technology sector in their civilian capacity, the chief of the National Guard Bureau told audience members at the North American International Cyber Summit 2016. Guard members can be found in companies ranging from startups to Google and Microsoft.

Those civilian-acquired skills give Guard members a unique ability to contribute in their military roles. And it’s a two-way street, Lengyel said: “We provide employers the military training and experience our Guardsmen take back to their civilian positions.”

The National Guard is not a new arrival in cyberspace: Fear that coding issues would cause problems after Dec. 31, 1999 – popularly known as the Y2K or millennium bug – prompted the formation of what are now called Defensive Cyberspace Operations Elements in each of the 50 states, three territories and the District of Columbia where the National Guard operates.

Networked technology has created tremendous freedom and opportunity, Lengyel said. “As with anything that is open and free, it presents some real vulnerabilities to those that would exploit them,” he said. “The cyber

domain also presents us with some of our greatest challenges from a security perspective.”

Challenges include protecting critical infrastructure, maintaining the freedom and agility of networked technology in spite of threats, defending Defense Department networks, defending the homeland against cyber threats and providing secure integrated cyber capabilities for military operations.

“We have to build close relationships, partnerships and bridges with the rest of society when it comes to cyber,” Lengyel said.

The summit where he spoke reflected those types of partnerships: Hosted by Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, it is a collaborative effort with the National Governors Association, the Department of Homeland Security, private industry, educators, students and local partners that started in 2011. “We are experts at building enduring partnerships on all levels – international, federal, state and local,” Lengyel said of the National Guard. National Guard contributions include working closely with the combatant commands, especially Cyber Command, to fight off cyber incidents.

“The more our world and society connects via the net, the more we are vulnerable,” Lengyel said. “Cyber warfare is a battle space that will only get more challenging. It’s a battle space available to all – both state and non-state actors. ... Staying one step ahead requires cooperation and teamwork.”

Army Guard Soldiers’ training days may need increase, director says

ARLINGTON, Va. (NGNEWS) – In order to maintain increased levels of readiness and meet Army needs, Army National Guard Soldiers may see changes to the amount of time spent training, the director of the Army National Guard said during a discussion forum at the annual Association of the United States Army conference and exhibition.

“We have critical capability in the Army National Guard that the active Army relies on to provide the combatant commanders with the forces they need,” said Army Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy. “As an example, our armored brigade combat teams and Stryker units are in high demand.”

While those units may be in high demand, Guard Soldiers have typically trained one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer for a total of 39 days each year. That training model, in place since the passage of the Dick Act in 1903, doesn’t match current operational tempos and needs, said Kadavy.

“This minimal level of training may not be sufficient anymore,” he said. “In fact we already know it’s not. Many of our units already do more than 39 days of training a year.”

An increase in training days and large-scale unit rotations to combat training centers such as the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., are needed to ensure continued readiness, said Kadavy.

Under the new training model, said Kadavy, armored and Stryker brigade combat teams will see a rotation to Fort Irwin every four years, adding those rotations are only possible if units ramp up their total number of training days.

As part of that four-year model, Soldiers in those units can expect to see yearly training days range from 39 days in year one to 60 days in year three, with the fourth year seeing Soldiers train for 51 days.

“This construct will fully support a deployment for one of those armored or Stryker units every two to three years,” said Kadavy. “If a contingency breaks out, they will be available to the Army and the joint force more quickly than our previous readiness generation models.”

The time required to put a trained and ready operational force on the ground is one of the most significant planning factors, said Kadavy. “A hundred days spent at the mobilization station will not cut it,” he

said, referring to older training models that saw large-scale unit training conducted once a unit was mobilized to deploy.

The increase in training days will mean a decrease in time spent at the mobilization center should units be called to deploy, said Kadavy.

However, deployment is only one possibility.

“(Units) may be used in other operational roles,” said Kadavy, adding that may include overseas exercises, flexible deterrent options or assurance missions.

Geared primarily toward armored and Stryker brigade combat teams, the new training model also includes other units such as attack and reconnaissance aviation units and other early entry enabler units, Kadavy said.

“Armored brigade combat team readiness is being prioritized because this is an area where the Army has an immediate requirement,” he said, adding that armored units also require greater time to develop and sustain proficiency. “(They) represent one of the most complex, most resource-intensive formations to prepare for military operations.”

Unit manning is also key as well, he said. “Soldiers are the core of the Army,” Kadavy said. “They must be available and prepared for collective training to improve a unit’s proficiency.”

Ensuring continued unit proficiency may mean over manning select units to cover normal attrition rates as Soldiers get promoted or reach the end of their service contract.

Select Army Guard units have also been part of the Associated Unit program, which fully integrates active and reserve component units into one element in order to maintain continued readiness. Most of the units taking part in the pilot program include infantry and Stryker units, but also transportation and engineer units as well, said Kadavy.

“The Associated Unit program demonstrates that active component and reserve component integration isn’t just a concept or theory,” said Kadavy. “It’s how the Army is doing business in the here and now.”

It also represents larger changes as well. “The Army Guard has truly transformed from a strategic reserve to an operational force,” said Kadavy, adding that the Army Guard has continued to evolve to support the needs of the Army and the nation.

“The main point is that we are ready, providing the nation what it needs,” he said. “We will be part of America’s ready response force.”



Kadavy

Teamwork At Greenlief



Photo by Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker

Cavalry In Action: Soldiers from Troops A and B, 1-134th Cavalry, conduct training, Oct. 22-23, at the Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb. Soldiers participated in round robin exercises that included improvised explosive device (IED) identification, basic camouflage skills, medical evacuation procedures and the use of Long Range Advance Scout Surveillance System (LRAS3).

Prairie Soldier

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

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

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Oh Wow! A Boy Scout leans over a fence watching the arrival of an Army Nebraska National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopter at Mahoney State Park, Oct. 15, during the Boy Scout Jubilee. Despite cloudy conditions, the helicopter made an exciting landing for the enjoyment of the Boy Scouts and their families.



Photos by Spc. Daniel Balkovic

Attaching 'Chutes: A Nebraska National Guard Soldier helps a Boy Scout put on an parachute and rigging, Oct. 15, at the Boy Scout Jubilee. Scouts were welcomed to interact with a variety of Nebraska Army and Air National Guard tools and equipment.

Scouts Out

Nebraska National Guardsmen lend hand to Boy Scouts during October's regional jubilee

By Spc. Lisa Crawford
Acting Editor

Pvt. Collin Donahue was a member of the Boy Scouts of America program for eight years when he was a grade school student in Omaha. Now a military police officer with the Nebraska Army National Guard's 192nd Military Police Detachment, Donahue can't help but smile when he sees other Boy Scouts and think that they, too, could one day join the National Guard.

On Oct. 15, the Nebraska National Guard had the opportunity to support the Boy Scouts of America Mid-America Council Jubilee at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park with a large static display of military vehicles, equipment demonstrations and hands-on fun. Soldiers and Airmen from multiple units across the state came together for the event. The Jubilee is the largest party in the area for all Scouts, Scouters and their families.

The event lasted three days, allowing Scouts to camp and participate in activities sponsored by local community organizations. Each year the Jubilee has included a military presence, but this was the first year the Nebraska National Guard was invited.

"It's been a great honor that they've chosen to work with us and that we've been able to partner with the Boy Scouts," said Capt. Erick Otte, 192nd Military Police Detachment commander. "Our mission here is to... make sure that everyone has a safe and a fun event."

Otte said the Nebraska National Guard Soldiers and Airmen got just as much out of the event as the Boy Scouts did by fulfilling their obligation to serve their community.

"They sign up to serve the general public, and here they get to go out and do that," Otte said. "It shows our support to the community and in return we get support back to the Nebraska National Guard."

Otte said participating in events like the Boy Scout Jubilee are important because it allows the community to see "where their tax dollars go to and they get to see some of the cool equipment that we work with every day."

"It also gets us more in tune with (other organizations) so that when we go to actually work with them in cases of disasters and emergencies, they know that we're there to help," Otte added. "It builds that relationship."

Donahue joined the Nebraska National Guard last December as a way to do something



Door, What Door? Airmen from the Nebraska Air National Guard Fire Department demonstrate the raw power of the "Jaws of Life" by removing a whole door from a car, Oct. 15, during the Boy Scout Jubilee. The exercise showed how to remove a victim trapped in a vehicle.

special with his life and be part of something bigger than himself. He said the Boy Scouts did that for him when he was younger, and the National Guard offers him that same opportunity today.

"It really builds a bond of fellowship with the people that you surround yourself with, with your unit, with your Boy Scout troop," Donahue said. "Through Boy Scouts I learned how to build relationships that have lasted me my entire life and the same thing is applicable to the National Guard."

Donahue said that as a Boy Scout he learned a lot of useful skills such as land navigation, how to sleep outside and endure all elements of weather, knot tying and more. And while he never attended an event like the Boy Scouts Jubilee at Mahoney State Park, after "seeing all of this," he wishes he had.

"We're here just to let these Boy Scouts know that all these opportunities are available to them," Donahue said. "That the National Guard is here for them. All the state troopers, the EMTs - we're all here to support them, and eventually some of these Boy Scouts may become National Guard Soldiers."



Photos by Spc. Daniel Balkovic

What's This One Called? Boy Scouts gather around a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team to learn the difference between a variety of military explosives, Oct. 15, at the Boy Scouts Jubilee at Mahoney State Park. The Boy Scouts especially enjoyed seeing the bomb squad's remote-controlled robot.

Staff Sgt. Ray Underwood, 192nd Military Police Detachment, was also a Boy Scout when he was younger. Like Donahue, Underwood said he enjoyed supporting the Jubilee.

"It has been a very enjoyable experience just interacting with people, getting to walk around and talk with others in the community," Underwood said.

Underwood said being around so many Boy Scouts brought back memories. He added he couldn't help but compare his current career in the National Guard with his experiences as Boy Scout.

"Being in the National Guard, especially when out in the field, is almost like a cross between laser tag or paintball, and Boy Scouts with all the different types of skills one needs," Underwood said. "We may not be building a fire, but we still have to figure out ways to stay warm, stay concealed, work as a team as well as think constructively on our own to solve sometimes very difficult problems."

Sgt. Rahshaw Sides, 234th Network Support Company, said he was never in the Boy Scouts, but he fully appreciates the purpose of the event and how it allows kids to meet and learn from a variety of professional community organizations they may one day want to get involved with themselves.

"It's to support pretty much our home town," Sides said. "As the Nebraska Guard, you want to be out there for the people to see, and enthuse the little ones about joining the Army National Guard or the Air National

Guard, to know how fun it is and what we can do out there around the world, to support our troops."

Sides said the event gave him a chance to talk about what he does as part of the Nebraska National Guard's Signal Corps. "I've gotten to talk to a lot of active kids," Sides said. "They ask a lot of questions, so it's pretty fun just teaching them stuff they can take back with them to explain to their friends."

One of those curious Boy Scouts included Tayden Blair, 12, of Boy Scout Troop 512 out of Crescent, Iowa, who attended the Jubilee with his father Mark and younger brother Kysen. Tayden said watching the Nebraska National Guard helicopters - a UH-60 Blackhawk, a CH-47 Chinook and a UH-72 Lakota - land in the field at Mahoney State Park as part of the Boy Scouts Jubilee was his favorite event of the day. Mark said both of the boys are interested in the military and know a lot about the equipment the Nebraska National Guard had available.

"We're just coming out to experience the fun that the Jubilee has to offer," Mark said. "The opportunities I've been able to give these kids through Boy Scouts; (they) probably wouldn't be able to get any other way. The fact that we get to spend time together and enjoy the outdoors and other experiences... It makes me feel pretty good."

Tayden said out of all the equipment the Nebraska National Guard had on display, the Blackhawk was probably his favorite.

New unit takes final steps before heading overseas

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

One of the Nebraska Army National Guard's newest units took another major step forward in its "amazing journey" from formation to overseas deployment in a single year when it participated in the casing ceremony of the 1st Infantry Division headquarters, Oct. 18, at Fort Riley, Kansas.

Among the division headquarters staff are around 90 members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's newly-organized 1st Infantry Division Main Command Post – Operational Detachment or MCPOD. The MCPOD was formed in February as part of a new concept that moved significant portions of Active Army division staffs to the National Guard as a way to save costs when the divisions aren't operating overseas.

In Nebraska, the MCPOD was formed with Soldiers from existing units that brought with them talent in a broad array of skillsets ranging from operational and logistical planning, to intelligence gathering, legal affairs and public affairs.

The unit is commanded by Lt. Col. Darin Huss.

"We stood up in February of this year. We got our mobilization order in March of this year. We put the unit together in a very short period of time and then we mobilized on the third of August," Huss said. "There was only one way that could be done and that was the (non-commissioned officer corps). They've been phenomenal in getting the Soldiers together."

Following the unit's mobilization in August, which came on the heels of several major training exercises at Fort Riley, the MCPOD Soldiers quickly immersed



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Parting Words Of Advice: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, speaks to the members of the 1st Infantry Division Main Command Post – Operational Detachment following a division casing ceremony at Fort Riley, Kan., on Oct. 18.

themselves in learning the finer points of serving on a division staff, which for many of the Nebraska Guardsmen, was a new experience. Huss said that the members of the 1st Infantry Division staff went out of their way to ensure that the Nebraskans became full members of the organization.

"The division staff has been phenomenal in incorporating us into their daily schedule," Huss said. "It is pretty historic what we've been able to do."

In October the division took the last major step at Fort Riley when the division and division headquarters' colors were cased during a ceremony at Fort Riley's Cavalry Parade Field. The ceremony came just moments after Maj. Gen. Joseph M. Martin

assumed command of the Army's oldest and most decorated division. The casing ceremony was a significant milestone in the division's history, which will soon include an assignment in Iraq where it will assume the role of Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command-Iraq, replacing the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). In that role, the division headquarters will provide command and control of coalition troops training, advising and assisting Iraqi Security Forces in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

"As the first and the most decorated division in our Army, our legacy is undeniable," Martin said. "Now it's time to carry the torch once again as we deploy the headquarters

to Iraq and call upon the tremendous accomplishments of the division."

"This team is trained and ready to accomplish our mission," Martin added.

Following the casing ceremony, the MCPOD Soldiers gathered at a nearby dining facility for one of the last times before the Nebraska Soldiers deployed to seven different locations in three separate countries in support of the Iraq mission. There, Nebraska's Lt. Gov. Mike Foley, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, adjutant general, and other senior Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers took time to wish the Soldiers well while also giving them some advice before they start their missions.

"I don't need to tell you that we live in a very dangerous world," said Foley, the MCPOD Soldiers circling around him on a gentle grassy hill. "It takes very, very special men and women to step up and say to the country 'I'm willing to serve.'"

"As you go overseas, I just want you to know that you go overseas with the love and prayers of all Nebraskans," Foley added.

According to Huss, since the unit has completed its major collective training objectives, unit leaders are now focusing on ensuring the MCPOD Soldiers hone their focus in onto their primary overseas mission.

"Our job is to bring the focus back to the Soldiers and what they will be doing overseas," Huss said, adding that managing a unit that will be spread over multiple locations will be a challenge, but the unit's NCOs and officer are ready for it.

"They're ready," Huss said about the entire team. "They're doing phenomenal things. They're getting recognition on a daily and weekly basis from the senior leadership here at Fort Riley."

"We're ready to go."

EVANS continued from page 1.

Haney lead one of the Department of Defense's nine unified commands. USSTRATCOM is responsible for nine unified command missions that include strategic deterrence; space operations; cyberspace operations; joint electronic warfare; global strike; missile defense; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; combating weapons of mass destruction; and analysis and targeting.

It was a logical assignment for an officer who had been seemingly preparing for it ever since he enlisted into the Nebraska Air National Guard and received his commission in 1984 as an RF-4C "Phantom II" weapon systems officer. Evans served in numerous leadership positions during the course of his 32-year military career, including command positions at the detachment, squadron, group and wing levels.

Evans completed two tours at the National Guard Bureau; first as acting director for Space and Information Superiority for the Air National Guard, followed by an assignment as the special assistant to the director, Air National Guard, for the Quadrennial Defense Review in 2010. He served as chair of the Air National Guard's KC-135 and Space, ISR and Cyber Weapon System Councils and was member of the Air Directorate Field Advisory Council from 2004-2012. Evans also supported U.S. Strategic Command as a National Reconnaissance Office liaison officer.

Evans commanded expeditionary forces and flew combat missions in the KC-135, supporting Operations Uphold Democracy, Decisive Endeavor, Deliberate Guard, Deliberate Forge, Allied Force, Southern Watch, Northern Watch, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. He served as director of Mobility Forces for NATO Operation Unified Protector. He was one of the early architects for a new Nebraska Air Guard detachment at Offutt that eventually grew into the 170th Group, now a full-fledge partner within active Air Force's 55th Wing at Offutt AFB.

Evans commanded of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing in Lincoln, Nebraska, from September 2007 until June 2012, where his KC-135R Stratotanker crews provided air refueling support for U.S. and allied aircraft around the world, to include bombers supporting exercise missions.

Following that assignment, Evans was promoted to brigadier general and reassigned as the mobilization assistant to director of USSTRATCOM's Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike (JFCC-GS). It was the first of four assignments at USSTRATCOM, which also included stints as the deputy commander of the Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike and mobilization assistant to the deputy commander of USSTRATCOM.

Evans said each assignment helped build his knowledge of USSTRATCOM's diverse

missions and his appreciation of the work the teams of active and reserve component military members from all services, Defense Department civilians, civilian contractors and foreign liaison officers do each day to accomplish those missions.

It was during his most recent assignment as the mobilization assistant to the deputy commander of USSTRATCOM, then-Lt. Gen. Stephen W. Wilson, that Evans learned first-hand what the deputy commander position entails.

As the mobilization assistant, Evans was Wilson's principal advisor on reserve component matters related to the command's diverse missions. He was also Wilson's backup for all duties associated with this senior leadership position.

Evans said that gave him an opportunity to attend meetings and engagements that few Air National Guard general officers ever do. It also gave him experience he would need when it became obvious that Wilson's promotion to general and assignment as the U.S. Air Force vice chief of staff would create a leadership gap at USSTRATCOM headquarters.

It was Wilson who first approached Evans about filling the deputy commander position until a permanent replacement could be appointed. Wilson recalled he had visited with Haney about that gap and they both came to the same conclusion that Evans was not only a logical replacement for Wilson, he was the perfect choice.

"Rick was an absolutely easy choice to take on this assignment because he had the right skills and knowledge to step right into the job and not miss a beat," Wilson said. "I can't think of a better example of using our reserve component assets to benefit the mission."

With the approval of the Joint Staff, Evans became the first National Guard general officer to serve as the USSTRATCOM acting deputy commander, adding him to a list of several Nebraska National Guard general officers – Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac – who are currently serving in roles or assignments of national importance.

Evans served as the acting USSTRATCOM deputy commander until Vice Admiral Charles A. "Chas" Richard assumed the fulltime duties in September 2016.

During the course of his assignment, Evans proved to be an exceptional member of the USSTRATCOM team, Haney said.

"Having seen his impressive work on a daily basis, Major General Evans was clearly the right person for this job," he said. "General Evans' experience in the position, and his history of outstanding service, left no doubt that he would excel as our acting deputy commander."



U.S. Air Force photo

Offutt Duty: Maj. Gen. Rick Evans, acting deputy commander of U.S. Strategic Command, stands on the flightline at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., in September. Evans was the first Air Guard officer to serve as the acting deputy commander of the Offutt-based command.

Evans' selection to serve as the acting USSTRATCOM deputy commander was part of a larger "recognition of the leadership and capabilities that our Reserve Component general officer can bring, especially since 9/11," he added.

Evans said his temporary assignment was a direct result of recent National Guard Bureau chiefs' initiative to develop a bench of National Guard officer general officers ready to step into the new and growing roles in the Department of Defense.

"As part of that process, (the National Guard Bureau chiefs) have gone out and tried to find opportunities for National Guard general officers, Army and Air, to serve in these joint assignments that expose you to things that most National Guard or Reserve Component general officers do not see when they stay in their typical service channels," Evans said.

According to Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, Evans' selection was definitely well-earned.

"The selection of Major General Rick Evans as the acting deputy commander, United States Strategic Command, speaks to not only the high caliber of individual skills and attributes that Rick brings to this role, but also the nature of the strong relationship between all components, active, Guard and Reserve in the Department of Defense," Bohac said.

"It means that the diversity of talent, and in this case, what a 'Citizen Airman' brings, is being recognized at the highest levels and is truly valued in ensuring mission success."

Evans said it's all about bringing the best and the brightest together to help solve problems.

"What Admiral Haney has tried to focus

in on is, and I would include Reserve Component general officers in this group, to bring the most diverse cross-section of expertise to each problem set we have to develop options and solutions for leaders and the nation," Evans said.

For example, as Offutt Air Force Base prepares to close its runway in the next couple years, Evans said he's able to bring his experience as a Nebraska National Guard Airmen who has been involved in similar closures in the past to help USSTRATCOM best prepare for the disruptions to its flying missions.

Evans said his appreciation for USSTRATCOM only grew during his recent assignment.

"We're essentially making our own history with the way that we're looking at our missions," said Evans, referring to the role that USSTRATCOM plays every day. "Our eye is on the future and leading boldly the mission set we've been assigned."

"This isn't SAC re-created here," he added. "This is basically U.S. Strategic Command shaping the future of the mission set that we have and focusing on the national level impact that we have. It's more than strategic deterrence. We are also fully-engaged in our space and cyberspace missions, plus all of our other unified command plan missions...we are focused on the future and (determining) how do we lead in the mission set that we've been assigned for the next 50 years. To be a part of it at this level of command is both humbling and an honor."

Evans has now returned to his position as the senior reserve component advisor to the commander and director of reserve forces. He said his variety of assignments on the staff will no doubt allow him to continue contributing to USSTRATCOM's missions at a very high level.

Contract team wished well before overseas deployment

By Spc. Lisa Crawford
Acting Editor

Four Soldiers with the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1969th Contingency Contracting Team bid farewell to their families, Sept. 16, at the Joint Force Headquarters building in Lincoln.

The veteran team is embarking on a year-long mission with the U.S. Army Expeditionary Contracting Command. The mobilization will ultimately take them to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility where they will be responsible for conducting contingency contract administration for a local base while also ensuring that U.S. Soldiers are receiving the necessary services from civilian contractors.

Before their official send-off ceremony began, the team and their families were able to meet with Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts in a relaxed setting.

"I just wanted to say thank you very much for serving our country and for all your great work," Ricketts said. "I know this is multiple deployments for all of you. One of the things that I always talk about with the men and women of our National Guard is how proud I am, because it used to be, before Sept. 11, when you joined the National Guard you may get deployed, but you didn't really expect it. But as we see from the multiple deployments, now it's a regular thing to be deployed."

Ricketts said today's Soldiers know that by joining the National Guard, they are expecting to be deployed, and that's what he's most proud of.

"Not only is it the expectation, but they want to be deployed because they want to take the fight to enemy," Ricketts said. "They want to be out there making sure we're protecting our liberties overseas so we're not fighting here at home."

Ricketts added that with the recent 15th anniversary of the



All Will Be Well: A Soldier with the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1969th Contingency Contracting Team places a comforting arm around his son during a Sept. 16 farewell ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln.

Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the public knows why a team like the 1969th CCT is important.

"It's a dangerous world," he said. "There are people out there that are our enemies. We have to be proactive and we have to be out there to protect our liberties and take the fight to the enemy, and not allow it to come back over here. The mission is important. You've got the best training of anybody in the world to carry it out, you've got the best people to take care of each other and you'll be successful."

During the official send-off ceremony, multiple congressional representatives addressed the team with well wishes and support. One speaker, former Nebraska adjutant general retired Maj. Gen. Roger Lempke, spoke on behalf of Senator Deb Fischer.

"I look at the four standing here and I know most of you guys, and I can tell you there's going to be a rise in the level of experience over in the area of operations that I don't think the DoD is ready for yet," he said. "You guys will do a great job

over there."

Brig. Gen. Richard Dahlman, deputy adjutant general, made a point to assure the ceremony's audience that while the team deploying may be small by physical numbers, their strength and training resounds.

"Today we send off a small, but extremely important group of Soldiers, warriors and contracting professionals," Dahlman said. "Make no mistake, these Soldiers go through training to prepare them very well to engage when deployed in harm's way if that ever comes to it. However, this team is no stranger to deployments. In fact, their strong work as Soldiers is quite impressive for such a small group."

"Although it may appear to be a small formation that are deploying, in fact, you can count them on one hand, but I would offer to you what you can't count what's powerful is what's behind each one of these Soldiers. Behind each of these Soldiers is a family. Behind each of these Soldiers is a supportive community. Behind each of these Soldiers are



Photos by Spc. Lisa Crawford

A Governor's Send-Off: Capt. Dustin Young, commander of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1969th Contingency Contracting Team, holds his daughter while Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts bids the team farewell prior to an official send-off ceremony, Sept. 16, at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln.

representatives that are watching out for them. Behind each of these Soldiers is a brotherhood of arms... that support their every effort, up to this point and after."

"Well, here we are again," said Capt. Dustin Young, 1969th Contingency Contracting Team commander. Young noted that with this upcoming deployment being his third – and either a second, third or fourth deployment for the other members of the team – he chose to divert from the traditional send-off ceremony speech and instead share a slideshow of photos, allowing the audience to know a little more about the team and their families.

"Deployments are a weird thing," Young said. "They always test you in ways that you never consider or anticipate. It seems like each one of our deployments you seem to learn something new about yourself, something you didn't know before. You start appreciating things that you've been taking for granted and they force you to grow, mature and to gain new perspective on life."

"On this deployment we'll maintain and exceed the high standards the Nebraska National Guard is known for. We'll stay safe and we'll all come home better Soldiers, husbands and fathers than when we left. We'll see you all next summer."

Omaha's special operations Soldiers hit road once again

By Spc. Lisa Crawford
Acting Editor

Seven members of an Omaha-based 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne) team and their families were wished well the morning of Sept. 23 at the Nebraska National Guard's North Omaha Readiness Center before the start of a roughly six month-long overseas deployment.

The Soldiers are members of an Army Special Operations Forces Support Operation (ASPO) Team. While deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations, the Soldiers will be responsible for coordinating, monitoring and synchronizing Joint/Combined Special Operations Forces logistics requirements.

"Today's a bittersweet day," said 1st Lt. Nathan McGruder, ASPO Team commander. "Bitter in the sense that we have to say goodbye to our family, our loved ones and our friends. Sweet in the sense that we get to perform our mission, which we have been training and preparing for. We get to defend this great nation, this state and answer the call of duty by deploying and achieving victory."

"Ladies and gentlemen, the Soldiers before you today are the best at what they do," he said. "Their work ethic, motivation and discipline are second to none and I am honored to be on the team with you. In six months from now, this same group of motivated Soldiers will be right back here in this very armory, mission complete and successful."

Brig. Gen. Kevin Lyons, Nebraska Army National Guard land component commander, said that not only is the Nebraska National Guard getting good at sending Soldiers off for deployments, but it's getting good at bringing them home, "and that's even better."

"To the seven members of the ASPO team, I've seen you in action the last several years," Lyons said. "I know what you can do, I know



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Father's Embrace: Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Wortman, 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne), receives a hug from his father following the Sept. 23 send-off ceremony for Wortman's Army Special Operations Forces Support Operation (ASPO) Team at the North Omaha Readiness Center.

your capabilities, your skillset and I know that you'll be successful on your mission over the next several months. And better yet, come next spring, we'll be right here to welcome you home."

Nearly 100 Soldiers, family members and guests attended the send-off ceremony. Some shed tears before and during the event, but overall spirits were high as loved ones embraced and shared well wishes for a safe and swift deployment.

Larry and Sandy Shupe, parents of Sgt. Tom Shupe of Fort Calhoun, said they are as prepared as they can be for their son's

first deployment.

"We're proud of him for serving his country," Larry said. "We're a real close-knit family and we'll support (his wife and son) with whatever they need. We already plan on visiting and working on their house together while he's gone. He just needs to stick together, trust his comrades and represent the U.S. in the way he was trained and we'll look forward to his return."

Sandy said his entire family collaborated together and supports Tom's deployment. Even his sister, Katy Shupe, feel comfortable about her brother's deployment. "I'm

proud of him for choosing this career," Katy said. "I'm going to talk to him as much I can, and I know he'll work hard. We're all proud of him, here, and he should never doubt his decision to do this."

Justine Schmid, of Fremont, Nebraska, said she has a plan to protect her husband, Sgt. Christopher Schmid, during this deployment, their second as a couple.

"Stay positive and don't let him know about any bad stuff that might happen at home," Justine said with a laugh. Still, she said she believes this deployment will likely be harder than the first now that Christopher will be away from their one-year-old son as well.

"We'll stay in touch as much as possible by using FaceTime and always including our son," Justine said.

As the unit's commander, McGruder said he's confident in the mission ahead and is certain this deployment – his fourth – will be over in no time.

"We're just going to dive right in," McGruder said. "It's going to be fast paced, but know the training will pay off and we'll take care of business."

McGruder's fiancée, Ellise Nichols, isn't 100 percent sure what to expect with this deployment. This will be her second deployment experience with McGruder. The last time he deployed, she said she was still a very busy college student and the two lived apart. Now she is working as a nurse and the couple live together.

"I'm sure I'll just miss his presence more," Nichols said. On their last deployment, she began counting down with 90 days remaining. She plans to do the same this time. But that's not all she's counting down to.

"I can't wait for our wedding in June," Nichols said. "I just need the flowers, cake and my groom to come home."

McGruder said he's very fortunate to have such a supportive partner. "She's a trooper," he said.

Building Teamwork

Nebraska Air Guard security police train with Lincoln SWAT

By Senior Master Sgt. Shannon Nielson
Staff Photojournalist

A metal battering ram slams against a door with a deafening crash. Wood splinters erupt from the door as it smashes open, closely followed by a four-person team that quickly enters the door looking for an intruder.

Thankfully, this scenario played out during a training exercise when 18 members of the 155th Security Forces Squadron, state employees and 16 Lincoln Police Department SWAT team members teamed up, Aug. 4, on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln. The joint team used the training to hone their skills in dynamic entry, a tactic of entering a building or room with surprise, speed and dominating force.

The training was designed to be as realistic as possible to ensure the team is prepared to respond to a variety of crisis situations that could occur on base.

The training piggybacked on a full-scale active shooter response exercise performed with multiple local law enforcement agencies and emergency responders on the base a few years ago, said Chief Master Sgt. Carl Oestmann, 155th SFS superintendent.

"During that scenario we found out that we need to work with each other," Oestmann said. "We wanted to build upon that exercise and to engrain both (the Lincoln Police Department) and ours into one team to alleviate any concerns we may have with an active shooter or a high crisis situation. We need to understand each other's philosophies, rules of engagement, use of force and then work together as a team to ensure we work cohesively...to stop the threat as soon as possible."

Along with familiarizing themselves with local first responders, Oestmann said the exercise gave Guardsmen an opportunity to perform training that hasn't always been available.

The war skills training building on the air base provides the capability of practicing on how to breach a door and enter a building. That training also helps the Lincoln Police



Knock Knock: Staff Sgt. Erica Daughtery, 155th Security Forces Squadron, uses a metal battering ram to open a reinforced door during a training exercise, Aug. 4, on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln.

Department.

"Whenever you have the ability to provide training to your members it enhances their skillsets to handle any situation that you may come across," Oestmann said. "Then, when you bring in another agency, it just reinforces the training that you're doing is relevant and that you are also finding out that no matter what the team make-up is...you are able to work through those issues and work together as a team to alleviate any problems on the installation."

Jason Stille, LPD captain and SWAT commander, understands the importance of military and civilian personnel building a solid relationship and functioning as one



Photos by Spc. Lisa Crawford

Keep A Low Profile: 155th Security Forces Squadron Airmen and Nebraska National Guard air base security specialists teamed up with the Lincoln Police Department SWAT for a training exercise, Aug. 4, to hone their skills in dynamic entry, a tactic of entering a building or room with surprise, speed and dominating force.

unit in a crisis situation.

"What we have tried to do is to learn a little bit of how (the military) operates and we want the military to learn about how we operate and try to figure out the best way to combine forces to come to bare on one situation, such as an active shooter on this base," Stille said. "There are a lot of nuances with any active shooter on a base. There are going to be different tactics that we use that maybe you don't use."

Stille added that a good working knowledge of each agency's personnel and the differences in how each team operates will make

a response to a crisis situation come together faster and provide the best possible outcome. Oestmann agreed, stating the training has already paid dividends.

"I have seen an improvement of the security forces members to include the state workers," Oestmann said.

"I get a lot of joy in seeing the improvement in our folks, and also seeing cooperation that we offer two outside agencies and that they offer to us. I think that is something that not all other areas in the country have. The relationships that we have with our outside agencies are second-to-none."

Nebraska Air, Army Guardsmen train to fight future wildfires

By Tech. Sgt. Mary Thach
Staff Photojournalist

Several instructors from the Nebraska Forest Service traveled to the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Sept. 9-12, to train approximately 20 firefighters from the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard, to respond to wildfires throughout the state and the plains region.

The four-day course, which is given nationally to all firefighters, helps the Guardsmen become Red Card certified, allowing them the ability to fight wildfires on state or federally owned property.

All Nebraska Air National Guard firefighters are required to be Red Card certified. Seth Peterson, a fire management specialist for the Nebraska Forest Service and instructor, travels across the state annually to certify firefighters on the basics of fighting wildfires. Peterson said the course is provided coast-to-coast using identical curriculum to ensure each person is using the same terminology, can implement and perform the proper procedures, use the same tools, and don protective equipment in wildfire situations.

The training is exactly the same whether the personnel being trained are volunteers, civilian "hot-shots" who travel the country fighting fires, full-time local fire and rescue, or military department firefighters.

Along with three days of classroom instruction, the firefighters are given a full day of hands-on training to familiarize themselves with concepts learned in the classroom, and to get experience using



Photo by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

Unrolling Fire Hose: A Nebraska Air National Guard firefighter trains with the Nebraska Forest Service to become Red Card certified to fight wildfires in Nebraska and surrounding states, Sept. 9-12, at the Nebraska National Guard air base, in Lincoln.

the tools and equipment introduced during the course.

"We are here because the Nebraska National Guard is looking at creating a 20-man hand crew to respond to wildfires throughout Nebraska and adjoining states that surround us," Peterson said. "In order to be qualified to go on fires you need to take the beginner firefighter classes."

"Other states have been sharing resources for fighting fires with Nebraska for a long time because we did not have a wildfire infrastructure," Peterson added. "Now that we are part of the (Great Plains Interagency) Compact, we need to share our resources when adjoining states need it. When a fire happens in Nebraska they are going to want to help us."

Swimming Lessons

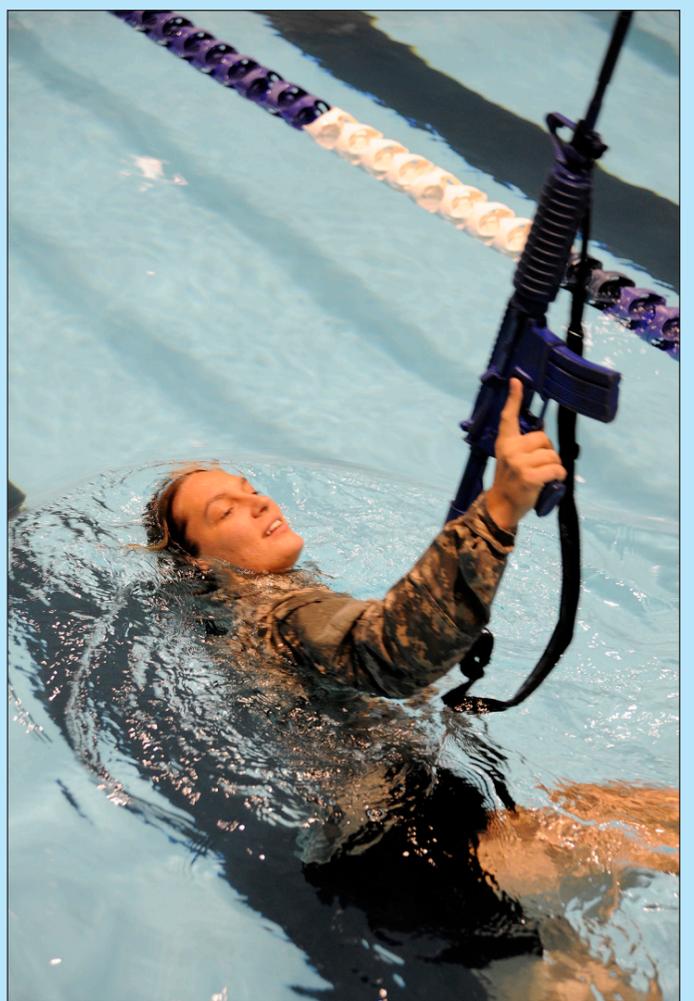


Photo by Spc. Lisa Crawford

Military Policemen use pool to prepare for possible overseas deployment

Above Water: Spc. Jessica Colegrove, 402nd Military Police Battalion, demonstrates how to swim with a weapon during the unit's Water Survival Training, Nov. 3, at the Offutt Air Force Base Field House pool.

Company Leadership Training

■ Leadership course prepares incoming Guard commanders, first sergeants

By Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen
Staff Photojournalist

Nearly 30 Soldiers from across Nebraska attended a commander's and first sergeant's leadership course at the Joint Force Headquarters building, Sept. 16, in Lincoln.

The multiple-day course is designed to prepare younger officers and senior non-commissioned officers for the challenges they will meet as company commanders for first sergeants.

According to Nebraska National Guard senior leaders, the course is primarily about helping develop company-level leadership teams so that they can be successful in their current or future assignments.

Over the course of several days, the future company- and troop-level leaders heard from a variety of subject matter experts in such areas as finance, medical and retention.

"It was helpful hearing some of the trials that others have gone through," said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua McAtee, Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry. "Moving forward, I will take some of their philosophies and apply them to my own."

For some students, unit and Soldier readiness were what the course was all about.

"I think building readiness is the number one goal," said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Marcello, Troop A, 1-134th Cavalry.

During the course, Marcello, along with several others, were able to hear from and speak with several senior leaders in the Nebraska Army National Guard.

"I know General Dahlman talked to you a little about the value of a command team. It's an incredibly powerful team," Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, told the officers and NCOs during one particular session. "I'm excited for you. I hope you have the same level of excitement for your command that you're going into that I had."

The adjutant general also reminded the group of several important leadership topics.

"Families matter, folks. They are the ones who are there for your (traditional, part-time) Soldier," Bohac said. "Make sure as time goes on, you've got the three pillars: unit, community/employers and family. All three have to be operating and happy for you to be successful, which means that you have to think about that and take care of those things."

Bohac also reminded the group that the National Guard and all of its members are important elements in today's high operations tempo world.

"You lead from wherever you stand in the formation today," Bohac said. "I'm proud of you. I'm proud of what you do, I'm proud of the team and I'm proud of everything we do for our fellow citizens—for our state and nation."

According to Marcello, the course definitely helped open his eyes to the responsibilities of being a first sergeant.

"It was a little dose of reality," Marcello said. "A lot of senior enlisted and commissioned officers came and spoke about the first 90 days in their positions. It was kind of nice to know that our leadership—all the way up to the people you don't see in the ranks that often—support you and care for you. That's the message that we, as new leaders, need to send down to the young troops."

Dustoff Training



Photo by Sgt. Charles Wilkins

Afghanistan MEDEVAC Simulation: This photo was submitted by Nebraska Army National Guard Sgt. Charles Wilkins from Ralston, Neb., who is currently deployed with Company G, 2-104th General Support Aviation Battalion, in Afghanistan. Wilkins said, "To start, this is a simulated MEDEVAC. Imagine it wasn't. The guys on the ground, the guys the helo came to get, they're hurt, scared and fighting for life. They called and we came. Even so, the help isn't clear. It's dusted out, they still have to make it that last 100 feet, and it's incredibly loud. Some people think we have a death wish when we come to theaters of war, but it's the opposite. We have a wish for life. And this moment shows that we all chose to live and risk all for our brothers and sisters in arms. We come with two pilots who bring us there, and two crew members in the back who fight all to bring the wounded home. As a photographer, I can give everybody a chance to view these moments. As MEDEVAC, we can give people a chance to have moments again."

'Smart' idea nets Nebraska Soldier big reward

By Spc. Lisa Crawford
Acting Editor

Sergeant Scott Witthuhn of Fremont, Nebraska, is a surface maintenance mechanic in the Nebraska Army National Guard. Witthuhn was honored in September for inventing a device that is key to ensuring the readiness rate for an entire family of skid steer loaders is always high.

In May 2013, Witthuhn received a work order to repair an M400W skid steer loader sitting in the back of a storage facility. When he went to move other skid loaders that blocked his access to the one requested, none of the skid loaders would start. The batteries on each skid loader were dead and he needed to jump-start multiple batteries.

"I read up in *PS Magazine* that it's an issue where the batteries are constantly going dead," Witthuhn said. "They said the only fix right now is to sit there and run them every day or at least once a week... well that's not always feasible. So I brought it in and decided to try and figure out why the batteries were going dead."

Witthuhn found out that even after a skid loader's power is shut off, the equalizer continues to operate, which causes the batteries to drain over time. He then spent a week finding a solution to the problem.

"All I did was take the power and the negative and cut it off at the equalizer, so when you shut the switch off, it cuts the equalizer off," he said. "If the batteries have been changed, to date we haven't had one dead out there yet."

Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, said Witthuhn's invention saves the state time and money. It can now be implemented Army-wide.

"The initiative and persistence that Sergeant Witthuhn demonstrated in developing a solution is one of the hallmarks of the Citizen-Soldier," Bohac said. "His commitment to equipment readiness, which in turn drives unit readiness, is such a positive example for all of us. His recurrent dead battery solution will have an impact on the total Army family and he represents what makes the Army National Guard such a vital component. It's an honor to have Soldiers like Sergeant Witthuhn serving his state and nation in the



Photo by Spc. Lisa Crawford

SMART Invention: Sgt. Scott Witthuhn poses with the new power switch he invented for a family of skid steer loaders with recurrent dead battery problems. His solution has already saved the Nebraska National Guard time and money, and will now be implemented Army-wide.

Nebraska National Guard."

When the issue first arose, Witthuhn's supervisor, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Dylan Welsh, asked Witthuhn to come up with a fix for the problem using parts already available. He added he didn't expect Witthuhn's quick and innovative solution.

"I was impressed with Sergeant Witthuhn's ingenuity and perseverance in finding a solution to the batteries always being dead in the skid loaders," Welsh said. "Utilizing parts that already exist in the system was a key factor in coming up with a fix. Applying Sergeant Witthuhn's solution improved the readiness rate of skid loaders and saved thousands of dollars a year by not having to

repeatedly purchase batteries."

Witthuhn said his team at Unit Training Equipment Site 2 in Mead, Nebraska, installed a battery cut-off switch similar to what is on the M915A3 tractor, made new ground and positive power wires and a mounting bracket for the cut-off switch to solve the dead battery issue.

"This keeps us from having to go out there with a jump pack and jump-start each and every single one just to get one out... and it cuts down on the cost of batteries," Witthuhn said. "Those batteries are like \$230 a piece, and most of the time once they're completely depleted, you can't recharge them, so you have to buy new batteries."

Witthuhn said he currently manages 12 skid loaders with two batteries each. His invention has the potential to save just one unit approximately \$5,500 a year.

After sharing his idea with other shops throughout the state, Witthuhn submitted his modification to the Army Supply and Maintenance Assessment and Review Team (SMART). SMART rated his modification as having substantial value with broad impact on the readiness rate on the entire family of skid steer loaders. For his suggestion, Witthuhn received a \$1,000 award, which Bohac presented him in September.

"I wasn't expecting this to be a big deal at all," he said. "I tried to be humble about it, but I told the guys here at the shop that if I did get a monetary reward for it that I'd buy them drinks."

Witthuhn said while he was the brains behind the invention, it took a team to accomplish the mission.

"It was kind of like a whole shop process, because those guys had to try and read my plans to help install and stuff," he said. "So I figured I should reward them a little bit, too."

"Sergeant Witthuhn has outstanding moral character and is able to exercise sound judgment in a multitude of situations," Welsh said. "He has a work ethic that is a relief to see in a young Soldier. He is absolutely a credit to his family name and the Nebraska Army National Guard."

Witthuhn said he has some 'other great ideas' that he's currently exploring as well, and he hopes to someday contribute more inventions to the U.S. Army.



Hands-On Experience: Spc. Adam Miller, Troop B, 1-134th Cavalry, practices loading an Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided (TOW) Improved Target Acquisition System (ITAS) during training at the Mead Training Site.



Photos by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

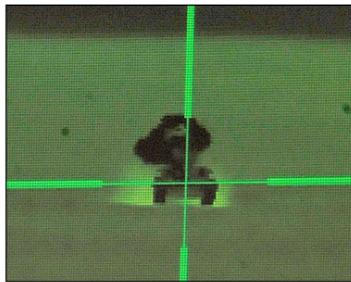
Cavalry Soldiers gain new capability with new missile system

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

The Nebraska Army National Guard's 1-134th Cavalry gained an important capability this fall when members of the unit participated in training designed to radically add to their unit's ability to identify the enemy and destroy them if necessary.

The training was part of the new fielding of the Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided (TOW) Missile Improved Target Acquisition System, or ITAS. The system is designed to increase the cavalrymen's ability to detect and acquire targets, compute ranges and fire the missile at a variety of targets ranging from personnel, to bunkers, to heavily armored tanks.

According to Sgt. Maj. Bruce Nakai, operations sergeant major for the 1-134th Cavalry, the weapon system fielding is part of the changing mission for the Nebraska Army National Guard cavalry organization as it transitions from its current role within the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade to one in which it will support the Arkansas Army



Direct Hit: A member of the 1-134th Cavalry scores a computerized hit while training with the new TOW missile system.

National Guard's 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

"We're still going to be recon-gathering. Alpha and Bravo Troops retain their recon capability while Charley Troop has transitioned from long-range surveillance to dismounted recon," said Nakai, adding that the TOW missile system and soon-to-be-received mortars are giving the squadron another way of conducting its mission while also adding to its ability to not only defend itself, but also actively engage in a battle.

New Missiles: Members of the 1-134th Cavalry Squadron practice acquiring targets on a rainy afternoon at the Mead Training Site in September with their newly acquired Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided (TOW) Improved Target Acquisition System (ITAS). The cavalry squadron received the new missile system as a part of its changing cavalry mission.

"So, not only are we going to be a recon unit, we're going to be actively engaged in the warfight with the systems that we're getting," he added.

Nakai said the TOW system, which fires a wire-guided missile that can eliminate targets over long distances, is definitely an upgrade for the cavalry squadron. Currently, the unit's primary weapons systems are .50 caliber machineguns and automatic grenade launchers that are attached to the roofs of armored Humvees.

"This weapon is known as the 'Finger of God,' which is what the Afghans refer to it as because of its capability," Nakai said. "To bring that capability into the cavalry, I think (the Soldiers) are excited about it."

As part of the fielding process, eight non-commissioned officers were brought to the squadron's headquarters at the Mead Training Site in late September for a week of "train the trainer" training where

they learned how to operate the TOW missile ITAS simulator training systems. The next week a group of 21 additional cavalry Soldiers – actual TOW missile operators – were trained on the system by the initial cadre of NCOs.

Those Soldiers will now serve as the primary training cadre as the missiles are fielded in Troops A and B. According to the Soldiers who had the opportunity work on the system, the weapon will be a major upgrade for the organization.

"This is all brand new to us," said Staff Sgt. Joseph Pritchard, a cavalry scout from Mead's Troop B who was one of the NCOs conducting the training. "That's why it's so important that we get so many guys out here."

Pritchard said the system's capabilities are pretty impressive. With its forward looking infrared system – or FLIR – the weapon can be used to collect important range information on a target, which can then be shared with other vehicles

or units, or as a way to call indirect fire onto it.

"We can take out enemy tanks, bunkers, vehicles, personnel," said Pritchard, adding that the organization's Soldiers are excited to get proficient on the system, which hopefully will include actually firing missiles during next year's annual training.

"We have a line of guys that wanted to come out and do this," Pritchard said. "Now all of us who are trained on the train the trainer equipment can take it out to the units and get out and train our Soldiers. We're all really excited about what's going to be coming."

Sgt. Ames Johnson, a scout team leader from Hastings' Troop A, echoed those thoughts.

"I think it's awesome. It's a really cool system," he said. "I've worked with quite a few systems that are similar to it, but nothing that's quite like this. It's more advanced... more effective than anything else we have."

ACTIVATION continued from page 1.

to logistics, transportation, maintenance and engineering roles.

Under the former battalion structure, the 734th Trans. Bn. focused primarily on transportation support, while also providing command and control activities for its five assigned truck companies spread out over 11 communities in northeastern, central and western Nebraska. Under the 734th Brigade Support Battalion, the organization will now be responsible for providing a variety of direct support – including logistical, maintenance, vehicle recovery and health services – to the 67th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and its subordinate units.

Teegerstrom said he expects the new organization's Soldiers to continue to embrace the opportunities that the changes bring.

"We look at transformation and say this is the end of the 734th (Trans. Bn.) but it really isn't," Teegerstrom said. "It's becoming a brigade support battalion. But more importantly, the thing that really matters within (any military organization)... it's the people that stand within a formation that makes a unit."

"The 734th Brigade Support Battalion will be a great unit because of the awesome people that stand within the formation here," Teegerstrom added. "It's going to be one of the (67th) brigade's top battalions from day one."

As a part of the two separate ceremonies, the 734th Trans. Bn. first had its red organizational colors cased for the final time by Weskamp and Command Sgt. Maj. Shawn Griffith, who served as the final senior officer and noncommissioned officer leaders of the unit. Those two Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers had led the battalion for the past three years dur-



Photos by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

New Beginning: Col. Rick Gray, commander of the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, holds the staff while Lt. Col. Andrew Collins reveals the new organizational colors for the new 734th Main Support Battalion at the Kearney Readiness Center on Sept. 11.

ing which, Weskamp said, they logged more than 30,000 miles traveling between the battalion's widely separated truck companies.

"It's truly been an honor to serve you all," said Weskamp during his last moments as commander.

Roughly an hour later, the new 734th Brigade Support Battalion was activated and its new sandy-yellow organizational colors unfurled for the first time. Assisting Collins in activating the unit was Col. Rick Gray, commander of the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, and Command Sgt. Maj. Bradly Anderson, senior enlisted Soldier of the new battalion.

According to Gray, the new battalion has an extremely important mission.

"The 734th Brigade Support Battalion is now active and already a disciplined and professional unit," said Gray, whose own unit would soon transform into the 67th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. He added: "The 734th BSB makes the 67th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade better in every way. This battalion's important role in supporting the brigade and its subordinate battalions in the warfight is critical."

Those same skills will be important during state emergencies as well, said Gray, adding that the Soldiers should take great heart in



End Of A Mission: Lt. Col. Chris Weskamp holds his colors as the 734th Transportation Battalion's flag is furled during a Sept. 11 inactivation ceremony in Kearney.

what they are now about to do.

"Today, each and every one of you Soldiers in this Army formation should allow yourself just a little extra smile knowing that your contributions to America's Army and this nation will continue to be felt for many, many years to come."

The battalion's new commander, Collins, agreed.

"Today marks the new beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Prairie Steel Battalion," said Collins, himself a veteran of the 734th in its past armor and transportation mission. "As a multi-functional support battalion, we are their lifeline; our success will be measured by the success of the brigade and the units within the brigade."

"The reorganizing from a transportation battalion to the BSB will come with some challenges," he added. "However, just like in the past, I am confident in the Soldiers and officers of the Prairie Steel Battalion. We will overcome these challenge and excel in our new mission."

Kearney transportation unit inactivates, looks to future

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Soldiers assigned to the 1195th Transportation Company saw their trucking mission come to an end, Sept. 11, when their unit was inactivated during a morning ceremony at the Kearney Armed Force Readiness Center.

The inactivation was brought about by the transformation of the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, which the Active Army is phasing out, into the new 67th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. That transformation affects roughly one-in-three Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers, state-wide.

In Kearney, this means that the venerable 1195th Transportation Company is being inactivated, with the Soldiers previously assigned to this unit being transitioned into several units, that are now part of the new 734th Brigade Support Battalion.

According to Capt. Justin Hochstein, company commander, there were plenty of mixed feelings among the Soldiers as they stood in formation for the last time as members of the 1195th Trans. Co. and watched as their red guidon was cased.

"The mood is kind of a mixed one," said Hochstein shortly after the inactivation ceremony, which took place on the drill floor of the Kearney Armed Forces Readiness Center. "Obviously, it's a little somber as we close the door on steep tradition, history and all those experiences and memories. But it's also one of excitement."

"We are making a significant transition into a place where there are abundant opportunities in new fields," Hochstein added.

Pfc. Collin Sindt, a unit automated logistics specialist, echoed those comments. It was Sindt's responsibility to hold the 1195th Trans. Co.'s guidon for the last time.

"It hit me a little bit after the ceremony about how big it actually was," said Sindt, a senior at the University of Nebraska at Kearney who is majoring in industrial distribution with a minor in music. "It's much more than just me."

Sindt added that he senses that his fellow Soldiers are ready to move into their new missions. "I think



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Final Unit Guidon Holder: Pfc. Collin Sindt, 1195th Transportation Company, holds his unit's colors for the last time during the Sept. 11 inactivation ceremony for the Kearney-based company. The 1195th Trans. Co. was inactivated as part of the state-wide transformation effort of Nebraska Army National Guard units that affects roughly one-in-three Nebraska Soldiers.

it's really about just moving ahead, fulfilling the mission of Nebraska and the country itself."

Hochstein said the transformation has actually been going on for some months, with a number of Soldiers from the 1195th moving into their new companies while other Soldiers are being moved into what would become Company A, 734th Brigade Support Battalion with the activation of that organization later in the morning.

"There are a lot of new faces here, today," Hochstein said. "At the same time, there are a lot of old faces that have moved on to their new missions."

Hochstein said that the new Company A, 734th BSB, will be responsible for a wide array of missions designed to provide direct support to frontline Soldiers. This includes teams of unit Soldiers that will be responsible for ammunition distribution, water purification, fuel management, supply and warehouse operations.

"All of these different teams and squads are going to work together to push supplies out to the front line," Hochstein said. "We anticipate a lot of good training coming up and a lot of neat equipment. It's something we really haven't been able to do before."



Photos by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

Hand Off: Lt. Col. Thomas Golden, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron commander, passes the Company D guidon to Capt. Ben Harper, the 39th Brigade Support Battalion, Forward Support Company's first commander, during Co. D's activation ceremony, Sept. 11, at the Spirit of '76 Armory in Lincoln.

Newly-formed forward support company unveils new colors

By Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen
Staff Photojournalist

The uncasing of a unit's military colors signifies the beginning chapter of a military unit's history.

Company D (Forward Support), 39th Brigade Support Battalion, was activated, Sept. 11, at the Spirit of '76 Armory in Lincoln.

In front of Brig. Gen. Kevin Lyons and senior military guests, Lt. Col. Thomas Golden, 1-134th Cavalry commander, uncased and passed on the Co. D guidon to Capt. Benjamin Harper, the FSC's first commander.

"Ben, congratulations," Golden said. "I know you're going to do great things."

Golden then took time to address the Soldiers in the newly activated support company.

"To the Soldiers of Delta Company, I started out in 1989 as a heavy track vehicle mechanic on active duty," he said. "Then, I found myself in Iraq—integrated in an armor platoon. Everywhere those guys went in Iraq, I went. I know what it's like to be a mechanic and to be in this type of organization. You guys are often behind the scenes quietly doing your job, but it

is a significantly important job—I understand that. You guys are the backbone of our ability to move, to do reconnaissance."

After the battalion commander's remarks, Harper directly addressed the Soldiers he now commands.

"So we begin the history of Delta Company, not the company as a whole, but Delta Company as far as Nebraska is concerned," Harper said. "And, we're faced with many challenges. The largest is how best we can do our mission? How best can we support the reconnaissance squadron?"

Co. D was originally constituted on Nov. 11, 1967, in Arkansas. The unit's history, among some reserve component firsts, included two tours in Iraq, one from 2003-05 and one from 2007-08.

However, Harper said he isn't looking backwards.

"We're not coming in being part of a unit's history—we get to create it," Harper said. "We get to start from the ground up; we get to make our own accomplishments, and that's pretty damn cool. Colonel Golden, thank you for granting me the privilege of leading these men and women."

67TH MEB continued from page 1.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

Physical Transformations: Sgt. Anthony Schuman paints "Maneuver Enhancement Brigade" (MEB) on a wall in the Spirit of '76 Armory in Lincoln, Sept. 19. The MEB is replacing "Battlefield Surveillance Brigade" (BFSB), the unit's prior designation.

historic ties to the Nebraska Guard's most famous organization: the 134th Infantry Regiment of World War II fame.

According to Nebraska officials, the November activation ceremony was historic in nature.

"Thank you for coming today to experience and be a part of history with the state of Nebraska," said Big. Gen. Kevin Lyons, Nebraska Army National Guard land component commander, at the start of the ceremonies.

The day's events included four abbreviated ceremonies packed into one: the deactivation of the 67th BfSB, the activation of the 67th MEB, and both the brigade's change of command from Col. Richard Gray to Col. Craig Strong, and change of responsibility from Command Sgt. Maj. Wilfred Uhing to Command Sgt. Maj. Shawn Griffith.

"Colonel Craig Strong... is the next person to assume command of the 67th MEB to take you to the next level... to prepare this brigade to be one of the top brigades in the United States," Lyons said. "We have the Soldiers already that are in the top of the United States, and now we are going to take this brigade and continue to transform and meet our objectives as we move forward."

Gray and Uhing both knew about the upcoming transition when they took their respective positions with the 67th BfSB and worked diligently to continue training while preparing for the move to a MEB.

"It provided a great challenge to us and the staff to synchronize it," Gray said of the transition. "To know that our brigade will be called on, maybe not today but in the future, and in the same manner it provides an excellent opportunity to really every Soldier

throughout the Nebraska Army National Guard because it allows us to grow in senior positions as well as the opportunity to transition to a different job, different MOS, should they seek that out."

The activation of the 67th MEB is the latest step in the largest reorganization of Nebraska Army National Guard units in a generation, affecting roughly one out of every three Soldiers in Nebraska.

Like the BfSB before it, the 67th MEB will continue to provide critical capabilities for higher level (division, corps, theater) commands, but will do so by securing and managing rear areas, allowing accompanying brigade combat teams to focus on the forward fight.

Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, adjutant general, announced the Nebraska Army National Guard's transformation Nov. 17, 2015. While the transformation is centered around the 67th BfSB, it affects roughly 1,100 Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers in 16 communities.

The Nebraska Army National Guard force structure transformation affects units in Lincoln, Omaha, Beatrice, Columbus, York, Hastings, Kearney, Grand Island, Mead, O'Neill, Broken Bow, North Platte, McCook, Sydney, Scottsbluff and Chadron. The major changes to the units will occur over the course of roughly three years.

The 67th MEB is specifically designed to maintain and secure supply lines and to maintain freedom of maneuver and action throughout the combat area, according to unit officials.

The structure of the MEB aligns with both

domestic and federal mission sets providing greater flexibility and capability to both the governor and geographic combatant commanders, Guard officials say.

The brigade's inherent engineering, military police and chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological consequence management capabilities are uniquely able to meet the needs of a local or state disaster as well as the combat needs in a theater of war.

This dual nature makes the brigade an ideal asset to have in the state and the Army inventory.

According to Gray, the final commander of the 67th BfSB, the brigade Soldiers performed amazing work that will help the new organization hit the ground running.

"You're outstanding in every way," Gray said the Soldiers of the 67th MEB. "Your dedication as a Citizen Soldier is tremendous today, because we ask more of you than just 39 days... we ask much, much more, and our Soldiers come forward in every way."

"Colonel Strong, Sergeant Major Griffith, you have a great, but brand new staff," Gray said. "They're excellent, well trained in their jobs and they're going to do great work for you. So we really, across the board, transitioned this brigade in every way."

Strong, the brigade's incoming commander, closed out the extended ceremony by, "most importantly," welcoming the Soldiers of the 67th MEB.

"I say most importantly because you are who embody this brigade and represent the best of this state; the best of this nation," Strong said.

"We are Nebraska's brigade and 'All Hell Can't Stop Us'."

Nebraska Army Guard Buffett joined much different than today's

By Lt. Col Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

The Nebraska Army National Guard that Warren Buffett joined in 1951 was one involved in a historic transformation. When the Nebraska National Guard was called up for World War II in 1940, the organization – like other state Guards – essentially ceased to exist.

However, after considerable conflict at the highest levels of the military, the National Guard not only emerged from World War

II intact, but with a federal mission that had grown substantially. Under the direction of Maj. Gen. Butler Miltonberger, a Nebraska Army National Guardsman who became the first postwar National Guard Bureau chief in 1946, the Army National Guard was to grow to 622,000 Soldiers by the end of 1951 – essentially a doubling of the Guard prewar strength. In Nebraska, this equated to a goal of recruiting 5,700 Army National Guard Soldiers into 32 different communities across Nebraska.

The responsibility of recruiting and reorganizing the Nebraska

Army National Guard fell onto the shoulders of several Nebraska National Guard leaders who would become known as the titans of the postwar era: Maj. Gen. Guy Henninger, the longest serving Nebraska adjutant general who would become one of the first Air National Guard general officers in history; Maj. Gen. Warren C. Wood, a prominent Gering, Nebraska, newspaper man and commander of a new Iowa-Nebraska 34th Infantry Division; and Col. Francis Greenleaf, chief of staff of the 34th Infantry Division who would go on to become Nebraska's second

National Guard Bureau chief in the early 1970s.

By the time Buffett enlisted into the Nebraska Army National Guard shortly after graduating from Columbia University in 1951, the Nebraska National Guard was well on its way as new Soldiers began filling the Guard's ranks and leftover World War II equipment began flowing into the hands of the new and veteran Army National Guard Soldiers.

Still, there were some problems that remained. For example, new Soldiers did not yet attend basic training as they would in later

decades. Instead, new enlistees received their training from more experienced unit noncommissioned officers during weekly drills at local armories.

State facilities were still a far-cry from what they would be in later years, with many units conducting training in the basements of local city halls, or on the second floors of local businesses or community centers.

Still, as Buffett would later attest, the same "can-do" spirit that exists in today's Nebraska National Guard was in ample evidence in the early 1950s.

BUFFETT continued from page 1.

the Guard almost impacted his wedding day and how he once received a stock tip during annual training.

Buffett's stories will one day be part of several Nebraska National Guard Museum exhibits, to include the "I Am the Guard" display that will tell the stories of several prominent Nebraska National Guard veterans.

Enlisting into the Nebraska Army National Guard

When Buffett enlisted into the Nebraska Army National Guard shortly after graduating from Columbia University in 1951, the Nebraska National Guard was well on its way to reestablishing itself following World War II as a newly reconstitution organization. New Soldiers were filling the Guard's ranks and leftover World War II equipment was starting to flow into the hands of the new and veteran Guard Soldiers.

At this time, however, new Soldiers did not yet attend basic training as they would in later decades. Instead, new enlistees received their training from the more experienced unit non-commissioned officers during weekly drills at local armories.

State facilities were still a far-cry from what they would be in later years, with many units conducting training in the basements of local city halls, or on the second floors of local businesses or community centers.

Still, as Buffett would later attest, the same "can-do" spirit that exists in today's Nebraska National Guard was in ample evidence in the early 1950s.

"I was 20 years old and I knew that I was coming back to Omaha. I was going to start selling stocks at this small firm that my dad had. I didn't know what the draft situation might be, so I joined the Guard."

That's how Buffett recalled his decision to join the Nebraska Army National Guard in January 1951. A native of Omaha, Nebraska, who had finished high school in the Washington, D.C., area while his father served in the U.S. Congress, Buffett had just earned his Master of Science degree in Economics when he decided to enlist into the Nebraska Army National Guard "near the Pentagon."

When he arrived back in Omaha, one of the first people Buffett met was then-Lt. Col. Francis Greenleaf, a veteran of Nebraska's 134th Infantry Regiment who had earned a Silver Star during the 1944 Battle of St. Lo, France.

"He told me I was in Captain (Melvin) Murphy's company and I was to do whatever Sergeant (John) Miglini told me to do," said Buffett about his encounter with Greenleaf.

The unit Buffett joined was the headquarters company for the 34th Infantry Division, which had been reformed in 1946 as a "shared" division between the Iowa and Nebraska Army National Guard. For Buffett, this meant attending weekly drills at the unit's armory at "around 20th and Woolworth" Streets in Omaha, where the unit's NCOs – some of them World War II veterans – oversaw the initial training of the new enlistees.

Buffett said the training was pretty rudimentary.

"There wasn't much training to do in terms of what I was going to be working on when we went to camp – which was going to be payroll – so, it was pretty basic, almost like you would see in the movies," Buffett said. "It was about learning about the rifle and learning about the Army."

"Sergeant Miglini would have us fall in and then we would learn about what we would be doing over the next few hours," Buffett recalled. "It was a variety of things that we were learning about... it wasn't a lot of specialized training because you didn't need it in the job that I had."

According to Buffett, he's not exactly sure

when he was assigned to serve as a payroll specialist within the headquarters unit, but it was fairly early on.

He added that his financial background probably had at least something to do with the assignment.

"There wasn't a lot to do with that specialized duty except when you went to camp," he said. "I could do debits and credits."

Much like today, drills were spent preparing for annual training camps, typically held during the summer months. In Buffett's case, this meant yearly trips to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin.

One particular memory stands out: the trip up to Fort McCoy. Typically, he said, the Soldiers would begin reporting to the Omaha train depot at around 8 or 9 p.m. on the Friday before camp started. "We wouldn't board until 12:01," said Buffett. "That way they wouldn't have to pay you for Friday."

After sleeping through the night, Buffett said he would awake around 6 or 7 a.m. The train had traveled roughly 50 miles from Omaha. "That was a very, very slow train," Buffett added, laughing.

Buffett said he spent the rest of the day peeling potatoes in an open boxcar and then mashing them with "big wooden sticks."

"We pounded potatoes," he said. "I learned a lot about mashing potatoes... thousands of potatoes."

Wedding Day Call-Up

One of Buffett's earliest memories of his Nebraska Army Guard service revolves around his 1952 marriage and how the Nebraska National Guard nearly disrupted his wedding plans.

During the winter of 1951-52, the upper Midwest was hit by a heavy snowfall, followed by an unusually warm spring thaw. By mid-April, 1952, it appeared that a major flood would hit the Omaha metro area, which was then protected by a series of levees.

The flood was expected to arrive at about the same time that Buffett was planning to wed his soon-to-be wife, Susan.

"For weeks, the question was 'Would the levee hold,'" Buffett said, adding that as the flood neared Omaha, a major sandbagging operation began.

"I was going to get married on April 19th. It was a Saturday. People had come in from out of town," Buffett said. "My ushers and other people kidded me that 'You'll probably have to get activated'... So, when Saturday came, I got phone call around noon and the voice said we're being activated."

"Captain Murphy had a very distinctive stutter, otherwise I might have said something because I might have thought it was someone pulling a line on me," Buffett said.

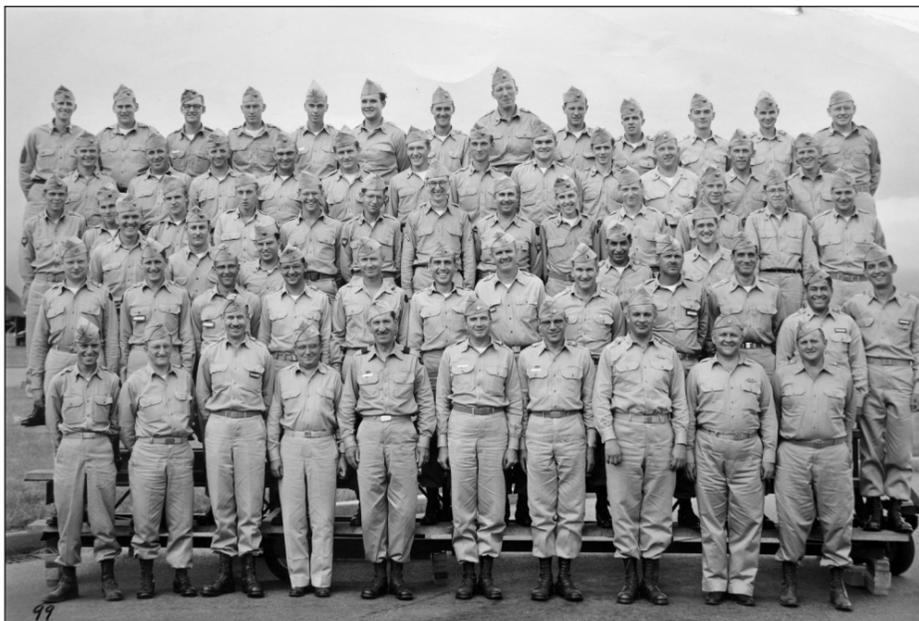
Buffett said the captain then asked him about his wedding. "He said, 'What time are you getting married?' I said 3 o'clock. 'Well,' he said, 'we've been activated so you can be at the Guard at 5 or 5:30.'"

Buffett said he was crestfallen, knowing that the activation would probably last for at least a week. He added that he waited to tell his soon-to-be-wife the bad news. It was a good thing, too.

"It wasn't too much later – maybe a half-hour – that I got a call for the first time. 'Corporal Buffett,' I said 'Yes, sir.' 'This is General Wood...' he was the commanding general, whom I had never met, he was a mythical figure.... He said, 'I'm countermanding Captain Murphy's order. Go and have a good time.'"

"That was a great moment in my life," Buffett said, adding he has always suspected that Murphy had a role in the phone call. "I like to think that it was a great moment in my bride's life, too."

The next day, the *Omaha World-Herald* newspaper ran a short article on Buffett's wedding, entitled "Love Only Thing That Stops the Guard."



Nebraska National Guard file photo

Camp Ripley, 1956: Members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's Omaha-based Headquarters Company, 34th Infantry Division, pose for a unit photo at Camp Ripley, Minn., in 1956. Staff Sgt. Warren Buffett, unit pay clerk, is standing on the far-right side of the rear row. Buffett said that training for the annual summer camp took up the majority of the unit's weekly drills.

Investment Tip

One year, during the unit's annual training camp at Camp McCoy, Buffett said he was given a two-day pass. Not willing to waste the free time, he and two other Soldiers decided to hitchhike to Minneapolis.

"We didn't look like much," Buffett said, adding that his uniform was dirty from spending time out in the field training. "But we had the uniform on, so people were inclined to pick you up. Hitchhiking was easy if you had the uniform on."

When the trio arrived in Minneapolis, Buffett decided to drop in on the man in charge of an important Minneapolis investment firm that Buffett had recently sent a report to.

"So I asked to see him," Buffett said. "He not only saw me, but he talked to me for a considerable length of time and answered questions that I had about companies in Minneapolis."

"One of them, I learned a considerable amount," Buffett added. "It became a very successful investment for me and my customers."

Friendships

Probably the most lasting impressions the Nebraska National Guard made on Buffett were the people he served with and the friendships he made.

"I had fun," Buffett said. "Any time you have the opportunity to make a lot of friends, that's important in life."

"And there was something about the spirit... of sleeping in the same barracks.... that has a really good effect on you. You learn about people from all walks of life."

For example, Buffett said that one of his friends – Master Sgt. Alfred Petersen Jr. – worked for the IRS in his civilian life. "All these different aspects of life that you probably wouldn't run into, especially in my line of work which was mainly working at home and working in a solitary way."

"It was as good of a group of people that you could've found," he added.

And that extended to the highest levels of the organization where people like Wood and Greenleaf operated. Although he didn't know them personally, Buffett said the senior officers made a definite impression on him.

"I thought they were really classy guys," said Buffett. "I thought General Wood was even classier after he saved my honeymoon."

"I am pretty sure that I never saw General Wood, but I did see Colonel Greenleaf when I came in," he said. "They were the kinds of people you would hope are serving at the top levels of the military."

Final Years

About midway through his time in the National Guard, Buffett decided to transfer to the New York National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division. After a year, he returned to Nebraska.

"I don't remember it very well," Buffett said about his 1954-56 time with the New York Guard. "I don't know if they had a job for me. If they did, I didn't do it too much."

"My heart was still in Nebraska," he added. By November 1956, with a growing family and a growing business, Buffett said he realized it was time to leave the Nebraska Army National Guard.

"I liked it, but I had two kids and I was starting my investment partnership," he said. "I used to probably work 50 to 70 hours a week, reading nightly. So, it basically become a matter of time."

"I didn't have a problem (serving in the Guard) and I figured the state would still be in good shape without me doing payroll," Buffett added. "I just elected to reclaim, in effect, three hours each week."

Now, 60 years after he left the ranks of the Nebraska Army National Guard, Buffett said he still remembers his days in the service fondly. He recalls many of the names he served with during that time period, stopping to tell quick stories about each face that he sees peering up at him from a picture of the company that was taken during his final summer camp at Camp Ripley, Minnesota.

He also recalls how the members of the unit used to meet up for an occasional get-together at local Omaha restaurants and clubs until life got in the way and the meetings became less frequent before stopping all together.

Mostly, though, he remembers his commander and his unit's NCOs and the benefits he gained from his time in the Nebraska Army National Guard.

"I learned how to take orders," Buffett said, "which is not a bad trait to acquire. But I had fun. Any time you have the opportunity to make friends, that's important in life."

Which is why he continues to believe that others can also benefit from service in the National Guard. "I think they're underpaid," Buffett said about the current generation of National Guardsmen. "You think about what they're asked to do and can be asked to do. I think it's a great experience, whether it be (in the active forces) or its reserves."

"You're going to make a lot of good friends. You're going to learn a lot. And I think you're going to be proud of what you're doing."



Capt. Youngman, War Correspondent

By **Gerry Meyer**
State Historian

One of the more unique displays in the Nebraska National Guard Museums' Concordia University Learning Center is an exhibit to the late Lawrence W. Youngman. A war correspondent with the *Omaha World-Herald* during World War II, his legacy is the stories and images that he recorded of the Nebraska National Guards' famed 134th Infantry Regiment during the war.

Youngman was born in Harveyville, Kansas, on June 21, 1905. He attended Kansas State University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism in 1927. He began a 17-year stint with the *Omaha World-Herald* in 1929. He married Audra Mae Calame in 1935.

During his time at the *World-Herald* he covered major events like the Republican River Flood (1935), 134th Infantry Regiment in World War II (1944), and the World Fair of Aviation (1946).

His road to war correspondent got off to a rough start when he attempted to enlist in the military, but failed his induction physical shortly after Pearl Harbor.

By 1944, he was determined to serve in some capacity. He convinced the *World-Herald* to sponsor his trip to Europe to cover Nebraskans in the theater of operations.

Youngman was sent to Washington, D.C. to be processed as a "war correspondent" with the military rank of captain.



Photos by Jerry Meyer

World War II Reporter Honored: The Nebraska National Guard Museum recently unveiled an exhibit honoring the work of Lawrence W. Youngman, an *Omaha World-Herald* newspaper reporter who covered Nebraska's 134th Infantry Regiment during World War II.

Youngman arrived in England on June 3, 1944, just before D-Day. He was able to find the staging areas for the 134th Infantry Regiment in the southern part of England and report on their training and preparation for combat in France. He then followed them to the hedgerows of Normandy and the liberation of St. Lo in July 1944. Youngman followed up with stories on the liberation of Nancy and the Battle of the Bulge.

His stories and pictures conveyed the human interest articles of loved ones from Nebraska in service to their country in time of war. Youngman followed the regiments' Soldiers to hospitals, on the battlefield, in logistic units and at their award ceremonies.

The 134th Infantry Regiment commander, Col. Butler Miltonberger, assigned him a jeep (called "Ye Omaha Bugle") and a driver (John Robideaux of Falls City). His quote on the display at the museum reads: "My mission was to find Nebraskans and get as many of their pictures and stories in the paper as I could."

Many of the pictures of the 134th Infantry Regiment displayed in the museum were photographs taken by Youngman.

Youngman was considered to be a very unique war correspondent as he focused on Soldiers from Nebraska. Many of the correspondents worked for the larger syndicated papers and covered a much wider distribution. Youngman brought the war to the people of Nebraska and helped deliver stories about those Soldiers serving in France.

He was considered a major morale builder in the 134th as family members saw their Soldiers in the paper from June to December 1944.

Youngman returned to Nebraska in early 1945 and worked at the paper until 1946. He then left the paper to become the founder of Travel and Transport, Inc. that year.

In 1991, Nebraska Gov. Ben Nelson presented him with a National Guard Legion of Merit for his contribution to the Nebraska National Guard in World War II. Youngman passed away on Aug. 12, 2003 and is buried in the Harveyville Cemetery in Kansas.

In 2016, his daughter Judy sponsored the display in the Concordia University Learning Center in the Nebraska National Guard Museum that tells his story and showcases the artifacts of his time as a war correspondent.

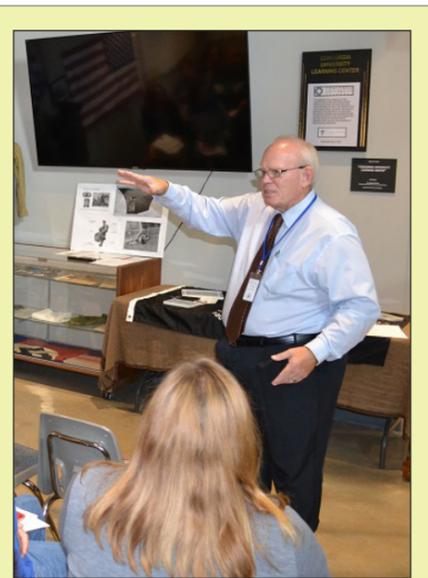


Photo by Jerry Meyer

Live Learning: Seward High School English Literature teacher Clark Kolterman talks to students at the Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward, Neb., Sept. 16, on National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

Museum hosts students for POW/MIA Day

By **Gerry Meyer**
State Historian

Students from Seward High School had the opportunity to visit the Nebraska National Guard Museum to learn the meaning of the National POW/MIA Recognition Day and discuss the book "A Few Survived," by Bob Dowding, a local World War II prisoner of war.

Clark Kolterman's English Literature class had been reading and discussing the book in detail before the visit. The book is about local World War II veteran, Dowding, who was captured in the Philippines in early 1942 and held prisoner by the Japanese until his release in late 1945. The class discussion was held in the new Concordia University Learning Center at the museum. After a book review and discussion, the class viewed the introductory movie in the Jones National Bank and Trust Co. Theater and examined artifacts in the John W. Cattle, Sr. Exhibit Area.

Students learned the heritage of this special day, with a history dating back to the late 1960s and the Vietnam War. The National League of POW/MIA Families wished to see their loved ones recognized during the darkest hours of the war. A day was set aside for National POW/MIA Recognition and ultimately firmly set as the third Friday of September.

The POW/MIA flag was designed by Newton Heisley of Annin Flagmakers of Verona, New Jersey, in the early 1970s, and in 1998, Section 1082 of the Defense Authorization Act—codified as Title 36, Section 902 of the U.S. Code—mandated that the POW/MIA flag be flown over the Capitol, the White House, the Korean and Vietnam Veterans Memorials, the offices of the secretaries of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, of the Selective Service System, and on the grounds or in the lobbies of every major military installation, every post office and all VA Medical Centers and national cemeteries on six days: POW/MIA Recognition Day, Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Fourth of July and Veterans Day.

Some of the overarching concepts related to POW/MIA Recognition Day and the book the students discussed included: the Japanese Code of Bushido and the treatment of Allied POW's. Another was how the U.S. had 12,000 Axis POW's in Nebraska during the war and how were they treated. Finally, how Dowding shared his story of survival and how he coped with the memories of the war after he returned.

Nebraska still has service members listed as MIA from World War II (727), the Korean War (60), and the Vietnam War (17) according to Department of Defense records. Many groups around the country honor this day with rallies under the slogan "Until They All Come Home."

The Museum is looking for artifacts related to POW/MIAs for the collection. If you have artifacts, please call 402-309-8763 (main desk), or 402-309-8761 (curator).

Military Retiree Council keeps you informed, engaged

Happy Fall! As the leaves begin to turn colors and the nights get colder, many of our retirees head to warmer climates for the winter. Safe travels and come back soon! Remember, your Tricare coverage is in effect no matter where you are – just be sure to check if you have any questions.

As always, we ask you to keep not only us, the NMRC, but the National Guard Retirement Services Office up to date on your email and mailing address. We will continue to share information on retirement updates.

On a Nebraska Military Retiree Council note, ballots will be going out for the offices of President and Secretary. Members, please take the time to vote and return your ballots. NMRC was formed to provide you, the retiree, a resource for retired issues, and we want to continue to provide this needed benefit. Your vote counts!

By all account, the printed *Prairie Soldiers* are being well received. Copies are available in all armories and reserve centers. It's always interesting to read the changes, updates, and accomplishments of our National Guard. Keep the currently serving members in your thoughts and prayers as they transition in and out of difficult assignments and missions.

Army Echoes for the Army Guard and the *Afterburner* for Air Guard folks are good websites to visit to find out more information on retiree appreciation days, upcoming events, and general retirement information. The *Army Echoes* is at <https://soldierforlife.army.mil>. The *Afterburner* is at <http://www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner>.

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

Nebraska National Guard Retiree News & Notes

By retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 William Nelson

DEERS/ID Card Stations

- ♦ G1 – 2433 N.W. 24th Street, Lincoln, NE 68524: (402) 309-8167/8168/8169;
- ♦ "Spirit of 1776" Armory 1776 N. 10th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 (402) 309-7359/7373;
- ♦ Penteman Armory at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln (402) 309-1724/1719;
- ♦ Air Guard (Lincoln Air Base) Bldg 600 Room E209: (402) 309-1542;
- ♦ Norfolk Armory 817 S. 1st St. Norfolk, NE 68701 (402) 309-8900/8908;
- ♦ Kearney Armory 5710 Airport Road Kearney: (402) 309-7758/7752;
- ♦ 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), 220 County Road A, Bldg. 508, Ashland, NE 68003, (402) 309-7809/7628;
- ♦ Offutt Air Force Base: (402) 294-2374;
- ♦ The number for DEERS is 1-800-538-9552.

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

Early Bird Breakfasts

- Lincoln, Army National Guard retirees: FIRST Monday of each month, 7:00 AM, Virginia's Travelers Café, 3820 Cornhusker Highway
- Lincoln, Air National Guard retirees: LAST Monday of each month, 7:00 AM, Stauffer's Café, 5600 S. 48th St
- North Platte area retirees: SECOND Saturday of each month, 8:00 AM, Airport Inn

From the desk of SFC Ed Luhn, Retirement Services NCO:

Once again, it's important to remind all Army National Guard "Gray Area" retirees that filing for your Age 60 Non-Regular Retirement does not come automatically. Human Resource Command is no longer mailing out a notification or the applications directly to you. Contact this office to set up an appointment to gather the necessary supporting documents and retirement forms to

fill out your application.

Retired applications should be submitted around nine months, but not less than 90 days prior to your 60th birthday to ensure all documents are received and processed correctly through Human Resource Command and then on to Defense and Finance Account Service for pay.

We provide a benefit brief that gives helpful and timely information to assist you in making the right choices prior to turning age 60. This benefit brief covers such areas as Tricare choices, Space A Travel, Funeral Honors, Retiree Dental Options and Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) choice or review of the Reserve Component Survivor Benefit plan you have already chosen.

Another service we offer is historical record research. Contact the Historical Records personalist at 402-309-8191 and fill out the necessary request forms to obtain past records that they have lost or need for service validation.

We also encourage you to call 402-309-8191 if you have had a change in address so we can update the Retiree data base.

Keeping you informed and helping you anyway possible is a very important to me, my section and the leadership of the Nebraska Army National Guard. If you have questions or need assistance you can reach me at 402-309-8162 or vincent.e.luhn@mail.mil.

PROMOTIONS

Army National Guard

Colonel
Shane M. Martin
Darin J. Mongeon

Michael N. Springer
Michael L. Starke
David D. Swanson
Jose R. Torres Garcia

Lieutenant Colonel

Kyle O. Lythgoe

Sergeant

Georgia G. Allen
Adam M. Barnhill
Brady A. Barton
Matthew J. Boelter
Alexander D. Boucher
Zachary J. Bowlin
Thomas D. Byrne
Christopher L. Cherington
James N. Cherry
Kristen R. Croymans
Everett L. Cuevas
Zach T. Davidson
Bryce T. Davis
Edwin A. Dossou
Jeffrey D. Downey
Alex C. Ernst
Levi L. Focken
Jacob J. Fosket
John M. Gargan
William A. Gerber
David E. Gerhardus
Robert H. Guess Jr.
Phillip J. Harmon
Isaac D. Hartman
Jacob C. Hartwig
Tanner D. Henning
Kaytlen R. Hernandez
Francisco E. Hernandez
Jacob E. Hill
Dennis D. Holder
James R. Johnson
Brent A. Koenigsman
Brandon L. Lambert
Levi S. Loomis
Austin T. McKeone
Harold E. Meyer
Dewey J. Page
Cody A. Renner
Zachary C. Reif
Jesse W. Roberts
Sean R. Roth
Emily R. Roth
Ethan M. Schroeder
Otis E. Seiler
Christopher J. Smith
Andrew J. Smithson
Spencer A. Sydow
Michael R. Ubelhor
Kristopher A. Vodicka
Kimberly L. Whittton
Ian D. Wulf
Frank J. Zakrzewski

Captain

Thomas K. Ballard
Jason K. Byers
Cody R. Cade
Cory J. Hanson
Dustin J. McKenna
Eric C. Otte
Jessica E. Prusaflores
David E. Stott
Jeremy R. Thorne

First Lieutenant

Jeremy P. Ham

Master Sergeant

David M. Nanfitor
Shane R. Prather

Sergeant First Class

Kelly L. Allsman
Joshua A. Armon
Robert T. Brewer
Adam L. Dack
Karl E. Girard
James A. Graham
Jeffrey L. Haight
Jeremiah B. Houlden
Owen P. Kramer
Joshua M. Meyers
Shawn P. Murphy
Andrew M. Siemek
Connie L. Smith
Tuan M. H. Tran

Staff Sergeant

Edward Alvizar
Jose M. Arita
Neville F. Cole
Matthew C. Dodge
Seth A. Gorham
Travis R. Hofmann
Colton C. Magill
Kimberly J. Mahlberg
John L. Monheiser
James S. Morpew
Joseph E. Prichard
Anthony W. Reinhard
Michael V. Rice
Justin L. B. Saner
Ryan S. Schacht
Christopher M. Singpiel

Specialist

Alicia J. Bartnes
Cody J. Bittner
Devon R. Boller
Koltun W. Brown
Axel K. Cassel
Erik Castillo Padilla
Jordan E. Consolver
Cody J. Cramer

Matthew E. Cullum
John R. Faughn
Nathan A. Felty
Ty M. Gibson
Ruben Gonzalez Ortega
Edem K. Gunubu
Trey M. Hamling
Klay K. Heisler
Travis M. Hula
Jonathan J. Janick
Joanie L. Lewis
Miranda J. Lynch
Taylor J. McKeeman
Anthony M. Medeles
Sabrina A. Mendoza
Joshua M. Meyer
Crystia M. Michalski
Martin J. O'Donnell Jr.
Peter K. Riehle
Mariah W. Robinson
Luke A. Robinson
Jesse L. Sandoz
Reamonn C. Seaman
Trey C. Sokolik
Andrew J. Soliz
Henry J. Sramek IV
Renee C. Stewart
Michael J. Toussaint
Spencer D. Volden
Luke A. White
Trevor J. Wood

Private First Class

Joseph M. Alunit
Leticia M. Anguiano
Ethan C. Dannelly
Dustin K. Dean
Michael V. Larsen
Antonio J. Escamilla
Kirk D. Mcken
Laura R. Nelms
Tu H. Nguyen
Kara L. Osantowski
Justin M. Pollock
Mason R. Powell
Shawndon J. Sommers
Tysen L. Taylor
Levi W. Tripp
Skyler D. Yung Vaught
Liam R. Wakeman
Erin E. Wilson
Corey J. Winchel
Tyler M. Wright

Private Two

Quashaun O. Bamesberger
Riley A. Butts
Daniel L. Carrier
Antonio R. Holbrook
Shelley A. Metzger
Justin P. Prohaska
Michael T. Stuft
Curtis S. Weber

Air National Guard

Colonel
Christopher L. Hesse

Lieutenant Colonel

Nicole D. Nuss

Major

Michael H. Roby

Senior Master Sergeant

Michael J. Kucera
Mark A. Stocking

Master Sergeant

Frank J. Gagliano
Robert J. Kozisek
Amanda J. Meyers
Theodore H. Parent
Brian N. Wood

Technical Sergeant

Adam E. Bowman
Jaclyn M. Carlisle
Darren D. Davlin
Evan W. Hanlin
Kody L. Kelly
Andrew B. Kendall
Jeffrey J. Leege
Christopher P. Rasmussen
Anthony R. Ray
Naomi V. Sanders
Mary E. Seeling
Sara E. Stoltenberg

Staff Sergeant

Dana P. Alt
Neal F. Chloupek
Reiny J. Dickhaut
Dillon J. Greenlee
Japheth J. Hartmann
Amanda M. Hohnstein
Tyler D. Johnson
Alex E. Quintana
Matthew J. Riley
Brett F. Schutte
Michael A. Smith
Holly M. Struebing

Senior Airman

Tyler C. Coleman
Connor J. Comstock
Tonya V. Craghead
Rebecca J. Hammock
John W. Leverage
Cody R. Moslander
Austin R. Nelson
Dylan J. Potter
Joshua J. Powell
Aleisha R. Stanford

Airman

Zachariah J. Nichols
Stephanie L. Welshonse

AWARDS

Army National Guard

Meritorious Service Medal

Col. Richard A. Gray
Maj. Andrew J. Nelson
Chief Warrant Officer 3 KC Sohl
Command Sgt. Maj. Shawn M. Griffith
Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey L. Rowell
1st Sgt. Dale T. Alexander Jr.
Master Sgt. Gail L. Peterson
Master Sgt. Lucas L. Poppe
Sgt. 1st Class Aaron J. Haag
Sgt. 1st Class Brian T. Hiller
Sgt. 1st Class Robert J. Ternus
Sgt. 1st Class Mark A. Vanderheiden
Staff Sgt. Brian J. Campbell
Staff Sgt. David J. Cook
Staff Sgt. Jacob R. Krause

Army Commendation Medal

Capt. David Matthew Easterday
Capt. Michael A. Kilgore
1st Lt. Matthew M. Boring
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Matthew D. Greathouse
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Peter G. Steiner
Master Sgt. Shawn M. Burton
Sgt. 1st Class Adam J. Borer
Sgt. 1st Class Lucas J. Smith
Sgt. 1st Class Gregory F. Smithburns
Staff Sgt. Jason E. Duff
Staff Sgt. Nicholas A. Juett
Staff Sgt. Nicholas A. Kemp
Staff Sgt. Kevin K. O'Brien
Sgt. Lawrence M. Lind

Army Achievement Medal

Maj. Reuben D. Rieke Jr.
Capt. Jennifer M. Myers
Capt. Eric C. Otte
2nd Lt. Jade E. Dale
Master Sgt. Jay F. Bortorff
Sgt. 1st Class Robin J. Trospier
Sgt. 1st Class David M. Wooten
Staff Sgt. Stephen P. Dorcey
Staff Sgt. Lucas L. Geyer
Staff Sgt. D. J. Johnson
Staff Sgt. Jeffrey L. Meyers
Staff Sgt. John K. Whalen
Sgt. Brandon L. Ahlers
Sgt. Georgia G. Allen
Sgt. Andrew C. Broers
Sgt. Samantha J. Kraft
Sgt. Carmen M. Ruiz
Spc. Katie Cole
Spc. Jordan Funk

Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

Col. Brent D. Flachbart
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dustin E. Guenther
Sgt. 1st Class Randy A. Garver

Nebraska National Guard

Commendation Medal

2nd Lt. Amanda L. Almanza
2nd Lt. Grant J. Hewitt
2nd Lt. James T. Rasmussen
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eric V. Cole
Staff Sgt. Joseph R. Pollock
Spc. Erik Castillo Padilla

Nebraska National Guard

Individual Achievement Medal

Capt. Ryan M. Carlson
Capt. Ryan E. Thompson
1st Lt. Owen M. Bargar
2nd Lt. Benjamin L. Grisel
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Matthew D. Greathouse
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eric V. Cole
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Douglas J. Luethe
1st Sgt. William C. Cary
Sgt. 1st Class Wade O. Kopetzky
Sgt. 1st Class Daniel R. Malizzi
Staff Sgt. Mario A. Chavez
Staff Sgt. David P. James
Staff Sgt. Brison G. Kuhn
Sgt. Keyle R. Alcorn
Sgt. Craig D. Hoppes
Sgt. Justin L. Lomison
Sgt. Kyle A. Russell
Sgt. Jessica A. Villwok
Spc. Hunter R. Brummer
Spc. Jordan E. Consolver
Spc. John M. O'Connell
Spc. Alexis E.R. Rowell
Spc. Cogan W. Thompson
Spc. Cacey N. Vavra
Spc. Jacob P. Viox
Spc. Shelby A. Ziegler
Pfc. Wyatt J. Brauckmuller
Pfc. Alexander M. Harms
Pfc. Neil J. Kermooade
Pfc. Raya M. Neujahr
Pvt. William J. Marcucci

Air National Guard

Meritorious Service Medal

Lt. Col. Phillip Fields
Senior Master Sgt. James Restau
Tech. Sgt. Bradley Sharp

Air Force Commendation Medal

Maj. Valerie Newman
Tech. Sgt. Elliott Blake

Air Force Achievement Medal

Staff Sgt. Anthony Ewing
Staff Sgt. Shawn Patsios

TAPS

Chief Warrant Officer 5 John Ayers
Spc. Brinnon Schukei

RETIREMENTS

Air National Guard

Lt. Col. Larry W. Whitmore
Capt. Mahleene M. Wright
Chief Master Sgt. Mark G. Forster
Master Sgt. Susan R. Melcher
Tech. Sgt. Bradley D. Sharp

Army National Guard

Col. Gerald D. Meyer
Sgt. 1st Class Steven J. Cerny
Sgt. 1st Class Eric S. Clyne
Sgt. 1st Class Richard S. Graves
Sgt. 1st Class Ward N. Robinson
Staff Sgt. Deric D. Day Sr.
Staff Sgt. Dylan S. Eckery

Shorttakes

155th Air Refueling Wing welcomes command chief

■ Jeffrey A. Horne named to Nebraska Air National Guard wing's top NCO position

By Capt. Alex Salmon

Staff Photojournalist

The Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing welcomed a new command chief master sergeant during an assumption of responsibility ceremony at the Joint Force Headquarters building of the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Sept. 11.

Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey A. Horne became the wing's seventh command chief master sergeant, which is the highest enlisted leadership role in the unit.

Horne, a native of Lincoln, is a 31-year Air Force veteran serving all of those years with the Lincoln unit. Horne succeeded Chief Master Sgt. Douglas Lierz, who recently assumed the responsibility of state command chief master sergeant.

As the 155th ARW command chief, Horne is charged with the mission effectiveness, morale, health and welfare of assigned enlisted Airmen.

According to Horne, becoming the wing's command chief and taking on that mission is extremely important to him.

"I am very humbled by it because it gives me the opportunity to lead the Airmen of the 155th Wing and their families," Horne said. "I want to help give them the tools they need to complete their mission."

Col. James "Bob" Stevenson, commander

of the 155th ARW, reflected on Horne's extensive career and why Horne was chosen for the position.

"He touches lives nationwide, has made an impact and brought credit to our state by his representation of us in multiple capacities as an expert in what he does," Stevenson said. "He's been there, he's done that. He's trained for and experienced everything he's going to lead in."

Horne thanked his family for their support over his more than three decades of service and said he will work to ensure not only the Airmen are cared for, but their families as well.

"The family piece is huge because if the family is not happy when people are deployed, it's rough," he said.

"I feel like the whole purpose of my new job is to take care of the Airmen and their families and they should be able to stop me in the hallway at any time," Horne said. "If just need to vent to somebody or if they have a great idea for a new program, I am very approachable."

"Anyone can come talk to me at any time because this job is not about the rank, it's about taking care of the Airmen and their families."

Horne then spoke directly to the enlisted members for whom he is responsible.

"As I start this new chapter in my career, I want to ensure you that I stand ready to represent and address those matters that influence the enlisted members' health, morale and welfare," he said. "As command chief I intend to maintain open and honest dialog to ensure your voice is heard in both policy and execution on behalf of the wing, state and nation."

Air Guard command chief says goodbye to organization

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Staff Photojournalist

The Nebraska Air National Guard's state command chief master sergeant retired during a ceremony, Sept. 11, at Nebraska National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln.

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Forster bid his final farewell to Nebraska Lt. Gov. Mike Foley; presiding officer, Maj. Gen. Richard Evans III, mobilization assistant to the deputy commander, United States Strategic Command; and other distinguished guests, dignitaries and fellow Airmen and Soldiers after more than 33 years of service in the Nebraska National Guard.

"Over the course of my career, I've worked with a lot of intelligent and hardworking people," Forster said. "I have shared three decades with more than 4,000 Nebraska Citizen Airmen. It's the collective effort of all of you who make our National Guard a great place to work. I am humbled to have served as your command chief."

Forster, of Waverly, Nebraska, joined the Nebraska Air National Guard in 1983. During his time in service, he deployed multiple times in support of worldwide military combat and support operations logging more than 3,600 flying hours as a boom operator in the KC-135 Stratotanker.

He became chief boom operator in 2009 where he served until his appointment to state command chief in 2012, advising the Nebraska adjutant general and assistant adjutant general (Air) on quality-of-life issues and concerns of Nebraska Air

National Guard enlisted Airmen.

During the ceremony, Evans presented Forster with the Legion of Merit Award, a military decoration of the U.S. Armed Forces that is awarded for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service and achievements. Forster is one the first enlisted Service Members in the Nebraska Air National Guard ever to receive the award.

"I can tell you that Mark not only filled the state command chief position, he excelled," Evans said. "Forster exemplifies the very best the Air Force has to offer. He is one of the finest examples I know of a member—officer or enlisted—who epitomizes the Air Force's core values of integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do."

Forster played a crucial role in overcoming many of the complex challenges faced by the Air National Guard today. During his tenure as state command chief, he served on the Enlisted Field Advisory Council representing Region Five—a seven-state region that includes Nebraska—working to improve the lives and mission capabilities of the nearly 104,000 enlisted women and men in the Air National Guard.

"When Chief Master Sergeant Forster put on the uniform so many years ago, he was saying in a very real and concrete way that the promise of America was worth the sacrifice," Foley said.

"Your contribution to freedom is duly noted, and we are so grateful and so proud of you. Well done to a man who has given best of self to the task at hand."

New Bars, New Challenges

Soldiers look forward to next step after Officer Candidate School

By Spc. Lisa Crawford
Acting Editor

After 18 months of intense, detail-oriented training, the 10 Soldiers of Officer Candidate School Class 59 each earned the gold lieutenant bar, officially signaling the beginning of their time as officers in the Nebraska Army National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserves.

"Each of you will remember today's graduation ceremony as one of the most important days and likely the most important day of your military careers," said guest speaker Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, Army National Guard director. "You have earned the right to be very proud of yourselves."

Kadavy spoke to a full Memorial Hall auditorium during a joint graduation ceremony for OCS Class 59 and Warrant Officer School Class 16-001, Sept. 25 at Camp Ashland, where 10 officer candidates and six warrant officer candidates received their commission.

"Arriving at this point required a lot of hard work. Many long days and weeks and more studying than you might have ever expected," Kadavy said. "But rest assured that it's been worth the effort. I guarantee you that. Be proud and fully understand that you are the next generation of Army leaders. Our country is entrusting you with prestigious positions today and in the future as it kneels in responsible of our national defense and supports our states in times of emergency."

Candidates of OCS Class 59 completed 18 months' of weekend drills designed to prepare the Soldiers for their future commissioning and their missions beyond. The candidates went through a three-phase process that gradually focused on mission planning and execution, and included two extended training sessions first in Salina, Kansas, and then at Fort Lewis, Washington.

"It's an overwhelming journey," said newly commissioned 2nd Lt. James Rasmussen of Lincoln. "My



Taking The Oath: Amanda Almanza and Travis Borchardt join eight other Soldiers in taking the oath of office as second lieutenants during the Sept. 25 Nebraska National Guard Officer Candidate School graduation ceremony at Camp Ashland, Neb.

favorite part was coming together as a team. Through the 18 months you do a lot together and you're able to watch your team mold and form into a really well-oiled machine and by the end you're running at top speed."

Rasmussen said he chose to attend OCS to make the next step in his military career and further develop his leadership skills. He said he hopes to be able to command a unit and be out front.

"I learned a lot along the way," he said. "I'm just glad to be through it all and on to the next step in my military career leading Soldiers. On to a new challenge, and looking forward to what's ahead."

Rasmussen's first appointment is with Company A, 128th Engineer Battalion.

2nd Lt. Raquel Chavez, of Kearney, accepted her commission and



Photos by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

First Salute: Newly-commissioned, 2nd Lt. Raquel Chavez returns her father's salute during the Sept. 25 Nebraska National Guard Officer Candidate School graduation ceremony. Retired 1st Sgt. George Chavez had the honor of giving his daughter her first salute as a commissioned officer.

will serve at the 67th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. Chavez said she attended OCS because she felt like she had something more to offer the Nebraska National Guard.

"I've been enlisted for almost nine years now and, I come from a military family – of all NCOs," Chavez said. "I thought I wanted to do something kind of different from the rest of my family and join the officer ranks and hopefully contribute more to the Nebraska National Guard."

Chavez said her favorite part of OCS was seeing her own personal growth as not only a Soldier, "but as a civilian and just a person," too.

"I've learned more about myself through this program than I have in the 29 years I've been alive," Chavez said. "It's been a humbling

experience to say the least, and I look forward to the challenge that's ahead. They've embedded in us that this is just the beginning and I totally see that. From being enlisted before, I know that there's a lot of work to do, and I'm just beginning my career."

Kadavy, who received his commission from the University of Nebraska's ROTC program in 1984, spoke to the candidates about the current state of the Army, including the close to 12,000 Army National Guard Soldiers mobilized and stationed around the world at more than a dozen locations worldwide.

"If you asked me in 1984 when I was sitting in a ceremony similar to yours where I thought the Army National Guard might serve, I would have never come up with that

list," Kadavy said. "Today's world seems more complex than when I was where you are today, and the world will continue to change. My message to you is this: be prepared for anything."

"You're going to be leaders of an Army that is much different than the one we had when I was a lieutenant. You'll be senior leaders in an Army that will be much different than the Army we now have. But that's okay. Remember as leaders, Soldiers are always watching and following your behavior."

The 10 Soldiers who earned their commission Sept. 25 were: Rasmussen, Chavez, Amanda Almanza, Benjamin Jochum, Joshua Maguire, Joseph Pollock, Travis Borchardt, Grant Hewitt, Justin Knapp and Charity Onyegbule.

Freshly-graduated, newest warrant officers join Nebraska ranks

By Spc. Lisa Crawford
Acting Editor

Keeping with tradition, members of Warrant Officer Candidate School Class 16-001, out of the Nebraska Regional Training Institute at Camp Ashland, unveiled a sign unique to their class this past summer. The sign, a gold rising eagle with purple lettering – their class color – included the names of all six candidates as well as their class leaders, signifying novice learners' eagerness and the wisdom of the tenured professionals.

Also represented on the sign was all five warrant officer ranks, a visual representation of where this years candidates want their careers to go. And on Sept. 25, WOCS Class 16-001 took the next toward those career goals, when all six members of the class commissioned as warrant officers in the Nebraska Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserves.

"After commissioning... Nebraska's new warrant officers will step up to be highly technical experts, combat leaders, trainers and advisors of their selected military occupational specialty," said guest speaker Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, Army National Guard director. "Keep in mind that you are not here for what you have done as candidates, but more importantly, for what you are going to do as... warrant officers in the future for our country and state. Your potential for leadership has brought you to this stage in your development."

The path to graduation asked the candidates to complete three phases, the first culminating with the unveiling of their class sign and

singing of their class song before being allowed to traditionally hang their hats in the cafeteria.

Candidates performed their class song to the tune of the "Brady Bunch" theme for Brig. Gen. Kevin Lyons, Nebraska National Guard land component commander, July 16 at Camp Ashland.

It was the final step before the warrant officer candidates entered Phase II.

The second culminating event included a service project, where the warrant officer candidates painted a park shelter in the Ashland City Park, a project solely developed and led by the candidates.

Finally, the course concluded with a two-week culmination exercise at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, where warrant officer candidates from across the country came together for more large-scale training that allowed the Soldiers to demonstrate and improve leadership skills in larger elements.

"Leadership moves us from one point to another," Kadavy said. "Leadership helps individuals find that they have more potential than they ever knew they possessed. As leaders you will provide that type of guidance that will help Soldiers realize their potential. That will



Photos by Spc. Lisa Crawford

Warrants In Waiting: Six Warrant Officer Candidates stand ready to take their seats during the joint Officer Candidate School and Warrant Officer Candidate School graduation ceremony, Sept. 25, at Camp Ashland.



Honored Handshakes: Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy shakes hands with Warrant Officer Candidate Gordon Davis during the Sept. 25 graduation.

be rewarding but requires a lot of responsibility and dedication. Your discipline, commitment and

determination will be reflected in all of your decisions."

Kadavy reminded the candidates of one of the most effective leadership methods: to lead by example.

"As a leader you're on twenty-four, seven, regardless of whether you're wearing the uniform or not," he said. "You should be practicing and living your own words each and every day, and fostering an environment of trust in your units."

Kadavy said there were essentially three steps needed to being a good leader.

"It's important that you establish a vision," Kadavy said. "Without it, your team is going nowhere. One trait that defines good leaders is knowing where they are going in the next two to five to 10 years. The next step after you establish your vision is to be able to clearly communicate to others... And lastly, it's critical for all leaders to have strong interpersonal skills. Interacting with and persuading others is both an art and a science, including understanding others, motivating others and, most of all, empowering others."

Newly-commissioned Warrant Officer Gordon Davis will serve with Company B, 734th Brigade Support Battalion.

He said he chose to attend WOCS

after working as an enlisted Soldier with warrant officers who shared many of the same leadership skills Kadavy mentioned.

"I wanted to emulate them," Davis said. "Being a warrant officer, to me, is the epitome of reaching the professional (noncommissioned officer) status."

And now that he's graduated and received his commission, Davis said his goal is to make whatever unit he goes to better than it was when he got there. He admits, however, the pressure is on.

"There's a little pressure," Davis said. "I guess when you're a lieutenant, it's kind of understood that you're going to have a little growing pains. But being a warrant officer you've got to be a subject matter expert from day one."

It's that desire to be seen as the expert that led Warrant Officer Brian Sloan, who commissioned into the 402nd Military Police Battalion, to attend WOCS in the first place.

"I wanted to advance my career, but still get to stay in the same (military occupational specialty) field," Sloan said. "Being a subject matter expert in your field is a great feeling and you get to advise on big decisions. Honestly, it's influence. I want to make big changes or help keep things rolling in the right direction for the Nebraska National Guard."

Sloan said regardless of where his career goes now, he knows one thing he's already changed: himself.

"You change in confidence," Sloan said. "Your whole demeanor will change just going through the course."



Guard Family NEWS You Can Use



Managing holiday hustle throughout deployment

By Jodi Kehler

Psychological Health Coordinator

Holidays can be stressful financially and emotionally for any family; but being part of a military family dealing with a loved one deployed can seem unbearable. Military families are familiar with long separations and have learned to be resilient during deployments, but what can military families do to help get through the holidays when a loved one is not physically home for the holidays?

Be Prepared for Emotions

Holidays can be overwhelming when a loved one is deployed. It might be difficult to fathom they are alone during the holidays. Knowing they are with their military family and are with other Soldiers and Airmen going through the same thing can help lessen the sadness and worry. Talk about your loved one often with other family members. Let children know that the loved one is on a mission. And if possible, Skype or talk on the phone with your loved one. And lastly, involve your children by having them send holiday artwork to their loved one.

Stay Involved with Holiday Activities

At first you may feel guilty going to fun activities with the kids or grandkids without your loved one present, but remember the rest of the family needs you during this time and pageants and parties still go on. The great thing about going to these activities is the memories you can capture and send to your loved one because they will see you are happy and will be less anxious about being away from home during the holidays.

Volunteering can help other families

Volunteer in your community at places such as: humane society, soup kitchen, homeless shelter or an organization that helps children that are less fortunate. This can ease holiday stress and strengthen family bonds while helping others in the process. Take pictures of you and your family helping others and send them to your loved one. They will be proud of you and may want to continue volunteering as a family tradition when they return.

Indulge less

This time of year you may be tempted to spend more money because you justify your spending with, "Well, it's the HOLIDAYS." Consider planning a reunion with your loved one by setting up a savings fund. Families will understand if you limit your spending to lessen the stress of financial burden. Also, limiting alcohol use during this time is key. Instead, call a friend or go to a support group for families for better coping skills. Alcohol will just feed the sadness and depression which will not help you or your loved one.

Holiday Care packages

During this time find out what things your loved one is allowed or needs. You would not want to send something they can't bring back. The little things can be the best presents because it shows your thinking of them and care.

These are just a few ideas to help families cope during a deployment around the holidays. If you feel hopeless, sadness, anger and have lost motivation, please reach out to someone. The Psychological Health Coordinator for the Army National Guard, Jodi Kehler, is available to Soldiers, Airmen and their families experiencing behavioral health issues. If you are struggling, call her at 402-416-2064 or email Jodi.l.kehler.ctr@mail.mil.

Resiliency key for combating military stress

By Fr. Steve Tomlison

Chaplain

Every Soldier and every Soldier's family knows first-hand the stress involved with serving in the U.S. military in the modern global environment. An honest assessment reveals that Soldiers and their families encounter stress across a battle front of multi-faceted threats: terror, deployment, combat, military standards, family relationships, finances, career – just to name a few in no particular order.

At times it may feel or seem overwhelming, but this is when our training kicks in.

A primary antidote to the stress of these challenges is to be anchored in our Army values, our creed as Soldiers and also the Army's Ready and Resilient (R2) program. Extensive research has shown that resiliency is a key factor to being able to adapt and overcome whatever stressors we encounter.

Resiliency for a Soldier is like power for an electronic device – it enables it to perform its functions. When a cell phone battery dies, the device shuts down. The same is true of Soldiers, when we are drained of resiliency, Soldiers begin to shut down and lose their range of functionality.

When we are knocked off our game by stressors of life, resiliency is what enables us to bounce back like a new tennis ball rather than cracking and breaking like a fresh egg that is knocked off the countertop.

It would be a powerful movement for each Soldier to intentionally think about resiliency and to engage other Soldiers and family members in the same discussion. Self-questions such as: "How am I effectively investing in resiliency each day?" "How am I increasing my resiliency quotient, reservoir and capabilities?" "How are my family and friends building resilience?" and "What can I do to take my resiliency skills to the next level?"

For many, resiliency can be anchored or fueled by their spiritual life. Or in the beauty of the created world – watching a sunrise, hiking in the mountains, fishing in streams, listening to the lapping of the waves on a beach, seeing the sun gently set into the ocean.

Another source of resiliency can be found in healthy marriages or in our families.

Regardless of where you tap into the reservoir of resiliency, taking purposeful action each day to think about our own depth of resiliency will create a tremendous safeguard for when tsunamis of stress unexpectedly blow into our lives.

One such field of study that is worth learning more about is called "embodied cognition." This is the scientific name for the idea that our physical 'body' impacts the 'cogs' of our mind as we think. It's a fascinating field of study that directly relates to resiliency. This area of research holds that many features of our cognitive thinking are directly influenced by aspects of the body beyond just brain activity. Our thoughts (cognition) are influenced by our perceptions, our hand-eye movements, the things around us and the presumptions we make about our environment.

Think of it this way: if I make a strong fist and act as if I'm angrily going to throw a punch that will hit you directly in the face, but I stop just inches before actually touching you – it will create an entire flood of emotions, chemical reactions, passions and thoughts in your brain. Hand movements, our perceptions of things and people around us have a direct effect on how we think and on our brain activity. This is an example of a how a negative event can influence us even though there was no physical contact.

Now think of it from a positive example. A peaceful, tranquil or fun environment can have an equal (or an even more powerful) impact on our thinking. Rather than a closed angry fist, an open palm or hand given in friendship can create friendly thoughts that renew us.

Our bodies are created to work in tandem – mind and body each influencing the other. The soul animates the body and the body responds in a corresponding manner to the gentle peaceful impulses of the soul. "Peace be with you" is a powerful blessing from ancient times that stirs deep meanings for the soul.

Dr. Jane McGonigal earned a Ph.D. in performance studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and is an American game designer. She has been named one of the "Top 20 Most Important Women in Videogaming." She has advocated making a game out of building resiliency. In her book, "Superbetter," she outlines a series of resiliency games that

are deceptively simple, but that employ the theories of embodied cognition to connect our motor skills, hand-eye coordination and environmental surroundings with our cognitive thoughts – and in the process, build resiliency.

She has developed small games designed to increase an open mind, more willpower, closer friendships, mood boosts, more positive play and self-image, and instant relaxation. For each game she describes how to do it and why it works. It's an instruction manual for resiliency made fun.

Think if the Pokémon phenomenon could have been modeled around game exercises that would promote building resiliency. We would now be living in a thriving vibrant global world of resiliency in action.

Imagine if parents, as the primary educators of their children, would teach kids five or six simple games that would become a wellspring for developing habits of positive mental thinking. Think how marriages would be strengthened if moms and dads practiced such "games" themselves. Or what if we dated and chose to enter into relationships with those who had good gaming skills – not the video kind, but the resilient kind.

Military chaplains are concerned with the holistic care of Soldiers – mind, body, soul and spirit. Resiliency is an important metric that all Unit Ministry Teams constantly assess.

Like all Soldiers, chaplains and their enlisted teammates endeavor to faithfully live the Warrior Ethos – particularly, "never leave a fallen comrade." A multitude of stressors can all too easily cause a fellow Soldier to fall under their collective weight.

Promoting resiliency in one another is just one of the ways that we can all endeavor to live this part of the Warrior Ethos.

Some might argue that the Army value of DUTY, obligates us to become Olympians when it comes to playing games that build resiliency. Squad leaders could challenge their Soldiers to find newer and fun ways of playing resiliency games. Chaplains or a Battalion's Religious Affairs Specialists could make presentations on resiliency gaming.

I invite you to commit yourself today to upping your resiliency game and to making the Nebraska National Guard a more resilient force!

Day of Unity 2016



Submitted photos



End Domestic Violence: Nebraska National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and Nebraska Military Department staff across the state wore purple, Oct. 3, for a "Day of Unity," as part of the Nebraska National Guard and Nebraska Military Department's observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October.

National Guard's importance grows as Total Army evolves

Street Talk

"What's the most important lesson you've learned from your time in the Nebraska National Guard?"



1st Lt. Mark Fischer
Company G, 2-104th
General Support Aviation Battalion

"Hard work will take you anywhere you want to go. Without hard work you can have all the raw talent, but you need hard work to achieve your goals and dreams."

Senior Airman Dominique Johnson
155th Logistic Readiness Squadron

"The biggest lesson is second chances. The Guard gave me a second chance, as well as an opportunity to put all the good and bad lessons (to use)...to prove what I'm worth here."



Sgt. 1st Class Michael O'Brien
92nd Troop Command

"The importance of teamwork and communication to work as one. Teamwork is important for mission completion, with a variety of steps, from E-1s on up."

Airman 1st Class Dominick Maldonado
155th Air Transportation

"I think the biggest lesson I've learned is to become more humble as a person. Learning the rank structure has really helped me understand other people's experiences and how I can learn from them."



Sgt. Javier Saldana
192nd Military Police Detachment

"No matter what the situation, remember teamwork and camaraderie are what's most important to combat any challenge. Teamwork is one of the key components to being successful."

Airman 1st Class Amanda Kingslan
173rd Air Refueling Squadron

"Not only respect for other people, but to hold myself to a higher standard. People see you in uniform and they expect more from you. That's carried over into my civilian life."



As a long-time Nebraska Guardsman, it is indeed an honor to share some thoughts with you as our historic organization looks toward the future.

Your service in the Army National Guard, as a part of the Total Army Force, is critical to our national defense.

I want to let you know how your service is becoming even more important as we continue to evolve as the Total Army.

In my 34 years wearing the uniform, one of the most positive changes I've seen is the strengthening of the relationship that the Army National Guard shares with the active component as well as our colleagues in the Army Reserve. We remain committed to our unique dual mission and believe that building warfighting-capable units provides governor-responsive forces.

The Army National Guard is more engaged, more intertwined and more relied upon than ever before. Every day I see more and more that we are one Army, working toward the same goal of protecting our citizens and national interests.

The Army, the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve are not three separate entities. We are one Army.

The Total Army is a linchpin in our national defense. In today's complex world, the Army needs everyone who wears the uniform to be ready to protect our national interests at a moment's notice. Our country needs us. The state of Nebraska needs us.

I'd like to commend several units of the "Cornhusker Guard" that recently answered the call, displaying the Nebraska Guard's role as part of the Total Army.

Four Nebraska Army National Guard units are mobilized to support the United States Central Command (CENTCOM). This includes the recently alerted 1269th Contracting Team and Company G, 2-104th General Support Aviation Battalion. Additionally, members of an Army Special Operations Forces Support Operation (ASFO) Team from the Nebraska Army National Guard's 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne) were activated on the 15th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

Our national response to those attacks had a lot to do with the transformation of the Army National Guard from a strategic reserve to an operational force.

This past summer, 90 Nebraska Soldiers led the way in a new type

Director's Viewpoint

Lieutenant General

Timothy Kadavy



Pete Ricketts and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, announced extensive force structure changes within the Nebraska Guard. These changes are designed to ensure that we are able to meet the Army's needs, increase readiness levels and maintain our ability to respond to state missions.

If you can imagine a scenario of the worst night in America, we will have to respond on short notice, prepared to take decisive action against a near-peer country.

Army National Guard Soldiers train a minimum of 39 days per year. Many of you can already attest that you already exceed one weekend per month and 15 days of annual training in order to attend schools and military exercises.

At the national level, we are looking at certain units, mainly Armor and Stryker Brigade Combat Teams along with key enablers, regularly training more than 39 days per year. This enhanced readiness is required in order to decrease mobilization time, so that we can get our formations to where they are needed more quickly.

Nebraska has critical enablers that may get tapped for contingency operations that will require additional training to support these formations. This could mean extra days away from home and work for training, exercise participation and deployments.

I recognize that predictability concerning these additional training days and deployments is critical to maintaining resilient Soldiers and families across the Army National Guard, and to maintaining effective relationships with employers. We will strive to achieve that predictability.

I encourage you to communicate to your family members and employers that Nebraska Guard units are still getting called for ongoing missions and that we still may be called for emerging missions. Without family and employer support, we face mission failure in the long term.

We cannot succeed without them and we owe it to them to keep them informed. We are doing this together, as part of the Total Army. I ask you to maintain the warrior spirit that helped us transform from a strategic reserve into an operational force over the past 15 years.

I agree with Major General Bohac when he said, "Excellence is never an accident." Thank you for your service to our country and to our state.

of unit displaying both the importance and the practicality of the Total Force. These Citizen Soldiers are members of the newly organized 1st Infantry Division Main Command Post - Operational Detachment - commonly called a MCPOD. These units augment and enhance an Army division headquarters during mobilizations.

The Nebraska MCPOD melded with the 1st ID to support a CENTCOM mission. This innovative approach is just one example of how Chief of Staff of the Army General Mark Milley is setting the tone for Army Culture.

Another of his initiatives is the Associated Units Program, which integrates Active and Reserve Component units. Participants train together, anticipating deploying together. They even wear the same shoulder patches.

13 out of 14 of these partnerships involve the Army National Guard. Expect to see more of this integration.

At the strategic level, the Army National Guard must make sure that we are aligned, structured and resourced so we can respond quickly as a part of the Total Army to myriad threats in a constantly changing world.

Today's Army is transforming further as we refocus on preparing for large-scale decisive action against potentially hostile adversaries, while continuing the type of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations we've been focused on for the past 15 years.

An Army of 980,000 means more reliance by the Army on its two Reserve Components. Army leaders and war plan officers all recognize that the Army National Guard is an indispensable part of that force. We have the capacity and capability that the Army relies on and we must be ready to provide it with less mobilization time than we're accustomed to. It's the way we are doing business.

I believe it is important for Citizen Soldiers, their families and employers to understand how and why the Army National Guard is evolving and to embrace the changes being implemented in order to successfully defend our country. A year ago, Nebraska Gov.

Broaden opportunities to get ahead

Recently I listened to the third online Town Hall hosted by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command that focused primarily on talent management. The 90-minute discussion invited Soldiers to submit questions before and throughout the presentation, but there was one question asked that really stuck out to me:

"When will getting ahead not involve having a professional working relationship with an influential senior leader or a branch manager?"

The panel responded to this question by simply stating how the Army is trying to move away from this perception by implementing new tools for individual growth and development.

For example, the new non-commissioned officer evaluation reports help deter favoritism by

A Different Perspective

Specialist

Lisa Crawford



can't stay in a broadening position forever. You have to take what you learn back to your unit and apply your new skills efficiently there.

The same is true of most civilian work. Many employers offer professional development opportunities, but

many employees rely on networking to get ahead. While networking can do great things for a person's career, people move in and out of positions and advancement will be based on how well one perform, not who he or she knows.

So, take time to really research what broadening opportunities are available for both your military career and your civilian career. The more you can develop your own talents and skills, the more valuable you become. Don't let the fate of your career rest in someone else's hands. Make personal development a priority and broaden your opportunities.

forcing senior leaders to accurately report on how well (or not) a Soldier is performing. Also, from a talent management perspective, there are a variety of Army broadening opportunities and assignments available.

For younger NCOs, this includes recruiting, drill sergeant positions, attending schools and exploring officer and warrant officer programs. For more experienced leaders, the Army offers fellowships, leadership seminars, industry training, etc., to continue to grow professional leaders.

But, as the Town Hall round table leaders mentioned, a Soldier



Photo by Spc. Daniel Balkovic

Extraction Exercise: Members of the U.S. Army Reserve's 7246 Medical Support Unit in Elkhorn, Neb., participate in a casualty extraction exercise, Sept. 10, at the Mead Training Site. The reserve unit was a participant of the 2016 Squad Medic Challenge, hosted by the Nebraska Army National Guard.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

Pig Lungs? Spc. Levi Paswaters, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-134th Cavalry, performs a surgical cricothyroidotomy on pig lungs at Mead Training Site, Sept. 10, for the Squad Medic Challenge.

■ Total Army Exercise

National Guard, Army Reserve Soldiers put medic skills to test

By Sgt. Jason Drager
Staff Photojournalist

Medics from across Nebraska gathered at the Mead Training Site, Sept. 10, for the 2016 Squad Medic Challenge.

The challenge consisted of nine four-person medical teams, with each having to complete nine scenario-based lanes that tested their medic skills.

According to Staff Sgt. Sean Delancey, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the challenge, the scenarios were designed to not only test individual skills, but also how well the medics work as a team. Eight of the teams were from the Nebraska Army National Guard and while the ninth was from the 7246th Medical Support Unit, a U.S. Army Reserve unit based in Elkhorn, Nebraska.

"A lot of the National Guard and Reserve Soldiers don't work, on the civilian side, in medicine," said Delancey. "So, having this competition to test the skills they train on throughout their drill weekends, it shows the

command staff where they're at with their medical skills."

Some of the medical skills tested included working sick call, administering an I.V., performing a high-angle rescue, spine board extraction, giving care in a moving ambulance, a litter carry, delivering a baby and even performing a surgical cricothyroidotomy on pig lungs.

"The best part of this challenge is all the resources are laid out for us," said Sgt. Ed Neidig, a medic with the Nebraska Army National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-134th Cavalry (Reconnaissance and Surveillance). "We have full-scale lanes with qualified and competent graders who are impartial and unbiased to really give us good feedback on not just our own medical skills, but also on how we work together as a squad."

Each lane had multiple graders who were tasked with assigning points to each medic and their squad. The graders also gave feedback and critiqued the participants on



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

MEDEVAC: Spc. Matthew Hall, Sgt. Jacob Shindollar and Pfc. Sabrina Gardner evacuate an injured role-player during an exercise at Mead Training Site, Sept. 10. Hall, Shindollar and Gardner were part of a squad that participated in the 2016 Squad Medic Challenge hosted by the Nebraska National Guard.

their skills.

"The overall goal is to help the medics perform their medical skills second nature so they don't have to think about what to do, it will just be automatic," said Master Sgt. Maritza Pearl, a medic with the 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion. "They

need to be able to do these skills during the day, at night or under strenuous conditions."

The winner of this year's 2016 Squad Medic Challenge was a team from the 1-134th Cavalry, which consisted of Sgt. Ed Neidig, Spc. Tyler Lamb, Spc. Austin Schrodt and Spc. Alex Webster.

402nd Military Police Soldiers compete for 'Best Warrior'

By Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen
Staff Photojournalist

Soldiers from the Omaha-based 402nd Military Police Battalion competed in a unit-level best warrior competition, Sept. 10-11, at the Camp Ashland Training Site.

The training exercise included 10 task-specific lanes designed to challenge the Soldiers' knowledge on a variety of skills. Whether it was tactically advancing on a target to deliver a fragmentary grenade, or searching vehicle for contraband and other dangerous items, the competition was designed to test the Soldiers while also providing the 402nd M.P. Bn. leaders an opportunity to receive a snapshot on their organization's current training proficiency.

"It's good training—it puts you on the level," said Staff Sgt. Trevor Dredla, a battalion communications team chief. "It also lets you know where you're at physically."

Dredla said events like the M.P. Challenge help flush out errors and establish better communication skills and other team-building fundamentals—essential components when conducting squad-size maneuvers.

"For one, you make mistakes," he said. "We've all learned—going into the next event—that we need to communicate better."

Training in a relatively dense, humid and hot wooded environment added an element of realism. Camp Ashland's "east-of-the-river" site provided the participating M.P. battalion Soldiers with a variety of topographies to explore,



Photo by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

Junior Enlisted Winner: Spc. Jordan Funk, corrections specialist, 402nd Military Police Battalion, keeps watch for the enemy, Sept. 10, during a unit-level best warrior competition at the Camp Ashland Training Site. Funk ultimately won for the battalion's junior enlisted category.

"Well, I got dirty and got wet from the water during the exercise," said Spc. Tara Millard, a battalion supply specialist. "But, I have learned a lot of new things this year."

For many Soldiers at the competition,

sharpening their military police skills is a nice break from their usual duties during a drill weekend.

"I like getting out of the logistics world and getting into this type of training," said

Pfc. Martin Odonnell, a unit supply specialist. In one case, this meant Odonnell and several other unit Soldiers were charged with investigating a military vehicle that may or may not have contained contraband or other illegal items, such as drugs or weapons.

"It's a realistic way to make sure we're staying vigilant and not overlooking something," he said.

For some, the testing involved with the best warrior competition was a way to review past training.

"This type of training is a good refresher for the primary training I've received," said Pfc. Desiree Wadsworth, a corrections specialist with the 402nd M.P. Bn. "It's easy to overlook things; you get in a hurry. The smallest places can hide the biggest things."

Training on contraband threats, in particular, is a key function for a military police battalion. With missions including internment, corrections and other law enforcement tasks, contraband searches can virtually mean the difference between success and failure.

"This is actually my first time doing something like this," Spc. Munir Musa, an administrative specialist with the unit. "You really got to pay attention to what you're doing. Or, it's like my battle buddy just said: It could result in a life or death situation."

Earning top honors during the battalion's competition were Sgt. Branden Ahlers, a culinary specialist, and Spc. Jordan Funk, a corrections specialist, who won their respective competition in the noncommissioned officer and junior enlisted categories, respectively.