

Happy Holidays

Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Agricultural team welcomed home in time for holidays

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

The holidays got a little sweeter for several Nebraska families when approximately 10 members of the Nebraska National Guard's Afghan Agribusiness Development Team No. 4 were welcomed home during a Dec. 12 ceremony at the Penteman Armory on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb.

Nebraska's fourth ADT was made up of 10 Nebraska National Guard Soldiers, one Nebraska Air National Guard Airman, and one Army Reservist. In Afghanistan, the Soldiers and Airman, from units located across Nebraska, became part of a U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Team where they assisted local Afghan farmers and governmental officials in conducting agricultural development planning, assessments and support activities in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan.

The goal of the mission was to expand legal agriculture, agribusiness services, markets and agricultural education in order to reduce rural poverty. The team also worked to increase employment opportunities in agricultural service industries and improve agricultural education.

Waiting anxiously in the crowd, Ashley Kilgore looked after her and husband, 1st Lt. Michael Kilgore's son, Maddox. Kilgore hadn't seen

the couple's only child since his birth four-and-a-half-months ago. Ashley struggled to contain her excitement and emotions.

"I'm excited," said Ashley. "Just so ready for him to be home."

Ashley added that during their first year of marriage, Kilgore had been gone more than he had been home, making it a difficult year. She crossed days off on a calendar counting down to when she would finally see her husband again.

Crossing off that last day was sweet.

"It was very emotional yesterday crossing that off and knowing that it was finally over," said Ashley. "Best Christmas present we could get."

Finally, the team members arrived to the open arms of friends and family. After hugs, kisses and more than a few tears, the excitement was obvious.

"Wonderful, elation," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Steve Stienike as he reunited with his wife, Lindsay, daughter, Piper and son, Cooper. "You can talk to them on the phone or you can 'Face Time' them or 'Skype' them from time to time, but it's just not the same thing as seeing them in person, that's for sure."

Lindsay said she was relieved her husband was finally home, as it had been challenging working full-time while also caring for their two kids.

"It's been exhausting," said Lind-



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Sweet Welcome Home: Maj. Tom Golden, commander of the Nebraska National Guard's Afghan Agribusiness Development Team No. 4, kisses his wife, Denise, while balloon-holding granddaughter, Audrey, looks on. Members of the Nebraska National Guard's ADT No. 4 were welcomed home to Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 12, after a nearly yearlong deployment to Afghanistan.

say. "It'll be nice to have a break and have someone else to help out around the house."

Stienike said he looked forward to sleeping in his own bed, a cold glass of milk and all the little things that are often taken for granted – especially free time.

"Now I don't have to have plans – don't have to have a schedule," said Stienike. "I can just take it as it

comes and do what I feel like doing for the next couple days."

The group's lone Air Guardsman served as the team's first sergeant and was welcomed home at the Lincoln airport three days before the rest of the members.

Not only did the team members have to deal with different branches during the joint deployment, they were often geographically sepa-

rated, said Senior Master Sgt. Don Zwart.

"We were in a couple different locations, so we were separated a lot as far as the team's concerned, but we overcame those challenges," said Zwart. "I've worked in the joint world since 2005 as a first sergeant on a number of different Army teams...so it wasn't a real huge

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Soldiers reap national supply, maintenance awards

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock
and Maj. Kevin Hynes
Prairie Soldier Staff Writers

Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers from seven Nebraska units were honored on Dec. 4 by Gov. Dave Heineman, Lt. Gen. Raymond Mason, the Army's top logistical officer, and Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, for their work in logistical and maintenance management during the Nebraska National Guard's 2012/2013 Logistics Excellence Awards Ceremony at Camp Ashland, Neb.

The Soldiers represented units from Lincoln, Camp Ashland, Grand Island and Norfolk. They were honored for having received national recognition during the recent U.S. Army Supply Excellence and Maintenance Excellence Award competitions.

"(Nebraska National Guard) you all have bragging rights for all you have accomplished," said Mason. "You are truly meeting the Army and National Guard Logistic outlook on excellence."

The most significant award went to the members of Camp Ashland's Headquarters, 209th Regional Training Institute, which earned



Photo by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Best of the Best: Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Deters, Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Burton, Master Sgt. James McKeehan and Staff Sgt. DJ Johnson receive the U.S. Army Chief of Staff Supply Excellence "Best of the Best" award for Camp Ashland's Headquarters, 209th Regional Training Institute during the Nebraska National Guard's 2012/2013 Logistics Excellence Awards ceremony Dec. 4, at Camp Ashland, Neb.

the prestigious U.S. Army Chief of Staff Supply Excellence "Best of the Best" award. To earn the award, the unit recorded the highest scores of more than 100 active Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard units evaluated.

This year was the first time a

National Guard organization has won this most coveted Department of Army Supply Excellence Award.

Receiving the award on behalf of their unit were Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Deters, Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Burton, Master Sgt. James

See **AWARDS** on 8.

State's Warrant Officer Corps welcomes new command chief

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

The Nebraska Army National Guard's Warrant Officer Corps gained a new advocate when Chief Warrant Officer 4 Teresa Domeier was installed as the state's command chief warrant officer at Camp Ashland, Neb., during a Nov. 17 ceremony.



Domeier

Domeier replaces outgoing Chief Warrant Officer 5 John Regan who had served in the position since October 2010. Regan is retiring from the Nebraska Army National Guard after a career that spanned four decades.

"Some would say it's the end

See **CHIEFS** on 4.

Camp Ashland supply team adds to historic winning streak

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Staff Photojournalist

Want to know what's better than winning a national championship?

Having the United States Army's top logistical officer come from Washington, D.C. to Nebraska to meet your team, see all the work that's been done and present the prestigious U.S. Army Chief of Staff Supply Excellence "Best of the Best" award himself, definitely has to rank pretty high.

At least that's what a team of Nebraska Army National Guard supply specialists found out when Lt. Gen. Raymond Mason, the U.S. Army, Deputy Chief of Staff – Logistics, Gov. Dave Heineman and Maj. Gen.

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Supply sergeant builds homage to childhood passion

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Guard reaction force battles rioters along with weather

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NEWS DIGEST

■ Budget 'step in the right direction,' Defense leaders say

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – The budget deal that passed Congress Dec. 18 means the page is turning on a prolonged period of fiscal uncertainty, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Dec. 19 during a joint news conference with Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The deal, eases sequestration's hold on the defense budget during fiscal years 2014 and 2015, Hagel said.

"It gives us some predictability for those two years," the defense secretary explained, before noting the deal is an encouraging step in the right direction.

At least in the short term, the bipartisan budget agreement gives the department three things it needs: certainty, time and flexibility, Dempsey said.

"And in so doing, it will allow us to address most of our near-term readiness challenges and restore some readiness that we had lost over the past year-and-a-half or so," he added.

"But, even with this agreement... DoD still faces very difficult budget decisions," Hagel said.

The agreement reduces the original \$52 billion sequestration cut in fiscal year 2014 by roughly \$21 billion – about a 1.2 percent reduction compared to fiscal 2013 instead of the expected 6 percent reduction. The fiscal year 2015 cuts are reduced by about \$10 billion, Hagel said.

"We'll use those funds to restore spending on readiness," the defense secretary said. "We will also work to minimize disruption to our most critical modernization efforts."

While these cuts are less than originally mandated under sequestration, they are still about \$70 billion deeper than the president's budget request, he said.

However, the department was prepared for this scenario, Hagel said.

The Strategic Choices and Management Review conducted earlier this year examined several potential budget situations, providing a baseline for DoD to work from as it sets future defense spending priorities, he said.

"We will continue to press ahead with our efforts to cut DoD's overhead and infrastructure costs, improving our acquisitions enterprise, and continue to make the tough choices on force structure," Hagel said.

The department can no longer put off military compensation reform, he continued. As they are currently structured, military compensation programs are unsustainable, Hagel said. Allowing the growth in military compensation costs to continue unchecked would force the department to make disproportionate cuts to military readiness and modernization, the defense secretary said.

"We will work with Congress to bring the rate of growth of our compensation and benefits programs in line with budget limitations and fiscal realities," he said.

Although such cuts are unpopular, tough decisions must be made, he added.

"The leadership of DoD is prepared to engage the Congress in achieving compensation reform. But any changes to cost-of-living adjustments should not apply to medically

disabled retirees," Hagel added.

"Of course, the remainder of sequestration still lurks on the horizon beyond these two years," Dempsey said. "And so, some of the force structure changes — force structure reductions — that we had planned based on sequestration will march on."

"I hope that in the time we've just now bought for ourselves, this two-year period, we can continue to have a conversation, a discussion, a debate, and an understanding about what full sequestration would do to the military forces of the United States," the chairman said.

■ Obama directs Defense Department to review sexual assault prevention progress

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – President Barack Obama has instructed Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey to continue their efforts to make substantial improvements to the military's sexual assault prevention and response, including related improvements to the military justice system.

In a statement released by the White House, Dec. 20, Obama said he has directed Hagel and Dempsey to report back to him with a full-scale review of their progress by Dec. 1, 2014.

The president's statement reads as follows:

"Earlier this year I directed Secretary Hagel, Chairman Dempsey and our entire defense leadership team to step up their game exponentially in preventing and responding to the serious crime of sexual assault in our military. As Commander in Chief, I've made it clear that these crimes have no place in the greatest military on earth. Since then, our armed forces have moved ahead with a broad range of initiatives, including reforms to the military justice system, improving and expanding prevention programs, and enhancing support for victims. I commend the Pentagon leadership for their hard work on this critical issue of vital importance to our nation.

"Yet, so long as our women and men in uniform face the insider threat of sexual assault, we have an urgent obligation to do more to support victims and hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes, as appropriate under the military justice system. Members of Congress, especially Senators Gillibrand and McCaskill, have rightly called attention to the urgency of eradicating this scourge from our armed forces. As a result, there were a broad range of reforms proposed in this year's National Defense Authorization Act. The White House and the Department of Defense and other relevant agencies in my Administration will continue to work with Congress to address this corrosive problem, which is a violation of the values our armed forces stand for, destroys trust among our troops, and undermines our readiness.

"Today, I instructed Secretary Hagel and Chairman Dempsey to continue their efforts to make substantial improvements with respect to sexual assault prevention and response, including to the military justice



Courtesy Photo

Nebraska Guardsmen lend helping hand to Santa Claus

Helping Bring Christmas Joy: Members from the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard help sort Christmas gifts during the annual KFOR's Operation Santa Claus. All the time is donated by KFOR employees, Nebraska National Guard members and social service members to ensure all the donations get out to children and families in the local community.

system. I have also directed that they report back to me, with a full-scale review of their progress, by December 1, 2014. If I do not see the kind of progress I expect, then we will consider additional reforms that may be required to eliminate this crime from our military ranks and protect our brave service members who stand guard for us every day at home and around the world."

■ TSA officially expands Precheck Air Travel program

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – The Transportation Security Administration officially began extending its precheck expedited screening benefits to all U.S. service members including members of the U.S. Coast Guard beginning Dec. 20, according to a Dec. 19 Defense Department news release.

The release reads as follows:

As the result of the ongoing partnership with the Department of Defense (DoD), the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will officially extend tomorrow TSA Precheck expedited screening benefits to all U.S. service members. Service members, including those serving in the U.S. Coast Guard, reserves and National Guard will be able to enjoy the benefits of this expedited screening program at more than 100 participating airports when flying on nine major U.S. airlines.

If a service member has entered their DoD identification number correctly in a flight

reservation, they will be permitted access to TSA Precheck lanes. The expedited screening will allow service members to keep their footwear on as well as light outerwear, laptop in its case and their 3-1-1 compliant liquids/gels bag in a carry on in select screening lanes. More than 30 million passengers have experienced TSA Precheck since it launched in October 2011.

DoD has worked closely with service members worldwide to inform them of the process of updating current and/or future reservations along with their airline profiles to include their DoD identification number. That ID number will be used as their Known Traveler Number, and enables TSA to expand the program to all airports offering TSA Precheck. Previously, members of the U.S. Armed Forces could utilize TSA Precheck lanes at 10 domestic airports by presenting their Common Access Card (CAC).

"Expanding the TSA Precheck screening benefits is great news for our service members, and is a tangible sign of this nation's gratitude for the men and women who serve this nation bravely each and every day," said Mary Snively-Dixon, director, Defense Manpower Data Center. "We will continue to work with the Transportation Security Administration to help expand this program further."

Further information on TSA Precheck for military members can be found at www.TSA.gov and www.defensetravel.dod.mil.

Thousands serving over holiday season

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey reminded Americans that their military is deployed worldwide, performing missions that keep their fellow citizens safe. In his last news conference of 2013, Dempsey pointed out that, in addition to service members in combat zones, about 250,000 men and women in uniform are deployed overseas during this holiday period.

"I wish their families a peaceful and calm and happy holiday season, as their loved ones are forward-deployed all over the world, doing what the nation asks them to do," Dempsey said.

And where are they based this holiday season?

There are roughly 39,500 U.S. service members in Afghanistan, down from 66,000 at the beginning of 2013. The mission in Afghanistan has changed this past year, with Afghan security forces taking the lead throughout the country. American, NATO and partner forces are training and mentoring Afghan units. They are also providing logistics and air support, maintenance and intelligence assets.

In South Sudan, 45 Americans are deployed to provide security for the embassy in the capital city of Juba.

There are about 28,000 American service members in South Korea standing watch on the demilitarized zone – often called the last Cold War frontier. Another 39,000 Americans are based in Japan, providing security for that critical ally. Others are serving in Europe, Africa, U.S. Southern Command and in the United States.

Corrections

The November 2013 series, "20 years of booming business," had a number of inaccuracies.

First, according to Chief Master Sgt. Mark Forster, Nebraska Air National Guard command chief master sergeant, in-flight-refueling technicians assigned to the 155th Air Refueling Wing weren't the first enlisted aviators in Nebraska Air National Guard history. "We had flight engineers on both the C-54 and C-131," said Forster.

Additionally, Mary Baker was identified as the first female boom operator in the 155th ARW. She was actually the second Nebraska Air Guard woman to graduate from the technical school, following Sandi Reynolds.

Finally, Senior Master Sgt. Mark Fusco was identified as being a member of the initial cadre of boom operators hired by the 173rd Air Refueling Squadron in 1993 when the 155th ARW transitioned from the RF-4 Phantom II aerial reconnaissance mission to the KC-135R Stratotanker aerial refueling mission. This was inaccurate. Fusco was actually one of the initial group of booms hired by the 170th Group at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., several years later.

Additionally, Lt. Col. Jake Link was misidentified in an accompanying article.

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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@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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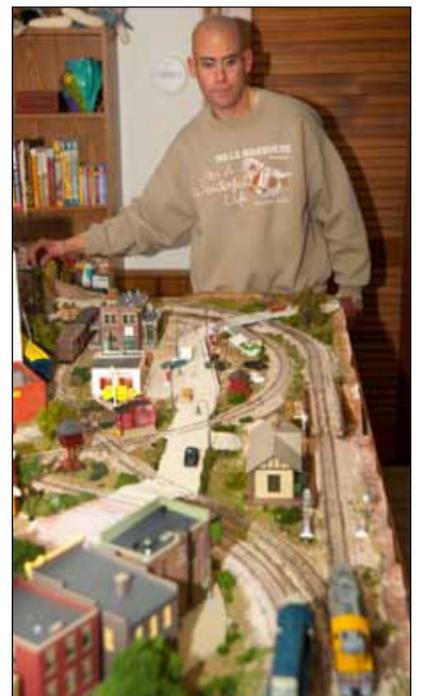
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Easy Does It: Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Deters eases a model train out onto the tracks of his mountain-side display. According to Deters, growing up the son of a Union Pacific Railroad employee created a lifelong fascination with railroads that has in turn impacted the way that he approaches his job as a Nebraska Army National Guard supply sergeant.

Making Refinements: Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Deters, supply sergeant for the Lincoln, Neb.,-based Nebraska National Guard Joint Force Headquarters, tinkers with the scenery of his HO scale model railroad village he has created in the basement of his Omaha, Neb., home. The village and train set have taken nearly five years to design and build.

Working on a Railroad

■ Supply sergeant uses spare time to recreate time gone by

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

There's something about the repetitive rhythmic sounds of trains that have always captured Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Deters' imagination.

For Deters, the supply sergeant for the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, those sounds have an almost music-like quality that have always both grounded him and carried him away.

"The sound," says Deters, whose voice becomes hushed... distant... when trying to describe what it is in particular about trains that have always captivated him. "Just hearing them as they go by... it strikes a musical note like no other sound does."

"I just love the sound of the diesel electric as it throbs through and the rumbling of the wheels on the rails," he continues.

According to Deters, this fascination with railroads has been with him since he was a young boy growing up in Omaha. Of course, that fascination really does stand to reason, considering his father spent decades working for Union Pacific, often taking Deters and his brothers and sisters to the train yards on the weekends where the elder Deters explained the interworkings of the mind-boggling action taking place in the yards below him.

Those experiences, said Christopher Deters, sparked an interest that, by-and-large, is still as strong today as it was then.

"I just can't pinpoint exactly what makes me so fascinated," said Deters recently, adding he often drives along U.S. Highway 6 from his house in Omaha to his work in Lincoln so that he can simply have the opportunity to watch the trains pass by on a nearby track. "It's a unique method of transportation that can, pound for pound, move more of our nation's goods and have the far least environmental impact on how we do things."

"Plus, the fact that railroads were instrumental in the building of our nation... being someone who



Finetuning: Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Deters examines the wheels on his HO scale railcar after the vehicle kept hopping off of the track on the model railway he has created over the past five years.

loves history, I just love the way they evolved," said Deters.

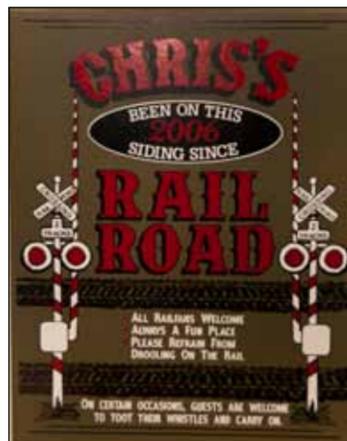
This fascination has actually manifested itself in several different ways.

First, Deters has spent a tremendous amount of time researching the history of railroading in Nebraska to the point that he can now speak definitively about the dozens of main and branch lines in Nebraska that no longer exist, and the laws that now govern their use as recreational trails. He's also a person who looks at the changes that have occurred in some of the state's largest communities as those cities take abandoned railroad lines and yards and transform them into modernized communities and recreational districts with a sense of sadness.

To Deters, it's not so much about what the city's are gaining in terms of revitalized communities, but rather what they're losing... what they're giving up... of their history.

"It's kind of sad to look at what used to be there and is no longer," said Deters. "A lot of these locations were integral to the development of these cities and became major employment centers... and now they're gone and most people don't even know they were even there."

In a sense, Deter concedes, railroads symbolize times gone by. "I guess there was something in my childhood that hooked me on them," he said. "I just love the hearing them. I love seeing them. I love the looks of the locomotives."



Sign Of The Times: A railroad sign, a gift from one of Sgt. 1st Class Deters family members, decorates the wall near his model railroad set, one of several railroad-themed decorations that line the walls of Deters' basement in Omaha, Neb.

That's why it would probably come to nobody's surprise who has known and worked with Deters over the course of his 27-year military career with the U.S. Army Reserves and Nebraska Army National Guard, that for the past five years Deters has been working countless hours to transform a portion of his basement into a functioning and highly entertaining railroad operation.

According to Deters, his father used to work with model railroad layouts when he was growing up.

"He was always expanding on the thing," said Deters. "Every time he would come home and work on the thing."

Deters said about 10 years ago, he also began thinking about creating a layout of his own. He spent hours researching various plans, visiting various hobby shops in the Omaha area, and talking with his father about several ideas. That interest continued to pick up when he and his wife bought a home.

Looking at the space available in his basement, "I knew I wanted to build a layout of my own."

However, finding the right layout took some time. For example, when Deters' parents bought him a starter kit for Christmas eight years ago, he admits that it just wasn't exactly what he was looking for. "It wasn't quite what I'd envisioned," he said. "It looked more like a child's



Rolling Along The Track: An HO scale engine rolls through a mountain tunnel and past the downtown area of a village Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Deters has spent the past five years designing. According to Deters, attention to the smallest details are a key to building both a model railway scene and an award-winning career as a supply sergeant.

starter set... like something for my nephews."

A short time later, Deters bought a mail order catalog at a local hobby shop. While pouring over the pages, he found one that piqued his interest. "I saw this layout that they had, called 'Grand Valley,'" he said. "The price seemed fair enough, so I ordered it through the hobby shop."

Deters also purchased some lumber and other equipment, and then literally started "hammering away." It's been a part-time hobby bordering on full-time passion ever since.

For example, Deters said he and his friend, another former Nebraska Guardsman named Dan Paxton, constructed the initial table in such a way as to ensure that it would remain stable. "To be honest," Deters said recently, "it was overkill. The way I constructed it, it would hold up an engine block. If I ever have to get out of that house, I don't know how I will ever get that table out of there."

Constructing the scenes, laying the track, building houses and buildings, wiring and re-wiring the lights and switches, all took up hours of free time.

Of course, a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan also impacted the building schedule.

"When I got home, the month I had off before coming back to work, I really started plugging away," Deters said, adding that the layout now, other than a few issues with wiring, is nearly completed.

According to Deters, constructing the layout has taught him a lot about himself and the skills he needs to be even more effective as a supply sergeant.

"Attention to detail is one thing," said Deters, one of four Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers who recently were named part of the top logistical operation in the U.S. Army while serving at the 209th Regional Training Institute. "I've learned that if you don't slow down and pay attention to what you're doing - the old adage, 'A Stitch in Time, Saves Nine,' applies."

"In my line of work, if I were to make a mistake on say the amount of supplies I'm ordering for someone... that can result in a waste of government resources," said Deters. "Whereas, in my little hobby, if I don't pay attention to the instructions that are written in the booklet and then I make a mistake, I have to start over and maybe even reorder parts... the slightest mistake will cost you time and it will cost you money."

Probably the biggest joy of the project, however, is the look of excitement that comes to a visitor's face - particular Deters' nephews - when he shows off his latest creations.

"That's what makes this really cool," he said. "I get to have a hobby that I really enjoy, and then I get to share that enjoyment with other people."

"You really can't ask for much more than that."

Small Nebraska city on display around world

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Assistant Editor

A Milford, Neb., high school student will have her artwork displayed around the world on the nose of a KC-135R Stratotanker from the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing.

Sierra Mongeon, a Milford High School senior, unveiled her artwork during a ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Nov. 24.

The artwork is part of the 155th ARW's annual nose art program, a continuing tradition in which members of the Nebraska Air National Guard nominate a Nebraska town or city and a contest is held by local high schools students to create a design that represents their community.

This marks the ninth year the 155th ARW has spotlighted a Nebraska community.

"This program is really cool," said Mongeon. "I'd never heard of anything like it before."

"I really thought long and hard about it and then I created something that I was like, 'Well I really like this and I'll submit it and see what they think,'" said Mongeon. "And they must have liked it because it's on the plane now."

Nose art on aircraft is a long-standing tradition within the military dating back to before World War II. The art was generally created by ground crews as a way to identify their aircraft and later embraced by pilots.

Mongeon's artwork was chosen as the winner several months ago after a difficult judging period.

"It was a pretty stiff competition," she added. "I think everybody that was in an art class or



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Proud Artist: Sierra Mongeon, a Milford, Neb., high school senior, displays her art during a Nov. 24 ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb. Mongeon will have her artwork displayed around the world on the nose of a KC-135R Stratotanker from the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing.

in a graphic design class at my school submitted artwork, so there was a lot of different artwork to choose from."

After finally seeing her art on the nose of an aircraft that will literally fly all over the world, Mongeon

struggled to explain what it meant to her.

"It's cool," said Mongeon. "I just can't stop looking at it."

And with her artwork now proudly displayed on the aircraft of a community-based organization,

like the Nebraska Air National Guard, Mongeon couldn't be happier to spread the word about her community of Milford.

"It's a cool way to just kind of get it out there because a lot of people don't know a ton about it."

CHIEFS continued from page 1.

of the Regan Era," quipped Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, who officiated over the change of responsibility ceremony that occurred before the state's warrant officer community.

According to Bohac, who has worked with Regan in numerous capacities, the outgoing chief warrant officer served his fellow warrant officers well.

"I would say to you that his tenure across most of the time that I've known him has been marked with passion and commitment," said the state's adjutant general. "He has left no doubt in my mind about his advocacy for his fellow warrant officers who are standing in formation... He has served them well and faithfully as a faithful servant to the Warrant Officer Corps."



Regan

Bohac added that in selecting Regan's replacement, he was faced with a difficult decision as the finalists for the position each had significant strengths and experiences that made them incredibly competitive. However, Bohac said, in the end Domeier was his choice for leading the state's Warrant Officer Corps into the future.

"It was a competitive and a tough choice. Any one of those warrant officers could've done the job, but at the end of the day, it was now Command Chief Warrant Officer Teresa Domeier," he said. "Welcome to the command team. We have much to do. Now let's get to work."

In addressing his fellow warrant officers, officers, Soldiers, friends and family members, Regan said he felt fortunate to take over the position that had been greatly strengthened by the work of such leaders as retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 Steve Weber, the state's first full-time command chief warrant officer. "It was clear that I was inheriting the best functioning, most professional Warrant Officer Corps the Nebraska National Guard had ever seen," said Regan. "Taking over in these circumstances is an enviable position to find yourself in, but still challenging since such high standards are difficult enough to maintain, let alone to try to improve upon."

"I knew that the only way to be successful



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

New State Command Chief Warrant Officer: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, presents Chief Warrant Officer 4 Teresa Domeier with a framed copy of her "Charge Order" that effectively installed her as the state's new command chief warrant officer following a Nov. 17 ceremony at Camp Ashland, Neb.

was to continue to rely upon my fellow warrant officers and to work as a team," he said.

Regan said he's pleased to report the Corps continues to be strong, as indicated by the organization's flourishing Warrant Officer Candidate School program and a Warrant Officer strength that continues to hover at more than 100 percent, which places it between first or second among the entire National Guard, depending upon the measurements National Guard Bureau uses to rate it.

"By all measures, the warrant officers of Nebraska are among the best in the nation because of the team effort of all of our warrant officers and because of the team effort of all of our (Noncommissioned Officer) and Officer Corps," said Regan. "The Nebraska National Guard team is a great team to be on. It's been a great honor to be entrusted with the role of the command chief warrant officer for the Nebraska Army National Guard and I hope I have served you well."

"But now that responsibility falls to Ms.

Domeier. I know she will do an outstanding job. We worked together as (teach, assess and counsel) officers right here at the (209th Regional Training Institute)," he said. "Teresa was the main engine that got our Warrant Officer Candidate School off the ground, so I know firsthand her great skill and leadership. She will do an outstanding job as the next command chief warrant officer."

Regan's career began in 1981 when he enlisted as a member of Nebraska Army National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 67th Support Battalion. After completing his college degree, he took a full-time job in the Nebraska Army National Guard in the Active Guard Reserve Program.

He was appointed as a warrant officer in 1994 after being selected as the Standard Installation/Division Personnel System (SIDPERS) chief for the Guard's State Area Command. He later served in a number of positions, including state equal employment manager, the state Active Guard Reserve

Air Force sees smaller force as way to preserve overall readiness

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — Discussing upcoming budgetary variables during a Dec. 13 Pentagon news conference, the Air Force's top civilian leader for the past six months addressed the inevitability of a smaller force.

Acting Air Force Secretary Eric Fanning, who returned to his position as undersecretary of the Air Force following the Dec. 13 Senate confirmation of Deborah Lee James to assume the service's top civilian position, said the national debt burden is a long-term national security issue, and Air Force officials are committed to being a part of the solution as the defense budget takes shape.

"I believe the American people have a right as we come out of two long wars to feel they can spend less, invest less in national security forces," he said.

Fanning characterized budget compromises currently in debate on Capitol Hill as encouraging though lower than service officials would like. The additional funds over the next two years will help cover readiness shortfalls, stability and planning, he said.

"Even with this relief, we will need to resize the Air Force to one that is smaller than it is today in order to protect investments we need for the future and to shape an Air Force that we can keep ready (and) we can't do these cuts individually, ad hoc, in isolation," Fanning said. "If something's restored to the budget we present to the Hill, something else will need to go."

Still, Fanning pledged a continued commitment to helping Airmen get past the "distractions" of budget and political uncertainty.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Tearful Reunion: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Steve Stienike, a member of the Nebraska National Guard's Afghan Agribusiness Development Team No. 4, gets a long-awaited hug from his wife, Lindsay, at the Penterman Armory on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 12. Members of ADT No. 4 spent nearly a year in Afghanistan working to rebuild the nation's agricultural infrastructure.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

A Baby's Fascination: Four-and-a-half-month-old Maddox Kilgore examines the face of his father, 1st Lt. Michael Kilgore, shortly after Kilgore arrived home from a deployment to Afghanistan as a member of the Nebraska National Guard's Afghan Agribusiness Development Team No. 4, Dec. 12, in Lincoln, Neb.

"They put their lives on the line every time they went out there so that area of the world could provide a better capacity for agriculture, and in the long run, provide stability for the region."

— **Maj. Thomas Golden**
Commander, Nebraska National Guard ADT No. 4



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Welcoming The Soldiers Home: The family of Maj. Thomas Golden, commander of the Nebraska National Guard's Afghan Agribusiness Development Team No. 4, tape a sign onto the wall of the Penterman Armory drill floor shortly before members of ADT No. 4 arrived back in Lincoln, Neb., after serving for nearly a year in Afghanistan.

HOMECOMING continued from page 1.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Tight Squeeze: Staff Sgt. Jennifer Feldt, a member of the Nebraska National Guard's Afghan Agribusiness Development Team No. 4, hugs Emma Bruce of Wahoo, Neb., at the Penterman Armory on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 12. Feldt was one of 10 Nebraska Army and Air National Guardsmen welcomed home following nearly a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan.

challenge. There are always cultural differences, but we worked through those and came together as a team."

Zwart's wife, Joy, met him at the airport and was happy her husband was home in time for the holidays.

"It's kind of like a kid waiting this time of year for Santa Claus," said Joy. "They can't really think of anything else until Santa Claus gets here and I feel like I'm waiting for Santa to get here."

"During a season when things are so much about home and family and appreciating the good things in life, it was wonderful to have him back here for all of that," she added.

Following tearful reunions, a brief ceremony officially welcomed the team home. Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, welcomed home the Soldiers and Airman, but had a few instructions for them.

"The first charge: go home and be with your families," said Bohac. "Learn how to be a family again. It's been a while; there's going to be a learning curve to that."

"To the families, your charge is to

welcome your Soldier and Airman home and bring them back into the community," he added. "And then when it's time for the Soldiers and Airman to return to the formations, your charge is to return ready... let it be known that we're ready to receive you back - we're ready to have you back in our formations here in Nebraska."

The team's commander was then called to give his final thoughts.

Maj. Thomas Golden thanked the families for their steadfast support and care packages throughout the deployment. He then reflected on something his mother had told him as a child.

"My mom used to say to me when I was young before I left the house... 'Tommy, remember who you are,'" said Golden. "Later in my life I started thinking about that and it made sense to me. What she was really saying was remember your good name."

"Your Soldiers and Airman remembered who they were," he added. "They remembered their good name and you should be proud of them."

"They remembered who they were when they conducted over 100 engagements with the Afghan Director of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock and his staff. Over 50 percent of those engagements outside the wire in a very kinetic and volatile area," said Golden.

"They put their lives on the line every time they went out there so that area of the world could provide a better capacity for agriculture, and in the long run, provide stability for the region," he added. "So it was a big mission. It was a good job and it was the right people to do it."

Bohac had one final instruction for the members of the team.

"Your final charge is this: To tell your story," said Bohac. "To tell your communities and your families about some of the adventures you had and the people you met."

"You need to tell the story of what you did so Nebraskans know who you are," he added. "They know of you, but they need to know what you've done on behalf of them and the citizens of this great nation we live in."

New House of Worship

Guard dedicates newly completed chapel at Camp Ashland

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

“Through the ages, Almighty God has moved his people to; Build houses of prayer and praise, and to set apart places;

For ministry. With gratitude for the adornment of this Chapel, We are now gathered to dedicate and consecrate it in God’s Nar.”

**—Right of Chapel Dedication,
Nov. 8, 2013, Camp Ashland, Neb.**

The Nebraska Army National Guard now has a chapel all of its own.

The chapel, which was recently dedicated at Camp Ashland, Neb., during a Nov. 8 ceremony, is designed to support the religious needs of military units training at the southeastern Nebraska Army National Guard training facility.

According to Chaplain (Maj.) Scott Ehler, 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) chaplain, the chapel fills a definite need within the Nebraska Army National Guard.

“The Nebraska National Guard has never had a free-standing building chapel,” said Ehler, adding that previously the Nebraska Army Guard had conducted worship services out of a small chapel in the basement of the Guard’s “Spirit of 1776” Armory in Lincoln. However, when the armory underwent a major facelift and reorganization of offices, that chapel was moved into storage.

That then began a search for a new chapel, said Ehler, adding officials soon settled on one of the small, single-story buildings at Camp Ashland.

“Camp Ashland is the perfect place,” said Ehler, adding that the camp typically brings hundreds of Guard, Reserve and active duty Soldiers to the training institute where the Soldiers attend a variety of leadership and



New Chapel: The altar of the Nebraska Army National Guard’s new chapel can be seen through the open door of the new facility, which was recently dedicated at Camp Ashland, Neb. The chapel will now serve service members training at the Nebraska Army Guard post.

military occupational schools. “We have a lot of Soldiers who go through such courses as the (Warrior Leaders Course), so now we can do chapel services in a dedicated chapel instead of trying to find a room somewhere to do it.”

“Also, we have a lot of units that that come through here for annual training, while a lot of other units conduct their drill weekends out here... so it’s the perfect place to have a chapel,” said Ehler.

Probably the biggest challenge –besides finding a building to support the chapel – was finding room for all of the furnishings from the old facility, such as the pews, and then



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Dedication Ceremony: Chaplain (Maj.) Scott Ehler and Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Philip Houser lead fellow Army and Air National Guard chaplains and chaplain assistants in prayer during the Nov. 8 dedication ceremony of the Nebraska Army National Guard’s new chapel at Camp Ashland, Neb.

actually moving it out to Camp Ashland.

“We had a lot of Soldiers who work at the (Civil Support Team) and the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade who helped us move in,” said Ehler. “They were really a huge help.”

Overall, said Ehler, the state’s chaplains

are extremely pleased with the finished chapel.

“Everything looks really good,” he said. “Most everything fit.”

“I think the space (the 209th RTI) gave us was the perfect size, so we’re really pleased.”

Nebraska honors state’s Medal of Honor recipients during Veterans Day event

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

Nebraska’s heroes received a new place of honor at the State Capitol in Lincoln, Neb., when a new Medal of Honor plaque was unveiled, Nov. 11.

The plaque, which honors those Nebraskans – or those Americans who spent significant time in the state – who earned the Congressional Medal of Honor, had hung in the main hallway of the State Capitol.

However, according to ceremony organizers, the older plaque had a number of inaccuracies and did not have significant room for the addition of future names.

The redesigned cast bronze plaque contains the updated list of 72 Nebraskans who have received the nation’s highest honor for military service “distinguishable by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty.”

The Medal of Honor was created during the Civil War and is awarded by the President in the name of Congress to United States military personnel. Nationally, nearly 3,500 Americans have earned the medal.

Two-thirds of Nebraska’s recipients were awarded the Medals of Honor for service during either the Civil War or the Indian Wars when the Medal of Honor was the only military award available.

Since then, two Nebraskans received it during World War I, 10 during World War II, two during the Korean War, seven during the Vietnam War and one for action in Somalia in 1993.

According to the ceremony’s keynote speakers, unveiling a new Medal of Honor plaque on Veterans Day was a poignant reminder of what those listed on the plaque did in service of their nation, as well as what thousands of other Nebraskans have done and continue to do.

“We will never forget the tremen-



Standing Tall: Members of the Offutt Air Force Base joint color guard prepare to march into the Nebraska State Capitol rotunda at the start of the Nebraska Medal of Honor plaque dedication ceremony, Nov. 11, in Lincoln, Neb.

dous legacy created by the men and women who have served and are serving this country. Their sacrifices have preserved our freedom and we appreciate their service,” said Gov. Dave Heineman who officiated over the unveiling of the updated Medal of Honor plaque that will hang in the 14th floor Memorial Chamber of the State Capitol. “The true meaning of the words, ‘Duty, Honor and Country,’ our service men and women today reflect those same ideals and we are grateful for what they do to protect the United States of America.”

Nebraska’s adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, agreed with Heineman, saying: “Today we take time to remember and honor those who contributed to preserving our free nation – and in particular retired Lt. Col. (Charles) Hagemester – who have earned this nation’s highest honor.”

“Generations upon generations



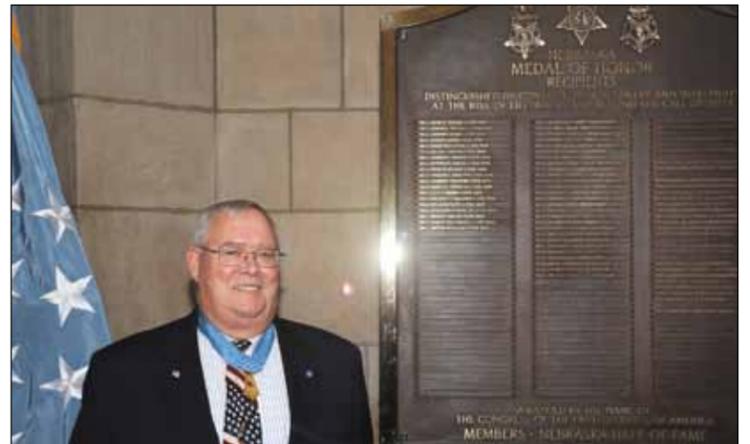
Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Inspiring Future Generations: Retired Lt. Col. Charles Hagemester, one of Nebraska’s two living Medal of Honor recipients, shows off the medal he earned while serving as a medic in Vietnam to a group of Lincoln, Neb., elementary school students following the Nov. 11 dedication ceremony for a new Medal of Honor plaque honoring 72 Nebraskans – or those who have Nebraska connections – who have earned the nation’s highest military award for bravery.

of Nebraskans have served their state and nation, whether it be on active duty, in the National Guard, or as a member of the Reserves,” Bohac added a few moments later. “And as a state, we give thanks for those Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen who swore an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”

The plaque itself was unveiled by Hagemester, one of Nebraska’s two living Medal of Honor recipients, who earned the award on March 20, 1967, while serving in Vietnam as a medic with the 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), during a firefight in the Binh Dinh Province. Later, Hagemester showed his medal to a group of elementary school students who had traveled to the Capitol to witness the ceremony.

According to Hagemester, the medal – which was presented to him by President Lyndon Johnson on May 14, 1968, has never been



Proud Veteran: Retired Lt. Col. Charles Hagemester stands next to the newly unveiled Nebraska Medal of Honor plaque that will be placed in the State Capitol’s “Memorial Chamber,” located on the 14th floor of the historic building in Lincoln, Neb.

cleaned even though it has been touched by countless students.

He also told the students that any of them have it within themselves to also do heroic deeds.

“What we did, or what I did, or what anyone of those guys listed on that plaque did, you guys are capable of,” he said. “Be sure to remember that.”

Soldiers, Airmen battle 'rioters,' elements

■ Despite frigid weather conditions, joint National Guard Reaction Force team practices responding to major disturbances

By Senior Airman Mary Thach
Staff Writer

Nebraska National Guard Soldiers from the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and 92nd Troop Command, and 15 Airmen from the 155th Air Refueling Wing battled frigid temperatures and aggressive rioters during a National Guard Reaction Force exercise Nov. 22-24, at Camp Ashland, Neb.

Nebraska Guardsmen learned tactical techniques and procedures to support civil authorities in the event of civil unrest by formulating a 500-man reaction force the governor could activate at any moment.

Capt. Matt Misfeldt, Joint Force Headquarters physical security officer and training officer in charge of the exercise said the exercise started with the Guardsmen moving into barracks, followed by leadership briefings, risk assessments, covering a general outline of the exercise and how the Guardsmen would be validated.

The next day, the Guardsmen learned individual tasks to assist in a civil disturbance: riot batons, shield usage, use of force, apprehending and detaining subjects, and moving as a group in a riot formation.

"We spend the entire training year training up to 500 Soldiers and Airmen," said Misfeldt. "Nebraska is a Tier One state and we have 500 trained and ready NGRF Soldiers and Airmen who can provide support to the governor."

Misfeldt said NGRF is activated through the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, which is directed by Nebraska's adjutant general under direction of the governor and is only activated if civilian authorities request the Guard's presence.

"Our activation process does not require all 500 at once," Misfeldt said. "We may provide 100 immediately and build up to that level."

Misfeldt said the joint exercise was successful and operated smoothly. The Air Guard represents 100 personnel out of the 500 total. Many of the Air Guardsmen serve in security forces, so they are familiar with civil disturbance techniques.

"We work very well with them. The Air Guard that comprised the action force, were from everywhere: logistics, operations, security, engineers, public affairs," said Misfeldt. "They are all out here playing a role. We ensure they are competent at those tasks and are qualified to conduct this operation. As far as operating jointly, this is how we should operate. We work together to plan the training and we are out here facilitating the training together."

1st Lt. Daniel Sandoz, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-134th Cavalry, led the four platoons making up the NGRF company during the exercise, ensuring the platoons operated as a cohesive unit.

Sandoz said the Guard receives this training to prepare for a situation larger than local law enforcement can handle.

"We can put more bodies on the ground than local law enforcement," said Sandoz. "We can provide 500 fully-trained Soldiers and Airmen to any civil disturbance within the state."

Real-world missions rely on troops who are fully trained, ready



Photo by Staff Sgt. Caitlin Price

Hold The Line: Members of the Nebraska National Guard's National Guard Reaction Force take on 'rioters' during a National Guard Reaction Force exercise Nov. 23-25, at Camp Ashland, Neb. Nebraska Guardsmen learned tactical techniques and procedures to support civil authorities in the event of civil unrest by formulating a 500-person reaction force the governor could activate at any moment.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Stone Cold: A member of the Nebraska National Guard's National Guard Reaction Force stands ready during a Reaction Force exercise, Nov. 24, at Camp Ashland, Neb. Soldiers from the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and 92nd Troop Command, and 15 Airmen from the 155th Air Refueling Wing battled frigid temperatures and aggressive rioters during the training.

and able to act in a moment's notice, regardless of which branch they serve, he said, adding joint operation training and missions are now common, with each service branch bringing diverse skills and potential to the table.

"I think we bring different capabilities," said Sandoz. "It was neat to be able to work with a different branch. We actually speak the same language, so we can all plug right in."

"We used 15 Airmen in the actual riot control," Sandoz added. "We had one extraction team of Airmen and a line squad. It worked out really well. They were able to operate the exact same as the Army would operate."

Sandoz said the basic techniques of riot control are the main tasks the Guardsmen need to know how to perform.

"We needed to train how to op-



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Tough Crowd: Members of the Nebraska National Guard's National Guard Reaction Force take on 'rioters' during a National Guard Reaction Force exercise, Nov. 24, at Camp Ashland, Neb. Members of the joint training exercise battled frigid weather conditions to form the team capable of creating an up to 500-person force able to react to any disturbances.

erate as squads and full platoons and ultimately as a company. In the real world you are not just an individual," said Sandoz. "An individual would never be able to contain a riot. The only way to learn to operate as a full company is to practice as a full company."

Staff Sgt. Jared Stubbendeck, non-commissioned officer in charge of the 15 Airmen training for NGRF, said: "When you sign up for the military, an exercise like this will make you look back on and think, 'Wow, that was so neat.'"

"This is not something you can do in the civilian world," said Stubbendeck. "This is one of the perks of being part of the Guard. You are involved in such a different program, so you are going to learn a lot of things."

"Many people take self-defense courses," said Stubbendeck. "This teaches you real world skills to keep yourself and loved ones safe. It is intense physical training. You will hit somebody and you will be hit. This is a very physical thing."

Airman Sean Pozehl, 155th Security Forces Squadron, has never been participated in an NGRF exer-

cise before. Being in security forces for only a year, he quickly earned himself a front row spot during the riot control portion of the exercise.

"The purpose of this exercise was to help the Air Guard learn riot control and maintain the front line of a riot," said Pozehl. "We learned to build extraction teams and how to extract aggressors, the people who are causing or antagonizing a riot to happen. We learned different pressure points and how to properly take down, subdue and handcuff an individual."

Pozehl said he is glad the Air Guard is included on training exercises such as this.

"It is really important, because the Army is not always going to be there and the Air Force will be on their own," said Pozehl. "With the evolving military, a lot of it is joint operations. Air Guard and Air Force units are getting called to do Army-type operations, so they need to know what they are doing, too."

"It's been a lot of fun working with the Army," said Pozehl. "There has been a lot of joking and jest between Army and Air. They can teach different things they learned

in the Army that you didn't learn in the Air Force."

During the three-day training exercise, temperatures dipped into the single digits, but the training continued on.

"It's been real cold, but the Air Force has provided us with proper equipment and cold weather gear, so it has not been that bad," said Pozehl. "Especially once you are focusing on the task at hand, you aren't really thinking about it."

Misfeldt said, even though temperatures were less than comfortable, the Air Force and Army had proper facilities, field heaters and cold weather gear to combat the icy winds.

"On the Army side, we are issued cold weather equipment. We operate in all conditions," said Misfeldt. "But, on the Air Guard side, some of the personnel were pilots or flight crews, so they do not have certain weather equipment. The weather had no impact on training, we just had to accommodate."

Sandoz explained how the troops dealt with the less than perfect climate over the weekend.

"It was a little cold but we layered up and kept moving," said Sandoz. "We are wearing more clothing than we normally would, but as far as the actual training is concerned, we are operating just like we normally would."

"We can't control the weather in a real environment, so we are ready to tackle this even if it is cold outside," Sandoz added. "We did have to take extra precautions using heaters and people rotating in to warm up and go back out again."

The weekend wrapped up with some chilled, but thoroughly trained Soldiers and Airmen who are ready to control a civil disturbance, if the need arises.

"This gives the Army flexibility, so we are helping them out," said Stubbendeck. "The Army National Guard has 12-16 month deployments, so they may not have a fully trained force. Having our force trained and ready not only gives the Air National Guard experience, but it also helps the Army National Guard. That is the big picture, Nebraska National Guard working together."

Army's top logistics officer impressed during visit to Nebraska Guard facilities

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Staff Photojournalist

Lt. Gen. Raymond Mason, the U.S. Army's deputy chief of staff for logistics, made a special visit to Nebraska to find out what's in the water that's enabled the Nebraska Army National Guard to stand out against units from across the world including units from the Guard, Reserve and active component on Dec. 4 in Lincoln and Camp Ashland, Neb.

Mason and Sgt. Maj. Mark Chance, U.S. Army logistics sergeant major, along with other distinguished visitors toured Nebraska Army National Guard supply and maintenance facilities to see firsthand how Nebraska units have excelled in supply and maintenance after seven Nebraska units were recognized in the U.S. Army Supply Excellence and Maintenance Excellence Award contests.

While in Nebraska, Mason also presented awards to the seven units during the Nebraska National Guard's 2012-13 Logistics Excellence Awards Ceremony at Camp Ashland, Neb.

"This (is an) incredible legacy of excellence that the National Guard of Nebraska has achieved for many years and I can see it (continuing) for many more years," said Mason.

According to Mason, just by the look of the supply rooms and facilities he could see how passionate the Soldiers are about their jobs in Nebraska.

"(Nebraska National Guard) you all have bragging rights for all you have accomplished," said Mason. "You are truly meeting the Army and National Guard Logistic outlook on excellence."

Not only did this give the opportunity for Mason and Chance to see what Nebraska was doing firsthand, it also gave them the opportunity to talk the Nebraska Soldiers during a town hall meeting.

During the town hall meeting, Mason and Chance gave a briefing over 'Sustaining the Army- An Update from the G-4.' Mason explained what the future of logistics will look



Photo by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Supply in Nebraska: Staff Sgt. Lillie Chambers, supply sergeant for the 313th Ground Ambulance Medical Company, shows Lt. Gen. Raymond Mason, U.S. Army deputy chief of staff for logistics, how she organizes her unit's medical bags during Mason's tour of Nebraska National Guard supply and maintenance facilities, Dec. 4, in Lincoln, Neb. Mason's visit gave him an opportunity to see what Nebraska was doing after seven Nebraska units won different awards in the U.S. Army Supply Excellence and Maintenance Excellence Award competitions.

like and what steps it will take to get there.

The town hall meeting also provided Soldiers from across Nebraska with the opportunity to ask Mason any questions they had about logistics.

According to Nebraska leaders and logisticians, they were grateful for Mason's

visit to Nebraska.

"To have the senior Army logistician with us for a full day and spending time with us, speaks volumes about how we are valued," said Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska's adjutant general who accompanied Mason on the tour.

AWARDS

continued from page 1.

McKeehan and Staff Sgt. DJ Johnson.

Additionally, Command Sgt. Maj. Boyd Navratil of the Nebraska Army National Guard's Logistics Office was presented the first-ever National Guard Bureau, Army, 2012 Logistician of the Year Award. According to Navratil's award citation, his "proven leadership, competence, extraordinary community service, and the development of Soldiers exceeded all expectations in his selection for this award. Command Sergeant Major Navratil's commitment to logistics readiness resulted in the Nebraska Army National Guard winning five consecutive Chief of Staff, Army, Supply Excellence Awards."

According to Governor Heineman, the awards are indicative of the quality of work that Nebraska National Guardsmen do on a daily basis.

"First of all, you've won the team Heisman award and Command Sergeant Major (Navratil), you've won the individual Heisman," said Heineman. "The units that are represented here today really are the national champions of the National Guard, and that's the expectation that we have because literally, the job that you do, as important as it is, we have to be the best every single day."

Mason echoed those thoughts, saying the entire Nebraska Army National Guard has a lot to be proud of.

"What an incredible accomplishment," he said. "The Nebraska National Guard today can proudly state that they are truly the best of the best."

Mason also reserved special praise for both the 209th RTI and Navratil. "It is the Heisman, no doubt about it."

Also honored during the ceremony were:
•The 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion Headquarters from Lincoln, Neb., which took second place in the Army National Guard's Supply Excellence Competition, Parent Level Category. Receiving the award on behalf of the unit were Lt. Col. Craig Strong, Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Hytrek, Staff Sgt. Lillie Chambers and Master Sgt. Steve Gavre.

•Headquarters, 92nd Troop Command, from Lincoln, Neb., which took top honors



Photo by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

National Honors: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac (second from left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Boyd Navratil share a joke as Bohac presents him with the first-ever National Guard Bureau, Army, 2012 Logistician of the Year Award. According to Gov. Dave Heineman, the award was like winning the individual Heisman Award for logistics excellence. Also pictured are Command Sgt. Maj. Eli Valenzuela (far left) and Lt. Gen. Raymond Mason (far right), the Army's top logistics officer.

in the Army National Guard's Supply Excellence Competition, Parent Level Category. Accepting the award on behalf of their unit were Maj. Shane Varejcka, Sgt. Maj. Shawn Griffith, Staff Sgt. Dean Martin and Maj. Brett Petit.

•The 189th Transportation Company from Norfolk and Wayne, Neb., which took first place in the U.S. Army Chief of Staff Supply Excellence Award Competition, Unit Level Category. Accepting the award on behalf of their unit were Capt. Cory Huskey, 1st Sgt. Mike Olsen, Staff Sgt. Justin Olson and Sgt. 1st Class Jon Wren.

•Headquarters, 209th Regional Training Institute, from Camp Ashland, which placed first in the U.S. Army Chief of Staff Supply Excellence Award Competition, Unit Level Category. Receiving the award on behalf of their unit were Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Deters, Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Burton, Master Sgt. James McKeehan and Staff Sgt. DJ Johnson.

•The Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters from Lincoln, Neb.,

which placed first in the U.S. Army Chief of Staff Supply Excellence Award Competition, Property Book Category. Receiving the award on behalf of their unit were Chief Warrant Officer 3 Todd Wagner, Sgt. Christopher Jensen, Chief Warrant Officer Scott Wilke and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Carrie Pittman.

•The Nebraska National Guard's Surface Maintenance Manager's Office in Lincoln, Neb., which placed first in the U.S. Army Chief of Staff's Maintenance Excellence Awards Competition. Accepting the award on behalf of their unit were Lt. Col. Christopher Weskamp, Chief Warrant Officer 2 KC Sohl, Maj. Edwin Davis and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Rob Davis.

•Headquarters, 1-376th Security and Support Aviation Battalion, from Grand Island, Neb., which placed first in the U.S. Army Chief of Staff's Maintenance Excellence Awards Competition, Aviation Category. Receiving the award on behalf of their unit were Capt. William McGreer, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Douglas Luethke, Warrant Officer Stephen Oppliger and Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Alt.

Gallery of Champions



Headquarters, 1-376th Security and Support Aviation Battalion, Grand Island, Neb. 1st Place, U.S. Army Chief of Staff's Maintenance Excellence Awards Competition, Aviation Category



189th Transportation Company, Norfolk and Wayne, Neb. 1st Place, U.S. Army Chief of Staff Supply Excellence Award Competition, Unit Level Category



Nebraska National Guard Surface Maintenance Manager's Office, Lincoln, Neb. 1st Place, U.S. Army Chief of Staff's Maintenance Excellence Awards Competition



Headquarters, 209th Regional Training Institute, Camp Ashland, Neb. 1st Place, U.S. Army Chief of Staff Supply Excellence Award Competition, Unit Level Category



Headquarters, 92nd Troop Command, Lincoln, Neb. 1st Place, Army National Guard's Supply Excellence Competition, Parent Level Category



Headquarters, 110th Medical Battalion, Lincoln, Neb. 2nd Place, Army National Guard Supply Excellence Competition, Parent Level Category

734th Transportation Battalion welcomes new commander

By Sgt. Amy Jacobson
Staff Writer

The 734th Transportation Battalion welcomed a new commander, Nov. 3, at the National Guard Reserve Center in Kearney, Neb.

Lt. Col. Christopher Weskamp assumed command of the battalion from Lt. Col. Curtis Abendroth in front of the Nebraska transportation battalion formation, distinguished guests, friends and family.

"I am truly humbled and honored by this opportunity," said Weskamp. "I am very excited to be here and carry on the exceptional reputation of the 734th Transportation Battalion."

"Soldiers are our greatest asset," added Weskamp, "and must be challenged at every training opportunity."

Weskamp joined the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1987 as a fuel and electrical systems repairer where he rose to the rank of staff sergeant before attending Officer Candidate School.

He received his commission as a second lieutenant in 1999. He received his undergraduate degree in Business Management at Bellevue University in 2000.

Lt. Col. Weskamp has served as Supply Management Officer for Joint Force Headquarters-Nebraska. He served as commander for the 267th Ordnance Company during its deployment to Iraq from 2003-05 and as commander of the 1167th Brigade Support Company during its 2010 deployment to Iraq. He later served as the operations and training officer for the 209th Regional Training Institute. He is currently employed as the Nebraska Military Department surface maintenance manager.

"Lieutenant Colonel Weskamp, you are the right person for the 734th and next chapter in their history," said Col. Anita Curington, commander of 92nd Troop Command. "With



Job Well Done: Lt. Col. Curtis Abendroth, outgoing commander of the 734th Transportation Battalion, passes the battalion colors to Col. Anita Curington, 92nd Troop Command's commander, during the battalion's change of command, Nov. 3, in Kearney, Neb.



Photos by Sgt. Amy Jacobson

New Leadership: Lt. Col. Christopher Weskamp holds the battalion colors during the 734th Transportation Battalion change of command where Weskamp took command from Lt. Col. Curtis Abendroth on Nov. 3, in Kearney, Neb.

your extensive logistics (and) maintenance experience and expertise, I know that you will excel as a battalion commander."

Abendroth began his career in the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 5th Brigade in Lincoln, Neb., where he attained the rank of sergeant before entering ROTC.

He served as an Army officer in the Army Reserves from 1991 to 1994. In 1995 to transferred to the 1013th Quartermaster Company, which he commanded from 1997 to 2000.

Abendroth transferred to the Nebraska Army National Guard in 2000 serving as

168th Quartermaster Battalion logistics officer. In 2003 he transferred to the 867th Quartermaster Battalion serving as battalion personnel, operations and training officer.

In 2006 he deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as the Support Operations Officer of the 867th Corps Support Battalion. In 2008 he served as the Assistant Inspector General for the Nebraska Army National

Guard. In 2010 he became the first battalion commander of 3rd Battalion, 209th Regiment at Camp Ashland.

He recently worked in the operations and plans section in the JFHQ for the Nebraska Army National Guard.

"It really has been a joy to be a commander of a unit that already knows where it is going," said Abendroth.

Co-workers send retiring sergeant major out in style

The co-workers of a retiring sergeant major made sure that his final day started in style.

Sgt. Maj. Boyd Navratil, who recently was named the Army National Guard's logistician of the year, spent his last day in uniform working at the Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 23.

Upon arriving at work, Navratil found his work area filled with boxes and Styrofoam peanuts and wrapped in Christmas paper. Navratil, who spent more than 28 years working full-time for the Nebraska Army Guard, took it all in stride, adding that he will miss working with his dedicated teammates.

"Our people, Soldiers, Airmen are what makes this organization so special. People make the difference in any organization and in other people, I've truly been blessed to have been surrounded with so many phenomenal supervisors, leaders, co-workers, and subordinates throughout my military career."



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

RTI continued from page 1.

Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, presented Camp Ashland's Headquarters, 209th Regional Training Institute, with the "Best of the Best" award during a Dec. 4 ceremony at Camp Ashland, Neb.

To earn the award, the unit recorded the highest scores of more than 100 active Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard units during a series of local, regional and finally, national evaluations.

This was the first time an Army National Guard organization has ever won this most coveted Department of Army Supply Excellence Award.

Receiving the award on behalf of their unit were Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Deters, Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Burton, Master Sgt. James McKeehan and Staff Sgt. DJ John-

son. These non-commissioned officers were the backbone of the RTI's supply organization as they were the four full-time supply sergeants at the time of the competition.

According to the supply sergeants, they wouldn't have been able to get to where they are today without teamwork and always placing the mission first.

"You cannot get your job done without teamwork," said Deters. "That's what the Army is all about, especially when it comes to leading troops."

As supply sergeants at the 209th RTI, the team was responsible for providing logistical support to hundreds of Soldiers attending several different military courses including the Warrior Leaders Course, Warrant Officer Candidate School, Officer Candidate School and Mo-

tor Transport Operator Course.

"I don't look at it as my accomplishment," said Deters. "I look at it as the whole group's accomplishment. Ultimately I was driven by mission accomplishment."

McKeehan couldn't have been happier with everyone's total effort.

"I'm very proud of our staff and so proud of how they executed their mission," said McKeehan.

According to all four Soldiers, they wouldn't have been able to do it without each other.

"If you have a good cohesive team that really believes in what they are doing, really enjoys what they are doing and are passionate about it, they will be able to accomplish things you never thought possible," said Deters.

And that, Deters added, is exactly what the 209th RTI had.

110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion under new leadership

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Staff Writer

Soldiers of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 110th Multifunctional Medical Battalion welcomed Lt. Col. Darin Mongeon as their new commander during a Nov. 10 change of command ceremony held at the Penterman Armory in Lincoln, Neb.

Mongeon took command from Lt. Col. Craig Strong in front of Soldiers of the 110th MMB, distinguished guests, friends and family.

"Make sure you focus on building your team, managing risk and continually engaging your Soldiers," said Strong. "Above all, enjoy your command time."

"The battalion achieved 100 percent of all officer positions filled within the battalion as well as having the top retention number within the Nebraska Army National Guard," added Strong. "Other noteworthy achievements during my time included the 110th MMB selected as the national runner-up Supply Excellence Award, having a battalion level dining out and recipient of a state diversity leadership award."

According to Strong, the 110th MMB is a great formation of Soldiers and is going to miss serving as their commander.

Strong began his military

career when he enlisted into the Navy Reserve in 1986 where he served as a construction electrician. He transferred to the Nebraska Army National Guard in 1993 and was commissioned through the State Officer Candidate Program in 1995.

Strong has held numerous leadership positions in the 313th Medical Ground Ambulance Company, 110th MMB, Joint Force Headquarters and even the Nebraska Army National Guard Deputy State Surgeon and Comptroller.

Strong has also completed two deployments to Iraq; one from 2004-05 and another in 2007-08. He currently serves full-time as the executive officer of 92nd Troop Command.

According to Mongeon, he looks forward to his time with the 110th MMB and making sure the Soldiers grow and excel in their career field within the unit.

Mongeon began his military career in 1988 enlisting in the North Dakota Army National Guard as a combat engineer. After he completed his bachelor of Science

degree in 1996, he received a direct commission. Mongeon served in different leadership positions both in the North Dakota and Nebraska Army National Guard. Mongeon is also a day/night non-rated crew member with more than 500 accident-free flight hours.



Mongeon



Strong

Song Birds: Staff Sgt. Alisha Kelly of the Nebraska Army National Guard and Tech. Sgt. Lindsay Bustamente of the Nebraska Air National Guard sing the National Anthem during the 377th birthday of the National Guard on Dec. 17, at the State Capitol in Lincoln, Neb.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Guard's 377th birthday celebrated during ceremony at Capitol

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

By any account, 377 years is a pretty long time.

Empires have risen and fallen in that amount of time. Dynasties have appeared and receded. Civilizations have gone from traveling upon the oceans in creaking, dangerous ships to standing on the moon and exploring the outer reaches of the solar system via telescopes, satellites, remote controlled robots and spacecraft.

377 years also marks the amount of time that has passed since the early settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony created the first official militia in what would become the United States, setting the stage for the modern National Guard of today.

On Dec. 17 Nebraska state and military officials gathered in the rotunda of the State Capitol in Lincoln, Neb., to officially celebrate the 377th anniversary of the founding of the National Guard. More than 200 Soldiers, Airmen, retirees and citizens attended the birthday party.

The ceremony included music by members of the Nebraska Guard's 43rd Army Band, the singing of the National Anthem by a Nebraska Soldier and Airmen, and the ceremonial cutting of a National Guard birthday cake by the oldest and youngest Soldiers and Airmen in

attendance.

Mostly, though, it was about honoring a nearly four century legacy of selfless service.

"The members of our Nebraska National Guard – both Army and Air – play a unique role in our nation's and our state's defense," said Gov. Dave Heineman. "The National Guard stands ever ready to serve Nebraskans in need, as we have seen multiple times in recent years during the wildfire outbreak that affected significant portions of our state, during the historic flooding on the Missouri and Platte Rivers and the recent tornado in Wayne."

"Our National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are always ready to serve our nation whenever needed," Heineman added, referring to the thousands of deployments around the globe that have occurred over the past two decades. "It is also echoed in the names of those Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers who gave their last full measure while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in the continuing sacrifices of the families they left behind."

The Nebraska National Guard's top general echoed those comments.

"To be a National Guardsman is something special," said Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general. "It means being committed to this concept of being a Citizen Soldier and Citizen Airman... of



Photo by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Sweet Occasion: Retired Brig. Gen. Paul Cohen, Airman 1st Class Leilani Beal, Pvt. Elyse Lyons and retired Maj. Gen. Edward Binder make the ceremonial first cuts to a National Guard birthday cake, Dec. 17, following a ceremony at the state capitol in Lincoln, Neb., celebrating the 377th birthday of the National Guard. In keeping with tradition, the National Guard birthday cake was cut by the oldest and youngest Soldiers and Airmen in attendance.

being ready to put on a uniform and assist our state and nation in times of need, of being ready to possibly give the ultimate sacrifice if need be, as the reading of that list of our recent fallen so eloquently underscores, while also being a valuable and contributing member of our local community."

The National Guard draws its heritage back to the Massachusetts Bay colony, which was founded on Dec. 13, 1636, when the Massachusetts General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, for the first time in America, established that all able-bodied men between the ages of 16 and 60 were required to join the militia. Since that day, members of the National Guard have fought in each of America's wars and continue to serve overseas in such locations as Kosovo and Afghanistan.

Although not quite as old as the larger National Guard, Nebraska National Guardsmen marked their 159th birthday this month. The Nebraska National Guard was founded when Nebraska's acting Territorial Governor Thomas B.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

Proud Day: Gov. Dave Heineman speaks during the 377th National Guard birthday ceremony at the State Capitol in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 17. Heineman expressed how proud he is of the members of the Nebraska National Guard and how important their role is to both the nation and state.

Cuming issued a proclamation on Dec. 23, 1854, recommending that the citizens of the territory organize, in their respective neighborhoods, into volunteer companies. The territory's first legally authorized militia consisted of two regiments, one north and one south of the Platte River.

"Happy birthday to us all," said Bohac. "Take pride in this anniversary. Take pride in being members of our National Guard."

"And take pride in being able to call yourselves what I believe is one of our greatest and most enduring titles: Citizens Soldiers and Citizen Airmen."

Nebraska Retiree Council looking to reschedule postponed briefing for spring

Greetings from your Nebraska Military Retiree Council. As we go into the Holiday season, best wishes to you and yours.

The NMRC is looking forward to more exciting events for retirees this next year. The adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, fully supports the retiree community and wants to maintain a relationship with a valued part of the military family. Please send all suggestions or ideas to me at william.h.nelson48.ctr@mail.mil.

This is your council and we encourage you to be an active and involved member.

We will be working with the Military Department for the rescheduled retiree briefing in Kearney, which will be sometime in the spring. Planning is also underway for the NMRC Spring Social in Lincoln. Members will receive notice early next year on the date and time.

Thank you for your dedicated service to the National Guard and this great country.

If you like to rise early to meet fellow retirees and share stories, here's the breakfast site information for those in the immediate areas:

Lincoln:
Army National Guard retirees: **FIRST** Monday of each month, 7:30 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, Lincoln

North Platte area retirees: **SECOND** Saturday of each month, 8:00

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;
- East Campus Readiness Center, 2000 North 33rd Street, Lincoln, NE 68503: (402) 309-8014.
- Penterman 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;
- Offutt Air Force Base: (402) 294-5019;

- Kearney Armory 5710 Airport Road Kearney: (402) 309-7758/7752;
- Norfolk Armory 817 S 1st St Norfolk: (402) 309-8908/8900;
- 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), 220 County Road A, Bldg. 508, Ashland, NE 68003, (402) 309-7809/7628;
- The number for DEERS is 1-800-538-9552.

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

AM, Airport Inn, North Platte

■ From the desk of Sgt. 1st Class Bonnie Frazier.

My phone number is (402) 309-8162 and email address is bonnie.d.frazier@mail.mil. Staff Sgt. Mandy Hatcher's phone number is (402) 309-8164 and mandy.r.hatcher@mail.mil. We are located in the Joint Forces Headquarters Building at the Air National Guard base, 2433 NW 24th St, Lincoln, NE 68524.

Your Tri-Care manager is Staff Sgt. Travis Garrett. His number is (402) 309-1541. Contact him for all your Tri-Care related questions.

Just a reminder: Retirees, you can get your "Retirement ID Card" as early as 14 days prior to your 60th birthday. Retirees can apply for retired pay as early as 12 months before their 60th birthday, but it usually kicks in 3 months after their 60th birthday with back pay on the 1st check and the next check will be your normal retirement check.

Jobs program connecting reservists to employers

WASHINGTON (AFPS)—Two years ago, the civilian employment situation for members of the National Guard and reserve was bleak.

Particularly troubling to Ronald Young, executive director of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, was that unemployment among reserve component members hit a record high of 13 percent in 2011.

"It was higher than for the general population and almost double that of the veteran population," Young said. "So we took a very aggressive approach to instituting employment initiative programs across the country to get at that challenge."

The cornerstone of that effort was the "Hero 2 Hired" program, created to make it easy for reserve component service members to connect to and find jobs with military-friendly companies.

"We put together a comprehensive program that used a very high-tech approach," Young said, including online career exploration tools, military-to-civilian skills translations, education and training resources and even a mobile app.

To support the program, 56 employment transition coordinators, many of them ESGR volunteers, fanned out to every corner of the United States to provide career counseling and resume assistance to job-seekers and to interface with employers seeking to fill positions.

Guard and reserve members make great employees, Young said. They demonstrate many attributes that employers are clamoring for: professionalism, responsibility, punctuality, a "can-do" attitude, understanding of diversity and an ability to remain calm under pressure, among them.

But when Young met with corporate leaders during a Clinton Global Initiative session in 2011, he recognized employers didn't know how to tap into this potential.

"Across the board, the one thing they said was, 'We want to hire them. We just don't know how to get access to them,'" he said.

Since its standup, Hero 2 Hired is helping to bridge that gap. Almost 20,000 employers now post their job announcements on the Hero 2 Hired jobs website. The site, which 151,000 service members and their spouses now use, provides not only leads about job openings but also information about interview skills, resume templates and links to employment resources.

Young attributes more than 11,000 hires to the program. In addition, through Hero 2 Hired's partnership with the Joining Forces initiative led by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, and other public- and private-sector job programs, he estimates that 100,000 reserve component members and veterans have landed jobs.



Guard Family NEWS

You Can Use



Father, daughter share special milestone during overseas tour

By Staff Sgt. Rachelle Elsea and
and 1st Lt. Susan Harrington
379th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA (AFNEWS) — Approximately 100,000 military service members are currently deployed and fighting the war against terrorism. Most will not see their families for at least six months.

However, there is the rare occasion where family members have the opportunity to serve side by side.

Senior Master Sgt. Timothy Lindell, a 763rd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron RC-135 Rivet Joint systems engineer, and father of Staff Sgt. Kimberly Haithcoat, Air Forces Central Command knowledge operations manager, was one of the lucky few.

He and his daughter were both deployed at the same time to Southwest Asia and able to spend the last four months of his service in the Air Force together.

His final flight in service to his country occurred Oct. 10 aboard the same RC-135 aircraft that started his operational flying career nearly 20 years ago during Operation Provide Promise out of Bosnia.

“Once I knew the jet was here, we were able to work with maintenance to ensure it was scheduled on that day,” said Lindell, a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard’s 170th Group stationed at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Not only was the day made special by the aircraft tail number, but also because his daughter was able to share the moment.

“I was concerned that if she wasn’t able to make it to my retirement, I wanted to do something with her,” said Lindell. “Additionally, I flew my very first sortie on an operational mission over the Adriatic Sea supporting operations in former Yugoslavia, so I wanted to finish my flying career on an operational sortie.”

Even though their schedules were polar opposite for the past four months, and Lindell is now on his way home, they both still appreciate the blessing.

“I worked a mid-shift with an unpredictable flying schedule, whereas she was on a

day shift,” said Lindell, who switched from the active Air Force to the Nebraska Air National Guard in 2011. “So, we tried to get together whenever we can.”

His daughter echoed his sentiment. “We tried to meet once a week for breakfast,” said Haithcoat, deployed from Minot Air Force Base, N.D.

The pair said they never imagined this opportunity. Lindell, a native of Milbank, S.D., said serving in the military was a family tradition for him, but wasn’t sure it would be passed onto his daughters.

“My dad was a Marine who served in Vietnam and my grandfathers were in the Army,” he said. “I chose the Air Force because I wanted to be different, but my little brother ended up joining after me.”

Lindell, who enlisted in 1985, said Haithcoat swore she would never join.

“I was rebellious,” she said.

However, she said she always had an appreciation for the military lifestyle, and as she grew older, decided to follow in her father’s footsteps.

“I was used to the military way of life,” said Haithcoat, who was born in the Philippines and later lived in Louisiana, England, Okinawa and eventually settled in Bellevue, Neb., before joining the Air Force. “You are able to travel and see a lot of things, whereas a lot of people never even leave their state or area they are from.”

Lindell said his daughter worked in the private sector for a while and it made her realize maybe the military was a good career option. Haithcoat joined at 21 and has now served for more than seven years.

Another of Lindell’s three daughters also enlisted and works at the National Security Agency on Fort Meade, Md.

“I was really happy and proud that she decided to join,” Lindell said. “I went with both of my daughters to the recruiters and we talked about the different career field options.”

Although they have taken completely different career paths within the Air Force, Haithcoat said she often went to her father during the first few years for advice.

“Early on she used to ask me questions



U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Robert Butler

Warm Hugs: Senior Master Sgt. Timothy Lindell is met by his daughter, Staff Sgt. Kimberly Haithcoat, after his final flight aboard an RC-135 Rivet Joint at the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing in Southwest Asia, Oct. 10. Lindell and his daughter were both deployed at the same time and able to spend the last four months of his service in the Air Force together.

pretty frequently,” Lindell said. “But she is tough and has a strong personality, so it didn’t take her long to find her own way.”

With his retirement looming at the beginning of December, this was the last chance he had to deploy with a family member, and he is very appreciative of the opportunity.

“It’s important to have family support,” Lindell said. “We’ve both been here separately and it’s literally night and day the difference in quality of life when you have somebody here as opposed to not.”

Haithcoat agreed and as a single mom understands the hardships of being away from her four-year-old daughter. Fortunately, she has had her dad to lean on.

“He’s always been there for me,” she said. “Any big events that happen in my life, when I need some advice, I always call him, so it’s nice to actually talk to him in person.”

Both father and daughter have found great joy in having each other to lean on, especially when so many others won’t see their families for months to come.

“As a parent who spent a lot of time

separated from my kids, and now watching my daughter as a mom having to deal with the same thing, it is good to be able to offer advice on how to deal with it,” said Lindell.

Having her father here in person to provide that advice made a world of difference for both of them, but also, for the first time Haithcoat was able to see her father’s work.

“It was really comforting to have him here, but also really cool to see him in action,” Haithcoat said. “As an adult, I was able to come out and see exactly what he does and understand his mission.”

The flight was a very fitting and memorable way to complete his 28 years in service, and while Haithcoat hopes to return home in time for his Dec. 12 retirement, she is thankful to have been part of his final flight.

“I was really excited that I was able to be here and to see that,” she said. “I think fini flights are a big milestone in any career, but to be there for your Dad’s in a deployed location ... I was really proud and happy I could experience that with him.”

Lincoln high school donates care packages to deployed Airmen

Students at Lincoln North Star High School gathered materials for care packages sent overseas to 12 deployed Air National Guardsmen, and presented those packages to Master Sgt. Sarah Bredthauer, of the 155th Civil Engineer Squadron, Dec. 6 at the school in Lincoln, Neb.

With the guidance of “civic engagement mentor” Cliff McEvoy, who was brought into the school through Nebraskans for Civic Reform’s Civic Action Project (CAP), the students learned about military service and how to organize a charitable giving campaign.

“As a veteran and proud Nebraskan, it has been great to see these students interested in serving their community and organize a project to show their appreciation for the deployed members of the Nebraska Air National Guard that serve their community and their country,” said McEvoy.

When the students asked what supplies to send, they were told, “Husker gear.” So, the students acquired donations of



Holiday Treat: Master Sgt. Sarah Bredthauer, 155th Civil Engineer Squadron, demonstrates how to eat a Meals, Ready to Eat, to students at Lincoln North Star High School in Lincoln, Neb., during a Dec. 6 meeting in which the students prepared care packages to be sent to deployed Airmen from the 155th Air Refueling Wing.

Husker gear with the help of University of Nebraska Defensive Coordinator John Papuchis, as well as Miss Nebraska, JaCee Pilkington. Nebraskans for Civic Reform recruits and trains civic engagement mentors to go into the classrooms of Lincoln high schools to work



Courtesy Photos

Season of Giving: Master Sgt. Sarah Bredthauer, 155th Civil Engineer Squadron, speaks with students at Lincoln North Star High School in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 6, during a meeting in which the students prepared care packages to be sent to deployed Airmen from the 155th Air Refueling Wing. The effort was part of a Nebraskans for Civic Reform’s Civic Action Project, during which the students learned about military service and how to organize a charitable giving campaign.

with the students on a substantive service learning projects.

The organization also provides the resources for the project and transportation.

Illustrating the impact of service learning, the class’s teacher, Elizabeth Carranya-Rodriguez said, “Service learning makes the curriculum come alive by giving

students the opportunity to apply what is learned in the classroom, and by introducing them to a variety of ways to participate in service to their community.”

Mortimer takes helm at chemical battalion

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton
Staff Writer

The Nebraska Army National Guard's 126th Chemical Battalion welcomed a new commander as it bid farewell to its current one during a change of command ceremony at Camp Ashland, Dec. 14.

Lt. Col. Thomas R. Mortimer III assumed command in a ceremony presided over by Col. Anita Currington, commander of the Nebraska Army Guard's 92nd Troop Command, and attended by distinguished guests, service members, friends and family.

Mortimer accepted the flag of command from Lt. Col. Steven P. Petersen in a military ceremonial formation.

Petersen became commander of the 126th Chem. Bn. in 2011 and currently serves as the Nebraska Army Guard's full-time planning and programming branch chief for the Construction and Facilities Management Office at Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve here," said Petersen. "There is no place that I would have rather have done a command tour." Mortimer will carry on the

mission of the 126th Chem. Bn.; providing command and control of chemical companies in support of corps or division level operations.

He served in the Nebraska Army National Guard as the traditional, part-time Guard joint training, education and exercises officer for JFHQ before taking his new command position.

"A big portion of my life has been carved at the Camp Ashland area," Mortimer said. "As an enlisted Soldier I did sit-ups and pushups here to prove that I was ready to go to basic training. When I was in (Officer Candidate School) I did pushups and sit-ups to prove I was ready to go out and be a leader. A lot of time passed between those two events and a lot of time passed between those events today. It makes it so much more significant that this is happening here at Camp Ashland."

Mortimer began his military career in February 1988, enlisting in the Nebraska Army Guard as an armor crewman as a member of Company B, 1-195th Armor, in Lexington, Neb.

He was commissioned as an armor officer in July 1992 through the Nebraska OCS. His military education includes the Armor Officer Basic Course, the Chemical Officer Advanced Course, the Joint Firepower Course, the Combined Arms and Service Staff School and Intermediate Level Education from the Command and General Staff College.

"To my senior leaders; thanks for



New Commander: Col. Anita Currington, commander of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 92nd Troop Command, presents the colors of the 126th Chemical Battalion to Lt. Col. Thomas R. Mortimer III during the Dec. 14 battalion change of command ceremony at Camp Ashland, Neb.

your confidence, trust and mentorship through the years," Mortimer said. "To my contemporaries, both (noncommissioned officer) and officer alike, thank you for teaching, learning and living Army values

and being a good example for me, it has made me a better officer."

Also during the ceremony Command Sgt. Maj. Scott M. Hansen accepted the saber of responsibility from Command Sgt. Maj. Boyd L.

Navratil. Navratil, has served as the 126th Chem. Bn. command sergeant major since April 2012 and is retiring after serving nearly 31 years in the Nebraska National Guard.



Petersen



40 Years Of Service: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, presents a 40-year Service Certificate to Brian Benes. Also marking his 40th year of service was Dennis McCaugherty.



35 Years Of Service: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac presents a 35-year Service Certificate to Mark Britton. Also pictured is Maj. Marna Cochell of the Nebraska National Guard's Facilities Management Office.

Military Department state employees honored during October ceremony

By Maj. Kevin Hynes
Editor

The Nebraska Military Department's state employees were honored for their contributions to the organization during the annual State Employee Appreciation Luncheon held Oct. 29 at the Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb.

Along with announcing this year's State Supervisor and Employee of the Year, state employees hitting major milestones in their careers were honored.

According to Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, state employees play integral roles in helping the organization achieve both its state and federal missions. "(You) are a vital part of our team and an essential part of our force" said Bohac.

State employees, he added, are integrated throughout the organization, providing important services in such areas as security, firefighting, facilities management, emergency management, distributive learning, human resources, state budget, hazard mitigation, property management, administrative support, radiological emergency preparedness, communications, graphic arts and custodial services.

Bohac said each state employee, regardless of their individual job, plays an important part in the

overall team effort.

"I'm very grateful for the service you render for your fellow citizens and the state of Nebraska," he said. "We're an amazing team, but we're all together – state, federal, drill status. We deliver a great product for America's citizens and the citizens of this state."

For example, Bohac said, this year the Nebraska Military Department State Employee Charitable campaign saw an overall 61 percent increase in donations over last year. That equated to more than \$11,000 contributed to the charitable campaign.

"I think that's pretty significant," he added.

Honored this year were:

•**State Supervisor of the Year:** Nikki Weber, who serves as the Federal Aid Unit supervisor in the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

•**State Employee of the Year:** Joshua Cowan, a facilities construction manager for the Facilities Management Office.

•**State Employee of the Year, Runner-up:** Sandy Cuning, an accountant II with the State Support Services Division.

•**40 Years of Service:** Brian Benes, a facilities maintenance technician with the Facilities Management Office, and Dennis McCaugherty, a facility construction coordinator II with the Nebraska Air National Guard Civil Engineer-

ing Office.

•**35 Years of Service:** Mark Britton, a custodian with the Facilities Management Office.

•**25 Years of Service:** Jerome Brewster, Greenleaf Training Site maintenance supervisor.

•**20 Years of Service:** Kirk Sommerfeld, a custodian with the Wayne Armory.

•**15 Years of Service:** Tige Hauschild, a military security specialist with the Nebraska Air National Guard Security Department, and James Perkins, an airport fire fighter crew chief with the Nebraska Air National Guard Base Fire Station.

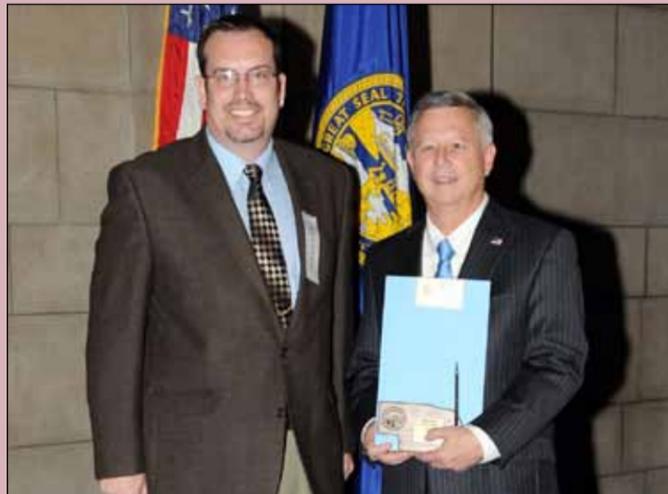
•**10 Years of Service:** Robert Bogle, an airport fire fighter crew chief with the Nebraska Air National Guard Base Fire Station; Justus Foged, an airport fire fighter with the Nebraska Air National Guard Base Fire Station; Terrence J. Hamm, an airport fire fighter crew chief with the Nebraska Air National Guard Base Fire Station; Shawn Safford, a distance learning manager with the Information Management Office; Dianna Simms, an accountant II with the Facilities Management Office; Michael Stroud, an airport fire fighter crew chief with the Nebraska Air National Guard Base Fire Station; and John Wieneke, a facility maintenance specialist with the Air National Guard Civil Engineering Office.

2013 Nebraska Military Department's Employee, Supervisor of Year named



Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Top Supervisor: Nikki Weber is honored by Gov. Dave Heineman as the Nebraska Military Department's 2013 manager of the year during a ceremony at the Nebraska capitol building Oct. 30. Weber's nomination was a result of her consistent high performance as a supervisor who is able to bring out the best in the individuals she manages. She is a thoughtful leader who is considered a go-to source within NEMA for the citizens of Nebraska.



Top Employee: Josh Cowan is honored by Gov. Dave Heineman as the Nebraska Military Department's 2013 employee of the year during a ceremony at the Nebraska capitol building Oct. 30. Cowan was nominated as a result of his management of the building project for the new Joint Force Headquarters building, which is the largest construction project completed by the Nebraska Military Department to date.

Street Talk

“What is your favorite holiday tradition?”



Staff Sgt. Phillip Tran
155th Maintenance Squadron
“Spending time is the biggest thing. Since being in the military, I am gone a lot. Getting together is a big thing because we hardly ever see each other except for holidays; it makes us feel like a family again.”



Staff Sgt. Joshua Wessel
189th Transportation Company
“Getting together with the family for holiday meals.”



Staff Sgt. Justin Olson
189th Transportation Company
“Being around family and opening presents.”



Airman 1st Class Maria Wesson
155th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
“We do secret Santa, a nice Whole Food dinner and watch movies.”



Sgt. 1st Class Jon Wren
189th Transportation Company
“Getting together with friends and family and seeing family members’ reaction to their gifts.”



Airman 1st Class Cody Moslander
155th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
“Going to my grandma’s house and playing pitch with all of my family.”

Looking forward to 2014

This time of year is when many retrospective articles are written, reflecting on the achievements of the past year. However, I am reminded of a line from a leadership blog I was reading which asked, “Which is bigger in your car, the windshield or the rearview mirror?”

Well in “our” car, the vehicle we call the Nebraska National Guard, it’s the windshield.

We have an incredibly bright future in front of us, and while its important “check six” from time to time if only to avoid the mistakes of the past, it’s far more important to drive forward. That means, more windshield time than rearview mirror time. One of the reasons I am so optimistic about our future is our people – the Soldiers, Airmen and civilian employees of the Nebraska Military Department, the Nebraska National Guard and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

For the past several weeks, Command Sgt. Maj. Valenzuela, the state command sergeant major, and I, and occasionally Chief Master Sgt. Forster, the state command chief, have been traveling and visiting with our Soldiers and Airmen. It has been a learning experience to say the least and one of the things I have been learning about is how involved our members are in their communities.

This is incredibly important to the well-being of our organization. In December we welcomed home Agribusiness Development Team No. 4 from their deployment to Afghanistan. That will be the last unit based welcome home we conduct for the foreseeable future and it will be at least 2015 before we conduct another send-off ceremony.

That means we have to rally to our communities after a decade-plus of having our communities rally to us.

Here are some of the ways our members and their families are

“Here To Serve”

The Adjutant General

Daryl Bohac



facilities for our Soldiers. We look forward to the dedication of a remodeled dining facility and a much improved main gate at the Air National Guard base in Lincoln.

We will certainly face challenges and changes in 2014 as defense budgets are shaped and re-shaped.

rallying to their communities – running food pantries throughout the year, holding a Christmas gift-giving for families in need, making 400+ pillows for young patients in the hospital, serving as Boy Scout leaders, volunteering in our schools, serving our veteran’s needs by providing gifts, vehicles and appliances, supporting Operation Santa Claus, and the list goes on.

Rallying to our communities will mean telling our story again and again, whenever we are asked, sharing our amazing stories ranging from what we do every day to what we do in faraway places away from our families and friends.

Looking forward to 2014, we will have the opportunity to engage in demanding and rigorous training activities to ensure our Soldiers and Airmen have meaningful roles directly related to the missions they are tasked to support. It also means forging strong relationships with those who can help us achieve those training activities including some non-traditional sources.

The University of Nebraska is keenly interested in forging partnerships with us, particularly in the areas of consequence management and nuclear forensics, two areas we already have experience and competence in.

We need to seek innovative readiness training activities that link us even more strongly with our communities and provide skill development and enhancement for our Airmen and Soldiers.

We will have two new readiness centers come on-line in 2013, one in Mead and one in Grand Island, providing even more state of the art

However, I am particularly encouraged by the relationship between with Air Force and the Air National Guard. It is perhaps as healthy as it has ever been in my 31 years in the Air National Guard.

The dialogue between the Army National Guard and Department of the Army is still a work in progress, but I remain confident in the ability of the chief, National Guard Bureau and my fellow adjutants general to engage in the appropriate venues to ensure that the value of the National Guard is fully understood and appreciated.

Nevertheless, we can expect changes to come our way and we will embrace those changes as opportunities to be even better than we are today – and we are really good today!

Let me close by where I began – with our people. It is an absolute privilege to serve as your adjutant general.

I am often asked what I like about the position and what I like most is the people. I am committed to your success and promise to work each and every day to make possible for you what you couldn’t even imagine possible when you started your military or civilian service to your state and nation.

Together we bring an incredible capability whenever we are asked to protect and defend the constitutions of the United States and Nebraska or protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Nebraska in the event of a natural disaster here at home. Together we do amazing things and as we enter 2014, Kris and I wish you and yours a very Happy and Prosperous New Year!

2013 to be remembered as transitional year, how organization dealt with new challenges

When one looks back on 2013, how will it be remembered? More to the point, how will the Nebraska National Guard be remembered from 2013?

Those are two pretty good questions that I’m not sure I’ve got the best answers to, simply because in my mind the year 2013 will always stand out as a year of transitions.

More Soldiers and Airmen came home from overseas deployments than departed. In fact, with the return of the Nebraska National Guard’s Afghan Agribusiness Development Team No. 4, we reached a point where the Nebraska National Guard does not have a single, entire unit deployed. That’s a transition.

Closer to home, for the first time in three years, the Nebraska National Guard wasn’t tasked to respond to a major state emergency like we saw during the historic flooding on the Platte and Missouri Rivers in 2011 and the widespread outbreak of fires in 2012. That, again, is a transition.

We also wished farewell to Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, Nebraska’s adjutant general since 2009, as he headed off to become the second-straight Nebraska Army National Guard officer to hold the post of deputy director of the U.S. Army National Guard, while welcoming Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, former deputy adjutant general who became just the third Nebraska Air National Guard officer as the 33rd Nebraska adjutant general. Again, a transition.

We also saw hundreds of Nebraska National Guard federal technicians withstand not one, but

My Turn

Editor, Prairie Soldier

Kevin J. Hynes



awards won and the new initiatives carried out during this year’s annual training.

These types of things don’t happen by accident. They happen because committed men and women commit themselves to dealing with challenges as best they can.

One of the things that Maj. Gen. Bohac has said several times this year, including his acceptance speech as the new adjutant general, has resonated with me: Excellence is never an accident. Actually, this isn’t the first time that I’ve heard him use those words, but this year they really took on a somewhat new importance.

Excellence doesn’t happen by happenstance. It happens because people – like those that serve in the Nebraska National Guard and the Nebraska Military Department, or support those who do – choose to take challenges and turn them into opportunities.

If we are indeed entering a transition – and all indicators seem to point to the fact that we are – then it’s this type of attitude that I believe will help carry us through both the tough and good times, and give us the opportunity to emerge from them a better, even more capable Nebraska National Guard than ever before.

That’s pretty comforting to think about as this challenging year comes to an end and we prepare for what will undoubtedly be an equally challenging 2014.

From my family to all of yours, Happy Holidays and best wishes for a Happy New Year.

