

Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD



Family Time: Tech. Sgt. Mark Baden, a member of the 155th Security Forces Squadron, sits with his daughter, Lexi, during a sendoff ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 29. Baden was one of approximately 50 Airmen from the 155th Air Refueling Wing wished well prior to deploying to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

Off They Go...

■ 155th Air Refueling Wing Airmen, families wished well in December prior to start of U.S. Central Command missions

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Editor

New Year's resolutions are as varied as the individual making the resolution. One resolution might be to get healthy, while another might be to travel more.

If travel was a resolution, approximately 50 Airmen from the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing can check that off their list when they were wished farewell during a Dec. 29, deployment ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Lincoln-based Airmen are members of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Security Forces Squadron, 155th Force Support Squadron and 155th Civil Engineer Squadron, and they are scheduled for a six-month mission to multiple locations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. The ceremony also included Airmen from the 155th Operations Group who deployed for a one-month mission.

The Airmen departed a few days



Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Parting Remarks: Gov. Dave Heineman speaks during a sendoff ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 29. Heineman wished approximately 50 Nebraska Air National Guardsmen well prior to their deployment.

after the ceremony.

Gov. Dave Heineman addressed the assembled crowd for the final time as commander in chief of the Nebraska National Guard.

"Let me start out by thanking all the men and women who serve in the Nebraska National Guard -

Army and Air," said Heineman. "We really appreciate your service and it means a great deal to this country and this state."

"To the 155th, you're the reason we're here today," he added. "The mission that you're going to be

See AIR GUARD on 4.

378 years young

■ Nebraska Guardsmen celebrate organization's historic birthday during ceremony at state capitol

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Editor

Under the glow of a massive Christmas tree, state officials joined members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard to celebrate the National Guard's 378th birthday during a ceremony in the rotunda of the Nebraska State Capitol building in Lincoln, Nebraska, Dec. 15.

Following music by the Nebraska National Guard's 43rd Army Band and a rendition of the National Anthem from Nebraska Guardsmen Spc. Cheri Wadas and Tech. Sgt. Lindsay Bustamante, Gov. Heineman thanked the Guardsmen for their continued service and sacrifices, noting that the families of Nebraska's National Guardsmen also contribute to the success of the Guard.

"I am incredibly proud of the members of our Army and Air Nebraska National Guard and the unique role they fulfill in our nation's and our state's defense," said Heineman. "The National

See BIRTHDAY on 6.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Delicious Day: (From left) Retired Chief Master Sgt. Dave Petersen, Airman 1st Class Matthew Parker, Pfc. Sean Carey and retired Maj. Gen. Edward Binder cut a cake following a ceremony celebrating the National Guard's 378th birthday at the Nebraska State Capitol Building in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 15. Tradition dictates the cake be cut by the oldest and youngest members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard who are present at the ceremony.

New governor retains Nebraska's top general

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Editor

Gov.-elect Pete Ricketts announced Dec. 5, he would retain several members of Gov. Dave Heineman's cabinet, including the Nebraska National Guard's top leader.

Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac of Waverly, Nebraska, has held the position of adjutant general since July 2013. As adjutant general, Bohac serves as the leader of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard and the director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

Bohac previously served as assistant adjutant general-Air, director of staff-Air and deputy chief of staff for operations at the Nebraska Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln.

As the new governor, Ricketts will fill his cabinet with existing personnel or replace them with his own appointments.

"During the transition, my team has continued to seek out forward-thinking leaders who share my agenda of growing Nebraska," said Ricketts. "As I continue to build my cabinet, I look forward to identifying experienced leaders who can assist



Bohac

in bringing about a culture of continuous improvement within state government."

"I am honored by Gov.-elect Ricketts' faith in me and humbled to continue to lead the men and women of the Nebraska National Guard and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency," said Bohac. "I am excited to be on the team with Gov. Ricketts and his vision to grow Nebraska as well as providing a force that's always ready and always there for the citizens of Nebraska and the United States."

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Nebraska Guardsmen help inaugurate new commander in chief

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NEWS DIGEST

■ Non-battle injuries result in more medical evacuations

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. (Army News Service) — If a person asks Soldiers what the biggest physical health threat they face while in the Army, only a portion are aware that it has nothing to do with warfighting.

In fact, the primary health threat to troops for more than two decades has been common muscle, joint, tendon/ligament and bone injuries like knee or back pain that are caused by running, sports and exercise-related activities such as basketball and weightlifting.

These activities are not just a primary cause of injuries in stateside locations, but also in deployed locations.

“Non-battle injuries resulted in more medical air evacuations from Afghanistan and Iraq than battle injuries,” said Keith Hauret, an epidemiologist at the U.S. Army Public Health Command, or USAPHC. “The leading causes of these non-battle injuries were physical training and sports.”

These injuries continue to cause temporary or even permanent disability and limit the physical capability of thousands of active-duty Service members each year. The impacts include millions of clinic visits annually, millions of lost or restricted duty days, as well as millions of dollars in medical costs.

Leaders need to be better educated on taking care of Soldiers, he said.

Army medical experts say training should be conducted in a way that avoids preventable injuries.

“Fit, healthy and uninjured Soldiers are what make an exceptional Army,” said Maj. Tanja Roy, an epidemiologist at the USAPHC. “Unit leaders should follow proper physical training guidance and be careful to avoid over-training Soldiers with too much running or improperly instructed exercises.”

It’s not just the lack of leadership awareness that prevents the Army from avoiding first-time injuries. To some health care providers it is sadly ironic that remedial physical fitness, or PT, programs often force less fit individuals to work out twice a day — which ultimately can result in injury making it more difficult to meet the standards.

■ Inherent Resolve airstrikes target ISIL in Syria, Iraq

SOUTHWEST ASIA (DoD News) — U.S. and partner-nation military forces have continued to attack Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists in Syria and Iraq, Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve officials reported Jan. 9.

Between 8 a.m. Jan. 8, and 8 a.m. Jan. 9, local time, fighter and bomber aircraft conducted five airstrikes in Syria, and six airstrikes using fighter and remotely piloted aircraft targeted ISIL elements in Iraq, officials said.

The airstrikes in Syria, all near Kobani, struck an ISIL fighting position and two ISIL tactical units and destroyed an ISIL building and seven ISIL fighting positions.

Officials provided the following details on

the Iraq airstrikes:

- Near Qaim, an airstrike destroyed an ISIL bunker.

- Near Asad, two airstrikes struck an ISIL tactical unit and a large ISIL unit and destroyed two ISIL vehicles.

- Near Sinjar, two airstrikes struck an ISIL tactical unit and destroyed an ISIL fighting position, an ISIL vehicle and an ISIL heavy weapon.

- Near Mosul, an airstrike struck an ISIL building and an ISIL tactical unit.

Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports, officials noted.

The strikes were conducted as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, the operation to eliminate the ISIL terrorist group and the threat it poses to Iraq, the region and the wider international community.

Coalition nations conducting airstrikes in Iraq include the United States, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Coalition nations conducting airstrikes in Syria include the United States, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

■ CENTCOM acknowledges social media sites ‘compromised’

TAMPA, Fla., (DoD News) — U.S. Central Command officials released a statement Jan. 12, detailing what they called “cybervandalism” affecting two of the command’s social media sites.

The full statement reads:

“Earlier (on Jan. 12), U.S. Central Command’s Twitter and YouTube sites were compromised for approximately 30 minutes. These sites reside on commercial, non-Defense Department servers and both sites have been temporarily taken offline while we look into the incident further.”

“Centcom’s operational military networks were not compromised and there was no operational impact to Centcom. Centcom will restore service to its Twitter and YouTube accounts as quickly as possible. We are viewing this purely as a case of cybervandalism.”

“In the meantime, our initial assessment is that no classified information was posted and that none of the information posted came from Centcom’s server or social media sites.”

“Additionally, we are notifying appropriate DoD and law enforcement authorities about the potential release of personally identifiable information and will take appropriate steps to ensure any individuals potentially affected are notified as quickly as possible.”

■ Dempsey: Sequestration cuts would require strategy change

WASHINGTON (DoD News) — Unless Congress changes the Budget Control Act, which now requires a return to sequestration-level spending cuts in 2016, the military will need to change its strategy, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said during an interview broadcast on Jan 11.

In an appearance on “Fox News Sunday With Chris Wallace,” Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey said the Army is drawing down from 570,000 Soldiers to 450,000, but he noted

Budding friendship

New Friends: Staff Sgt. Dave Schmidt, a 155th Security Forces Squadron member, visits with Della Leavitt during a tour of the Nebraska National Guard air base, Jan. 11. The meeting was a reunion of the two after they made an impact on one another when Della spoke to Schmidt after he helped provide the color guard before the new governor’s inauguration at the State Capital Jan. 8. Schmidt gave Della, who is autistic, his Honor Guard medallion from his uniform in appreciation of her patriotism. Look for a full story in the next issue.



Photo by Senior Airman Marshall Maurer

that a Pentagon analysis shows sequestration would drive that number to 420,000, and even lower under some circumstances.

Sequestration would leave the military “far less able to do the things that we think the country needs us to do,” Dempsey said.

Meanwhile, he United States continues to face threats from both state actors and non-state actors, the chairman said. Though he’s concerned about that, he added, the United States still is the most powerful nation in the world by any measure, and is likely to remain so — “unless we — unless we talk ourselves out of it and legislate ourselves out of it with things like the Budget Control Act.”

“What will get us through this is investing in our human capital,” the chairman said, “because we’re going to have to think our way through the future, not bludgeon our way through it.”

Dempsey also touched on the cyber domain, noting that the United States does not enjoy the same significant military advantages in that domain that it has in others.

A cyberattack can be disruptive, he said, and also could be destructive to hardware and critical infrastructure. “We don’t have an advantage — it’s a level playing field,” he said. “And that makes this chairman very uncomfortable.”

■ Chairman: Lack of credibility will aid in ISIL’s collapse

WASHINGTON (DoD News) — Though U.S. and coalition airstrikes are destroying facilities and equipment controlled by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, the terrorist group ultimately will fail because the people it’s trying to control will reject its ideology, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in an interview broadcast Jan 11.

Appearing on “Fox News Sunday With Chris Wallace,” Gen. Martin E. Dempsey noted that ISIL is inspiring other groups that already existed to “rebrand” themselves into a more radical ideology.

“A group that embraces such a radical ideology has to maintain momentum in order

to succeed, in order to maintain its credibility with the very people it’s trying to influence,” Dempsey said.

Tactically, U.S. and allies forces have destroyed ISIL equipment, reversed some of its territorial gains and affected the group’s leadership, command and control and logistics, the chairman noted. But the fate of the terrorist regime is inevitable, he added, simply because people won’t accept it.

“It will collapse under its own contradictions, frankly, when the populations in which it tries to maneuver realize that ideology is not to their future benefit,” Dempsey said.

Though military efforts get the most attention, the chairman said, strides other areas such as in countering ISIL’s financing and messaging may be more important in thwarting the organization, Dempsey noted.

The campaign in Iraq will take time, Dempsey said, pointing out that U.S. and coalition forces are enabling the Iraqi government’s strategy. “It’s not our strategy,” he said. “And I’m telling you, that is an extraordinarily important distinction.”

The Iraqi government, with the help of trainers and advisors, must accumulate the appropriate level of force and have it followed by reconstruction and humanitarian relief so the government is providing real governance and not simply security, the chairman and other defense leaders have said. This, Dempsey said in the interview, could take months.

Meanwhile, in Syria, the opposition to Bashar Assad’s regime is under “enormous pressure,” particularly in the north, Dempsey said. That region brings the greatest concern in regard to the ability to attract, recruit and vet a moderate opposition, he added.

Turning to Afghanistan, Dempsey described the new president Ashraf Ghani as a “credible and cooperative partner.”

“We’ve got Afghan security forces who have demonstrated their willingness to stand and fight,” Dempsey said. “I personally think there will be pockets inside of Afghanistan that change hands from time to time, because that’s the history of the country.”

Military OneSource offering free tax preparation, advice to military families

By Nick Simeone
DoD News

With the new year comes the annual dread of tax-filing season and the confusion and stress that can go along with it, especially for military families whose tax returns can be further complicated by frequent relocations, involvement of rental properties and other aspects of military life.

To ease the burden, the Defense Department, through Military OneSource, is teaming again this year with H&R Block to offer no-cost tax preparation to the military community with a promise of guaranteed accuracy, a service that otherwise could cost military families hundreds of dollars or more.

Military OneSource offers

no-cost tax consultation and no-cost tax preparation and filing to service and family members, as well as to reservists regardless of activation status, survivors, and separated service members until 180 days after their retirement, discharge or end-of-tour date, Anthony Jackson, a Military OneSource program analyst, told DoD News.

Because it’s online, the service is available to eligible tax-filers regardless of where they are. “They can do one federal and up to three state tax returns — again, at no cost to the service or family member,” Jackson said.

This year, he said, the service is adding features to accommodate those with special tax-filing needs.

“If your tax situation includes rental property, charitable deductions or mortgage interest, this software can accommodate those

particular situations,” he explained.

Tax experts also are available by phone at no cost for anyone who may have questions before they get down to using the online tax preparation software.

“You’re getting individuals when you’re talking — tax consultants who are thoroughly educated on the military situation, no matter what it is,” Jackson said, including knowledge of special tax exemptions for combat duty and other situations unique to the military.

The tax service being offered by Military OneSource became active Jan. 13. Military OneSource was established by the Defense Department in 2002 to provide comprehensive information on military life free of charge.

Prairie Soldier

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

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

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Commander-in-Chief
Adjutant General
State Public Affairs Officer
Editor
Staff Photojournalist

Gov. Dave Heineman
Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac
Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock

STAFF WRITERS

Nebraska Army National Guard

1st Lt. John McNally
Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson
Pfc. Anna Pongo

Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen
Sgt. Jason Drager

Nebraska Air National Guard

Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton
Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

Nebraska Air National Guard

Master Sgt. Shannon Nielsen

Governor Pete Ricketts Inauguration



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Left Right Left: Members of the Nebraska National Guard Color Guard bring forward the flags as part of the 2015 Inaugural Ball for Gov. Pete Ricketts, Jan. 10, at the Pinnacle Bank Arena in Lincoln, Neb. Nebraska Guardsmen supported Ricketts' inaugural ball by serving as members of the color guard, honor cordon, escort officers or part of the planning cell.

Everyone Ready? Members of the Nebraska National Guard Honor Cordon practice their movements moments before the 2015 Inaugural Ball, Jan. 10, at the Pinnacle Bank Arena in Lincoln, Neb.



Nebraska Army, Air National Guardsmen support state inaugural events in January

By Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes
State Public Affairs Officer

Members of the Nebraska National Guard helped usher in their newest state commander in chief in January when Pete Ricketts was inaugurated as the 40th governor in Nebraska history.

The Nebraska National Guard – like all National Guard organizations – are unique military structures in that they have both state and federal missions. When mobilized for war or national emergencies, members of the National Guard serve under the president of the United States.

However, during normal times, the National Guard serves under state control with the governor serving as the commander in chief of their individual state military organizations.

Ricketts, who was elected governor on Nov. 4, was formally inaugurated on Jan. 8 at the State Capitol in Lincoln during a ceremony at the

Unicameral Legislature. Ricketts succeeds outgoing Governor Dave Heinemann, who had served as governor from 2005-15, the longest tenure in the history of Nebraska.

During the ceremony, members of the Nebraska National Guard served as either members of the color guard or as escort officers for Ricketts and other senior state officials.

The Nebraska National Guard and Nebraska Military Department also supported Ricketts' inaugural ball on Jan. 10 at Pinnacle Bank Arena in Lincoln, serving as members of the color guard, an honor cordon, escort officers, or part of the planning cell.

According to Ricketts, who was born in Nebraska City and raised in Omaha, he's excited to get started to work.

"I am honored and humbled to serve as your 40th governor of the great state of Nebraska," said Ricketts, Jan. 8 during his inaugural address. "Today, as with all inaugurations, is a day of new beginnings. I am optimistic."



Full Honors: (Above) Members of the Nebraska Honor Cordon welcome Gov. Pete Ricketts and his wife, First Lady Susanne Shore, to the 2015 Inaugural Ball, Jan. 10. (Right) 'Oh Say Can You See..' Dawn Krogh sings the national anthem during the inaugural ball while members of the 43rd Army Band stand at attention, Jan. 10.





Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Final Goodbyes: Carissa Brunk kisses the hand of her husband, Airman 1st Class John Brunk, a member of the 155th Security Forces Squadron, during a sendoff ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 29. Brunk is one of approximately 50 members of the Lincoln-based 155th Air Refueling Wing who deployed shortly after the beginning of the new year for a deployment lasting up to six months to the Central Command area of responsibility.

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involved in, in the Middle East is going to be important to this country... and I just want you to know we in Nebraska, more than almost any other state in America, we appreciate your service, what it means to you family and the sacrifices they make while you're abroad or in places throughout the world."

Heineman also reflected on his time leading the Nebraska National Guard.

"The reason we have the greatest country in the world today is because of the men and women who are willing to serve in our United States armed forces," said Heineman. "You protect our freedoms and our liberties, and you understand it better than almost anybody else because of personal sacrifices you make and sacrifices that your families make. But I want you to know America and Nebraska appreciate what you're doing – it's a special honor and a special privilege to serve the United States of America."

"I've thoroughly enjoyed the 10 years I've had the chance to serve as your commander-in-chief and I'll always look back very fondly on those memories," he added.

Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, joined Heineman in thanking family members for their sacrifices and offering help if they find themselves in need while their loved one is away.

"The Air National Guard is a frequent deployer, rotating to this nation's wars for shorter periods, but typically more often," said Bohac. "But gone is gone – whether it be one day, six months, a year, or more. So, to the men and women of the 155th Air Refueling Wing – the security forces, civil engineering, maintenance and operations (group) – we're yet again preparing to deploy on a six-month rotation to the Middle East, be sure those of us at home have your six."

"While you're gone we're committed to supporting you so that your Airmen can be mission focused and not worry as much about what's going on at home," he added. "Your



Standing Ovation: Members of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing stand to be recognized during a sendoff ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 29. The Lincoln-based Airmen are members of the 155th Security Forces Squadron, 155th Force Support Squadron and 155th Civil Engineer Squadron, and are scheduled for a six-month mission to multiple locations in the Central Command area of responsibility. The ceremony also included Airmen from the 155th Operations Group who deployed for a one-month mission.

National Guard family is always ready, always there for you."

That family support will be very important for the deploying Airmen.

For Tech. Sgt. Mark Baden, 155th Security Forces Squadron, this deployment will be different than his five previous.

"This will be the first deployment that I've left and I've had a family left behind," said Baden. "We have a baby on the way, so it's a different story. So, it's making things a little more difficult... leaving loved ones."

Baden's wife, Carrie, is expecting the couple's third child about the time Baden is scheduled to return. Carrie said that although she's prepared for her husband to be away, it's always challenging.

"It's hard," said Carrie. "The last time he left we were just dating and that was tough, but we've grown a lot closer as a family."

Baden, who will assist in providing installation security while deployed, said he's looking forward to the opportunity to grow in his leadership position within the group. He said he also sees the deployment as a chance to provide a



National Anthem: Tech. Sgt. Lindsay Bustamante, 155th Air Refueling Wing, sings the national anthem during a sendoff ceremony for approximately 50 members of the 155th ARW at Joint Force Headquarters on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 29.

bigger sense of purpose, "like you're a bigger part of something larger than just our installation," he said. The Baden family used their last



Play Time: Tech. Sgt. Robert Robinette, a member of the 155th Security Forces Squadron, holds his daughter, Lilly, while he speaks with family friend, Kloie, during a sendoff ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters on the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 29. Robinette joined approximately 50 155th Air Refueling Wing members for the ceremony to wish them well before beginning a mission in the Central Command area of responsibility, which will last up to six months.

few days soaking up every moment of family time together, but will still miss a lot. At least he doesn't have to worry about not watching his beloved Chicago Bears, who had a subpar season, he added.

"I'll miss that sense of family," said Carrie. "He's a huge support. He's always there."

And while the Baden's seven-year-old son, Evan, hopes for a baby brother in a few months, 10-year-old daughter, Lexi, summed up what she'd miss about her dad while he's gone succinctly.

"Everything," said Lexi. Col. Bob Stevenson, 155th ARW commander, said members of the Nebraska Air National Guard have

been in multiple combat zones in every year since 9/11 and will continue to deploy in 2015 and 2016. He added that the air power the Airmen will help provide has repeatedly changed the tides of multiple battles.

"As you take your turn... know that I, as your commander, could not be more proud of you and your dedication, or more thankful to you and your families for your commitment to your state and nation," said Stevenson. "We'll be here for your families 24/7 – you or they need only call. We'll be here for you when you come home."

"So, be smart, be safe, take care of each other and the mission."



Rubble Pile: A wall is demolished to make way for a new entrance and gift shop for the Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward, Neb.



Hazy Days: Construction dust hangs in the air in the main assembly hall of the new Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward, Neb. Once construction is completed the assembly hall will house multiple Nebraska National Guard historical exhibits.

Transformation on historic scale

Work to convert Seward Armory into new Nebraska National Guard Museum continues

By Jerry Meyer
State Historian

Wow, what a difference six decades make. On Oct. 26, 1955, the following headline appeared in the Seward Independent Newspaper: "New Armory Work Begins at Seward." The article then details the works that would begin at the site of the Nebraska Army National Guard's newest armory.

"The location of the old city park west of 8th and Jackson Streets is being transformed into a 133 foot by 102 foot building for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Second Battalion of the 134th Infantry Regiment. The building will be built by Beall Construction of Lincoln for an estimated cost of \$210,000 and will be completed in the fall of 1956."

A few months later, another headline appeared: "State Adjutant General Will Dedicate New Seward Armory Saturday Afternoon." That article, which appeared on Feb. 27, 1957, further detailed the armory's opening ceremony, which was led by Capt. Willis Heyen, commanding officer of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 134th Infantry.

Several Seward dignitaries were included: Paul Bek, Seward city attorney and John Cattle, Chamber of Commerce welcome committee. Several military dignitaries were included: Lt. Col. Milton Maurice, 2nd Battalion commander; Col. William Bachman, 134th Infantry Regiment commander; and Maj. Gen. Guy Henninger, adjutant general.



Photos by Jerry Meyer

Paving The Way: Crews pour concrete for visitor handicap parking in front of the new Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward, Neb. The building, once used as an armory, is undergoing a transformation to become the home for the history of the Nebraska National Guard.

State Senator Fay Wood of Seward also spoke to the gathered crowd of hundreds. Following the afternoon ceremony an evening dance was held in the new facility.

Now fast forward to 2014. Construction is under way to transform the 1950s armory into the new home of the Nebraska National Guard Museum.

Phase I of the project has been completed to refurbish the lower bays and range room into storage and work areas. Phase II is underway to complete the upper areas of the armory (assembly hall, rooms, etc.) into space for displays, theater, learning center, library, conference room, and offices that will be complete in June 2015. A



On The Level: A construction worker levels the ground for a new sidewalk near an M-4 Sherman tank in front of the Nebraska National Guard's new museum in Seward, Neb.

building dedication is scheduled for July 4, 2015 during the Seward 4th of July festivities, which annually draws more than 45,000 people to the community of 7,000 every year.

Phase III will include over \$2 million in private and corporate donations to construct state of the art displays for some of the 11,000 artifacts that tell the story of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard. Phase III will be dedicated on July 4, 2016.

Some highlights of Phase III include:

- Front entryway changed to visitor kiosk and gift shop;
- North classrooms will become the theater and "I Am the Nebraska National Guard" exhibit;

- Northwest classroom has become the weapons display area;

- West classrooms have become the "Cornrow to Hedgerows" life-sized exhibit featuring a walk through a French hedgerow depicted in the famous 134th painting;

- South classrooms have become the library and conference room;

- Kitchen will become a break area and 40s malt shop;

- Main Assembly Hall will house the chronological history of the Guard to include: Indian War; Civil War; Philippine Insurrection; Mexico Border; World War I (to include a life sized trench walk through); Between the Wars, World War II, Cold War, Domestic Operations, Air Guard, Operation

Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom, deployments, etc;

- Learning Center will feature a classroom on the main floor that utilizes state of the art teaching technology;

- Exterior work will feature the static displays previously housed at the state Arsenal, which include an M4 Sherman, M60 MBT, M59 and M113 APC's on angled pedestals. Another feature is the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Nebraska Air Guard memorial, which will be located directly in front of the museum with the M4 Sherman;

- On the north side of the building will be a memorial to the fallen and place of reflection;

- Additional parking will be located in the current west side entrance to the bays.

Upon completion of Phase III in July 2016, the museum will be ready for an estimated 30,000 annual visitors.

Opportunities exist for current and retired Guard members to visit and help the museum "tell the story." The museum has incorporated ideas and technologies from highly successful museums and has created ties to them through the process of designing and building this state of the art building.

From 1955-2014, the Seward Armory served the Nebraska National Guard as a part of the Seward community. Today, the armory is being transformed into an example of how National Guard museums are designed and built to "tell the National Guard's story."

Origins unknown: Hand-made M4 Sherman tank replica moved to new museum



Photos by Jerry Meyer

Mystery Tank: An M4 Sherman tank replica is displayed in Seward, Neb., in December. The 1/6 scale replica was handcrafted from wood by a World War II veteran and was given to the Nebraska National Guard following his death. The mysterious veteran has yet to be identified.

By Jerry Meyer
State Historian

A piece of the 195th Armor Battalion story is being put on display at the new Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward, Nebraska.

The "Fairbury Tank" is a 1/6 scale replica of an M4 Sherman. It was sculpted out of wood by a World War II veteran and given to the Nebraska National Guard after his death.

The mysterious veteran has yet to be identified and the museum is looking for details to complete the story of this tremendous artifact.

The tank has been in storage for many years and has just recently been delivered to the museum. It was used by the Fairbury unit in parades in which they towed the tank on a modified carriage. Children would wear tanker helmets and throw candy from the hatch on the top of the tank. Candy wrappers are still visible inside the tank.

The museum is looking to fill in



Here's Your Sign: 1st Lt. Cody Cade, a member of the Nebraska National Guard Museum staff, hangs a banner on an M4 Sherman tank replica in Seward, Neb., in December. The tank was displayed in front of a Seward theater in conjunction with a World War II movie premier, which featured an M4 Sherman.

the historical details of the tank from its creation to how it got to Fairbury and it's finally making its

way to Seward.

Recently, the "Fairbury Tank" made its debut at the special showing of the World War II movie "Fury" about an M4 Sherman tank crew.

The "Fairbury Tank" was put on display in front of the Seward County courthouse across from the Rivoli Theater in Seward. Chuck and Julie Wisheart, owners of the Rivoli Theater, hosted the event which was free to veterans and included displays of artifacts from the museum that were showcased in the movie. The special showing saw two packed houses and is the first of many events in conjunction with the Rivoli Theater and the Nebraska National Guard Museum.

If you have information on the "Fairbury Tank," please correspond to: Gerald D. "Jerry" Meyer, historian, Nebraska National Guard Museum, 201 8th North Street, Seward, NE 68434. Phone: 712-269-1981. Email: gerald.d.meyer@mail.mil

Seeking work: Air National Guard's dirtiest jobs

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon
Editor

Much like the popular Discovery Channel show hosted by Mike Rowe, Chief Master Sgt. Mark Forster is looking for a dirty job.

Forster, the Nebraska Air National Guard's command chief master sergeant, has begun his own quest to seek out and perform the various jobs that Airmen of the Nebraska National Guard do. And the dirtier, the better.

Forster took ideas from the television show, but also from Chief Master Sgt. David Stanton, command chief master sergeant of Second Air Force.

Forster said he wants to highlight the work of those not in the spotlight.

"It gives me a chance to get out from behind a desk and get my hands dirty doing physical work," said Forster. "I also thought it was a good vehicle to illustrate some of the 'back shop jobs' few people know about and explain the importance of those jobs."

Many people don't understand how jobs like washing an aircraft to help prevent corrosion or cleaning mobility weapons relates to mission readiness, said Forster, adding that he hopes his new endeavor will help promote that understanding.

"I want them to understand how important all of our dirty, and not so dirty jobs are," said Forster. "Every single task is connected to the mission and its success, and it's important to publically recognize those efforts."

"We tend to tell our story from the flying mission perspective, but that's just one end result of hundreds of other jobs," he added. "It's pretty hard to refuel a bomber if you don't have fuel, tires, brakes, you haven't eaten recently, you lack sleep or someone breached your security



Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon



This is My Weapon: (Above) Chief Master Sgt. Mark Forster, Nebraska command chief master sergeant, cleans mobility weapons at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Nov. 5. Forster is looking to perform "dirty jobs" alongside members of the Nebraska National Guard to shed light on the not-so-flashy work Guardsmen perform on a daily basis.

Dirty Job: (Left) Chief Master Sgt. Mark Forster, Nebraska command chief master sergeant, cleans mobility weapons for the 155th Air Refueling Wing at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Nov. 5.

and damaged your jet. Likewise, we have other mission sets that get little attention, like the (explosive ordnance disposal) folks working with civilian authorities or the Civil

Support Team working to keep sporting venues safe."

Every job is important and job satisfaction is vital because it reflects in the quality of work, ac-

ording to Forster.

"My neighbor had a daughter in the 170th Group and they were very proud that she was in Intel," said Forster. "Our next door neighbor's

son-in-law was deploying and when I asked what he did he said 'Oh, I'm just a cook.'"

"Napoleon was absolutely right when he said, 'An army marches on its stomach,'" he added. "I wouldn't want to fly a combat mission without good intelligence and a good meal. I think all Airmen need to understand that they play critical roles in mission success."

Forster's first dirty job was cleaning dirty M-16s used by 155th Air Refueling Wing members during recent deployments.

"I've cleaned mobility weapons before and I actually enjoy tearing down the M-16 for maintenance," said Forster. "It's one of those jobs where you get into a routine pretty quickly, but you have to stay focused on lots of little details."

And although dirty and tedious, Forster said when he was finished there was a sense of satisfaction in knowing that the weapon went back into storage in the best possible condition.

The weapons cleaning job was completely a voluntary duty so Airmen cleaning weapons appreciated having help, especially from someone holding the top enlisted rank.

"I don't think they were surprised that a chief could still tear down a weapon, but they appeared happy to have more hands on deck even if they were slower hands," said Forster.

But Forster's job is far from over. To show support and appreciation, he said he needs help from Nebraska Guardsmen.

"Your job is directly impacting our nation's defense and the command staff appreciates your efforts every day," said Forster. "What you do is a big deal to us and you should be very proud of your efforts."

Email Forster to set up a date to have him help with your dirty job at (mark.g.forster.mil@mail.mil).



Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

For a Job Well Done: Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, presents Gov. Dave Heineman with the Nebraska National Guard Legion of Merit during a ceremony celebrating the National Guard's 378th birthday at the Nebraska State Capitol in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 15. The Nebraska Military Department presented Heineman with the medal as he wrapped up his tenure as governor in appreciation for his work as the commander in chief of the Nebraska National Guard.

BIRTHDAY continued from page 1.

Guard stands ever ready to serve Nebraskans in need, as we have seen many times in recent years during wildfires that affected significant portions of our state, during the historic flooding on the Missouri and Platte Rivers and the tornados in Pilger, Wayne, Beaver Crossing, Cordova, Sutton and many other parts of Nebraska. I thank our Soldiers and Airmen and their families for the continued sacrifices asked of them. These are the real heroes of our great state."

The National Guard traces its roots to Dec. 13, 1636, when the general court of Massachusetts

Bay Colony formed existing militia companies from town surrounding Boston into the first Guard regiments. That fledgling organization has grown into the modern Army and Air National Guard that is stationed in all 54 states, territories and the District of Columbia, and serves as a primary operational reserve force for the U.S. Army, Air Force and the Department of Defense. This has resulted in the deployments of tens of thousands of National Guard Soldiers and Airmen around the globe in support of national operations.

National Guard units also serve in their local states and communities, said Heineman, providing a



Festive Music: Members of the Nebraska National Guard's 43rd Army Band play during a ceremony celebrating the National Guard's 378th birthday at the Nebraska State Capitol in Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 15.

wide array of support to local and state officials, especially during state emergencies such as occurred in Nebraska in 2014 following the tornadoes that struck Beaver Crossing and Pilger.

The Nebraska National Guard traces its individual lineage back to Dec. 23, 1854, when acting Territorial Governor Thomas B. Cumming issued a proclamation urging the citizens of the Nebraska Territory to organize into volunteer companies.

The Nebraska National Guard's role was further codified on Feb. 28, 1881, when the Nebraska State Legislature established the Nebraska military code, under which all units within the state became part of the Nebraska National Guard under the office of the adjutant general.

Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, thanked the Guardsmen for their service and

said what the Nebraska National Guard has accomplished over the years is truly a community effort. He then had a surprise for Heineman for his steadfast support of the Nebraska Military Department over his 10 years as governor and command in chief of the Nebraska National Guard—the longest tenure in Nebraska's history.

Heineman, who had reached his term limit as governor and was leaving in early January 2015, was awarded the Nebraska National Guard's State Legion of Merit Medal, a distinguished honor recognizing his record tenure and exemplary leadership as the Guard's commander in chief. During his tenure the National Guard deployed thousands of Soldiers and Airmen around the world in efforts related to the Global War of Terror.

State Sen. Bill Avery, the chair-

man of the Nebraska Government, Military and Veteran Affairs Committee who attended and spoke during the ceremony, also received the award for his long-term support of the Nebraska National Guard.

"This is a great day to celebrate not only our current generation of National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, and their families, but also to celebrate the legacy of those National Guardsmen who came before us," said Bohac. "Their work and sacrifices made the National Guard what it is today. It's also a day to thank Governor Heineman and Senator Avery for their services and the contributions that they made ensure our Nebraska National Guard's ability to be always ready and always there."

2014: Federal Missions

March

■ March 15 and April 11: Members of the Omaha-based 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne) welcomed home after multi-month deployments in support of U.S. Army special operations units operating in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility.

May

■ May 21: Nebraska officials cut the ribbon to the newly-built \$9.6 million Mead-Titan Readiness Center at the Mead Training Site.

■ May 27: Nebraska officials cut the ribbon to the newly-built \$18 million Grand Island Readiness Center, located near the Nebraska National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility No. 2 in Grand Island.

June

■ June 14: Soldiers from the Nebraska Army National Guard's Chadron, Scottsbluff and Sidney-based 1057th Transportation Company begin moving logs from the Black Hills to Native American reservations in South Dakota during the unit's two-week annual training in support of Golden Coyote.

July

■ July 11-14: Eighteen members of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing travel to the Transportation Proficiency Training Center at Dobbins Air Force Base, Ga. The Airmen's training was designed to prepare them for upcoming overseas deployments while also serving as their bi-annual recertification in their air terminal and services specialties.

■ July 19-Aug 2: Members of the Omaha-based 402nd Military Police Internment and Resettlement Battalion conduct annual training at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., where they receive training on a number of critical skills including working with the active Army's United States Disciplinary Barracks.

September

■ Sept. 10: Members of three Nebraska Army National Guard units were honored at a Pentagon ceremony when they are named the top in the Army National Guard for supply management. The units honored are from Lincoln and Camp Ashland.

October

■ Oct. 31: Ten members of Omaha's 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne) wished well as they begin another deployment in support of U.S. Army special operations units operating in the Central Command Area of Responsibility.

December

■ Mid-December: Members of the Grand Island-based 1-376th Aviation Battalion (Security and Support) return home to Nebraska after a six-month deployment to Laredo, Texas, where they supported the U.S. Border Patrol.



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Happy Family: Sgt. Edward Alvizar grabs a quick look at his daughter, Grace, while his wife, Samantha, watches shortly after Alvizar returned to Omaha, March 5, following a nine-month deployment overseas as a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne).



Photo by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

New Digs: The Grand Island Readiness Center sits next to the Army Aviation Support Facility No. 2 in Grand Island, Neb., May 27. The Readiness Center will house multiple Nebraska Army National Guard aviation units.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Quick Snip: Gov. Dave Heineman joins Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska's adjutant general, and other military and local leaders to cut the ribbon for the new Mead-Titan Readiness Center at the Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., May 21.



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

On The Move: A lumber-laden truck from the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1057th Transportation Company makes its way down a trail, near Hill City, S.D.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

Teamwork: Members of the 402nd Military Police Internment/Resettlement Battalion practice their skills during the unit's annual training at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., July 29. Members of the unit were able to work and train with their active duty counterparts in their own job fields during the annual training.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Spotter: Senior Airman Tyler Kleinschmit, 155th Small Air Terminal, guides Staff Sgt. Christine Ebel, also with the 155th Small Air Terminal, as she drives a 10K A/T Forklift. Ebel was moving the forklift into position to receive a pallet that she then loaded onto a 60K Aircraft Turret, which was then loaded onto an aircraft during annual proficiency training at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., July 11-14.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

The Pride of Nebraska: Staff Sgt. Lillie Chambers (second from left) poses with U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno (left) Acting Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics Kathleen S. Miller (second from right), and 53rd Quartermaster Commandant Col. Ronald Kirklm. Chambers' unit, the 313th Medical Company from Lincoln, Neb., won the Supply Excellence Award for the Army National Guard division in the Level I (A) Company Supply, Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) category.

I See You: Sgt. Jarrod Fuchser, an air conditioning and heating mechanic with the 195th Forward Support Company (Special Operations) (Airborne), holds his 9-month-old son, Jerome, during a ceremony to wish good luck to 10 195th FSC Soldiers at the Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb., Oct. 31, as they begin a deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

2014: State Missions



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Hot Stuff: Staff Sgt. Nicholas Driggs, 1st Battalion, 209th Regiment (Regional Training Site), practices starting a fire, March 27, during wildland firefighting training at Camp Ashland, Neb. Nearly 30 Nebraska National Guard Soldiers from across Nebraska participated in the training to earn their "Red Card" wildland firefighting credentials.



Photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes

Point Person: Staff Sgt. Aaron Krajicek, a squad leader with Kearney's 1195th Transportation Company, points out the location of the in-processing center for workers involved in the tornado response at Beaver Crossing, Neb., May 13. Krajicek, a University of Nebraska-Omaha student who is studying Emergency Management in civilian life, was among the 16 Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers called to duty in Beaver Crossing where they assisted local officials in maintaining public safety following the "Mother's Day" tornado.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Spotted: A crew from Company A, 1-376th Aviation Battalion, searches for "suspects" above the Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., Aug. 12, in an LUH-72 'Lakota' helicopter equipped with the Mission Equipment Package during their annual training. During the Mead exercise, the unit worked with the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Operation Center, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and Saunders County Sheriff's office to work out communication issues should the Guard helicopter be called to support local law enforcement.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Quick Response: (L to R) Staff Sgt. Anthony Ray, Staff Sgt. Lawrence Hudecek and Master Sgt. Daniel Emken, all members of the 155th Security Forces Squadron, clear a stairwell in the main hangar at the 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, Neb., during a mass-casualty exercise, April 24. The exercise was designed to help the agencies involved learn how to work and communicate.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Shrapnel Wounds: A garage in Pilger, Neb., is punctured by a piece of wood hurled by a tornado that hit the northeast Nebraska village on June 16. A severe storm produced twin tornadoes about a mile apart, the biggest of which, an EF4, tore directly through the heart of the town wiping out or damaging approximately 75 percent of the town.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

Team Work: A 'victim' played by Master Sgt. Rebecca Boddicker, a personnel specialist at the 155th Air Refueling Wing, is helped onto a stretcher by fellow Airmen, Lincoln Fire and Rescue personnel, and Lincoln Police officers during a mass-casualty exercise at the Nebraska National Guard Air Base, April 24. Multiple local agencies partnered together to conduct the first exercise of this kind on base.



Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

Total Loss: A Nebraska National Guard Humvee drives through the streets of Pilger, Neb., June 18, past what is left of a church as clean-up efforts begin after twin tornadoes slammed the town of approximately 350 people in northeast Nebraska. Twenty members of the 189th Transportation Company were put on state active duty to assist local authorities.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

Ultra Realistic: Members of the Nebraska National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, also known as CERF-P, tend to a "victim" during an exercise at the Mead Training Site, May 16. The exercise tested the team's ability to perform their roles in a major disaster with numerous civilian casualties.

March

■ March 24-27: Members of the Nebraska Army National Guard participate in wildfire training classes conducted at Camp Ashland designed to prepare them to respond to what officials believe will be a busy fire season in Nebraska.

April

■ April 24: Members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska State Patrol, Lincoln Police and Fire Departments, Lincoln Airport Police and other emergency response agencies conduct an "active shooter" mass casualty exercise at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Nebraska. The exercise is designed to help officials from the various agencies coordinate their responses to a mass casualty emergency.

May

■ May 11: Beaver Crossing, Nebraska, is struck by an estimated EF-3 tornado, causing considerable damage within the community and surrounding countryside. Following the tornado, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency officials are dispatched to the scene to help coordinate the state response while members of the Kearney and York-based 1195th Transportation Company are mobilized to provide support to local traffic control points.

■ May 14-18: Members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard's CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force or CERF-P) participate in a mass casualty exercise involving a major natural disaster at the Nebraska National Guard's Mead Training Site. The CERF-P is capable of conducting casualty location and extraction, mass decontamination and initial trauma treatment operations in a wide array of environments.

June

■ June 16: Pilger, Nebraska, is struck by a massive EF-4 tornado that causes widespread devastation. Following the tornado, members of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency are dispatched to help coordinate state emergency responses while members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 189th Transportation Company from Wayne and Norfolk are mobilized to state active duty to assist with traffic control points and public safety.

August

■ Aug. 4-8: Members of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and the Nebraska Army National Guard's Company A, 1-376th Aviation Battalion, the Guard's Joint Operations Center and the Saunders County Sheriff's Office conduct an exercise at Camp Ashland designed to test the Guard's new LUH-72 Mission Equipment Package and its ability to conduct interoperability operations with the various organizations. The MEP is designed to provide live-video feeds from the Lakota helicopter down to a tactical operations center, which is then further disseminated to the JOC, NEMA and law enforcement officers on the ground.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

It's Official: Brig. Gen. Jon F. Fago, assistant adjutant general-Air, passes the colors of the 170th Group to Lt. Col. Mark A. Hopson during a change of command ceremony, Nov. 16, at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb. Hopson relinquished command of the 238th Combat Training Squadron at Offutt AFB to take command of the 170th.

170th Group welcomes new commander

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton
Staff Writer

The 170th Group of the Nebraska Air National Guard welcomed a new commander during a change of command ceremony at the Air Force News Agency at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, Nov. 16.

"Sir, I assume command," said Lt. Col. Mark A. Hopson, who previously commanded the 238th Combat Training Squadron at Offutt, as he accepted the unit's guidon from Brig. Gen. Jon F. Fago, assistant adjutant general-Air. Hopson replaced Col. John R. Anderson as commander.

Hopson is responsible for the mission of the 170th Group, which is to provide training and operational support to the active duty 55th Wing's global command and control and intelligence missions.

The 170th has continuously proved itself and Anderson made a big impact over the last year as the commander, said Fago. He also thanked the unit's members for the legacy they have built while congratulating Anderson for a job well done and wishing him the best in retirement.

"It has been a sacred honor and a high point in my career to serve as your commander," said

Anderson. "I can think of no better way to finish my military service than to serve with such a group of professionals. There is no better total force unit in the Air Force. You can take stock in that fact and strive constantly to maintain excellence. While I will dearly miss all of you, I leave you in very capable hands."

Hopson began his Air Force career earning his commission from the United States Air Force Academy in 1991. He earned his pilot wings in 1992 before reporting to his first operational assignment in the 38th Reconnaissance Squadron at Offutt.

In 1997 he was selected to be an initial instructor cadre member of 55th Operations Group Training, the RC-135 Flying Training Unit that would become the 338th Combat Training Squadron. He separated from active duty in 2000 and joined the Nebraska Air Guard's 238th Combat Training Squadron, serving in various leadership roles including chief of standardization and evaluation, chief of scheduling, flight commander, assistant director of operations, and director of operations for the 170th Operations Support Squadron.

Hopson has participated in numerous contingency operations including Southern Watch, Vigilant Warrior and Joint Guardian. He has more than 14 years experience in the

RC-135 formal training unit and is a command pilot with over 5,000 flying hours, including over 2,200 instructor and evaluator hours in RC-135 aircraft.

Following his assumption of command, Hopson thanked the various military leaders in attendance for their mentorship and guidance. He also thanked the military spouses for their patience and dedication.

"We couldn't do our jobs without you," said Hopson.

His biggest thanks, however, went to the men and women of the 170th Group.

"There is no group I'd rather be a part of," he said. "You all swore to the governor, the adjutant general and the people of the great state of Nebraska. We partner with the 55th Wing – the largest wing in (Air Combat Command) – and together with its partners, we execute that intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance from electronic attack and you know it better than anyone in the world. I'm humbled and honored to be associated with all of you."

"To the 170th group, be safe and get the mission done, save some time and money, but have fun along the way," he added. "I'll remove the obstacles. Other than that, I'm going to get out of your way."

Children model resiliency after parents' behavior

By Krystyn Schmidt
Psychological Health Coordinator

Resilience as defined by Merriam Webster dictionary is: "an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change."

Change for many of us is difficult, but inevitable; uncomfortable, but necessary. So, although we know change is required to continue to grow, at times we may find ourselves fighting it.

As adults, if we adapt a resilient view of life, of situations, of change; in turn our children will also develop this. When we think of children, we may have a preconceived notion of a carefree lifestyle, this is not always reality. Children are required to face a multitude of challenges including, but not limited to: bullying, new classrooms, adversity, stress, trauma, grief, secondary trauma, anxieties and worries.

The ability to thrive, despite these challenges, comes from skills developed through resilience. Resilience can be learned and can provide a foundation for our children to effectively cope through stressful and difficult situations. So how do we do this, some tips are outlined below:

♦ **Make connections** – Teach children how to make friends, be social and demonstrate empathy – basically, treating others how one would want to be treated. Developing a strong family network so that the child has an understanding of safety, security and support through the inevitable barriers of life, will provide a positive foundation from which to operate. Connect with individuals in the child's educational institution. Become aware of what your child's day is like and the individuals in their lives. Make connections with a higher power, spiritual guidance or your choice of worship or connection.

♦ **Help and give to others** – Providing support, materials or time to others can help your child develop empathy and empowerment. Ask your child how they would like to help others to get them involved.

♦ **Structure** – Although not something permanent, providing awareness and implementation of rules, expectations, and daily activities provides a strong foundation of comfort. Small children thrive in structure and their individual routines should be encouraged.

♦ **Encourage a positive self-concept and outlook** – Point out successes through hardships – that what they learned in a past experiences can help them through

"The ability to thrive, despite...challenges, comes from skills developed through resilience. Resilience can be learned and can provide a foundation for our children to effectively cope through stressful and difficult situations."

— **Krystyn Schmidt**
Psychological Health Coordinator

another difficult situation. Help them learn to trust themselves and their decisions. Having an optimistic outlook allows children to see the good things in life even in the most difficult times. Teach children to find the humor in life.

♦ **Take a break** – Be aware of what's troubling the child and encourage a break from that situation. Provide some unstructured time during the day to allow the child to be creative, grow and do what they want to do. Teaching them how to focus on something other than what is bothering them for a little while helps to develop coping skills.

♦ **Set and achieve goals** – Foster the ability to continue trying in the face of difficulties and experiencing the success of achievement. Break down large goals to smaller, achievable goals. Acknowledge accomplishments on the way to larger goals.

♦ **Self discovery** – Going through difficult times provides the best learning opportunities. Teach that when we fall down, we get back up and try again. Ask questions about what was learned after going through a difficult situation.

♦ **Embrace change** – Help them see that change can create an opportunity to learn new things. Setting new goals and then validating their feelings can encourage the acceptance of change. Point out changes they have already been through, for example, moving up a grade in school, getting new teachers or changes in toy preferences.

Developing resilience is an individualized journey. Acknowledging and embracing the child's differences and unique characteristics will further the development of resiliency as they will gain an understanding that they are okay just the way they are.

A Chinese proverb states, "one joy scatters a hundred griefs."

Nebraska National Guard Retiree News & Notes

By retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 William Nelson

For the Army Guard "Gray Area" retirees, remember the United States Army Human Resources Command (HRC) has discontinued mailing retirement applications to you for your non-regular retirement at age 60.

Therefore, it is imperative to keep track, and make sure to contact ones respective Retirement Services Office for assistance. For the Army Guard, contact Sgt. 1st Class Ed Luhn. His contact information is below. Air National Guard retirees will receive their information from Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC), and if to answer any related retirement questions, please contact ARPC directly.

For any other questions, don't hesitate to contact us at (402) 309-7303 or (402) 309-7305. We can provide the right direction to ensure retirees start receiving retirement benefits on time.

We strive to ensure all our members receive quality information and service. We look for suggestions and comments to make our product better.

The expiration date on one's identification card is important. The retired ID card serves as identification for Tricare, Tricare for Life, and to validate Medicare eligibility.

Searching for that perfect retirement job? Check out job opportunities at www.ne.ng.mil. Many Nebraska-based companies want to hire military service members and veterans. Who knows? One might find that perfect part time job to stay occupied!

Has there been a recent move, changed a phone number or added an email address? Please contact us to keep information current.

As always, thank-you for your dedicated military service. The Nebraska National Guard is rightfully proud of its heritage and you were part of that legacy.

Retiree Breakfasts

Lincoln:
Army National Guard retirees: **FIRST** Monday of each month, 7 a.m., Virginia's Travelers Café, 3820 Cornhusker Highway, Lincoln.

Air National Guard retirees: **LAST** Monday of each month, 7 a.m., Stauffer's Café, 5600 S. 48th St, Lincoln

North Platte area retirees:
SECOND Saturday of each month, 8 a.m., Airport Inn, North Platte

If any other towns have retiree breakfasts and want to share that information, please let us know and we'll add you to the list.

From the desk of Sgt. 1st Class Ed Luhn.

Hello retirees. I wanted to point out a very important website which provides very good up to date information on retirement; www.soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement. On this site one can find the U S Army's official newsletter for retired Soldiers, surviving spouses and their families. We've also found the Army Echoes a very good source of new information on retirement.

Reminder, if there are any major life changes, such as divorce or death of spouse, please contact me

DEERS/ID Card Stations

- ♦ G1 – 2433 N.W. 24th Street, Lincoln, NE 68524: (402) 309-8167/8168/8169;
- ♦ "Spirit of 1776" Armory 1776 N. 10th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 (402) 309-7359/7373;
- ♦ 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;
- ♦ Norfolk Armory 817 S. 1st St. Norfolk, NE 68701 (402) 309-8900/8908;

- ♦ Kearney Armory 5710 Airport Road Kearney: (402) 309-7758/7752;
- ♦ 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), 220 County Road A, Bldg. 508, Ashland, NE 68003, (402) 309-7809/7628;
- ♦ Offutt Air Force Base: (402) 294-2374;
- ♦ The number for DEERS is 1-800-538-9552.

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

as soon as possible. You may need to adjust or rework your survivor benefit plan elections. Plus, we'll need to make sure you contact DFAS, as well, at 1-800-276-9472.

I look forward to assisting you with your retirement processing and questions. Contact me at (402) 309-8162 or vincent.e.luhn@mail.mil.

My assistant, Sgt. Craig Hoppes, can be contacted at (402) 309-8159

or craig.d.hoppes@mail.mil. We're located in the Joint Force Headquarters building, 2433 NW 24th St, Lincoln, Neb., 68524.

Your Tri-Care manager is Staff Sgt. Travis Garrett and he may be reached at (402) 309-1541 or travis.s.garrett@mail.mil. Contact him for all Tri-Care related questions. The United Health Care for Military and Veterans phone number is 1-877-988-9378.

PROMOTIONS

Army National Guard

Colonel
Kevin L. Hittle
Gerald D. Meyer

Lieutenant Colonel
Vernon A. Chandler
Leslie L. Durr

Major
Jason Palatas

Captain
Mujahid Y. Kuwa
Stephen Q. Preston

First Lieutenant
Chad J. Flanagan
Richard S. Laschankzy
Nathanael J. Rutherford

Chief Warrant Officer 5
Martin L. Adkins

Chief Warrant Officer 4
Patrick L. Hegemann
Morgan J. Mathis

Chief Warrant Officer 3
Rebecca R. Betts
Gabriel H. Kelly
Kevin E. Monismith

Sergeant Major
Dean A. Reicks

Master Sergeant
Kelli J. Hatzenbuehler
Kimberly A. Lamb
Mary M. Moss
Maritza J. Pearl
Paul G. Smedra Jr.
Shawn E. Vater

Sergeant First Class
William J. Becker
Brent J. Benes
Adam J. Borer
Craig M. Cooper
Chad A. Couillard
Michael J. Gillott Jr.
Kristine D. Hulse
Sean R. McMahon
Shada K. Robinson
Alan L. Rosenthal
Patrick S. Sitter
John R. Tolliver Jr.
Jeffrey J. Wagner
Courtney M. Westerhold

Staff Sergeant
Nicholas J. Anderson
Tyler J. Anderson
Cameron J. Araujo
Jacob N. Campbell
Gabriel C. Conrad
Joshua D. Cowsky
Benjamin J. Dally
Adam J. Fischer
Ryan J. Fischer
Jason A. Fleck
Matthew A. Harre
Jason G. Hottell
Amy Jacobson
Kirk R. Jensen
Phillip M. Kapsa
Christopher M. Kruger
Joshua J. Kushen
Kevin J. Larson
Laurie E. Maley
Heidi J. McClintock
David L. McIntosh
Joshua D. Peavy
Alex D. Peyton
Joseph R. Pollock
Jon T. Regnier
Brock A. Rogers
Matthew D. Salomons
Carley L. Schultz
Mark T. Stafford Sr.
Scott L. Stevens
Tonjaih A. Thomas
Daniel J. Townsend II

Sergeant
Johnathon A. Albaugh
Amanda L. Almanza
Mathew L. Bossinger
Ryan D. Brassington
James R. Burkland

Mariana G. Calderon
Ryan L. Chapman
Brett M. Clark
Travis J. Dittmer
Tucker L. Ferguson
Nathan D. Fielder
Alex D. Fischer
Alex J. Fritz
Matthew L. Graves
Todd M. Gunter
Tyler R. Hightree
Marc A. Hennings
Daniel A. Holguinsanchez
Keith B. Jorgensen
Austin T. Kucera
Megan M. Liekhus
Jordan P. Longwell
Nicholas B. Loseke
Benjamin M. Moyer
Amand L. Odvody
Kurtis L. Parks
Matthew T. Petersen
Rachel L. Plock
Ashley M. Pofahl
Luke D. Potts
Benjamin R. Prater
Christopher L. Preister
Taylor D. Quinn
Kevin R. Reed
Kurt F. Ruh
Kathryn J. Ryder
Claire I. S. Sandman
Freeman S. Sandquist
Jeffrey D. Spickelmier
Brody C. Staman
Brandi J. Sullivan
Troy D. Thielke
Derek J. Utemark
Jasmine R. Utterback
Anastasia B. Whisenhunt
Mason J. Wren
Ryan A. Yarnell

Specialist

Anthony J. Ahlman
Heather N. Anderson
Alexander S. Barto
Garret S. Braman
Lindsey R. Bright
Kiel H. Brunken
Caleb A. Dewey
Alex C. Ernst
Elijah J. Eubanks
Austin K. Frideres
William A. Gerber
Michael L. Gilpin Jr.
Raecia A. Gordon
Brittney J. Gress
Misti N. Haase
Matthew Z. Hall
Sabrina M. Herchenbach
Andrew P. Hubbell
Alex M. Hulewicz
Andrew W. Hunt
Jordan M. Ivey
Brian R. Jackson
Nathan R. Jenkins
Kody A. Johnson
Tyler M. Johnson
Jesse A. Just
Nathaniel J. Kahn
Kristina A. Klopp
Calvin J. Kozioł
Zachariah T. Krings
Lucas S. Lias
Alexander K. Lorimor
Randall F. Lucas Jr.
Christopher M. Manhart
Hilary C. Maresch
John S. Martin
Colby A. May
Owen C. McClenny
Michaela L. Metcalf
Tristan R. Meyer
Ross W. Miller
Dana J. Mitchel
Alex M. Mousel
David N. Mueller
Taylor J. Nelson
David J. Nies Jr.
Patrick T. Noble
John M. OConnell
Zachary C. Pedersen
Kyle L. Petersen
Taylor K. Pinkerman
Brody A. Pranteballue
Brandon S. Prochnow
Jeffery D. Riesland
Alexander J. Rossman
Melissa A. Schmit

Tyler P. Schmitt
Nicholas A. Schreiner
Reamonn C. Seaman
Zachery L. Schnert
Tyrel J. Sell
Brandon M. Shatto
Douglas H. Shaw
Marcus J. Steed
Austin L. Stenger
Devon J. Taylor
Casey R. Thompson
Jason D. Urbom
Robert C. Wells
Bryce J. Wessels

Private First Class

Dustin W. Acker
Amir A. K. Akot
Matthew A. Arthur
Lily S. Baines
Cody T. Ballew
Christopher A. Bartlett
Gage M. Boyce
Devon C. Brogdon
Hunter R. Brummer
Colin A. Buckley
Dylan T. D. Case
Chad D. Comeau
Jake B. Eden
Zachariah L. Edmonds
Luke D. Engel
Logan L. Fay
Isaac W. Finn
Derick T. Ganseboom
Barret D. Gibbons
Jose A. Gonzalez
Selena R. Gray
Derek D. Hedlund
Michael J. Henn
Jade J. Hetzler
Nathan A. Holman
Nicholas S. Hooley
Joseph R. Howard
Jauregui J. Iniguez
Lizzette M. Jimenez
Gary L. Kaplan Jr.
Zachary C. Kramer
Lane M. Koperski
Nyayan J. Koug
Khristofej J. Kuhlmann
Aubriel R. Loomis
Corey S. Manko
Joshua M. Mayers
Jacob R. McCarthy
Timothy R. McClure
James A. Meyers
Roxana Moraogle
Joshua D. Moser
Munir A. Musa
Gregory A. Neff II
Andrew J. Nunes
Jonathan R. Osterhoudt
Jacob P. Petersen
Coltan J. Plock
Cameron S. Presher
Tyler J. Rasmussen
Tyler O. Reece
Cody D. Rossman
Brinnon E. Schukel
Marissa N. Sedam
Henry Segurabarrza
Michael B. Shaw
Riley P. Smith
Kassidy L. Spencer
Donald E. Stivers Jr.
Jackson M. Stoneman
Tyna R. Taylor
Andrew A. Thomas
Cogan W. Thompson
Tylar S. Tierney
Seth R. Trenhaile
Trent J. Volence
Rebecca R. Welsh
Braxton M. Wright
Shelby A. Ziegler

Private Two

Erika Cardosaperez
Ashley K. Chinana
Shawn M. Fleischman
Mahlon L. Gingerich
Samuel L. Helm
Michael J. Helmers
Randy H. Juarez
Blake E. Mark
Danielle M. Martin
Gregory S. Miller
Jacob B. Miller
Drake H. Otto
Perry J. Pierce

Gregory L. Salnicko II
Dylan J. Samway
Brandon L. Schu
Hailey R. Sletten
Angela K. Spencer
Jaiden B. Thomas
Muhsin A. Younis

Air National Guard

Colonel
Mark A. Hopson

Lieutenant Colonel
Matthew F. Burns
Kevin J. Hynes

Major
Beth L. Foster
Evan A. Gibson
Kevin C. Johnson
Michael J. Kanter

Virginia L. Witulski

Captain
Chad U. Boggs
Aaron J. Self

Master Sergeant
Kevin D. Fedon
Daniel J. Koesters
Ryan K. Sandell

Technical Sergeant
Mary Couture
Abby Ford
Anita K. Lovell
Jessica Peters
Gregory Pollman
Dustin R. Sabatka
Paul M. Vasa

Staff Sergeant
Brittani Cain

Jose Guerrero
Dallas Havens
Natalie Nason
Bristol L. Prai
Sawyer Ritz
Naomi V. Sanders
Daniel Wiemer

Senior Airman
Derek Hubbard
Chad Johnson
Michael A. Smith
Cameron R. Walther
Katherine T. Welsh

Airman First Class
Joseph Ashmore
Sarah Harre

Airman
Samuel L. Albertson

AWARDS

Army National Guard

Meritorious Service Medal
Capt. Christopher J. Hansen
Chief Warrant Officer 5 Derek H. Simonds
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Scott E. Wilke
Command Sgt. Maj. John A. Valasek
Sgt. Maj. Dean A. Reicks

Army Commendation Medal

Maj. Clayton W. Engelman
Maj. Shane P. Varejcka
Maj. Martin E. Neal
Capt. Matthew D. Bartling
Capt. Brent T. Wiese
1st Lt. Benjamin C. Harper
2nd Lt. Tyson A. Gould
Warrant Officer Jacob A. Kohlman
Master Sgt. Kelli J. Hatzenbuehler
Master Sgt. John A. Snoozy
Sgt. 1st Class Jeramey Anderson
Sgt. 1st Class Christopher R. Apley
Sgt. 1st Class Travis D. Arner
Sgt. 1st Class John D. Bates
Sgt. 1st Class Richard S. Graves
Sgt. 1st Class Corey A. Hiller
Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery A. Holbrook
Sgt. 1st Class Joseph A. Jackson
Sgt. 1st Class Allan D. Kerl
Sgt. 1st Class Ricky R. Ruth
Staff Sgt. Lillie D. Chambers
Staff Sgt. Jessie A. London
Staff Sgt. Clinton R. Paul
Staff Sgt. Andrew M. Siemek
Staff Sgt. Erik J. Singasas
Staff Sgt. Rachel L. Tobaben
Staff Sgt. Jason J. Winer
Staff Sgt. Jody M. Worm
Sgt. Jennifer L. Good
Sgt. Zachary L. Homes
Sgt. Joshua E. C. Sladky
Spc. Jason S. Baker
Spc. Christopher J. Currier
Spc. Michael L. Gilpin Jr.
Spc. Matthew M. McClure
Spc. Kyle L. Petersen
Spc. Jesse W. Roberts

Army Achievement Medal

Capt. Russell L. Bartholow
Capt. Daniel C. Sandoz
1st Lt. Bradley L. Gonzales
1st Lt. Nathan J. Reicks
1st Lt. Jessica L. Wolff
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael E. Beraldi
Sgt. 1st Class Tarissa R. Batenhorst
Sgt. 1st Class Carl K. Dehling
Sgt. 1st Class James G. Dinville
Sgt. 1st Class Michael L. Hytrek
Sgt. 1st Class Thomas P. Jelinek
Sgt. 1st Class Wayne P. Johnson
Sgt. 1st Class Colby L. McCoy
Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey S. Rexus
Sgt. 1st Class Justin L. Schmitt
Staff Sgt. Rosalba Amezcua
Staff Sgt. William R. Bane
Staff Sgt. Jeremy S. Borrell
Staff Sgt. Jon A. Buller
Staff Sgt. Joshua D. Cowsky
Staff Sgt. Russell W. Kelley
Staff Sgt. Leroy S. Koenig
Staff Sgt. Jeremy J. Kozak
Staff Sgt. Joshua J. Kushen

Staff Sgt. Dean P. Martin
Staff Sgt. Jillian L. Petersen
Staff Sgt. Denier Y. Rivera
Staff Sgt. Scott D. Seals
Staff Sgt. Andrew M. Siemek
Staff Sgt. Patrick L. Walker
Staff Sgt. William D. Webster
Staff Sgt. Matthew S. Wonder
Sgt. Christopher D. Anderson
Sgt. Jason M. Drager
Sgt. Brycen L. Gillingm
Sgt. Dakota A. Kingham
Sgt. Christopher J. Lammers
Sgt. Candice M. Lyon
Sgt. Manuel S. Molina
Sgt. John C. Moore
Sgt. Riley J. Ohde
Sgt. Jay L. Quinn
Sgt. Amanda R. Sedivy
Sgt. William M. Sons
Sgt. Colton J. Stepp
Sgt. Nevine Zaki
Spc. Jared D. Archer
Spc. Riley E. Armes
Spc. Jason S. Baker
Spc. Taylor R. Beck
Spc. Trent A. Bottolfsen
Spc. Christopher J. Currier
Spc. Devon R. Eilers
Spc. Alexander S. Fandrich
Spc. Alex J. Herstedt
Spc. Randall R. Hevelone
Spc. Kaytlyn N. Johnson
Spc. Lucas S. Lias
Spc. Kyle L. Petersen
Spc. Anthony W. Rischling
Spc. Jason A. Royal
Spc. Daniel Salinas
Pfc. Charles H. Sweeney III
Pvt. Perry J. Pierce
Pvt. Dylan J. Samway

Military Outstanding

Volunteer Service Medal
Sgt. 1st Class Matthew J. Rouse
Sgt. 1st Class Douglas D. Stephens
Sgt. Patricia H. Lee
Sgt. John L. Monheiser
Spc. Jason S. Baker

Combat Action Badge

Spc. Jason S. Baker
Spc. Michael L. Gilpin Jr.
Spc. Kyle L. Petersen

Nebraska National Guard

Legion of Merit
Col. Rodney K. Koerber

Nebraska National Guard

Individual Achievement Medal
Lt. Col. Jan K. Behn
Maj. Robert J. Mendez
Maj. Brett A. Scholting
Capt. Russell L. Bartholow
2nd Lt. Andrew C. Cameron
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert P. Davis
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Craig W. Niemyer
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Douglas A. Shively
Sgt. 1st Class Christofer J. Alt
Sgt. 1st Class Eric S. Gettert
Sgt. 1st Class Lucas W. Mitchell

Staff Sgt. David J. Austin
Staff Sgt. Lillie D. Chambers
Staff Sgt. Robert L. Halmes Jr.
Staff Sgt. Robert G. Kercher
Staff Sgt. Aaron R. Krajcick
Staff Sgt. Teresa M. Lenz
Staff Sgt. Shawn P. Murphy
Staff Sgt. Michael H. Obrien
Staff Sgt. Matthew D. Salomons
Staff Sgt. Scott L. Stevens
Staff Sgt. Alisha K. Welch
Sgt. Edward Alvarez
Sgt. Dalton S. Boden
Sgt. Mary V. Crandell
Sgt. Jennifer L. Good
Sgt. Ryan J. Greulich
Sgt. Joshua J. Hatheway
Sgt. Rachel M. Hofstra
Sgt. Daniel D. Hogsett
Sgt. Tyler J. Klabenes
Sgt. Michelle K. Lindgren
Sgt. Brady J. Masters
Sgt. Britny J. McNeese
Sgt. Westley P. Negley
Sgt. David M. Ober
Spc. Ashton G. Henderson
Spc. Andres Lara
Spc. Jason C. Lenz
Spc. Michael A. Lindgren
Spc. Jenna R. Medley
Spc. Grady O. Phillips
Spc. Dillon J. Prater
Spc. James W. Taylor
Spc. Adam J. Wackler
Spc. Scott J. Withuhn
Pfc. Kayla B. Ambrose
Pfc. Colin A. Buckley
Pfc. Sean M. Carey
Pfc. Zachariah L. Edmonds
Pfc. Brian T. Stodola
Pfc. Chasen J. Welch

RETIREMENTS

Army National Guard

1st Sgt. John T. Herron
1st Sgt. John H. Wills
Staff Sgt. Michaela E. Howard
Sgt. Laura K. Kaeding
Sgt. Dustin R. Morris

TAPS

Amy Stroh
Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) David Spatz

Shorttakes

Army says first females to attend Ranger Course this spring

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) — The Army announced Jan. 15 that female Soldiers will be allowed, for the first time, to attend the Army's Ranger Course and possibly earn the coveted Ranger tab.

According to an official Army statement, the first Ranger Course open to female Soldiers begins this spring.

"Secretary of the Army John McHugh approved the participation of both men and women in the spring 2015 Ranger Course assessment," said Army spokesperson Wayne Hall. "The assessment will be conducted during Ranger Course 06-15, which is scheduled to begin on April 20, 2015. The course has approximately 60 women scheduled

to participate. Those who meet the standards and graduate from the course will receive a certificate and be awarded the Ranger tab."

According to Monica L. Manganaro, a spokesperson for the Maneuver Center of Excellence's Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade, the 2015 "Ranger Course assessment" is a regular Ranger Course, with all the same physical requirements. The current Ranger Course completion standards, to include prerequisites, phase performance requirements and graduation standards would not change for the assessment, she said.

Manganaro said the course is being called an assessment due to the first-time participation of

female Soldiers. Both male and female students will participate in the assessment.

The Army released an all Army activities message in September requesting units forward the names of female volunteers to attend the spring Ranger Course assessment. At the time, the decision to include women in a Ranger Course had not yet been made.

"The response was overwhelmingly positive," Manganaro said. "When the Army asked for women who had interest, the interest outweighed the number of slots available."

Some of the women who may attend that Ranger Course assessment began the 16-day Ranger

Training Assessment Course, run by the Army's National Guard Warrior Training Center, Jan. 16. The RTAC is meant to prepare Soldiers to succeed in the Ranger Course.

This is the first time an RTAC has included women. Of the 120 slots available for students in the RTAC, up to 40 are allotted for women.

There are three additional RTACs scheduled before the Ranger Course Assessment begins that include female Soldiers.

With an endorsement from their unit, Soldiers who successfully complete the RTAC are eligible to attend the 62-day Ranger Course, Manganaro said. Historically, she said, approximately half of those

who enter the Ranger Course will succeed in earning the Ranger tab.

Not all Soldiers who attend the Ranger Course are required to attend an RTAC, Manganaro said. But all female Soldiers who attend the Ranger Course Assessment must first attend and successfully complete an RTAC.

"The RTAC is mandatory for the women who want to go to Ranger school," Manganaro said. "It is going to re-enforce those Ranger skills, and familiarize the female Soldier with the skill sets they may not have had in other courses they have gone through."

Manganaro said the requirement to attend the RTAC will "level the playing field," in the Ranger Course.

Street Talk

“What is your New Year’s resolution?”



**Airman 1st Class
Christian Pedersen**
155th Maintenance Squadron

“I would like to see my plans start coming together for my future with college and working on my career development courses.”



Spc. Shawna Brymesser
1057th Transportation Company

“To exercise more.”



Pvt. Gregory Miller
1074th Transportation Company

“To go out running more.”



**Airman 1st Class
Mayte Ruiz**
155th Maintenance Squadron

“My New Year’s resolution is to stay fit and healthy, making it a part of my day-to-day habit for my well being.”



Staff Sgt. Amanda Kahler
155th Air Refueling Wing

“My goal is to spend more time with my family, especially my 9-month-old son, Christian.”



Spc. McKenna Eshleman
1074th Transportation Company

“To achieve a 4.0 GPA in all my classes.”

With change comes opportunity

It has been said that change is inevitable and with change comes opportunity. Whether it is at the national, state, or local levels, there has been a lot of change that will certainly create opportunity for all of us to be engaged in relevant and meaningful ways in the New Year.

At the local level, one of the more significant changes was the retirement of Al Berndt, the assistant director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. While the adjutant general is the director, the reality is that the assistant director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of NEMA.

Fortunately for us and for the citizens of Nebraska, it was my privilege to select Bryan Tuma, former superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol, as the new assistant director. Bryan brings a lot of experience working in the public service sector and a strong working knowledge of state government, both of which are keys to success in his position.

At the state level, we said goodbye to our longest serving commander-in-chief of the Nebraska National Guard and governor of Nebraska, Dave Heineman. We helped welcome our new commander-in-chief and governor, Pete Ricketts,

“Here To Serve”

The Adjutant General

Daryl Bohac



liable force that stands ready to respond when our state and nation call up on us. We found ourselves in Pilger and Beaver Crossing helping secure both towns in the aftermath of tornadoes. We were on the Southwest border assisting customs and Border Patrol. We

continued to deploy Airmen and Soldiers forward in support of the nation’s efforts in the Middle East and elsewhere.

We demonstrated our resilience in the face of change and proved time and time again that we are a ready, reliable and accessible force.

In 2015, we will deploy Army National Guard aviation and military police units and Air National Guard air crew, maintainers, engineers, logisticians, personalists and security force defenders. Certainly not in the numbers during our peak mobilization years, but gone is gone and we stand ready to support our deployers and their families.

Each and every member of our National Guard and Nebraska Emergency Management teams is a difference maker and we deliver an amazing value to all we serve. It is with great pride that I can say we are, “Always Ready, Always There,” for our state and nation and ready to embrace the change the new year brings!

at his inauguration and inaugural gala. We haven’t had a change in the governor’s office for 10 years, so for many this is new territory.

We will have 18 new state senators in the legislature, a new U.S. senator and a new congressman in the House of Representatives. This means we have to engage decisively on telling our story to this group so that they truly understand the value of their Nebraska National Guard and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

At the national level, I would hazard a guess that one year ago, no one was thinking about the Russian annexation of Crimea in Ukraine, the emergence of an Islamic caliphate or the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. All of these events have emphasized how important the Department of Defense is to our national security and to promoting our interests abroad.

One thing that hasn’t changed is how important the National Guard is to America. We continue to be a re-

Some random thoughts to start New Year

A few random thoughts as we kick off what will undoubtedly be a busy 2015:

•I don’t know why it happened initially, but somewhere in some Journalism 101 class, a professor is telling his or her students that the first newspaper of each year must include something related to New Year’s resolutions. So, this being our first edition, we have of course included New Year’s resolution in this month’s Street Talk poll.

Now granted, New Year’s resolutions obviously play a function. For example, many coaches have their players write out their goals before the start of each new season with the idea that goals become much more concrete once they’re written down. I guess that’s part of the idea behind the publishing of resolutions in news print: helping respondents and readers accomplish their goals.

With that in mind, here are my resolutions for 2015:

I want to work harder and accomplish more, I will be friendlier and smile more often, I will work out more and lose some weight, I will spend more quality time with my family and enjoy the time that I spend with them more, I will try to worry less and not let things stress me out as much, and I will try to be better at helping the people I work with accomplish their goals.

Check back with me in March to see how I’m doing on these goals.

•A few months ago, I wrote a column about the book, “Unbroken,” that detailed the life of former Olympic athlete and World War II prisoner of war Louis Zamperini. Written by acclaimed author Laura Hillenbrand, the book was a mesmerizing view into the experiences of a legitimate hero who bravely faced unbelievable challenges and outright cruelty at the hands of his Japanese captors after his B-24 bomber crashed in the Pacific during a search and rescue mission.

When I heard that this book was going to be made into a major motion picture directed by Angelina Jolie, I was both excited and somewhat nervous. Excited because I really believe that this is a story that people – especially young people – should and need to learn about. Nervous because I like this book so much that I feared that there wasn’t any

My Turn

State Public Affairs Officer

Kevin J. Hynes



Dave Heineman and State Sen. Bill Avery honored during the National Guard Birthday celebration at the State Capitol in December for their constant support of Nebraska National Guard Soldiers and

Airmen.

Having been around both of these leaders during a lot of the different events that they attended over the years, it became pretty readily evident that both had a genuine appreciation for what this state’s Guardsmen have been called upon to do over the past decade. It was also readily apparent that they both simply seemed to enjoy being around Guard Soldiers and Airmen.

Still, to see their smiles when Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac presented them with Nebraska National Guard State Legion of Merit medals and then to watch as they proudly showed them off following the ceremony was absolutely priceless.

•Finally, and this is probably the hardest part to write, I’d like to wish my counterpart, 1st Lt. Alex Salmon, well as he moves back into the civilian world. Having worked with Alex ever since the very day that the Nebraska National Guard mobilized the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and other units for Hurricane Gustav, it is safe to say that we have faced our fair share of challenges, and overcame most of them.

As many of you know, I recently completed a 17-month stint as the commander of the Joint Force Headquarters. What most probably don’t know, though, is that while I served in this assignment, Alex took on a lion’s share of the burden of keeping the Public Affairs Office’s operations functioning. And that work was definitely appreciated.

While Alex will continue to serve as the 155th Air Refueling Wing public affairs officer in a traditional, part-time setting, his impact on the full-time side will be greatly missed.

So, to Alex and his new wife, Kristen, good luck to you as you begin a new chapter of your lives in northeastern Nebraska. Hopefully the memories you helped create during the time that you served with us full-time are happy ones that you will be able to look back upon fondly as the years pass.

Recently, I had the chance to see the movie. It definitely lived up to my hopes in that it stayed faithful to the book while the depth of strong acting and cinematography added to the experience. Overall, I was extremely impressed by the movie and would recommend it to anyone who would ask.

•What to think about the state of Nebraska Husker Football? I have definitely struggled with my thoughts on this one the past couple months. While it was hard to watch Nebraska fire another 9-win coach, especially after having watched what happened during the decade that followed, it was also hard not to feel that perhaps the Bo Pelini era had run its course.

So, I feel cautiously optimistic that Coach Mike Riley will be able to do good things in Lincoln. This hope is based both on what other “experts” have said about his ability to coach as well as the fact that I don’t feel that the cupboard is bare at Memorial Stadium.

Will that be enough to satisfy the fans, though? That’s really the toughest question to answer. Regardless, it’s going to be a fascinating journey to watch.

•Also, talking about Nebraska football and athletics in general, another huge thank you needs to go out to the Nebraska Athletic Department for their continued support of the Nebraska National Guard and military service members in general.

During the past year NU athletics has continued to spotlight individual service members through their Gate Sentinel program (see this year’s poster on Page 13 in this edition of the *Prairie Soldier*), the annual Veterans Day Game observance, and many other efforts.



Rodeo on Wheels

Photo by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

Straight-line Back-up: Soldiers from the 1074th Transportation Company participate in one of the four driving events of the 734th Transportation Battalion Truck Rodeo at Lincoln County Fairgrounds in North Platte, Neb., on Nov. 15. Soldiers competed in a total of five different events for bragging rights and top honors amongst the battalion.

Transportation battalion rounds up troops from across state for truck competition

By Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson and Staff Sgt. Heidi McClintock
Staff Writers

Instead of wearing cowboy boots Nebraska National Guard Soldiers wore their combat boots to their rodeo, recently.

Soldiers from the 734th Transportation Battalion traveled to North Platte, Nebraska to show off their truck driving skills during what the organization called a truck rodeo at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds on Nov. 15.

The truck rodeo included five main events, four of which were driving events. The final event focused on maintenance.

"The purpose of this event is to bring all the units together, but Mother Nature had other ideas," said Lt. Col. Christopher Weskamp, commander of the 734th Trans. Bn.

Although some units were unable to make the trek to North Platte due to inclement weather, the truck rodeo still went on.

The winter weather also provided training opportunities for Soldiers to get comfortable driving in all conditions.

"Every unit puts winter driving on their calendar November thru February, well today they got ample opportunity for winter driver's training," said Weskamp. "If a Soldier is not confident in driving in all types of conditions behind their assigned

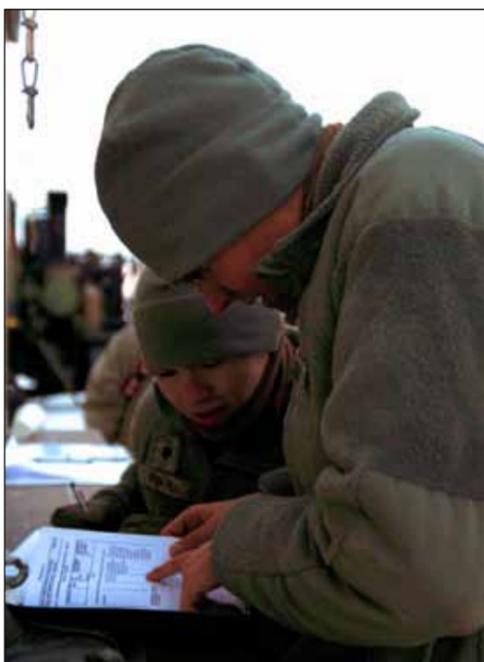


Photo by Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson

Checking the Book: Two Transportation Soldiers look through their truck manual for the correct steps of proper preventative maintenance checks and services during the truck rodeo at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds in North Platte, Neb., Nov. 15.

anything like this or ever seen anything like this," said Weskamp.

Once the units that could make it arrived in North Platte, they split into two teams from each company to compete for bragging rights and top honors.

According to Sgt. John Weinmaster, a transportation specialist with Detachment 1, 1074th Transportation Company, the truck rodeo brings out a competitive atmosphere rather than the typical driving at drill weekends.

"We're all family, but it makes us competitive across the units," said Weinmaster.

In addition to the truck rodeo, the battalion conducted a reenlistment ceremony, presented hero awards and ended the night with a barbeque chuck wagon dinner.

Despite the cold, the drill weekend also provided the opportunity to gain valuable insight while working together as a battalion in a competitive setting.

"It was cold. It seemed like it went pretty smooth," said Sgt. 1st Class Tyler Miller, Det. 1, 1074th Trans. Co. "It makes it fun for us to do something different now and then."

"You always learn new things even if you do it repetitively, you're still learning every day," added Miller. "It's a good learning experience for everyone." Weskamp couldn't agree more.

"The training is very valuable, because a lot of the younger Soldiers have never done



Photo by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

Almost There: Graders watch a Soldier to ensure he uses proper ground guide signals to his teammate driving the truck in North Platte, Neb., Nov. 15.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

Winners: (From left) Command Sgt. Maj. Shawn Griffith, Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Rexus, Spc. Trent Bottolfsen, Sgt. Gregory Lammers, Sgt. Jacob Graff, Staff Sgt. William Bane, 1st Lt. Nathan Reicks and Lt. Col. Christopher Weskamp pose for a photo after winning the truck rodeo, Nov. 15, in North Platte, Neb. The winning team was from the 189th Transportation Company based out of Norfolk, Neb.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Amy Jacobson

Fix a Flat: A team works together to replace a tire on their trailer that went down on their way to the truck rodeo in North Platte, Neb., Nov. 15. Despite the cold weather teams were able to work together and learn from each other during the truck rodeo events.

Thanks Huskers

FOR SUPPORTING NEBRASKA'S MILITARY



GAME SENTINELS MILITARY APPRECIATION GAME

