



2-130th FA demonstrates new rocket system5



Kansas Soldiers dive into adventure in Egypt . . . 7



“Death March” tests 190th ARW team8

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“What a great day to be in Kansas”: Soldiers home from Africa

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

Soldiers of the Kansas National Guard’s 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry were welcomed home April 22 from their yearlong deployment to the Horn of Africa to the cheers of families and friends who packed the Kansas Expocentre in Topeka. The unit deployed May 10, 2010.

The ceremony honored approximately 560 Soldiers who spent the last year conducting stability operations in Africa to strengthen partner nations and regional security capacity for long-term regional stability and to prevent conflict and protect U.S. and Coalition interests.

“What a great day to be in Kansas,” said Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general. Tafanelli said it was a proud day for Kansans to have the Soldiers once again on Kansas soil and praised them for their service.

“You’ve accomplished your mission in the Horn of Africa and successfully passed the baton to the First (Battalion) of the 161st Field Artillery to continue the mission.”

“You are an amazing group of Soldiers,” said Tafanelli, “and you have every reason to pat yourselves on the back and be proud of your hard work and your sacrifice this past year. I’m proud to serve with you.”

“To the families,” he continued, “thank you all for what you have done for your Soldiers to support them during this deployment.”

“Your job isn’t over, though,” he reminded them. “Your Soldier needs your support to readjust to life at home again. It’s not easy to transition from deployment to home and that’s where you can help them. Take care of them and keep them safe.”

“We are proud of you,” said Gov. Sam Brownback. “I’ve been to areas that some



Soldiers of the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry march into the Kansas Expocentre in Topeka as family and friends wave signs of welcome during a homecoming ceremony on April 22. (Photo by Jane Welch, Public Affairs Office)

of you have been in... they needed you. They needed your training if they’re going to provide any sort of stability in their country and any sort of hope for a future where people can live free and prosper. They needed your technology and your information if they’re going to provide better

for their families. You have helped people live better lives.”

“And, hopefully, in the process as well, you’ve become a better person yourself and I’m sure that has taken place.”

Brownback echoed Tafanelli’s thanks to the families and told the Soldiers “We are

just happy to have you back” a remark that prompted an enthusiastic response from the crowd.

“Nearly one year ago, I addressed many of you in Salina,” said Lt. Col. Greg Mittman, the battalion commander, “and spoke of a day when we would, once again, be united with the ones we love. That day has finally come.”

“The Soldiers you see before you have performed magnificently,” said Mittman. “Across 12 African nations, the 1st Kansas Battalion is known for a standard of excellence directly impacting regional security in East Africa. They received accolades from everyone they worked with and elevated the standard of professionalism throughout the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa.”

“Their outstanding work could not have been done alone,” he continued. “The support we received from family and friends has been tremendous. While Soldiers may wear the medals, our mission success was only possible through the heroic efforts of our entire Guard family. I sincerely appreciate the sacrifices every one of you have made over this past year.”

“We have all endured the fatigue of supporting liberty,” Mittman concluded, “and now we are reunited to reap its blessings. May the Lord bless and keep each and every one of you. May He watch over you during our wonderful reunion, and may He ensure each of you live out long and happy lives filled with peace.”

Kansas aviators return from medevac mission

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Officer

Although the weather threatened rain, the storms held off on the evening of May 5 as approximately 55 Soldiers of the Kansas National Guard’s Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment (General Support Aviation) returned home from their yearlong mission to Iraq.

Throng of families and friends waited anxiously in Hangar 680 at the Army Aviation Support Facility, Forbes Field, Topeka, since 8:30 p.m. for the appearance of the Soldiers. When the large hangar doors finally began to open shortly after 10 p.m., the crowd cheered and applauded, straining to catch that first glimpse of the one they had missed for nearly a year as Company G marched smartly into the room.

In addition to family and friends, the members of Company G were greeted by Kansas Lt. Gov. Dr. Jeff Colyer; Brig. Gen. Eric Peck, commander of the Kansas Army National Guard; Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Haworth, senior noncommissioned officer of the Kansas National Guard; Command Sgt. Maj. John Ryan, senior noncommissioned officer of the Kansas Army National Guard; Lt. Col. Barry Manley, executive officer for 69th Troop Command; Lt. Col. Dave Leger, commander of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment; Command Sgt. Maj. James Crosby, senior noncommissioned officer for the 1-108th Aviation; and Chaplain (Lt. Col.) David Jenkins, chaplain of the 35th Infantry Division.

“You’re a sight for sore eyes,” said Peck. “Welcome home. Glad to have you here,” remarks that met with resounding applause from families and friends. “You’ve done an

outstanding job and it is really, really great to have you home.”

Peck recounted how he saw a rainbow on the way to the ceremony that evening. “It looked like it was touching down right here at Forbes Field and I knew something good was happening here tonight. It looked like Somebody up above was recognizing that you were coming home, too.”

“Today was the National Day of Prayer,” said Colyer, “and today, many prayers were

answered in this room. (I) thank all of you. Welcome home.”

Colyer conveyed the thanks of Governor Sam Brownback to the Soldiers for their service to the country and the community and additional gratitude to the families. “Sam and I want to thank everyone here in this room for the sacrifices you have made over the last year for our country.”

“On behalf of Golf Company, I can’t tell

(Continued on Page 3)



Capt. Kevin Kennedy (center), commander of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, leads his troops into a hangar at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Topeka May 5 as the unit returned from a yearlong deployment to Iraq. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

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Kansas Guardsman competes in “Expedition Impossible” program

By Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office

Capt. Aaron “Ike” Isaacson, 33, a member of the 69th Troop Command, Kansas National Guard, legislative liaison for the adjutant general, and native of Topeka, Kan., is a Soldier driven by challenges. Therefore, it is no surprise to find him competing in an extraordinary television reality show, solving problems and taking on the biggest adventure of his life.

“I wanted to do the television show because of the challenge that I knew it would bring. I love a new challenge,” said Isaacson.

The new summer reality show, “Expedition Impossible,” premieres Tuesday, June 23, 2011, at 8 p.m. CDT on ABC television network.

Isaacson was chosen for the show after completing a mountain climb to Nepal with a team of wounded warriors in 2010.

The show features 13 teams of three players who find themselves racing across vast deserts, over snow-capped mountains and through raging rivers in the beautifully exotic Kingdom of Morocco. Each week, a new stage of the expedition is revealed to the competitors, who must find a way to work together to complete the trip. After 10 legs of competition, one team will cross the finish line. Each winning team member gets \$50,000 as well a new Ford Explorer.

Isaacson said viewers can expect a wild ride of physical and mental stress from everyone involved with the show. They worked every day in very stressful situations. They climbed mountains, rafted on rivers, rode camels, swam across rivers, rode horses, jumped out of airplanes... all while exploring the incredible country of Morocco.

“Expedition Impossible is similar to a



Team members (from left) Erik Weihenmayer, Capt. Aaron “Ike” Isaacson and Jeff Evans are contestants in “Expedition Impossible,” a reality TV series airing on the ABC Television network. (Photo courtesy ABC Television)

couple of other shows that are out there but totally different in every other way” shared Isaacson. “We were not catered to on the show. I didn’t take a shower the entire time I was there. We slept out on the dirt every single night. It was rough. It was way more challenging than I have seen on other television shows.”

Isaacson competes alongside teammates Erik Weihenmayer, 42, speaker/writer and native of Golden, Colo., and Jeff Evans, 41, a physician assistant and native of Boulder, Colo., known as “No Limits.” Weihenmayer and Evans picked Isaacson as their teammate for his hard work and dedication to accomplishing his goals.

Weihenmayer became blind at an early age, but didn’t let that get him down. In 2001, he reached the summit of Mount

Everest. He has also completed the “Seven Summits” (climbing all of the highest summits on all seven continents).

Evans serves as Weihenmayer’s “eyes in the field.” He has been Weihenmayer’s primary climbing guide for over 20 years and is a published author and motivational speaker.

Isaacson, a combat engineer in the Kansas National Guard, has served in Iraq and Afghanistan, earning two Bronze Star Medals, a Purple Heart and an Army Commendation Medal, among other awards.

“We are a great team of guys that know what it takes to get the job done,” said Isaacson. “We are not afraid of pain and suffering.”

Isaacson has been no stranger to challenges throughout his life, including deployments to Iraq in 2004, 2005 and 2006, followed by a tour in Afghanistan in 2008.

“During those deployments – with any Soldier that deploys – you go through rough times where you can’t contact family like you would want to. You are sleeping in

an environment that is not friendly. You have a job to do everyday, no matter what you need to do it and work with the people around you,” said Isaacson. “And that pretty much sums up what happened on the show. You have to work with your teammates. They are all you got. Sometimes you go without sleep and a goal to achieve every single day. So there are a lot of similarities between the show and the Army.”

During these deployments, Isaacson was injured twice, the first time in 2005 by the explosion of a land mine set off by a vehicle as he walked beside it. The explosion damaged his hearing and caused minor head and neck trauma. These injuries resulted in his award of the Purple Heart.

Isaacson’s second major injury was during his Afghanistan deployment. While conducting combat operations along the Pakistan border, he broke his right leg.

However, that hasn’t stopped Isaacson. Just two years later, Isaacson joined a team of wounded warriors from other branches of the U.S. military for a “Soldiers to the Summit” expedition Oct. 2 to 21, 2010, that took them to the top of Mount Lobuche in Nepal. Through that adventure Isaacson met Evans and Weihenmayer.

His previous military training proved valuable during the competitions. Training to work with a team of leaders to be successful, land navigation, and just down to earth suffering in order to get the job done was a great help, claimed Isaacson.

“Training wise, land navigation came in handy,” shared Isaacson. “We would have to trek for many, many miles and if you went to the wrong spot you were done.”

“The military lifestyle is what helped me the most. There was a lot of training that helped, but the lifestyle helped the most,” said Isaacson. “You’ve got a team that may have differences but the doesn’t matter. You have to come together in order to accomplish the goal.”

Kansas Guardsmen rescue two Liberian soldiers from drowning

By Sgt. Leon Prather, UPAR
1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery

Four Kansas Army National Guard Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery pulled off a daring rescue and saved two Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) soldiers from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean April 16, 2011.

While swimming at a Monrovia beach, Sgt. Michael Eicher, Topeka; Sgt. Joseph Johns, Great Bend; Sgt. Chad Kuker, Spearville; and Sgt. Rich Miles, Topeka; discovered two nearby swimmers, later determined to be AFL soldiers, had been caught in a rip tide and were being swept out to sea.

The Kansas Soldiers, along with two Liberian soldiers who had also been visiting the beach, immediately linked arms, formed a human chain and waded into the surf to reach the two swimmers. At one point,

according to Kuker, a large wave crashed over the group, breaking them apart.

“We were going to get them out no matter what it took,” Kuker said. “We could only think about getting to the [AFL] soldiers before they drowned.”

Ultimately, the group was able to rescue the pair and pull them back to shore.

“Both of the soldiers were very fatigued and worn out, but they were able to go home with their families,” Kuker said.

The Soldiers’ actions were recognized in a short ceremony led by U.S. Army General Carter F. Ham, U.S. AFRICOM commander, who happened to be visiting Monrovia at the time of the event. In a brief speech, Ham commended the Soldiers for their efforts and gave each a commander’s coin.

“We never gave up hope,” Miles said. “We just wanted to get them back to safety.”



General Carter F. Ham, commander of the U.S. Africa Command, recognizes four Kansas National Guard Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, for their rescue of two Liberian soldiers who were drowning. (Photo by Sgt. Leon Prather, UPAR)

Battalion accepts Transfer of Authority for Horn of Africa mission

By Sgt. Leon Prather, UPAR
1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery

On April 15, 2011, the Kansas National Guard’s 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry transferred authority of the Horn of Africa mission to the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery. The battalion’s mission is to assist partner nations in building their ability to provide security and a lasting regional peace.

The outgoing commander, Lt. Col. Gregory Mittman, told the 1-161st FA to “challenge those on your left and right to improve on the positions we leave for you. Pledge yourself to uphold the high standard your battalion is known for.” He also thanked the Soldiers in his command by saying “this unit has become known as one composed of quality Soldiers, committed to excellence. You have endured the fatigue of supporting liberty, and have earned the right to return home and reap its blessings.”

Brig. Gen. William L. Glasgow, deputy commander of Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa, told the 1-161st FA to “Step up to the plate. If you see something that is not right, change it. Let’s make it better.”

Shortly after the comments from the general and outgoing commander, the 2-137th Infantry cased its colors signifying mission completion and that the battalion is prepared to return to Kansas. The uncasing of the 1-161st FA colors signified the battalion’s preparedness to assume its role within the CJTF-A-HOA.

The battalion will be involved in missions that range from force protection to mentoring professional development, and sharing experiences. By joining and working together as partners, everyone wins.



Lt. Col. Thomas Burke and Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Matticks uncased the colors of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery during a Transfer of Authority ceremony April 15, 2011. (Photo by Sgt. Leon Prather, UPAR)

The partnership is destined to foster a professional standard of conducting daily duties, and to treat all people as equals.

The incoming commander, Lt. Col. Thomas Burke, accepted the challenges issued by Glasgow and Mittman. Burke commended the units and Soldiers of the battalion for their leadership, professionalism and demonstration of the Army values.

Burke challenged his unit to use inner strength to “raise the bar even further in all our camp and Combined Joint Task Force Africa-Horn of Africa missions.” He also credited the Kansas leadership for setting the battalion up for success, by giving the opportunity to follow the 2-137th Infantry. Burke told Glasgow “Sir, the battalion is excited and ready to perform our mission. Faire Sans Dire (to do without saying).”

Adjutant general visits Kansas Guardsmen in Kuwait

By Pfc. Tara Keehner

718th Transportation Battalion

Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of the Kansas National Guard, visited Soldiers from the 778th Transportation Company in Kuwait May 3, 2011. The National Guard Bureau gave Tafanelli the opportunity as part of the Joint Monthly Reserve Access for Reserve Components Program for adjutant generals to visit troops from their state. Tafanelli chose the Soldiers in Kuwait since they were the largest unit currently deployed with almost 300 troops.

The purpose of the visit was to ensure the deployment was progressing well and each of the Kansas Soldiers knew how much the state supported them while engaged in their mission.

Tafanelli had lunch with 15 Kansas Guardsmen of the 778th, headquartered in Kansas City, Kan. The 778th assured Tafanelli the company was doing well, as evidenced by their high morale.

Tafanelli, who was sworn-in as adjutant general Jan. 28, 2011, sees this progression in his career as a tremendous challenge, as well as a great honor to serve the citizens of Kansas and the United States. Tafanelli commented on how many changes he has witnessed over his past 30 years to the Armed Forces, making the Army what it is today.

However, he is aware that 50 percent of the current servicemembers in the Kansas National Guard are new to the service since



Pfc. Dalton White, 778th Transportation Company, briefs Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli (right), Kansas adjutant general, and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hector Vasquez, state command chief warrant officer, on the company's Heavy Equipment Transport System at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Tafanelli, along with four other adjutants general, visited with troops from their states during a tour of Kuwait May 2 through May 5, 2011. (Photo by Pfc. Tara Keehner, 718th Transportation Battalion)

the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

Tafanelli went on to say that this is going to create two distinct challenges as the drawdown continues and the Army transforms into a more institutional organization.

"We are going to have to teach Soldiers how to be a part of an institutional Army," said Tafanelli.

Many of these post-9/11 Soldiers are not aware of how such a concept even works. The other issue he mentioned was the lack of civilian jobs for Soldiers returning with

multiple deployments.

"All of these Soldiers have been on a current rotation of either preparing for deployment, on deployment or resetting from deployment," said Tafanelli.

He foresees, along with the budget challenges, an increase in unemployment for returning troops. He and the Kansas National Guard are ready to do anything within their power to help.

Change was something Tafanelli mentioned extensively. He commented, "The Army is constantly changing and the basic Soldier skill-set will also have to change as we get back to an institutional Army. What skill-set does the future Soldier need in order to be an effective leader? Do they need to be multi-lingual? What kind of leader attributes do (noncommissioned officers) need to have?" Tafanelli posed these rhetorical questions in an effort to prepare for the future of the state of Kansas veterans.

Tafanelli was encouraged by and grateful for the opportunity to see first-hand the living and working conditions of the Kansas Soldiers, and for the opportunity to connect with the troops. Tafanelli felt he assisted the troops by "...giving (the Soldiers) an outlet ... to express concerns as well as becoming better prepared for the Kansans re-deployment to the states."

Tafanelli delivered a message on behalf of Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, who he met with just before his departure to Kuwait, which said, "Make sure all Kansans know how proud I am of them."

Annual fishing tournament honors fallen comrades

The 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery and Wolf Creek Nuclear Power Plant combined forces to host the Seventh Annual Veterans Memorial Fishing Tournament at Coffey County Lake April 30, 2011. This event originated in 2005 to recognize the sacrifices of veterans who protect the basic freedoms sometimes taken for granted.

On Nov. 8, 2004, two members of the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, Staff Sgt. Clinton Lee Wisdom, Atchison, Kan., and Sgt. Don Allen Clary, Troy, Kan., selflessly gave their lives in Baghdad, Iraq, during a terrorist attack in order to protect their convoy. Both individuals enjoyed fishing as one of their many pastimes. In recognition of their selfless service and love for fishing, the fishing tournament was born.

To honor those that have served and those currently serving, teams lined up on the road leading into Coffey County Lake awaiting the opening of the gate at 6 a.m. Staff Sgt. Justin Lawson, a member of the 250th Forward Support Company, was one of the first in line.

"This is our fourth year participating in

the tournament as a family and we wanted to be one of the first teams to get our boat in the water," said Lawson, whose team consisted of his daughter, Ashleigh, and father-in-law, retired Lt. Col. Les Gellhaus.

At 7 a.m., more than 20 boats raced across the water as teams headed to their favorite fishing spots. The sun was shining and the lake was calm, although it did not take long for the wind to pick up and force some teams off the lake early.

All teams returned safely with their catch by noon and enjoyed bratwursts and hamburgers prepared by Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Stubbs and fellow Soldiers of the 250th Forward Support Company.

"I'm honored to prepare lunch for all the teams coming out in honor of our veterans and plan on doing it for years to come," said Stubbs.

Following lunch, awards were presented to first through sixth place teams by retired Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, retired Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Rodina and Steve Hedges, vice president of Wolf Creek Nuclear Power Plant.

Kansas aviators return from Iraq

Continued from Page 1

you how good it feels to be back home," said Capt. Kevin Kennedy, commander of Company G. "I want to commend the Soldiers for the outstanding job they did during the past year. Every person standing in formation was required to operate at a capacity above their position that the Army intended for their slot."

"The professionalism, attention to detail let the company complete 908 missions, evacuate 249 patients with an average response time of seven and a half minutes," said Kennedy. "We completed 28 million dollars worth of parts and maintenance and had the highest operational readiness rate in the entire country for our aircraft mission status."

Kennedy said that the success of Company G does not end there. He reminded the audience of his remarks a year earlier, noting that the families would be going "on deployment" with their Soldiers.

"But I cannot rattle off the stats that marked their accomplishments," he contin-

ued, "because there is no operations section tallying up how many hours they worked, diapers changed, meals prepared or miles driven to school, work and extracurricular activities. There is no staff behind closed doors, determining the best course of action to pay for the latest unforeseen expense, while making ends meet and attempting to save for the future."

Kennedy said there were no duty descriptions for the families to tell them what to do or awards ceremony at the end. "They did it simply because it was the right thing to do and because it had to be done."

Acknowledging it was a combined effort that allowed the Soldiers to be successful and save lives, Kennedy concluded with a simple "God speed and Dust Off."

Following the benediction, Kennedy returned to the podium and issued the command all had been longing to hear: "Company, dismissed."

With that, although night had long since fallen, there was sunshine throughout the room.

Do those spring chores safely

By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Marvin Terhune
Safety Office

Springtime has arrived on schedule this year! It is nice to be able to get out of the house and work in the yard and plant the garden. The rotary tillers, lawn mowers and weed eaters are pulled out for the first time of the year.

Now would be a good time to review the owner's manual for the equipment and ensure the equipment is serviced properly and has the manufacturer's safety equipment installed. It seems a nuisance that every time you get off from your lawnmower's seat or let go of the

handle that the engine quits. These switches were designed with your safety in mind. Do not try to "bypass" or circumvent a manufacturer's-designed device that is installed for your protection.

As you are operating all the yard power tools, don't forget to wear protective clothing, including safety glasses and hearing protection. The grass trimmer's string can launch a rock or small stick at a very fast speed. Long pants and toe covering shoes are definitely a plus over shorts and flip flops. And again safety glasses work.

You have seen a hundred safety posters showing the damage done by not wearing protective equipment. It becomes easy, sort of like wearing your seat belt! Have the protective equipment located by your power tools and make it a habit that you put it on. When you have the rocks bounce off your safety glasses you will be glad you had them on.

Enjoy spring and be safe!



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Marvin Terhune

Ready for action



Spc. Randy McMillan, Sgt. David Childers, Spc. Nathaniel Beets, and Spc. Charles Arbogast provide security for another fire team during Small Unit Infantry Tactics training conducted April 16, 2011, at the Pittsburg State University Recreation Center/National Guard Armory. The Soldiers are members of the 772nd Engineer Company, Kansas Army National Guard. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jason Lane, UPAR)

This department has much to feel good about

By **Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli**
The Adjutant General

Severe weather season is upon us once again. We were fortunate for a while, but then an EF3 tornado hit the community of Reading in Lyon County during the evening of May 21. One man died, several others were injured, more than 20 homes were destroyed and 200 more buildings sustained varying degrees of damage. Approximately 80 percent of the town of 247 was impacted in some way by this tornado.



**Maj. Gen. (KS)
Lee Tafanelli**

I want to thank the staff in the Kansas Division of Emergency Management for staying on top of the situation and coordinating state assistance to the authorities in Lyon County. My thanks also go to the Incident Management Team, Kansas Highway Patrol troopers, local law enforcement, fire departments, medical personnel and all others who responded in Reading during their time of need. The job there isn't over, but your quick, professional responses have done much to start the community back on the road to recovery.

Incidents such as this one remind us of the unpredictability of life and the need to plan ahead, not just for weather disasters, but for whatever may come our way. This is why KDEM exists and why the Kansas National Guard is necessary to our state and nation. The Guard not only responds to the needs of Kansas citizens when disasters strike, protecting lives and property, but it also responds to the call of our nation, to defend it from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

To this end, we train constantly to make ourselves better Soldiers and Airmen, ready to answer the call when it comes, because we know it will come. Often, that training

requires us to learn new skills and become familiar with new equipment.

One example of this is the fielding of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System by the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, which is transitioning to a smaller, more mobile force. The HIMARS is a truck-mounted rocket launch system that is similar to the Multiple Launch Rocket System the battalion previously used, but lighter and more mobile, able to launch its rockets and move quickly to a new location. The battalion presented a live-fire demonstration of its capabilities for the public May 21 on the firing range at Fort Riley. You can read about it in this issue on Page 5.

Another example of Soldier training can be found on Page 6, detailing how Soldiers of Battery E, 161st Field Artillery learned rappelling techniques as part of their training for a mission in Djibouti, Africa.

In addition to receiving training, Kansas Guardsmen are also providing it. The members of Agribusiness Development Team 3 are continuing the mission of its two Kansas predecessors in Afghanistan, teaching Afghan farmers methods to improve their crops and develop new markets for them. Team members recently took part in a graduation ceremony for Afghan students who took part in a course in Applied Agriculture and Animal Science conducted through Nangarhar University in Afghanistan. Students such as these are the future of their country and I am proud that it is Kansans who are helping the Afghan people shape that future through programs like this.

In the Horn of Africa, Kansas Guardsmen of the 2137th Forward Support Company taught combat lifesaving skills to soldiers of the Rwandan Defense Force. This is just one of the many missions our Soldiers are engaged in over there, fostering military-to-military relations by helping the military of East African nations develop the skills needed to better defend their people and be good allies in the War on Terror.

I am always amazed at what extraordi-

nary people we have in the Kansas National Guard. In this issue of the Plains Guardian you can read about a Soldier who last year climbed a mountain in Nepal with a group of Wounded Warriors and this year took part in a television reality program pitting his three-man team against several others in a race across Morocco.

You can also read about a team of Airmen who tested themselves in a 26.2 mile hike across the New Mexico desert to honor the survivors of the Bataan Death March from World War II.

In this issue are two articles about the Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, a U.S. Air Force, volunteer auxiliary that augments disaster relief, homeland security, and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. A number of Kansas Guardsmen also belong to the Civil Air Patrol, using their Guard-learned skills to train CAP cadets.

Another article tells the story of the richly-deserved honor bestowed on a retired command sergeant major whose military career began in 1945, long before many of our current Guardsmen—including

me--were even born! Michael W. Hernandez enlisted in the U.S. Army shortly before the end of World War II. He completed his active duty, then enlisted in the Kansas Army National Guard in 1958 (again, before I was even born!) During his career in the Kansas National Guard, he deployed with the 69th Infantry Brigade to Vietnam.

I am sure that, during his career, Hernandez helped to train many Kansas Soldiers, imparting to them his wisdom and experience. Hernandez embodies the Kansas Guardsman we should all try to be, someone who served his country with pride, a mentor to younger Guardsmen and an example to his peers.

Memorial Day has just passed. I hope you took some time to remember those family members and friends who served in the U.S. Armed Forces before you and who are now gone. Some gave their lives in service to their country; others ended their career in a quiet retirement after many years of unassuming, selfless dedication to duty. All left behind a legacy of service and distinction that we should follow.

Soldier to Soldier

Challenge and change

By **Command Sgt. Maj. John Ryan**
JFHQ-KS Land Component

As you may have heard, the budget, end strength, and just about everything else is coming down. I sometimes think I am still at home where gas is up, insurance is up, food costs more, the children need shoes and I didn't get a raise this year. Oh by the way, my son just graduated and has moved out on his own and now I have to take out the trash and help more around the house. Holy cow! I think I'm at work.



**Command Sgt. Maj.
John Ryan**

All this being said, the environment in which we operate today has changed and is changing not just a little bit, but a lot and faster than we think. The question that comes to mind is "How will we survive?"

Let me just say, we can do this, but we can not wait. We must act now. We as leaders, senior noncommissioned officers and commanders, must consider ways to accomplish the many training tasks and requirements before us.

How can we train our Soldiers with less money to do so? How can we leverage technologies to help train our Sol-

diers? How can we maintain our equipment better and smarter? We must answer these question and more while keeping in mind safety.

As an individual, what must I do to stay in the system? What schooling do I need to get to the next level? How can I accomplish this while I maintain my job and keep my employer happy, too? What must I do to maintain my physical fitness and medical readiness? How can I better prepare my family should I have to deploy?

These are hard questions to answer. It seems we are too busy to get it all done. Let me suggest that, as individual Soldiers, we have choices to make every day of our lives. We can choose to get school dates and talk with our families and employers to figure out when we can go. We can choose to find time to exercise, maybe right after we get up in the morning or at night. Just a suggestion on how we can fit it into our busy schedules. Who knows? Maybe the spouse will join in and do it with you.

Bottom line up front: In the current environment, each of us must do all we can to maintain our personal readiness and be fully qualified to go to the next level because we do not know when that opportunity will present itself.

We must become better leaders and better utilize the limited resources, time and money, available to us. As leaders, senior NCOs and commanders, we must figure

(Continued on Page 6)

Versatility is the future

By **Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hector Vasquez**

Recently, I had the privilege to travel with the adjutant general to visit the 778th Transportation Company, currently deployed in Kuwait. I spent some time with Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kevin Harsch, the unit maintenance officer and maintenance manager for the 778th fleet. Despite his busy schedule, Harsch took the time to write up an article for this month's "Warrant Officer" column.

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On Thanksgiving morning 2004, while people back home were preparing for Thanksgiving festivities, the 778th Transportation Company advanced party was preparing other things.



**Command Chief
Warrant Officer 4
Hector Vasquez**

"Do you see that open area clear over there?" said our battalion motor officer, pointing to a huge opened area near the back corner of the camp near an outer perimeter. "That is your new home."

This is what would become the beginning of the planning and execution phase for the arrival of the 778th Transportation Company's huge 96 Heavy Equipment Transporters in Kuwait.

Six years down the road, buses transported the 778th, once again, into Kuwait and to what was going to be our home away from home. They pointed to that "area clear over there." We discovered that

the area was still recognizable. A lot of the efforts that we contributed to--the basic design, shop layout, electrical grids, truck layouts and many other areas--were still much the same, a reflection of the careful planning that we put in place years prior.

As a logistician in today's forces, we need to allow ourselves to be versatile. Sometimes, this requires us not to only know the job or Military Occupational Skill that you are trained in, but being able to perform in other functional areas.

During the 2004-2005 deployment, the 778th Transportation Company saved the Army supply system \$3.4 million of excess unaccounted Class 9 repair parts. This deployment we are well on our way of doubling last deployments numbers; currently we have exceeded \$5.1 million. Having knowledge of the Standard Army Retail Supply System allows us to communicate with the warehouses, which, in turn, allows the unit to be more fiscally responsible and in line with the Command Supply Discipline Program here in theater.

One of the coherent taskings a Soldier has as part of a transportation company is to know and understand the processes for the movement of personnel and equipment. Who else know the equipment better than the mechanic, who is always climbing up and down it?

During the 2004-2005 deployment, I was the assistant unit movement officer, helping move the entire company's equipment and personnel from home station to the area of operations overseas. This deployment, I have been appointed as the UMO. Having the training courses

(Continued on Page 6)

PLAINS GUARDIAN

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Fielding new weapons system is business as usual for battalion

By Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office and
Sgt. Shawn D. Stovall, UPAR
2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery

The Kansas National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery lit up the sky with rockets during an Open House and Live-Fire exercise Saturday, May 21, at the firing range on Fort Riley, Kan.

The public was invited to visit with the Soldiers, eat a hot dog lunch from the battalion field kitchen and observe a live-fire demonstration of the battalion's new High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, a truck-mounted rocket launch system.

A static display of radios, ammunition trucks and other equipment were on scene for family and friends to explore.

"This is something we do every year to bring the communities out to see what our Soldiers are doing," said Jolene Lowe, battalion Family Readiness Group leader. "It was nice to have the weather clear up and that so many people came out."

The 2-130th FA is headquartered in Hiawatha with units in Abilene, Clay Center, Concordia, Holton, Marysville and Ottawa.

The battalion, fresh off the heels of a yearlong deployment in support of the Multinational Force and Observer's mission in Sinai, Egypt, is transitioning from the tracked-vehicle M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System to the HIMARS.

Weapons transitions have happened several times in the battalion's past, each met with tremendous success.

The first major weapons upgrade came in 1977 when they switched from M102 105 millimeter Towed Howitzers to the 8-inch Self-Propelled Howitzer. Then, in 1977, the



An unarmed rocket speeds downrange at Fort Riley from a High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System fired by Soldiers of the Kansas National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery May 21. (Photo by Sgt. Jessica Barnett, Public Affairs Office)

battalion switched once more in 1995 to the Multiple Launch Rocket System.

Master Sgt. Eric Thompson, master gunner for Headquarters Battery, 2-130th FA, has been through the MLRS transition and knows the process well.

"During the MLRS transition we were going from howitzers to rockets, which entailed more of a workload for us to take on," said Thompson. "Now that we are just updating our rockets, the process has gone very smoothly."

Thompson said the Soldiers were adapting

to the new equipment and added tasks, even after just months from returning home.

"Our Soldiers are doing outstanding work," said Thompson, "and have met every obstacle with professionalism. The Soldiers realize the importance of keeping our validity as a field artillery unit. The deployment to the Sinai was a peacekeeping mission, and

this transition allows the Soldiers to return to what they do best, firing rockets."

The HIMARS is the newest member of the multiple-launch rocket system family, built by Lockheed Martin Corp. HIMARS is a highly-mobile artillery rocket system offering the firepower of MLRS on a wheeled chassis. It carries a single six-pack of rockets on the Army's family of medium tactical vehicles.

The purpose of the system is to engage and defeat artillery, air defense concentrations, trucks, light armor and personnel carriers, as well as support troop and supply concentrations. HIMARS is able to launch its weapons and move away from the area at high speeds before enemy forces are able to locate the launch site, according to Army-technology.com.

HIMARS is operated by a crew of three - driver, gunner and section chief - but the computer-based fire control system enables a crew of two or even a single Soldier to load and unload the system. The fire control system includes video, keyboard control, a gigabyte of program storage and a global positioning system. The fire control computer allows firing missions to be carried out in an automatic or manual mode.

There are two different jobs that Soldiers trained for, the fire direction specialist and launcher crew. Each requires several weeks of training provided by Precision Fire; a civilian company based out of Texas.

(Continued on Page 9)

Brothers meet in Afghanistan

By Sgt. Kenneth Kumle and
Sp. Thomas Sureau, ADT-3 UPAR

While not uncommon for family members to simultaneously serve in the military, it is rare to come together while deployed, unless serving under the same command. It was a special occasion for brothers Capt. Gary L. Crist and Master Sgt. Michael L. Crist, serving in separate commands, to have an opportunity to meet on Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam in the Laghman Province of Afghanistan.

"Our dad was in Vietnam, our granddad served in World War II and our great granddad served in World War I," said Michael. Michael, of Basehor, Kan., is currently on his sixth overseas tour and is a well-respected member of the armor community as a tank master gunner.

"So, it's a family tradition," said Gary, Hattiesburg, Miss., who is on his second deployment and has served in the air defense artillery branch for the past 12 years.

Michael, a division master gunner for the Kansas Army National Guard, is currently deployed to Laghman with the 3/6 Kansas Agribusiness Development Team as the personnel officer. Gary, who serves in the Mississippi Army National Guard's 184th

Expeditionary Sustainment Command, is currently deployed to Kandahar with the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan.

"I'm thankful to both of our commands for being supportive of getting us together," says Gary. "It really is a blessing to be able to do this."

While spending time together on FOB Mehtar Lam, the Crist brothers had an opportunity to go out on patrol together and assist with a market analysis.

"It's cool to get to do this with him," said Michael. "It's the first, and probably the last, time I'll get to do a combat patrol with a blood relative."

"It really gives you a sense of perspective," said Gary. "Being able to come down and see what the Agribusiness Development Team is doing on the ground is a lot different than working for a command group."

In an era in which a video-call is just a click away, or a quick message sent with a thumb-dance on a keypad, having the opportunity to come together on a deployment is something appreciated by all. It is our collective consciousness, unspoken but shared, that shows in the unmistakable heredity of the Crist brothers and this family of ours, the U.S. Armed Forces.



Capt. Gary L. Crist, left, Hattiesburg, Miss., 184th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, and his brother, Master Sgt. Michael L. Crist, Basehor, Kan., 3/6 Kansas Agribusiness Development Team, patrol in a village in the Laghman province of Afghanistan, April 17, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Kumle)

Kansas ADT takes part in graduation for Afghan students

By Sgt. Kenneth A. Kumle
ADT-3 UPAR

On May 5, 2011, members of Kansas Agribusiness Development Team 3 participated in a completion ceremony in Mehtar Lam for students of a course in Applied Agriculture and Animal Science conducted through Nangarhar University.

The ceremony was the culmination of an 11 week course, focused on teaching numerous practical agricultural technologies and techniques that bring the academics of the classroom to the field for practical use by the students.

"We have already studied the academic theory of agriculture through Nangarhar University," said Noorzamir, a student. "This course was a good, practical application of those things."

Another student, Moneerah Mad, said, "More than 80 percent of all Afghans base their livelihood on agriculture. I'm learning these techniques here so I can go and teach them to other villages."

This course, taught by agricultural professionals sponsored by the Kansas

Agribusiness Development Team 3 with the cooperation of the director of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock of Laghman Province and Nangarhar University, is vital to the future agricultural growth of the province.

"I have great hope for the future of Afghanistan because of students like these," said Col. Howard E. Wheeler, commander of the Kansas Agribusiness Development Team 3.

Many of these students are due to graduate from Nangarhar University in the next month with their Bachelor's degree in Agriculture and are looking to the future with plans on pursuing their master's degree and moving into governance to better serve the people of Afghanistan.

"This course is a gateway for the young agricultural students to get into the agricultural community through the Director of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock," said Dr. Eric Grant, the USDA Sr. Agricultural Expert with the Kansas Agribusiness Development Team. "These students are

(Continued on Page 9)



Col. Howard E. Wheeler, center, commander of Kansas Agribusiness Development Team 3, assists in handing out certificates of completion to students of an 11-week course in Applied Agriculture and Animal Science conducted through Nangarhar University. (Photo by Sgt. Kenneth A. Kumle, UPAR)

Special training helps Kansas Soldiers learn the ropes

By Capt. Lisa Brown
205th Infantry Brigade

Soldiers from the Future Operations Section, 1st Battalion, 335th Infantry, and the 2nd Battalion, 337th Training Support, 205th Infantry Brigade, worked in conjunction to perform their first rappelling/fast-rope training exercise at Camp Atterbury in support of the unit's upcoming mission to Djibouti, Africa.

Battery E (Target Acquisition), 161st Field Artillery, Kansas National Guard, a 40-Soldier platoon, arrived at Camp Atterbury in March to receive pre-mobilization training to include specialized rope training from several battalions within the 205th Infantry Brigade in order to prepare for their yearlong deployment.

Capt. Layne Matthews, future operations planner, 1-335th Infantry Brigade, explained that rappelling, rope ladder and fast rope operations are identified as part of the Army command training requirements for the platoon as potential missions.

"During the first day, we started out with a hands-on portion where we explained the principles of rappelling, terminology, roles, rules and responsibilities, and how to tie a Swiss seat," said Matthews.

Matthews said after the guidelines are set, the Soldiers are then moved to the 15-foot incline towers where they conducted belay procedures and get familiarized with proper 'L' shape and techniques.

"The second day of training they moved to the 45-foot tower," said Matthews. "The Soldiers conducted three rappels facing the

wall side of the tower. The first rappel, they do not wear any gear. The second, they perform with no gear and show proficiency with the safety lock in, and the third iteration is with full combat gear on."

After the Soldiers practiced rappelling down the wall side of the tower, they rappelled again down the 45-foot tower this time down the non-wall side in order to practice fast-roping.

"The training we're getting here at Camp Atterbury is high-speed, lots of fun and good times," said Sgt. Eurik Hunt. "I work for the Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department back home, and the training I received from Air Assault School and the 205th Infantry Brigade as far as the tactical aspects with the different skills and tasks we are performing will help me for when I apply for the SWAT team."

2nd Lt. Barry Gomes, Battery E commander, was very impressed with the training his troops received.

"This training has been fantastic and the greatest training we've had in the past two months since we started our pre-deployment training," said Gomes. "We have had great support from the trainers of the 1-335th Battalion. They were given an unconventional mission... and have definitely adapted and overcome to try and meet our needs as best they can."

Sgt. 1st Class David Medina, platoon sergeant, shared the commander's sentiments.

"It motivates our Soldiers, and really pushes them to get more confidence built up in them."



Members of Battery E (Target Acquisition), 161st Field Artillery, Kansas National Guard, rappel from the towers at Camp Atterbury, Ind. The Soldiers are part of a Site Security Team for the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa mission deploying to Djibouti, Africa (Photo by Sgt. Brian Gisbrecht)

AFRICOM, Rwandan partners engage in joint exercise

By Staff Sgt. Gary Merrick, UPAR

A team of U.S. Army Soldiers deployed to Camp Lemmonier returned from Rwanda after teaming with more than 600 Rwanda Military Academy cadets to enhance a variety of mutual skills.

The team consisted of Kansas National Guardsmen Master Sgt. Randy McCall, Hays; Staff Sgt. Keith Adams, Topeka; and Staff Sgt. Gary Merrick, El Dorado. Together, they worked with the RMA cadre and the Rwanda Defense Forces to practice peacekeeping operations in Darfur. McCall is a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery; Adams and Merrick are members of the 35th Military Police Company.

The partner nation units went to villages outside the Rwanda Military Academy's training area and participated in convoys to local villages to distribute water.

"I enjoyed partnering with the RDF," McCall said. "The Rwandans were eager and receptive to working with us as well. I'm looking forward to the opportunity to work with them again in the future."

The trip culminated in a graduation ceremony for the 4th Infantry Battalion Soldiers. It was attended by Stuart Symington, U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda; Lt. Gen. Charles Kayonga, chief of RDF; the Rwanda Military Academy cadre and the soldiers.

At the graduation, the soldiers demonstrated their new convoy operation skills and performed a casualty evacuation and a vehicle recovery, which consists of providing security for a disabled convoy vehicle.

Kayonga thanked the RMA cadre and U.S. Soldiers for their efforts to build partnership and trust between nations. Future U.S. - Rwandan partnership events are scheduled to occur.

Business magazine names Rose as "Kansan You Should Know"

Brig. Gen. Deborah Rose, director of Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas, Kansas National Guard, has been named one of Ingrams Magazine's "50 Kansans You Should Know."



Brig. Gen. Deborah Rose

The Kansas City business magazine features Rose and other notable Kansans in its January 2011

issue.

"I was extremely honored when notified by Ingram's Magazine that I had been selected as one of the "50 Kansans You Should Know," said Rose. "When I received the actual article, I was humbled to be recognized alongside such a prestigious group of Kansans. It is with great pride that I represent the Kansas National Guard, as well as all of the females serving or who have served in the Kansas National Guard."

The short profile of Rose can be found on page 22 of the magazine, which is also available online at IngramsOnline.com.

Practicing to saves lives



Spec. Austin Drake, a combat medic with the 2137th Forward Support Company, assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, Kansas National Guard, assists two Rwandan Defense Force soldiers practice the proper technique for a two-man manual carry. RDF soldiers partnered with Drake and his fellow combat medic, Sgt. Bethany Edwards, also from the 2137th Forward Support Company, to exchange lifesaving skills and prevent injuries. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

Versatility is the future

Continued from Page 4

and the knowledge in this area allows me to be able to communicate with the proper entities, starting at state level through the deployment platform, then into the theater of operations and return.

Today's Army is changing into a more modularity style application. The MOS that you hold today may not be the one that we need for tomorrow. As you progress through your military career challenge yourself to be more versatile. Take courses that allow you to have knowledge in adjacent career paths. In doing this it evolves a

more developed functional area that you will be able to interpret.

*** **** **

I would like to thank Kevin for this article and wish all of the Soldiers in the 778th Transportation Company the "best of luck" with our hope that everyone returns home safe to family and friends.

For the rest of us, I ask that you please send an e-mail or letter to the Soldiers that are deployed all over the world. Let them know they are not forgotten and thank them for the sacrifices they and their families are making for defending this great country.

Challenge and change

Continued from Page 4

out how to make our training meaningful and challenging so we don't waste our Soldiers' time. We must keep our Soldiers informed on what is going on and how we intend to accomplish all the things we need to accomplish. We must ensure that our Soldiers get the education needed for them to advance and become better Soldiers and leaders. We must train them to take our place for the betterment of the Kansas National Guard. We must lead by example. Remem-

ber the words of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower: "You don't lead by hitting people over the head--that's assault, not leadership."

Let us not forget to include our families. They need "training," too, so our Soldiers can focus on what they need to be doing.

Again, I say to you "We can do this." We have transitioned from a strategic force to and operational force with success. Today, we have a better team, senior NCOs and commanders. We will get through these times of challenges and change.

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Kansas Guardsmen dive into adventure during Sinai deployment

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

For many, the word “Egypt” conjures up visions of great stone pyramids, the enigmatic Sphinx, camels crossing a dun-colored desert and the bustling metropolis of Cairo. However, three Kansas National Guardsmen experienced another aspect of this African nation, one that was cool, blue and silent.

Sgt. Nathaniel Chilson, Sgt. William Vonderschmidt and Spc. Scott Matthews deployed with the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery to Egypt in 2009 as part of a Multinational Force and Observers mission charged with keeping the peace between Egypt and Israel under the terms of the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace negotiated by President Jimmy Carter.

“We would do three weeks out and come back for three weeks,” said Matthews of their duty schedule on the Sinai Peninsula. “On our down time, we would have three to five days to go explore stuff, see the beaches, see the sights.”

During their off hours, the three Guardsmen took up the hobby of scuba diving. Before deploying to Egypt, none of the three had ever been diving before and all credited their deployment as Guardsmen with providing them an opportunity to experience something they otherwise might never have had the chance to do.

“My first exposure to diving was in Egypt,” said Chilson, who learned of diving opportunities in Egypt from the newsletter of a unit that had previously deployed there. “In Kansas, there’s not much diving to be had here, so when I went over to Egypt, I thought that was certainly one of the things I had to do in a venue I would probably never be able to go to again.”

“I started diving about six months into our deployment,” said Vonderschmidt. “It was something I was pushing. I had looked into it a few years back. When I heard we were going there, it was definitely something I was interested in.”

After receiving diver’s training, the three took several excursions into the Red Sea



Sgt. Nathaniel Chilson readies himself for a dive into the Red Sea during some down time on his deployment to Sinai, Egypt. Chilson deployed as part of a Multinational Force and Observers mission in 2009. (Photo provided)

with a local diving group. One particularly memorable experience was a dive to the wreckage of the SS Thistlegorm, a British merchant ship sunk by German bombers during World War II. As a supply ship, the Thistlegorm was loaded with all manner of goods bound for British troops, including two railroad steam engines.

“(The Thistlegorm) is one of the premier dive sites over there,” said Chilson. “It has world-wide recognition as a good shipwreck to dive, primarily I think because it’s in such shallow water, which means even novice scuba divers can go there.”

“The ship was sunk before it off-loaded its cargo,” he continued, “so you have all types of motorcycles down there, still stacked up ready to be delivered, supply trucks. There were stacks of Enfield rifles down there, including some very large cannon shells... all kinds of supplies to see down there. Rubber boots, Wellington boots (is) what they were

called, scattered all over the place.”

“I counted upwards of a dozen to 20 motorcycles,” said Matthews. “I actually swam through one of the locomotives that was down there. There had to be like maybe two or three versions of a deuce and a half (truck). A lot of trucks were loaded with boots and gloves.”

In addition to the ship, however, the Guardsmen found their various interactions with the area’s sea life to be fascinating.

“We saw a three to four meter stingray,” said Matthews. “There were a lot of smaller stingrays, moray eels, a lot of beau-

tiful fish. I also saw a sea turtle. He was in the (Thistlegorm) wreckage eating some vegetation.”

“Diving around Tiran Island, the colors of coral are a lot more vivid, a lot more vibrant,” said Vonderschmidt. “I saw a couple of octopus, a couple of sea turtles. They were pretty fascinating, very large, a lot larger than you think they are.”

“I also saw a white-tip reef shark. It wasn’t very large, about six to eight feet long. The closest I got to it was about 15 feet away. It’s a lot less scary than you think it would be.”

Chilson also had a shark encounter on his last dive in the area, which he termed “the pinnacle” of his experiences.

“It was a white tip reef shark,” he recalled. “I reacted in a way I didn’t think I would have, once I saw it. I was so excited about seeing the thing I started swimming toward it! After swimming about five or 10 feet, I realized that was a bad idea and I would just admire it from a distance.”

Chilson, Vonderschmidt and Matthews returned to Kansas in 2010, but said would like to find new venues stateside to continue their diving experience.

“South Carolina has some good diving spots,” said Vonderschmidt. “They have some public parks that have diving off of them.”

“Florida’s got a lot of shipwrecks,” said Chilson. “I’d love to go see some of those. Australia’s Great Barrier Reef would be an amazing place to go dive.”

Prior to his Egyptian experiences, “I was half-scared of the water,” admitted Chilson. “Being land-locked in Kansas, I was actually afraid to ever get into anything bigger than my bathtub. So, why I decided to jump into the sea, I don’t know, but it was one of the greatest things I’ve ever done.”



The Red Sea has a number of coral reefs teeming with a variety of sea life, making it one of the premier dive spots in the world. (Photo provided)



A diver hangs suspended in the blue, silent world of the Red Sea off the coast of Egypt. (Photo provided)

One added to NCO Hall of Fame

By Spc. Jessica Zullig
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

A new addition was made to the Non-commissioned Officer Hall of Fame at the Kansas Regional Training Center, Salina, Kan. Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Michael W. Hernandez, who enlisted in the Army 66 years ago, is the 11th honoree in the Hall of Fame.

A ceremony was held for Hernandez on April 10, 2011, where he was presented with a plaque for the induction and a commemorative plaque from his deployment to Vietnam in 1969 with the 69th

Infantry Brigade by retired Command Sgt. Maj. Viviano Reveles and retired Maj. Gen. Alonzo Dougherty.

“It’s a special day for Command Sgt. Maj. Hernandez, his family, but more for the Kansas National Guard,” said Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general. “This induction serves as recognition and gratitude of future generations of your service and the lasting impact you have made to the Kansas Army National Guard.

“Congratulations and thank you for a job well done,” Tafanelli continued. “You

(Continued on Page 10)



Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli congratulates retired Command Sgt. Maj. Michael W. Hernandez on his induction into the Kansas National Guard Noncommissioned Officer Hall of Fame. (Photo by Spc. Jessica Zullig, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Air tanker crews weather Japanese tsunami during Pacific missions

By Capt. Joe Blubaugh
190th ARW Public Affairs

With the ferocity of Kansas weather, it's not uncommon for a mission to be impacted by thunderstorms, wind or even the occasional blizzard. However, it's not often that a 190th Air Refueling Wing mission is affected by a tsunami, but that's exactly what happened following the massive earthquake and resulting tsunami that recently struck Japan.

Within minutes of the earthquake, officials issued tsunami warnings for Japan and dozens of other islands throughout the Pacific, including Wake Island and Hawaii, both of which were the temporary home of three 190th KC-135s and their crews.

The two tankers and crews at Wake Island were part of a six ship mission escorting 12 Marine F-18s from Japan to the United States. The Coyotes took off from Yakota Air Force Base just hours before the devastating earthquake struck. They were unaware of the earthquake or the resulting tsunami, until they landed at Wake Island.

It was actually several hours after their arrival that they learned they were in a tsunami warning. And once they learned of the approaching tsunami, they had less than three hours until the anticipated wave would strike. Unlike many islands, Wake is extremely small and completely void of any elevated features.

"The tallest features on the island are the two-story billeting buildings," said Maj. Dan Skoda, one of the 190th pilots on the mission. There are also only about 100 year-round personnel that are stationed at

Wake and they immediately implemented the island's disaster plan.

"They assured us that the geography of the reef around the island made the risk of a devastating swell very low," said Skoda. "We had to trust they knew what they were doing. We certainly had enough time and space on the tankers to evacuate all the personnel off the island."

When the wave did finally strike, the island was spared the disaster that struck Japan. Wake experienced just a two foot swell that caused no damage and the Coyotes were able to complete their mission on schedule. The crews rode out the wave on the roof of their billeting building.

The story was somewhat similar for the 190th crew that was in Hawaii at the time of the tsunami as part of a mission to move two F-15s to a Pacific country.

When Maj. Ryan Strong first learned of the tsunami warning, his first course of action was to gain accountability of his crew and restrict them to their high rise hotel in Waikiki. After discussing a possible unscheduled launch of the aircraft to avoid the tsunami, it was decided that the crews would ride out the wave from their hotel.

Being in an unfamiliar situation, the crews found it difficult to sleep with the approaching wave due to strike at 4 a.m. local time.

"Every hour there were public safety messages playing over the hotel intercom instructing us to stay in our rooms above the second floor," said Strong. "The streets were empty except for the occasional police vehicle."

Although Hawaii did experience some



A 190th KC-135 prepares to refuel F-18s over Wake Island during an escort mission from Japan to the United States. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ben Fulton)

localized flooding and minor damage from the wave, it was uneventful at Waikiki beach. The biggest impact to the crew was later that morning said Strong.

"We had a 7 a.m. crew show that morning, but there were no taxis or crew transportation due to gas stations being sold out," said Strong. The Coyotes were eventually able to secure transportation and the rest of their mission was uneventful.

Although the tsunami ended up having no negative impacts on the missions, it was still a unique situation that reinforces the professionalism and flexibility aircrews must maintain even on routine missions.

Neither pilot said they ever felt like they were in danger. However, Skoda said, "There was definitely some apprehension on the part of the crew members as we waited for the wave."

190th ARW team takes part in Memorial Bataan Death March

By Master Sgt. Terry Martin
190th Air Refueling Wing

The day started at 4:30 a.m. That was the report time to White Sands Missile Range, N. M., March 27.

Every year, survivors of the infamous Bataan "Death March" in 1942 gather at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico to remember their comrades in the Bataan Memorial Death March. This year, a record 6,400 people from all 50 states and four countries participated. The march is open to the public and military members can participate in either the individual or team category.

This year, a group of five from the 190th Air Refueling Wing assembled a team consisting of Col. Kyle Garrison, Lt. Col. Tim Stevens, Lt. Col. Bill Hefner, Master Sgt. Jeff Norling and Master Sgt. Terry Martin. Senior Airman Megan Carlson also participated in the individual category.

Garrison, who assembled the team and served as team captain, did it to honor the survivors.

"When I first read about the march two or three years ago, I mentioned to Lieutenant Colonel Hefner that we should put a team together," said Garrison. "Those men

need to be honored... and I've always wanted to do it."

The team entered into the "military light" category, which required the wearing of ABUs and a camelback. In addition, all teams were required to start and finish the 26.2 mile march within 20 seconds of each other or risk being disqualified.

The event was one of remembrance, a way to honor those men who, in 1942, were captured by Japanese forces and forced to march through treacherous terrain of the Philippines to a prisoner of war camp. American and Filipino troops were systematically executed; the sick and weak were pushed to exhaustion before being bayoneted or beaten to death with the butt end of the captors' rifles. Many of the 54,000 who reached the camp would succumb to disease or torture while imprisoned. Within two months of surrender, more than 21,000 men perished. The Bataan "Death March" is known as one of the greatest inhumanities of World War II, as well as one of the greatest displays of heroism and human will power on the part of its survivors.

The day before the march, the team had

"In all the marathons I have run, I have never gone up hill for six straight miles."

Lt. Col. Bill Hefner

the privilege of visiting with one of the survivors, John Mims. Mims was very gracious with his time and was a rambunctious fellow. The team later learned that Mims, then a private first class, observed a Japanese sergeant accidentally drop a bottle of soda.

"I picked it up and handed it back" Mims said. The soldier smashed the bottle into Mims's lower jaw, shattering his bottom row of teeth. Mims's infraction? "I didn't bow."

During the march, Hefner served as the team motivator. He has completed more than 25 marathons and understood the framework and challenges associated with completing a 26.2 mile course. He advised the team when to take their nutrient supplements and encouraged every team member at different points in the march. It seemed whenever anyone started to hit a mental

wall, questioning whether they could keep going, Hefner was there.

It was a tough course, over 80 percent of the route consisted of sand and dirt. The winds were consistently 40 mph with gusts up to 60 mph in the first half of the course. Also at one point in the march, the team went up hill for six consecutive miles.

"In all the marathons I have run, I have never gone up hill for six straight miles," said Hefner.

In the last half mile near the finish, the team could start to hear the cheers and sense the end. Legs gained strength as the team of five formed into a straight line across locking arms about 20 yards before the finish line.

In those final steps some of the team members experience self contained moments of emotion. It was an overwhelming feeling of joy, relief and a sense of something bigger than ones' self. A few minutes after crossing the finish line, the team reflected on what they had just accomplished.

"No matter what we say, no words can describe how difficult this was," said Norling.

It was a physical strain, but nothing compared to the suffering of those men who endured the Bataan Death March.



More than 6,400 people from all 50 states and four countries took part in the 2011 Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands Missile Range, N.M. (Photo submitted)



Master Sgt. Terry Martin (left) and Master Sgt. Jeff Norling change socks during the 26.2 mile Bataan Memorial Death March. (Photo by Lt. Col. Bill Hefner)

Kansas Civil Air Patrol fields first all-female flight crew

By Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR

History was made April 30 when, for the first time in its 54 years of existence, the Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol fielded its first all-female flight crew. The crew was one of several that took part in the search and rescue exercise conducted over the weekend April 30-May 1.

When Civil Air Patrol members check in at the beginning of a mission, their records are checked for what duties they are qualified to perform. Lists of qualified members are prepared and then provided to the Air and Ground Branch directors. The directors build their staff from the names on the lists.

CAP Air Branch Director Lt. Col. John Shelton, New Century Composite Squadron, assembled flight crews, matching trainees with experienced personnel. For one of his three crews, Shelton selected Maj. Lynn Haltom, Kansas Wing Headquarters, as the mission pilot; 2nd Lt. Mary Ann Teschan, New Century Composite Squadron, to be the observer and, to complete the crew as the scanner, 2nd Lt. Dyann Berglund, Topeka Eagle Composite Squadron.

"Having the first all female flight crew was an honor and a wonderful experience, said Haltom. "We, as a new crew, complimented each other's experiences and talents and worked well as a team."

"I simply follow my heart and do what I love to do! And in the process, sometimes history happens," said Teschan.

"We were all pleased that we got to go together and did not realize we were the first "all girl" crew," said Berglund. "That was very cool! It was a lot of fun and I

learned a lot."

"Kansas Wing has a tradition of female leadership dating back to Col. Pat Lane, who was my wing commander (May 1989 to December 1992)," said CAP Col. Regena Aye, Kansas Wing commander. "With strong examples and dedication, the female members of the wing find themselves actively serving their communities, state, and nation alongside their brother volunteers."

"I'm not surprised this crew came together," she continued. "We currently have three female squadron commanders in the wing."

The crew flew as part of a combined air/ground search for a simulated downed aircraft. They flew a search pattern in an area bordered by Salina, McPherson, Marion and Herington. They crossed the area searching for a signal from an emergency locator transmitter. As the pilot, Haltom flew the Cessna 182 from the left front seat. Her duties involved the safe operation and navigation of the aircraft. Teschan, the observer, sat in the right front seat. From there she conducted a visual search to the right, looking for signs of a downed aircraft and other airborne traffic. She also assisted Haltom in navigation and operated the CAP air to ground radios, communicating with mission base and the assigned ground teams. Performing the scanner duties, Berglund sat behind Haltom, she conducted the visual search from the left side. She also maintained the flight log, noting course changes, radio communications and other mission related activities.

Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of



From the left: 2nd Lt. Mary Ann Teschan, observer; Maj. Lynn Haltom, mission pilot; and 2nd Lt. Dyann Berglund, mission scanner, became the first all-female flight crew fielded by the Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol. (Photo by Maj. Alan Simon, Kansas Civil Air Patrol)

the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with more than 61,000 members nationwide. CAP, in its Air Force auxiliary role, performs 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and has been credited by the AFRCC with saving 112 lives so far this fiscal year.

Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the more than 25,000 young people currently participating in the CAP cadet programs. Visit www.gocivilairpatrol.com for more information.

Civil Air Patrol conducts long-range communications training

By Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR

Long range communications training was the purpose of the Civil Air Patrol's Kansas Emergency Service Academy. Sixty cadet and adult CAP members spent the weekend of April 9 and 10 in the Junction City's National Guard Armory training with the CAP's high frequency radios. The training was conducted by Lt. Col. Charles Bishop, a member of the CAP National Technology Squadron.

"High frequency radios allow communications over great distances, far greater than the line of sight VHF radios," said Bishop. "HF wavelengths are measured in football fields, where VHF wavelengths are measured in inches."

The Automatic Link Establishment automatically searches for the best frequency within a channel. This eliminates the need for the operator to constantly tune the radio to compensate for changes in the ionosphere.

As part of its overall communication plan, the Civil Air Patrol has established a series of VHF radio repeaters across the state. They are placed on the highest points possible, such as radio and water towers and on roofs of the tallest buildings available. This allows responders to speak over great distances. However, if one or more repeater towers are destroyed by a tornado, fire, flood or earthquake; VHF radios would be limited. This is where the long range of the HF radios would be used.

"Unlike VHF radios that are line of sight, just a few miles, depending on the terrain; HF radios can easily communicate five to six hundred miles or more," Bishop explained. "The HF does not replace the hand-held VHF radios for normal operations. However, when they are needed, there is nothing that can complete with the HF."

Saturday was spent in classroom training.



Members of the Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol erect a 33-foot high-frequency antenna during a communications training April 9 and 10 in Junction City. (Photo by Sgt. Michael Mathewson, UPAR)

Members new to communications underwent a basic communications training program that presented both theory and hands on training. The other members trained on setting up and operating the HF radio.

Sunday was all hands-on. The group raised a 33-foot antenna mast supporting an HF antenna. The training was made even more realistic by erecting the antenna in 30 mile per hour winds. A dozen pairs of hands were needed to hold the guy wires and control the mast. Once raised, there was a good deal of adjustment required to get it straight.

Bishop, who had driven from Little Rock,

Ark., to conduct the training said, "I enjoyed the interest everyone had in learning."

"I am glad that I was able to attend. I received my basic communication training card so I can use my Squadron's radios," said Cadet Airman 1st Class Matthew Boone, Wichita.

"This was some of the best training that I have had," said Cadet Staff Sgt. Chance Troup, Wichita.

Cadet Airman 1st Class Donald Mansker of Junction City said "I enjoy the hands on learning that we did Saturday afternoon and this morning."

"I enjoyed putting up the pole and stringing up the antenna," said CAP Maj. Randy Haufler, a former U.S. Air Force communications officer. "My active duty jobs involved aircraft radios, so this was my first chance to work in a field environment putting up antennas and using hand-held and HF radios."

Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with more than 61,000 members nationwide. CAP, in its Air Force auxiliary role, performs 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and has been credited by the AFRCC with saving 112 lives so far this fiscal year. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the more than 25,000 young people currently participating in the CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for almost 70 years. Visit www.gocivilairpatrol.com for more information.

Afghan graduation ceremony

Continued from Page 5

the future agricultural leaders of Afghanistan."

"I want to get a Master of Science degree in Agriculture and through it I can serve my country," said Mitayyeb, one of the graduates. "I'm trying to get even more in-

formation, maybe even be a doctor in agriculture so I can better serve my country and my people."

"These students have an enormous amount of opportunity," said Wheeler, "for those that have the knowledge and daring to (seize) it."

Battalion fields new weapons system

Continued from Page 5

"The difference between the two sets of training is the fire direction specialists have to do three weeks of computer training that is similar to the old system, but the launcher crew have to train on all new equipment," said Sgt. Randal Milleson, a training noncommissioned officer for Headquarters Battery.

As the unit makes its transition from the M270 to the HIMARS, they will gain greater mobility as the HIMARS vehicle weighs approximately 24,000 lbs compared to more than 44,000 lbs for the MLRS M270 launcher. The system is also trans-

portable on the C-130 aircraft (combat loaded), allowing the system to be moved into areas previously inaccessible to the larger C-141 and C-5 aircraft required for the M270 launch vehicle, according to Lockheed Martin Corp.

The transition also plays a bigger role overall in the Kansas National Guard.

"(The transition) allows more than 400 Soldiers to keep a ready and relevant status and gives junior leaders a venue to practice their leadership and management skills, while maintaining the craft of field artillery," said Lt. Col. Christopher Burr, battalion commander.

Unit Public Affairs Representatives learn how to tell the Guard story

By Lt. Col. Rex Johnson
JFHQ PA

Fifty National Guard Soldiers, Airmen, and Civil Air Patrol employees attended the 2011 Unit Public Affairs Representative training course over the weekend of April 2 and 3, 2011, in Salina, Kan. The course is held annually to provide basic public affairs skills to help Guard members create news stories and photographs about their units.

“We’ve been teaching the students how to write stories, take photographs, and work with members of the community,” said Sharon Watson, Public Affairs director for the Adjutant General’s Department. “Many of our Soldiers and Airmen are residents of Kansas and have full-time jobs in the civilian workforce. We believe they have a lot of interesting stories to tell about their roles in the National Guard.”

The two-day course provided the participants with the opportunity to learn the skills needed to conduct interviews, write stories and take effective photographs. In addition, the course covered modern forms of mass communication; including social media like Facebook and Twitter.

“The UPARs are the ones in the field telling the story of the Kansas National

Guard,” said Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general. “They’re like hometown newspaper reporters, because they know the people in the unit and what they do. They can provide all those interesting stories about our Soldiers and Airmen and how they serve the people of Kansas and the nation.”

Tech. Sgt. Michael Bieberle who serves in flight operations at Smoky Hill Range, Detachment 1, 184th Intelligence Wing, said the UPAR course covered more information than he originally anticipated.

“I thought it was just going to be about (writing) stories,” said Bieberle. “But we’ve gotten into picture taking, social media and video. It is a lot more inclusive than I thought.”

For many Guard members, this training will prepare them for a UPAR role for upcoming deployments, missions, and overseas service.

“Our unit is about to deploy,” said Spc. Alicia Murphy, an intelligence analyst for 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation. “I was appointed as the UPAR.”

Murphy said that as a UPAR, she had been taking photographs, but not yet writing stories about her unit. Murphy said the UPAR



Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, talks to the Unit Public Affairs Representative class about the importance of the UPAR’s role in telling the public about the activities of the Kansas National Guard. The class was held at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina April 2 and 3, 2011. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

course has helped prepare her for her role.

“Now I know what to do with the pictures and how to write the stories,” added Murphy. “Now I know who to contact.”

“We already have a full time UPAR,” said Sgt. Shawn Evans, band member with the 35th Division Band. “We are supposedly deploying, so I would be the forward unit UPAR.”

“I like taking pictures and doing media,” added Evans. “I am learning to pick up some good habits in writing.”

According to Watson, the UPAR program is an essential component of the State’s Public Affairs Department.

“We are training our Unit Public Affairs Representatives to work with their units during drill weekends to get stories and photos submitted to our Public Affairs Department,” said Watson. “These Soldiers and Airmen are our eyes and ears in the units and local communities. Without their input, we may not know what interesting stories are out there.”

Staff Sgt. Patricia Leihy is an executive administrative assistant for the command staff of the 35th Division. She commented that she had always had an interest in pursuing UPAR work for some time.

“Years ago I had wanted to be in Public Affairs, but never pursued it,” said Leihy. “(Our PAO) thought it would be great for a full-time person to become a UPAR. I was asked if I wanted to come to the UPAR course by my company commander.”

Leihy feels this will give her the opportunity to provide information about her unit to the rest of the Kansas Guard community.

“If the events during the week, such as conferences or visits by distinguished visitors, occur (and) they need someone to cover the story or take some photos then I can do that,” Leihy added.

Although the majority of students were from the National Guard, other state employees also benefitted from the training. Henry Hickey, of the Civil Air Patrol, works for the Division of Emergency Management and is on the Adjutant General’s communication team. He plans to use the training from the weekend to assist him in his role.

“The course will help me as the unit historian,” Hickey said. “To take pictures, do stories and gives me some interviewing techniques. When we go to our conferences, I can take pictures of our unit and do a story for the historical files.”

Brig. Gen. Eric Peck, commander of the Kansas Army National Guard, attended part of the training on Saturday. He emphasized the importance of the UPAR program.

“Getting unit stories out to our communities is a critical step in building community relationships,” said Peck. “These stories do a couple of other critical functions. First, they document unit activities for historical purposes so they function as a historical record. Secondly, they are great contributors to the retention of our Soldiers; everyone likes to see their picture or read about their participation in unit training, and the stories create interest for people in the community to join the National Guard. The importance of Unit Public Affairs Representatives cannot be overstated as they are the public voice of the unit.”

Awards and Decorations

KANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Legion of Merit



Col. Matt Raney, 35th Div, Fort Leavenworth
Chief Warrant Officer 5 Keith T. Rogers, 35th Div, Fort Leavenworth

Meritorious Service Medal



Capt. Feng X. Zhang, 73rd CST (WMD), Topeka, with one oak leaf cluster
1st Sgt. Richard R. Bridges, R&R Bn, Topeka, with one oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Ricky J. Combes, HHC, 287th SB, Wichita
Master Sgt. David Costales, 73rd CST (WMD), Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Edward J. Sullivan, Btry C, 2-130th FA, Abilene
Sgt. 1st Class Kathy S. Zabel, 287th SB, Wichita, with one Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. William P. Lorenz, JFHQ LC-KS, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Terry E. Clark, JFHQ LC-KS, Topeka
Sgt. Gary A. Kenney, BCTC, Fort Leavenworth
Sgt. Michael T. Ott, HHB, 2-130th FA, Hiawatha

Army Commendation Medal



Master Sgt. Dwayne S. Burgoon, Kansas Counterdrug, Topeka, with two Oak Leaf Clusters
Sgt. 1st Class Lisa I. Baker, Kansas Counterdrug, Topeka, with three Oak Leaf Clusters
Sgt. 1st Class Shelly R. Mann, Kansas Counterdrug, Topeka, with two Oak Leaf Clusters
Sgt. 1st Class Marc A. Toomey, Kansas Counterdrug, Topeka, with three Oak Leaf Clusters
Staff Sgt. Matthew G. Rubin, Kansas Counterdrug, Topeka, with one Oak Leaf Cluster
Sgt. Daren D. Guy, Det 1, 170th Maint Co, Colby
Sgt. Warren V. Rogers, Det 1, 170th Maint Co, Colby

Army Achievement Medal



Staff Sgt. Jamie J. Baxter, Kansas Counterdrug, Topeka, with two Oak Leaf Clusters
Sgt. Matthew A. Asebedo, Kansas Counterdrug, Topeka, with three Oak Leaf Clusters
Sgt. Michael Brent, Kansas Counterdrug, Topeka, with one Oak Leaf Cluster
Spc. Joseph D. Goodale, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Wichita
Spc. Joshawa J. Heaslet, 35th ID Band, Olathe
Spc. Isaac J. Leihy, Btry B, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Paola
Pfc. Jeffery S. Fisher, 35th Div, Fort Leavenworth
Pfc. Matthew Slagle, Btry C, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Newton

Kansas National Guard Achievement Ribbon



Spc. Celia Jane Prince, 226th Eng Co, Augusta

KANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Meritorious Service Medal



Lt. Col. Thomas Turner, 190th ARW, Topeka
Capt. Eric Webb, 190th ARW, Topeka
1st Lt. Roger Stockman, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. David Rodriguez, 190th ARW, Topeka, with one Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Christiana Wickline, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Robert Crain, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Thomas Hopper, 190th ARW, Topeka

Air Force Commendation Medal



Capt. Penny Jamvold, 190th ARW, Topeka, with one Oak Leaf Cluster
1st Lt. Eric Tincer, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Master Sgt. Wade Durkes, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two Oak Leaf Clusters
Senior Master Sgt. Russell Mercer, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two Oak Leaf Clusters
Master Sgt. Clark Cook, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Michael Gellings, 190th ARW, Topeka, with one Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Shawna Hartford, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Jeffrey Johansen, 190th ARW, Topeka, with three Oak Leaf Clusters
Master Sgt. Michael Sinkhorn, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Stephen Wodtke, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Andrew Piper, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Gabriel Ramirez, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Tod Scott, 190th ARW, Topeka

Air Force Achievement Medal



2nd Lt. Jack Brooks, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Jamesson Dunbar, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Ralph Lilley, 190th ARW, Topeka, with one Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Kristina Perkins, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two Oak Leaf Clusters
Tech. Sgt. Mandy Johnson, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Joel Pascua, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two Oak Leaf Clusters
Tech. Sgt. Dale Wright, 190th ARW, Topeka, with one Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Steven Blowers, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two Oak Leaf Clusters
Staff Sgt. Kevin Byers, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Eric Demeritt, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Christopher Kieffer, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Heather O’Neal, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Joseph Palmer, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Brian Peterson, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Jason Williams, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Edward Korneman, 190th ARW, Topeka
Airman 1st Class Megan Touchton, 190th ARW, Topeka

Staff Sgt. Mitchell Marker, 170th Maint Co (-), Norton
Staff Sgt. Susan Middleton, Det 6, Co D, 2nd Bn, 135th Avn, Topeka
Sgt. Cecil Cooper Jr., Det 2, 250th FSC, Clay Center
Sgt. Lane Doner, Det 1, Btry A, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Concordia
Sgt. Michael Hanson, HHD, 635th SG, Hutchinson
Sgt. Travis Harrison, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Sgt. Timothy Hill, Co C, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Wichita
Spc. Jason Myers, 2137th FSC, Manhattan

Kansas Air National Guard

Col. Kathryn Hulse, 190th ARW, Topeka
Capt. Darin Coash, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. David Rodriguez, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Master Sgt. Christiana Wickline, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Master Sgt. Kelly Innes, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Carren Christianson, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Roderick Meadows, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Joe Seley, 190th ARW, Topeka

Retirements

Kansas Army National Guard

Lt. Col. Stephen Smith, HSC (-) 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Chief Warrant Officer 5 Keith Rogers, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Indulis Dambro, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. Maj. Pat Pierson, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Master Sgt. Ricky Combes, HHC, 287th SB, Wichita
Master Sgt. Charles Kuhn, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Fred Jones, 137th Trans Co, Olathe
Sgt. 1st Class William Neff, HHC, 169th CSSB, Olathe
Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Staver, Co A, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Lawrence
Staff Sgt. Donnel Groshong, Det 1, 778th Trans Co, Manhattan
Staff Sgt. William Lorenz, Det 1, Btry A, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Concordia

NCO Hall of Fame induction

Continued from Page 7

answered the call, did you part and asked nothing in return.”

“I’m humbled by this presentation,” said Hernandez. “There are many outstanding Guardsmen that deserve an honor like this and we thank them when we can. Guardsmen, Reserves and active duty all answer the call, and because of them our nation lives and our lives are free.

“I’m not ashamed to admit that I cried with pride that General Dougherty was here,” he continued. “I thank him, my wife, family and friends.”

Hernandez enlisted in the Army on April 9, 1945. After basic training and Advance

Individual Training, he was assigned to the 9th Infantry Division as a driver and interpreter. He completed his active duty time and returned home to enlist in the Kansas Army National Guard in August 1958, where he was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry.

After completing his noncommissioned officer training, he was selected to be the first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry in 1962. He mobilized in 1969 as part of the 69th Infantry Brigade. While mobilized, he was selected for special training and was awarded the Jungle and Recondo Badges.

Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same.

- Ronald Reagan

Program aims to improve Guard readiness by combatting substance abuse

By Sgt. 1st Class Matthew G. Rubin
Prevention Coordinator

The Kansas National Guard has long been committed to maintaining a drug free workforce through the random drug testing of service members and for the last two decades through prevention programs and services for at-risk youth in both the military and civilian community. Drug and alcohol use and abuse degrades the effectiveness and readiness of our Soldiers/Airmen, affecting the overall capabilities of KSNG units and wings throughout the state. Educating Guard members to the negative impacts of high-risk behavior can increase Soldier/Airman effectiveness, strengthening our forces and increasing readiness.

The mission of the Kansas National Guard Joint Substance Abuse Program is to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the total KSNG workforce and to enhance the combat readiness of its members. The objective is to achieve maximum productivity and reduce absenteeism and attrition among service members by reducing the effects of the abuse of alcohol and other drugs. The Kansas National Guard JSAP has two major functions:

- Collections – Properly collecting specimens for urinalysis testing, provide supplies, process positive results and track the testing statistics.
- Education – including prevention, treatment and outreach.

The Prevention, Treatment and Outreach program is a new initiative by the National Guard Bureau designed to establish a culture of responsible choices compatible with National Guard core values through the use of Substance Abuse Prevention and Awareness training and support. The PT&O program is managed by the State Prevention Coordinator and provides an opportunity to go one step further in helping our Soldiers/Airmen make informed and healthy life choices. The program is designed to expand prevention efforts and add outreach and treatment referrals/resources to the list of substance abuse and disorder services available to Guard members and their families. In addition to increased readiness for deployments, the program aims at reducing the number of drug positives by providing the tools necessary for



members to succeed.

The objective of the PT&O program is to meet the needs of all members of the Kansas National Guard and their families. The PT&O program will provide classroom prevention education coordination, literature, and treatment referrals/resources to all National Guard members. Assistance will be provided to military families by working closely with Family Support Groups and local community support groups which will foster awareness for a safe drug-free environment for Guard members statewide.

One mission of the State Prevention Coordinator is to promote the self-referral program. The goal of the self-referral program is to facilitate the identification of service members who abuse alcohol or other drugs by encouraging identification through self-referral. The primary objective is to facilitate the rehabilitation of those abusers who demonstrate the potential for rehabilitation and retention.

Currently, all units are to comply with annual prevention education requirements in accordance with Army Regulation 600-85, National Guard Regulation 600-85 and Kansas Standard Operating Procedure 600-85. Basically, all traditional Guard service members are required to receive two hours of prevention education. AGRs are required to receive four hours of prevention education annually.

In order to ensure that the Kansas National Guard is successful in meeting this requirement, unit prevention leaders/drug testing program administrative managers at the unit/wing level are trained not only to conduct drug testing, but also to provide prevention education. Many resources are available on the Counterdrug website to assist the leaders in meeting the standards in both the Army and Air Force by providing

training options such as PowerPoint presentations with lesson plans, a video library and various marketing materials.

The JSAP is also beginning to train UPLs/DTPAMs to facilitate a new program called "Team Readiness." The overall purpose of the Team Readiness program is to train service members how to communicate in order to reduce risks associated with substance use or mental health concerns, and help service members to recognize that their units' /wings' health and ability to handle stress impacts readiness.

A tool available to unit commanders is the Unit Risk Inventory, or in some cases the Reintegration Unit Risk Inventory. The URI is a 53-item anonymous questionnaire

designed to screen for high-risk behaviors and attitudes that compromise unit readiness. It measures a units' risk as it relates to alcohol, other drugs, and other factors linked to substance abuse, such as domestic violence, suicide, crime, personal and unit relationships, perception of the Army environment, and financial problems.

Similarly, the R-URI is an 80-item anonymous questionnaire designed to screen for high-risk behaviors and attitudes affecting unit readiness and personal well-being that may have occurred during deployment or since redeployment.

The URI and R-URI results help commanders to assess the status of their unit's human relations readiness, make smarter decisions and create more effective action plans by pinpointing specific prevention education and intervention programs based on the needs of the Soldiers, minimize unproductive or ineffective services and programs provided to the Soldiers, lead more effectively, and in the case of the R-URI, assess the well-being of the unit following a deployment.

BCTC marks 20 years of improving Soldiers' skills

By Douglas Kolb
Battle Command Training Center

It was 20 years ago that the Battle Command Training Center, formerly the Leadership Development Center, opened its doors for business, marking the beginning of a new era of Soldier training in Kansas. The Battle Command Training Center in Leavenworth, Kan., has provided training and support to thousands of Army National Guard Soldiers and command staff officials. The National Guard, in close cooperation with the Combined Arms Center of the Kansas National Guard and the 35th Infantry Division, founded BCTC-LVN in 1991 to improve the Army National Guard division battle command and staff training. In 20 years of operating, BCTC has undergone a myriad of changes.

The mission of the Battle Command Training Center is to provide battle command and staff training, training support, and publications to Army National Guard Soldiers and units prior to mobilization. This facility is capable of supporting mobile training teams and assisting them in preparing for war-time missions including battlefield tactics and logistics. National Guard publications are also produced at this installation.

The Battle Command Training Center and its various programs provide essential training necessary to ensuring National Guard success. During a 2009 training exercise, Brig. Gen. Perry Wiggins, exercise director, said BCTC's "...untiring efforts to accommodate our activities helped United States Army North accomplish its mission."

Brig. Gen. Glenn Bramhall, formerly of the 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, said the support of BCTC "was invaluable during our culminating training exercise."

In the early 1980s, the National Guard Bureau, Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth and the Kansas adjutant general envisioned constructing a federally-funded and state owned facility to serve as a training center in support of Army National Guard Divisions battle staff exercises required by U.S. Forces Command and to house its headquarters, which was the 35th Infantry Division. The Army licensed land on Fort Leavenworth with coordination from the Kansas adjutant general to build a facility, with funding from NGB. This facility would serve the dual purpose of an armory and division-training center for the newly activated 35th Infantry Division.

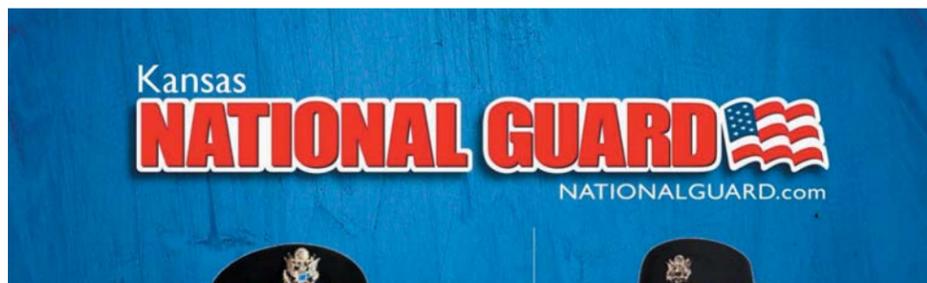
The original organization, the Leader Development Center, later became a federal field operating agency of the National Guard Bureau. It was to support the same battle command and staff training for the Army National Guard, which the Army active component received. BCTC-LVN hosts all Army National Guard division warfighter exercises, as well as the 35th ID Headquarters and exercises.

In 1999, the Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence Support Team was added to the Leadership Development Center. Its capabilities later became today's Army Battle Command Systems - Support Team. Today, Army Battle Command Systems - Support Team provides Army National Guard Soldiers and unit leaders training and systems support. The Army Battle Command Systems - Support Team also supports more than 160 training events on eight battle command systems.

In the early 2000s, the Leadership Development Center was renamed the Lt. Gen. Herbert R. Temple Battle Command Training Center. Temple was the chief of the National Guard Bureau from 1975-1990 and served in many capacities including office of mobilization readiness. The capabilities of BCTC were expanded further to include the Battalion Staff Training Program consisting of an analog military decision making process training capability, the Battalion Staff Training Team, and the Training Analysis Feedback Team.

The Battalion Staff Training Team assists Army National Guard commanders in training for wartime missions including battlefield tactics and logistics. The BSTT provides training support to over 120 Battle Staff training rotations annually. The Training Analysis and Feedback team identifies, analyzes, and evaluates training trends across the Army National Guard. These trends provide information used to train and prepare National Guard Soldiers. The TAFT has developed more than 20 staff training publications with Army National Guard-wide distribution, as well as more than 200 job aids.

National Guard Soldiers support both domestic and foreign missions. Training National Guard Soldiers is crucial to ensuring success. The Battle Command Training Center has served a vital role in the preparation of National Guardsmen and staff leaders and will continue to serve as Citizen Soldiers are needed.



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ADT-3 builds on relationships to improve agriculture prospects



Capt. Ernest Kratina, left, project manager for Kansas Agribusiness Development Team 3, visits with Namath Khan, a village elder and contractor, at the Muskeenabad canal construction site. Khan supervises the crew building the canal located outside the village of Alingar. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Greg Zuercher, ADT Public Affairs)

**By Staff Sgt Greg Zuercher
ADT-3 Public Affairs**

Three months into their yearlong mission, the reach and scope of efforts made by the 3-6 Kansas Agribusiness Development Team are already impacting lives in Laghman Province, Afghanistan. Building on the foundation set by the first two ADT teams; ADT-3's focus has been focusing on project sustainability and bolstering the provincial government's role on those projects. The Soldiers of Kansas ADT-3 formulate, manage and execute plans for extending governance and agricultural knowledge deeper into Laghman Province.

"The key to our success is the relationships that we build with the governmental leaders, village leaders and local farmers of the province," said Col. Howard Wheeler, ADT-3 commander. "We are not here to simply deliver projects; we are here to help the Afghan government deliver services to its citizens and to increase the individual farmer's ability to increase his productivity and ability to market his commodities. There is a lot of hard work in a variety of areas that goes into building those relationships."

Accomplished through district and agricultural centers in each of the five districts of the Laghman Province, governance and provision of agricultural-specific services will nurture governmental legitimacy in the eyes of the villagers and rural population. These two governmental entities will provide guidance to local farmers, both in their fields and at the extension centers. Local government officials and agricultural extension agents work to increase the knowledge base among the 70 to 80 percent of the population who grow their own food, raising productivity and transforming the agricultural practices. Governmental legitimacy, financial independence and education blunt the influence and intimidation used by the enemy forces in this region.

"We're (the ADT mission) where the rubber meets the road. We don't deal in theories; we deal in helping people," said Sgt. Maj. Terence Hankerson, ADT-3 non-commissioned officer in charge. "It's hard work, but the rewards are great."

"We're at that base level," continued Hankerson. "Other entities deal in concepts and higher government levels. We're dealing with the local villagers, as well as the government at the local level."

Comprised of Security Platoon, Headquarters, and the Agriculture team, the three platoons have different missions, but must work together seamlessly to achieve the overall mission's objectives, not an easy task, according to Capt. Robert Melton of Kansas City, Kan., the operations officer.

"It's challenging trying to match agricultural expertise with war fighting skills," said Melton, "and ensuring that we are providing not only war fighting skills in our Security Platoon, but providing our agri-

cultural subject matter experts that connection with the local populace and the provincial government."

The Security Platoon provides the security bubble within which the Headquarters and Agricultural team operate. The platoon's responsibilities include planning and executing both mounted and dismounted operations in direct support of the agricultural focused mission.

"This allows ADT-3 the freedom of movement in Laghman Province by conducting force protection," said 1st Lt. Benjamin Pimpl, security platoon leader. "By allowing our Soldiers freedom of movement in and around our province... our mission here in Afghanistan will be accomplished safely and securely so our team will return home to their families."

Headquarters platoon covers personnel, leadership, operations and equipment. A critical section to the ADT mission is intelligence.

"Intel keeps the commander informed as to the enemy situation and as to what is happening in real time in our sector," explained 1st Sgt. David Miller, who leads the intelligence operations. "I keep those who depend on intelligence information up on what likely courses of action the enemy may take. Intel is one of the commander's tools; it helps the commander make decisions associated with the risks at hand."

Core to the ADT mission, the Agricultural Team initiates most mission objectives through interaction with local Afghan government, tribal elders, and business people.

"We are mentoring the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to assist them to become more connected, transparent, and budget smart to the agricultural populace," said Lt. Col. Eric Blankenship, Ag Team chief. "By evaluating overarching project benefits and future sustainability, (the government) will become more efficient in their outreach to the people with the available financial resources."

Mentoring Afghans does not begin and end with government, village and business leaders.

"We mentor from the very bottom up, as well, beginning with the local farmer to shuras (a local meeting with village elders) in the project submittal process, to going out and identifying project proposals," said Blankenship. "We don't have an open checkbook. There is so much to be done with limited resources that we have to work with those who understand their needs and work with the project submittal process."

ADT-3 understands its role as the middle mission that Kansas has taken on in Laghman Province. Providing farmers and livestock owners the opportunities to raise production is crucial to ADT-3's success in Laghman Province, and helps the United States achieve its overall goal in Afghanistan.

Guard support helps make Easter Egg Hunt a success

By Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR

On April 16, Governor Sam Brownback and First Lady Mary Brownback hosted approximately 2,000 eager children and their parents for the annual Governor's Easter Egg Hunt. The egg hunt, conducted on the south facing lawn of the Governor's Mansion, has been a long-standing tradition on the weekend before Easter and the Kansas National Guard has an extensive history with the event.

"I have worked the Easter Egg Hunt every year since 1995," said Staff Sgt Raymond Jowers, "except for the years that I have been deployed."

Jowers' serves as the 35th Military Police Company's training noncommissioned officer. He and 2nd Lt. Benjamin Moore were there to ensure that the MPs were properly deployed in support of the Capitol Police. In addition to Jowers, 35th Military Police Company members Spc. Dewayne Bourque, Spc. Jason Colobong and Spc. Brian Wigans have also supported many hunts.

Lt. Col. Jon Shafer, code-named "Papa Bunny," served as the officer-in-charge for the Guard's portion of the hunt. Shafer was responsible for the planning and activities of 35 Guard members and Youth Teen Council volunteers.

The Guard members arrived at 7:30 a.m. and, at that time, the weather was not looking good for the hunt, calling to mind the previous year, when the hunt had to be cancelled. However, by 10 a.m., when it was time to start scattering the 12,000 candy-

filled plastic eggs, the sun was out and the wind had dropped.

Darcy Seitz, Youth Teen coordinator, and eight members of the Youth Teen Council were among several volunteer youth groups that scattered the eggs. The Youth Teen Council is made up of teenage dependents of Kansas Army and Air Guard members.

As the eggs were being placed, families started arriving by the bus load from the satellite parking areas. Hunters lined up at their age respective hunting areas, some a little shy and others moving into a position from where they could get the best start. As the 11 o'clock hour approached, the governor and his wife stood on the stage, a long haul flat bed trailer provided by the 731st Transportation Company. As the governor counted down, members of the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, fired the starting signal from the ceremonial cannon.

The hunt was on! Children rushed out, filling up baskets and sacks. Parents followed, trying to keep track of their young ones in the sea of bobbing heads. What took months of planning was over in minutes, leaving nothing but smiling faces as families boarded the buses to take them back to their cars. It was a great introduction for the upcoming holiday.

For the Guard members, the day was not over. They still had to pack up their equipment and return it to their armories, making sure it is ready to go for the next time it's needed, fulfilling the motto "Always Ready, Always There."



Spc. Mark Dixon, 35th Military Police Company, gives directions to a shuttle bus, one of the many functions performed by Kansas Guardsmen at the annual Governor's Easter Egg Hunt at the Kansas governor's mansion April 16. (Photo by Sgt. Michael Mathewson, UPAR)

Kansas National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team

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