Fighting Jayhawks awarded the Bronze Star

By 2nd Lt. Matt Lucht
184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs

Three members of the 184th Intelligence Wing, Kansas National Guard, were recently honored for their achievements while serving in Afghanistan. The ceremony took place Dec. 3, 2011, in Hangar 41, crowded with family members, friends and co-workers. 

Master Sgt. Clint Bradfield, first sergeant of the 184th IW Medical Group, and resident of Wichita, Kan., and Master Sgt. Homer King, a member of the Civil Engineer Squadron, and resident of Augusta, Kan., were presented the award by Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general. “The Bronze Star isn’t handed out often and when we have an opportunity to present the Bronze Star for service and achievement above and beyond, it is truly a special event,” Tafanelli said. “I would like to congratulate each of the recipients today for all their hard work, effort and sacrifice upon earning the Bronze Star award.”

Culp and King were deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from March to August 2011. Under Culp’s command, the squadron completed projects that were essential to the operations of their area. “I was really thankful that I went,” Culp said. “My team wanted to go and was able to make a huge impact on the mission.”

While in Afghanistan, the 184th Civil Engineer squadron completed 166 projects totaling $76 million. The squadron also completed nine complete Master Plans, installed 182 tents, averaging one per day, supported 18 forward operating bases; completed 130 off-site missions and supported five operations.

Col. John Hernandez, commander of the 184th Intelligence Wing, complimented the Airmen for their achievements. “When you look at the contributions of you and all of our personnel in support of the Guard and Reserve, an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, an Employer Support of the Guard...”

My Boss is a Patriot Award, but state leaders being nominated, as well,” said Mick Allen, Kansas Chairman for ESGR. “Secretary Kobach is an example of a state leader that has a genuine concern for the men and women who serve, not only in the Kansas National Guard, but in all branches of the service. His leadership in supporting the men and women who serve is an example for all state leaders to follow.”

By Chuck Bredahl
Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

The Kansas Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, an agency of the Department of Defense, presented an ESGR Patriot Award to Secretary of State Kris Kobach on Thursday, Jan. 5, 2012. During the ceremony, Kobach signed the ESGR Statement of Support. “Our Guard members couldn’t do what they do without the support of employers,” said Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general. “We are grateful to all Kansas businesses and organizations who take this step to support our men and women in uniform.”

“It is refreshing to see not only private sector employers being nominated for the My Boss is a Patriot Award, but state leaders being nominated, as well,” said Mick Allen, Kansas Chairman for ESGR. “Secretary Kobach is an example of a state leader that has a genuine concern for the men and women who serve, not only in the Kansas National Guard, but in all branches of the service. His leadership in supporting the men and women who serve is an example for all state leaders to follow.”

(Continued on Page 9)

National Guard gets seat at Joint Chiefs of Staff

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

The chief of the National Guard Bureau is now a statutory member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The stroke of a pen, the same month the nation’s oldest military institution celebrated its 375th birthday, President Barack Obama signed legislation that includes a provision adding the chief of the National Guard Bureau to the Joint Chiefs. The provision, part of the fiscal year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets the fiscal year’s defense policy and authorizes $670 billion in spending for Department of Defense programs and Energy Department nuclear weapons programs.

Other provisions of the bill that affect the National Guard include re-establishing the position of vice-chief of the National Guard Bureau at the three-star level while rescinding the two-star position of director of the NGB’s Joint Staff.

The bill also requires that National Guard general officers be considered for command of Army North and Air Force North and authorizes funding for the National Guard State Partnership Program.
Period of time when deployments by active duty were extremely high, the Department of Defense was mandated by Congress to ensure every state had a National Guard MFH team. Kansas came on board in 2006. The requirements to be a member of the MFH team are high. In order to qualify for the team, the Soldier must make height and weight and pass the Army physical fitness test. Prior to this year, once the Soldier was deemed qualified to join, there was a 40-hour course that had to be passed. The reason for higher standards is because the MFH team follows the same standard operation procedures that are used by the Old Guard at Fort Myer/Army National Cemetery. Soldiers who volunteer for the program and training receive pay that amounts to half a day’s drill status pay. They also receive one retirement point for every day they work. The requirements for Soldiers to earn the “Honor Guard” tab are 40 hours worth of training and testing. In order to retain the “Honors Guard” tab, the members are required to perform 10 services per year. Kansas currently has drill status Soldiers who are dedicated to performing services. The more services you perform, the more you will get paid. However, they will tell you they do it because of the sense of honor and pride of doing something that is so vitally important to families by honoring past veterans who have sacrificed and given so much for their country.

With the operation tempo that the MFH team is subjected to, it is important to keep new members for the teams. In addition to recruiting new drill status, AG or technicians, the program would like to recruit armories to start up a team. At present, the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery units in Hawaith and Abilene, Kan., have teams already trained and are performing services. The goal is to have new members for each state to ensure all veterans, regardless of their location, will receive honors.

If you or your organization is interested in becoming a member or team, please contact Rod Moyer, state coordinator, at 785-274-1520 or Sgt. Nick Churchill at 785-174-1209.
Coyotes prep for Operational Readiness Inspection

By Capt. Joe Blubaugh
190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Office

Nearly 150 members of the 190th Air Refueling Wing deployed to ‘Japan’ as part of an exercise to help prepare the wing for an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). The mock deployment, which was actually held in Gulfport, Miss., featured multiple scenarios that put Coyotes in chemical suits and protective masks for extended durations.

The Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE) was designed to prep the wing for the next ORI, which is currently scheduled for June 2014. In particular, the 190th evaluation team wanted this two-day ORE to focus on communication up and down the chain of command.

“We wanted to work the command and control functions heavily,” said Lt. Col. Scott McGregor, the wing Exercise Evaluation Team chief. “We also wanted to get some new members exposure to the deployed ORE environment.”

While command and control training was the main focus of the exercise, McGregor was also hoping to refresh members on Mission Oriented Protective Posture levels and give them the opportunity to complete their missions in a simulated toxic environment.

Being able to demonstrate the ability to survive simulated attacks while still completing the wing’s missions is critical during an ORI. Senior Airman Tyisha McNutt, 190th Operations Support Flight, served as a post-attack reconnaissance team member during the ORE. It was her responsibility to methodically search a predetermined area during the ORE. It was her responsibility to focus on communication up and down the chain of command.

“That is exactly what happened for McNutt. In addition to learning more about her job and how to operate in a war-time scenario, she said she really enjoyed meeting and working with people she did not know prior to the exercise.

While designed to exercise the wing, the ORE is also a busy time for the evaluation team, which was made up entirely of 190th members. The elaborate scenarios required intense planning and forethought in order to work certain areas and accomplish the stated objectives, said McGregor. The team must be in sync and communicating effectively so that exercise inputs and injects are made at the appropriate time. McGregor was pleased with both the evaluation team and the wing and thought the ORE was a success. “I think the low key and nonthreatening level of this exercise was exactly where it needed to be for the 190th at this place and time in our run up to the 2014 ORI.”

Brevity - the soul of Twitter

By 2nd Lt. Matt Lucht
Public Affairs Office

While attending conferences, meeting with coworkers or even out in the community, many times you will hear “Are you on Facebook?” or “Get more info on our Facebook page.”

More and more Soldiers, Airmen and military organizations are adopting social media as a way to communicate. Social media gives everyone the opportunity to share opinions, interests, pictures, videos and more. While Facebook is a big contributor to the social media highway, Twitter is another tool that is used or should be considered for use.

President Barack Obama is the first U.S. president to embrace social media. When campaigning in 2007, he was able to raise millions of dollars and gain support by using social media and technology. Obama still uses his Twitter account to reach the public. The leadership of the Adjutant General’s Department, Kansas Division of Emergency Management and the Kansas National Guard see the benefits and are also using Twitter to inform and gather feedback from their followers. Before signing up and using Twitter, you have to understand what it is and how it can be used. Twitter is a microblogging tool that allows you to post comments in 140 characters or less. As with other social media sites, you set up who you want to communicate with by following people or gaining followers. Millions of people are using Twitter, so finding friends, organizations or topics of interest is extremely easy.

Twitter has several benefits that many other social media tools don’t. First, Twitter has the ability to connect to other social media sites. This makes the process easier to get your message out to your followers simultaneously. With a few clicks, you can send a message out on your Twitter account, your Facebook page or many other social media sites.

Second, Twitter has built-in tools to track how your message was received. For example, have you ever wondered how many people actually read your posts? Twitter allows the user to track how many people clicked on your message and how many people reposted your message. For the Kansas National Guard, this feature is important because it allows us to address issues that Kansas Soldiers and Airmen have, while tracking to see how effective our messages are at reaching you.

Third, Twitter allows you to track what others are saying about you. If anyone mentions your name in a post, that post will appear on your account. This allows you to address bad information or rumors.

Fourth, you can stay connected easier because of the nature of Twitter. Unlike other social media sites, Twitter can only be 140 characters, meaning that you don’t have long posts that you have to read to stay connected.

As with other social media tools, you have to be careful about what you say and breaking operational security. Several celebrities have found the pitfalls of using Twitter. Ashton Kutcher tweeted an off-hand comment about the Pennsylvania State University sex scandal and received some unfavorable responses. This forced Kutcher, the first account to get one million followers, to re-evaluate how he should use Twitter. Also, former U.S. Representative Anthony Weiner was forced to resign his position after tweeting an inappropriate picture, intended for one of his female followers, that was posted to all of them. Always remember that social media is called “social” for a reason. The information or pictures that you post can be, and usually are, read by hundreds of people, regardless if they are your “friends” or not.

Things to keep in mind about using Twitter:
1. Don’t post classified information.
2. Don’t post casualty information before the next of kin has been notified.
3. Don’t post information protected by the Privacy Act.
4. Don’t post information that is for official use only.
5. Don’t post personally identifiable information.

For Soldiers, Airmen and military organizations, Social media is fast becoming a popular way of communicating. If used properly, Twitter can help fill the gap left by other social media sites. But always pay attention to the information that is released because social media is “social,” not private.

Airman 1st Class Lexi Green (right), Senior Airman Tyisha McNutt (center) and Tech. Sgt. Denton Stafford (left) prepare to cordon off an unexploded ordinance during the Operational Readiness Exercise, held in Gulfport, Miss. (Photo by Master Sgt. Allen Pickert, 190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Office)
By Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli

The Adjutant General

The new year presents a number of challenges to our organization, as also many opportunities we’ve been working with for the past few years. Our department has been aggressively analyzing our data both externally and internally, constantly scanning the horizon for emerging threats and trends that we must prepare to face.

The following lays out the road ahead for us, based on the information we have today.

National Guard

Over the next decade, the Department of Defense will reduce its force structure dramatically. President Obama’s new national defense strategy is based on Pentagon cuts of a half a trillion dollars over the next 10 years. However, if Congress fails to address required spending cuts outside of defense as part of the budget sequester, defense cuts budget cuts will more than double to $1.2 trillion. As you might imagine, this is considerable and we must transform the military to best address 21st century threats such as cyber-attack, transnational terrorism, nuclear proliferation, the use of biological agents, and the U.S. economy’s ability to sustain expensive national security infrastructure and programs. There are many smaller threats, much easier to assimilate large-scale land wars, but more active in limited conflicts or problems areas.

The future role of the National Guard, with its unique mission of fighting the nation’s wars and protecting the homeland, is an ongoing point of discussion. The National Guard has proven itself as an integral force that is ready, relevant and accessible when called upon. At one-third the cost of its active component counterpart, it is a cost-effective solution.

Homeland Security

Emergency Management

Similarly, homeland security professionals have seen a 25 percent reduction in our fiscal year 2011 federal homeland security grant funding from fiscal year 2010. Current projections indicate that we will see an additional cut of $12.2 billion in 2012. President Obama’s new budget, based on the information we have today, is a half a trillion dollar reduction over the next decade. This reduced federal funding trend is expected to continue as the federal government focuses diminished resources on high-population urban centers, leaving Kansas and many other states with fewer resources for homeland security.

Time of Transformation

For the past year, we have been thoroughly examining our organizational structure, our infrastructure, our staffing, and our business processes in light of the budget cuts. Unfortunately, there are significant challenges in our future. Additionally, we have developed some guiding principles for Kansas’ future public safety/homeland security actions to ensure we are best prepared to meet the future public safety/homeland security challenges.

Analyze future trends – We must conduct thorough analysis of potential future environments to determine the likely types of budgets, emerging threats, demographic trends, etc., that Kansas will face in the years ahead.

Transform our organizational structures – We must transform our organizational structures and existing business practices to make

By By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Marvin Terhune

Soldier to Soldier

A New Year, A New Beginning!

I was reading an article on winter driving tips. It was a very good article on how to prepare your vehicle for the inclement all of the windows and even mentioned to call a tow truck for a water/ vial kit in the trunk. What jumped out to me in the ar ticle was how to control your vehi cle when weather conditions create driving challenges.

Those thoughts reminded me of when I was learning how to drive.

How did we learn to drive in the snow and ice? I don’t know about you, but I learned from experience. If you got stuck you knew what the conditions were like and you could not get out of gear. You learned the limitations of your vehicle and what it could do for you, or in some cases, could not do.
Start the new year with a plan!

By Capt. Amy Blow
Occupational Health Manager

Every year many Americans head into the month of January with a hope for doing “something” different. Whether it is better health, less stress or a general thought about being more positive when conducting their daily activities. The gym becomes full and the diet craze begins! Unfortunately, though, by mid-February the gym crowding and dieting is not as noticeable, which leads us to believe the newness of the New Year has started to fade once again.

Obesity is on the rise in adults and children throughout the nation. As National Guard employees, we have responsibilities other Americans do not have when thinking about our overall health and wellness. As a term of our employment, we are expected to be ready to go at a moment’s notice to assist our community and nation in its time of need.

National Guard employees are generous people and naturally want to serve. However, sometimes it is our own health needs that we forget in the process.

The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight isn’t about short-term dietary changes. It’s about a lifestyle that includes healthy eating, regular physical activity and balancing the number of calories you consume with the number of calories your body uses.

Organizations all over the country are leaning towards preventive medicine in the form of company-wide wellness programs. Research shows education and planning go a long way in helping people adopt healthier lifestyles to feel better and be more productive in their daily lives.

In October 2011, a new education series was launched via Defense Connect Online. The 10-lesson program “Basic Nutrition for Everyday” was developed to provide basic nutrition information to Soldiers and Airmen struggling to meet Army and Air Force Physical Training Program Height and Weight standards as part of the Adjutant General’s Remedial Physical Training Program.

The thought was, if Soldiers and Airmen can refresh their memory of basic nutrition concepts or even learn them for the first time, they could have better success in adopting a lifestyle to support better overall health and wellness. The information was provided through weekly, one hour live sessions over the lunchtime, to anyone with access to DCO.

During the first week, a small group of employees participated in the live session, but it wasn’t long before many employees across the state “tuned in” for the live discussions on topics ranging from water consumption guidelines, to advice on being smart dietary supplement consumers.

Group diversity evolved, as well, starting with members of the Army Guard, then to the Air Guard and very quickly grew to include state employees of the agency. The participation from all of our agency employees is what made the program possible! This year, be part of the growing numbers to join in on the concept of “preven-tion.” You can become healthier for you, your family and your team here at the Kansas National Guard. You can become healthier for yourself, your family and your team here at the Kansas National Guard.

Future health promotion topics will be provided through DCO sessions throughout the year, so look for the reminder messages and advertisements to be posted. Grow the good. Education equals action!

By Sgt. Jessica Barnett
10th Mobile Public Affairs

Kansas National Guard retirees joined together for a retiree briefing at Nickell Armory, Nov. 6, 2011, hosted by Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general.

During the event, retirees were briefed on the latest actions and initiatives of the Kansas National Guard. To start the briefing, Tafanelli showed a short video encompassing the Kansas Guard from its beginning to today.

The retirees also heard from Brig. Gen. Eric Peck, commander of the Kansas Army National Guard, and Brig. Gen. Keith Lang, chief of staff of the Kansas Air National Guard, on events that have happened over the past year from each component.

“As General Bunting used to say about retirement checks, that it’s just really a re-tainer fee,” said Tafanelli. “What I am going to ask each and every one of you to do is be an ambassador for the Kansas National Guard and, more importantly, tell the National Guard story.

“You run into groups of people frequently you don’t even realize what the Kansas National Guard is, how long we have been around, what we have done, who we are and what we do on a daily basis.

That is a constant education that we need to do and I can’t think of anyone better in our communities to be our ambassadors and tell the Guard stories other than our retirees.”

“I have been away for a couple of years, so it was nice to come in and get a short briefing on where the Guard has been over the past year, where it is presently and where they look to be in the next couple of years,” said retired Lt. Col. Craig Fox.

“This gives us a feeling when we go out and talk to the community or other retirees.”

“It’s okay if you want to stay anonymous, or don’t want to give us any personal information when you call or chat with us online. Connect with someone who understands and can help.

Why Call Us?
We are here to help. We have all served in uniform for the United States Military. Some members of our staff have served in combat missions while others have served in supporting and peacekeeping missions. However, we are all Veterans of the United States Military and we are all here to help the men and women who are currently serving or have served in the National Guard and Reserve.

Services Provided
Our toll free peer support line 1-855-838-8255 (VET-TALK) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for National Guard and Reserve service members. Call now for:

Veteran Peer Support
Every single one of our Peer Counselors is a Veteran.

Warrant Officer Corps in review
Continued from Page 4
As we reached the end of the year, I began to look into topics that I want to work on in 2012. Some of those items include:

1. Looking into the possibility of establishing a Warrant Officer Hall of Fame.
2. Placing a warrant officer brick at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard. We have ordered a brick and it is in the engraving process. Once the engraving is complete, the brick will be placed at the museum during a dedication ceremony.
3. Since October, I’ve been working with Chapter 303 of the USA Warrant Officer Association at Fort Riley. I’m trying to develop a partnership with this organization that will allow us to pool our knowledge, expertise and resources to help with mission accomplishment throughout the Active, Reserve and National Guard components. Chapter 303 is dedicated to supporting local communities and will also be giving out college scholarships to students whose family members are warrant officers. As a warrant officer, I believe the USAWOA is a good organization worth looking into, and I would like to encourage all Kansas National Guard warrant officers to support Chapter 303.
4. I will begin visiting units with the Warrant Officer Strength Manager starting this week. The Guard will be talking to recruiting Warrant Officers within the same units where vacancies exist. I will also be talking to the current warrants to discuss any issues that they might be challenged with to see how I can assist them in the field.
5. I will also continue to refine the Advisory Council and ensure that topics brought up for discussion are given due attention. In my last article, I mentioned that I have been thinking of ways to generate more involvement and interaction among Kansas Army National Guard warrant officers, both technicians and aviators. So, I decided to establish a Warrant Officer’s call. The first Warrant Officer’s call will be held in Topeka on Feb. 17. The intent is for us to interact as professionals, but in a casual atmosphere. I have seen many good ideas and many problems solved as a result of these interactions, plus it allows us to break the monotony of our everyday routine. I’m taking suggestions for other places for future meeting.

In every issue of the Plains Guardian I try to give out helpful advice to junior warrant officers. Now is a good time to update your biographies, Interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System and Officer Evaluation Report support form. You have to be proactive in maintaining your record, because if you don’t, no one else will. By updating your records at one time you can better track and update the schools and training you have received the past year. Promotion boards are looking over your records and if you don’t update your records or Officer Evaluation Reports, then you can be overlooked because you don’t meet promotion requirements.

Finally, if you know of any warrant officer news, such as promotions, graduations, retirements or changes that affect warrant officers and you would like to see them in the Plains Guardian, please send them to me at 785-274-1903 or Hector.vasquez@us.army.mil.
Guardsmen gain applied suicide intervention skills

By Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office

Soldiers and Airmen of the Kansas National Guard gathered, Dec. 13-14, 2011, at the Nickell Armory in Topeka, Kan., for Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. ASIST training helps Guardsmen feel more comfortable, confident and competent in helping to prevent the immediate risk of suicide in the military. Approximately 30 Guard members participated in this two-day, highly interactive, practice-oriented workshop.

The ASIST workshop overall teaches suicide first aid, on helping a person at-risk stay safe and seek further help.

“We are providing immediate suicide prevention,” said Sgt. Shawn Evans, ASIST instructor for the Kansas National Guard and Triare Reserve Select manager for Joint Forces Headquarters. “One of the examples we use in class is if you come across someone having a heart attack, you’re not going to do heart surgery, you are going to do CPR to sustain them until you can link them to permanent resources.”

ASIST goes beyond the annual ACE training all Soldiers and Airmen receive with the help of professionals. The people around each active servicemember, spouse, parent andEditTextBox is not valid

Following are the contacts for the KSNG Suicide Prevention Program:

1. ASIST training helps Guardsmen feel more comfortable, confident and competent in helping to prevent the immediate risk of suicide in the military. Approximately 30 Guard members participated in this two-day, highly interactive, practice-oriented workshop.

2. The main goal is to try and have them admit they are having suicidal thoughts by exploring the reasons they want to die, helping them see the reasons to live, coming up with a safe plan and escorting them to professionals.

3. “I have gotten positive feedback from the students that are now ASIST certified,” said Potter. “Because it changes how you see things, it changes how you hear things. So a comment that could be made during drill weekend, now all of a sudden is that person at risk? Yes or no. They might be more willing now to find that Soldier and pull them aside and ask them questions and find out what is going on. I hear that more frequently once people do take the class.”

4. “The basic curriculum teaches the basics of knowing the signs and symptoms of someone who might be contemplating suicide. Through the examples we use in class is if you come across someone having a heart attack, you’re not going to do heart surgery, you are going to do CPR to sustain them until you can link them to permanent resources.”

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State chaplain retires after 28 years of service to God and country

By Sgt. Jessica Barnett
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) William David Jenkins had served as chaplain early in his Kansas National Guard career. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson, 35th Infantry Division Public Affairs)

Lt. Col. Jenkins becomes Kansas National Guard state chaplain

By Pfc. Anna R. Laurin
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Chaplain (Col.) Don Davidson, Kansas National Guard state chaplain, receives a picture of a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System from Lt. Col. Chris Burr during his retirement ceremony at Nickell Armory, Jan. 8, 2012. (Photo by Pfc. Anna R. Laurin, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Prior to his current assignment, Jenkins served the 1st Battalion, 653rd Armor, 1st Battalion, 105th Aviation Regiment and was brigade chaplain for the 35th Division Artillery and the 635th Regional Support Group.

Jenkins was deployed in support of Stabilization Force 13 and 14 as the deputy command chaplain in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He later served as deputy command chaplain for the 377th Theater Support Group in Kuwait and in 2007-2008 was the command chaplain for Kosovo Force 9.

Jenkins’ military awards include the Meritorious Service Award with three oak leaf clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Army Achievement Medal with three oak leaf clusters and several other medals and ribbons.

Jenkins is an avid gardener and can be seen in his neighborhood on daily runs with the family basset hound, Penelope. Jenkins is married to Mary Anna. They have two grown children, Tim, a graphic designer who resides in Wichita, Kan., and Anna, a teacher with the Auburn-Washburn School District in Topeka.

The day Jenkins was announced to be the next state chaplain, will forever be a high point in his career.

“I felt honored to be asked to be the state chaplain. As a chaplain it is the pinnacle in terms of being able to serve, to maximize experience,” said Jenkins, “especially in terms of training and mentoring of the younger chaplains, subordinate chaplains and chaplain assistants, to build a strong state National Guard, Army and Air. I feel very honored to be given that opportunity.”

By Pfc. Anna R. Laurin
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

There was standing room only Jan. 8, 2012, as Chaplain (Col.) Don Davidson gave his last speech as the state chaplain for the Kansas National Guard, at the Joint Forces Headquarter Nickell Armory in Topeka, Kan. His wife, retired Master Sgt. Marcella Davidson of the Kansas Air National Guard, family, friends and co-workers were present to show their appreciation for the time Davidson has spent as a compassionate chaplain dedicated to helping his fellow servicemembers. The atmosphere was full of gratitude, endearment and a sense of sadness knowing that a beloved chaplain has retired and would no longer be serving in uniform.

Davidson retired with more than 28 years served as a chaplain in the Kansas National Guard. Along the way, he made many friends, including members from his first unit, the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery. Davidson believes that the best years of a chaplain’s career are the years of being a battalion chaplain.

“The battalion chaplain is the guy who is most closely associated with Soldiers and has an opportunity to meet with and to spend time, one-on-one, with as many Soldiers as possible,” said Davidson. “The best ministry in the Army is on that battalion level. My first eight years were with the 2-130th in Hawiatha. I really loved being with them and still consider myself to be a part of that family. That’s my first battalion, always will be. I had a very strong connection and still do.”

Serving with Soldiers of the battalion may have been one of the most meaningful memories from the many moments he has from over the years.

“A long, long time ago I got the opportunity to lead a single Soldier’s retreat to Berchtesgaden, in Bavaria, Germany,” said Davidson. “I remember having the chance to lead a very short prayer service … in the Austrian Alps. You really feel like you’re on top of the world before you go down and you’re just absolutely unbelievable.”

“I remember just stopping there and thinking to myself, ‘OK, does it get any better than this?’ That was just a wonderful experience being clear up there, the air is so clean, and it’s so beautiful. There were a lot more meaningful moments with Soldiers, at extreme times in lives, families, babies being born, and people dying and all the things that happened in the cycle of life, but for me that was just a real meaningful moment.”

Davidson dedicated his career to being a supportive figure in every Soldier’s life. From the beginning, being a chaplain was all about serving Soldiers, being with them, being with units and having a purpose for Davidson.

“Chaplain Jenkins, we welcome you and your expertise to one of the command team,” said Tafanelli. “I know we have significant challenges ahead, but I can think of no one better equipped to handle those challenges and lead us, and serve as an up spiritual to meet our needs in the future as we face some very difficult and challenging times. So, I want to extend my congratulations on this assignment and certainly, on behalf of the Kansas National Guard, we all look forward to working with you.”

“I want to express the gratitude,” Jenkins thanked Davidson for his efforts in strengthening the Chaplain Corps during his time as the state chaplain.

“The Kansas National Guard chaplaincy is stronger than it has been in years,” said Jenkins. “Chaplain Davidson has left a legacy that is stronger than it has been in years,” said the Kansas state chaplain. As a chaplain it is the pinnacle of his career.

Jenkins resides in Topeka, where he serves as bereavement coordinator for Grace Hospice. As a pastor of the Disciples of Christ, he has served churches in South-eastern Kansas. He is currently a candidate for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church. Jenkins received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Bible Ministries from Manhattan Christian College in 1978 and his Master of Divinity degree from Phillips Graduate Seminary in Enid, Okla., in 1984. He completed clinical pastoral education in 1983 and received certification in family systems therapy at the Menninger Institute in 1986.

He is currently a Doctor of Ministry student at the University of the South at Sewanee, Tenn., and will graduate from the U.S. Army War College in July 2012.
Headquarters trains on the latest protective chemical gear

Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson

The Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Joint Forces Headquarters, Kansas National Guard, conducted Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear training during drill weekend, Jan. 7 and 8, 2012. Members of the 73rd Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) conducted the training for the detachment.

On Saturday, the detachment drew their M40 protective masks for the weekend’s training. The 73rd CST ensured that each mask fit properly and was sealed air tight by using testing equipment that hooked up to the mask. This process took about five minutes for each Soldier. Once fitted, the Soldiers of the Headquarters staff carried their masks for the rest of the day.

On Sunday, the detachment went through three training stations. In sequence, the training started with performing preventive maintenance on the M40 protective mask. They were instructed on how to do operator level disassembly and repair of the mask. After the masks were reassembled, they completed DA Form 2404 Equipment Inspection and Maintenance Work Sheet noting any problems that needed attention.

“It has been over a year since I have trained with my protective mask,” said Sgt. Kelly Perry, supply sergeant for information management, from the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Joint Forces Headquarters, is assisted with taking off his contaminant protective chemical gear by the less experienced person. Throughout a person’s career they are exposed to a lot of information and experiences that can’t be found in a book or documented anywhere. Once that person retires where does that institutional knowledge go? If they have never mentored someone in their career, that knowledge walks out the door with them. Mentoring is critical in enabling the Kansas National Guard to continue to grow and thrive. It is a way of paying back to the National Guard and paying forward to those Soldiers coming after you with the experience, knowledge and other benefits received during your career. Leaders must mentor their subordinates to help them accomplish the work assigned but also to develop the leaders of the future. There is a belief held by some that knowledge is power, but when you do not share your knowledge gained from experience there is a void left when you are gone. Our goal should be to leave the National Guard moving into the future. Do not hide the footprints you have made and paths you have already blazed. Mentor like you are retiring tomorrow.

Equal Opportunity News: Mentor the leaders of the future

By Chief Warrant Officer 4 Sandra Lashey State Equal Employment Manager

Mentoring is defined in many different ways. One definition is “a relationship between an experienced person and a less experienced person for the purpose of helping the one with less experience.” –Cicely A Richard. This seems to be the typical definition of mentoring. I would argue on the point of who it helps. It does indeed help the one receiving the mentoring, but it also benefits the one providing the mentoring and in the long run benefits the Kansas National Guard.

The person mentoring is challenged to remember and to research the questions asked by the less experienced person. Throughout a person’s career they are exposed to a lot of information and experiences that can’t be found in a book or documented anywhere. Once that person retires where does that institutional knowledge go? If they have never mentored someone in their career, that knowledge walks out the door with them. Mentoring is critical in enabling the Kansas National Guard to continue to grow and thrive. It is a way of paying back to the National Guard and paying forward to those Soldiers coming after you with the experience, knowledge and other benefits received during your career. Leaders must mentor their subordinates to help them accomplish the work assigned but also to develop the leaders of the future. There is a belief held by some that knowledge is power, but when you do not share your knowledge gained from experience there is a void left when you are gone. Our goal should be to leave the National Guard moving into the future. Do not hide the footprints you have made and paths you have already blazed. Mentor like you are retiring tomorrow.

Kansas teen receives Civil Air Patrol’s highest cadet honor

By Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown, Kansas Air National Guard


The Spaatz Award is named in honor of Carl “Tooey” Spaatz, the first chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force.

Chaverin is the 1,819th Civil Air Patrol Cadet to achieve the prestigious Spaatz award since its inception in 1964. Founded in 1945, the Civil Air Patrol has grown to 65,000 civilian volunteer members serving our communities as the Official Auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. CAP’s three-fold mission delivers air and ground search-and-rescue, cadet programs, and aerospace education to communities nationwide. The Carl A. Spaatz Award is the highest cadet honor and unique cadet program provides teens challenging leadership and character development opportunities and prepares them for success in college and career.

Chaverin’s Spaatz Award achievement required more than four years effort, 17 grade promotions, leadership schools and the successful completion of a rigorous four-part exam consisting of a challenging physical fitness test, an essay exam testing his moral reasoning, a comprehensive written exam on leadership and a comprehensive written exam on aerospace education.

Col. Rich Almeida administered the final Spaatz test to Chaverin in December at Whiteman Air Force Base.

Chaverin serves as the cadet commander for the Kansas City Composite Squadron and is active in encouraging the cadets under his leadership to grow and reach their full potential. Chaverin has also been recognized as a National Merit Scholarship winner and has volunteered 300 hours a year in our community through CAP.

Sgt. Shawn Wise, a financial management technician with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Joint Forces Headquarters, is assisted with taking off his contaminated chemical suit by an instructor from the 73rd Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) during drill at the Nickell Armory in Topeka, Kan., Jan. 8, 2011. (Photo by Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment Joint Forces Headquarters UPAR)

Join the Civil Air Patrol

The Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol is looking for teens 12 to 18 years of age and adults to join our current volunteers in our important missions.

The Civil Air Patrol is an auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. Go to www.kawg.cap.gov for Civil Air Patrol Squadron near you.
Secretary of State receives ESGR Patriot Award

Continued from Page 1

The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve conducts an awards program designed to recognize employers for their support of the Army National Guard and Reserve Force. Employers qualify for recognition when they practice leadership and personnel policies that support employee participation in the Guard and Reserve. Patriot Award nominations may come only from National Guard and Reserve members or their spouses.

The ESGR Statement of Support Program seeks to inform and educate employers about their rights and responsibilities to their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve, and to recognize and reward employers who go “above and over” the requirements of the law.

The mission of the Kansas Committee of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is to promote public understanding of Guard and Reserve components to advance national interests and protect our nation’s security and maintain active and reserve employers for the national Guard and Reserve as defined by demonstrated employer commitment to employee military service.

For more information about ESGR Employer Outreach Programs and volunteer opportunities visit www.esgr.mil.

Topeka Eagle Composite Squadron promotes first Cadet/Airman

Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson
Topeka Eagle Squadron, Civil Air Patrol

The Topeka Eagle Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol promoted its first Cadet/Airman. A Civil Air Patrol composite squadron is one that has both cadet and senior members. The Topeka squadron started its cadet program after a break of more than 60 years.

Even though Appelhanz was the first, he wanted to be involved with young men and women through a cadet program. He was named the deputy commander for cadets and preparations were made to start the program. It took a lot of effort from a number of people to make it all come together.

In October, the first six prospective cadets started to meet at the Kansas Army National Guard’s Nickell Armory. Of the six, Cadet Appelhanz’s father, Jason, promoted Appelhanz from Cadet/Airman Basic to Cadet/Airman, with a date of rank of Nov. 14, 2011. Jason, promoted Appelhanz from Cadet/Airman Basic to Cadet/Airman, with a date of rank of Nov. 14, 2011.

The women of War and Peace Quilters display their pride by simultaneously sewing a quilt for each Soldier. The War and Peace Quilters provide patriotic quilts for deployed Soldiers. (Courtesy photo)

War and Peace quilters adopt deployed unit

By Spc. Mandy Ebert, UPAR

1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment

When it comes to preparing for deployment, there is a long list of things a Soldier needs to take care of that list includes a handmade quilt from the ladies of the War and Peace Quilters. Connie Lamasuc, who answers to the loving nickname of Grandma Hugs, had been making quilts regularly with a group of women when a fellow quilter, Beverly Alstatt, commented that she’d heard of other groups making quilts for Soldiers.

That was enough of a spark for Grandma Hugs. Lamasuc and others from a group formerly called the Brethren came together under the new name of War and Peace Quilters. When these women of faith began, they were making quilts with no designated recipients.

“When we started, two ladies were consistent that we would make quilts and have no one to give them to,” recalled Lamasuc.

Then a conversation with retired 1st Sgt. John Degand, a former member of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, changed that. Degand and Lamasuc worked together and she knew he had been deployed, so she presented him with the gift of a quilt.

Little did she know that one thing would lead to another and one day Degand asked her if the War and Peace Quilters would make quilts for all the Soldiers in his unit.

“When he asked and I answered yes, he then said ‘You know there are 130 of them. It was a very simple thing to end the phone’ then out of my mouth came ‘We will make them one at a time!’” she recalled.

That’s what they did. Through the help of Staff Sgt. Patrick Crawford, a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-108th Avn.ált list of names was compiled and quilts were handmade and sent one at a time to the Soldier they were specifically designed for.

Many of the quilts are rich with sentimental value and include aspects of that Soldier’s life, such as their civilian jobs, favorite sports teams, hobbies or interests. The crafty quilters have stitched everything from an intense green Ferran, proud Puerto Rican flag and shower curtain material just to make sure that each Soldier feels that he or she is personally cared about.

Thus far, 83 quilts have been made and shipped to members of Company D, 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment. Does your family have someone receiving this kind of special attention? Lamasuc listed many other groups to which they have provided quilts.

“We have made quilts for veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, service members who are now serving, children of reserve members, Gold Star Mothers [mothers of soldiers killed in action], Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm.”

The group has made and are giving quilts to the Veterans Affairs hospice at Robert J. Dole Medical Center, Wichita, Kan. They make red, white and blue ones specifically for them. They also gave 32 quilts to the VA nursing home.

Two homes have been built in Emporia, Kan., for returning veterans that need a place to live. One houses 14 women and the group has seen that the house received quilts. They have also made quilts for homeless veterans in Wichita. All of the quilt recipients come to them solely by word of mouth.

Their work is funded entirely through donations. Items such as cotton or polyester material, single-double knit material, sewing thread, special patriotic material, batting, crochet thread for tying, straight pins and sewing machine needles are necessary to keep the operation in order, not to mention the cost of shipping each quilt.

In light of all of this, when asked what the quilters needed most, Grandma Hugs said, “Prayers that we continue to have the strength and health to keep on making the quilts, would be nice. We are ‘gently aged’ ladies. We will continue making them as long as we can.”

For information about War and Peace Quilters or to donate, go to www.warandpeacequilts.blogspot.com or find them on Facebook.

Security Forces return from Afghanistan

By Tech. Sgt. Emily F. Alley

190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Office

A group of deployed 190th Air Refueling Wing Security Forces members safely returned from Afghanistan in mid-October.

The 18 Airmen provided security at Bagram Airfield and their responsibilities included supervising the automated security system, guarding gates and runways and responding to incidents.

Originally, their tasking had not be taken off-base. They began training for outside-the-wire missions. During pre-deployment training, however, the group was re-tasked to secure Bagram Airfield.

“Everyone wants outside the wire adventures,” said Master Sgt. Mark Peterson, who said some of his Airmen were disappointed to have a change in mission.

“But they maintained a good attitude and that goes a long way.”

Staff Sgt. Brian Beatty still got the chance to put his training to use while on routine patrol on the runway at Bagram Airfield.

He was driving when a rocket exploded about 20 feet from his vehicle and hit an aircraft. Beatty pulled his truck around and gave emergency medical treatment to another staff sergeant by putting a tourniquet on his gashed leg and dressing his neck wound.

Beatty said the staff sergeant had just been promoted that day. They found his new rank had fallen off his uniform and was laying, covered in blood, on the ground.

With Beatty’s help, the staff sergeant was able to get quick medical treatment and was doing fine.

“Didn’t hesitate,” said Master Sgt. Brett Higginbotham, the senior enlisted security forces member on the deployment.

“It’s the type of thing I’d expect from any of them. We did stellar work.”

Higginbotham explained that in Afghanistan, particularly in the security forces career field, accidents can be commons. However, none of the members of the 190th Air Refueling Wing Security Forces Squadron were hurt.

“We had professionalism, we stayed motivated and did phenomenal work,” Higginbotham added. “To come out with nobody getting hurt, I couldn’t be happier.”

The deployment was not what they had originally planned on, but it was a job well done.
A young 284th prepares for first overseas combat role

By Master Sgt. Matt McCoy
184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs Office

Over the course of three days in November in Salina, Kan., the 284th Air Support Operations Squadron loaded six cargo planes with heavy equipment and headed toward the west coast. The aircraft took off from Salina Regional Airport bound for the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., where the 284th linked up with the 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Ohio National Guard. The training completed their final preparations for the brigade’s deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Although it only took three days to load and leave, the squadron has spent much more time preparing for their first combat mission since their activation in 2009.

“People think we just go out and drop bombs,” said Staff Sgt. Cameron Carlson, a tactical air control party. “I don’t think they realize everything it takes to get to that point.”

The 284th ASOS is a tenant unit of the 184th Intelligence Wing while stationed in Kansas during peacetime operations. As the 184th IW has evolved, it’s picked up various missions with many different roles. The 284th embodies the diverse operations of the wing, being one of many squadrons within it with unique capabilities.

Tech. Sgt. Carl Denuna, 284th Air Support Operations Squadron, augmented from the Georgia National Guard, responds to small arms fire during convoy patrol training at Smoky Hill Weapons Range. (Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs Office)

During their training at Smoky Hill Weapons Range, part of the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, the unit members experienced a variety of learning opportunities. They conducted combat lifesaver training, weapons qualifications, helicopter insertion and extraction, Improvised Explosive Device defeat lane training and vehicle rollover training. The squadron trained with many weapons systems on different types of terrain and learned various tactics while incorporating close air support missions.

“Everything we’ve done for the past two months is to fulfill the requirements from our deployed parent unit,” Arnold said. “Throughout their training, the unit had support from expert equipment operators representing various organizations, including Rockwell Collins, the National Guard Explosive Device defeat lane training and

“The biggest challenges to overcome was keeping the guys motivated,” said Senior Master Sgt. Matt Poole, the squadron’s superintendent. “When the mission changes like that, it’s easy to get frustrated and lose focus.”

The unit is so young that the manning and training hasn’t caught up with the requirements, as it takes four years to fully train a joint terminal attack controller. This forced the squadron to pull resources from five other units across the United States. Once the team was built and the mission was set, training kicked off in late September 2011. Most of the training was conducted in Kansas.

“That’s what makes the 284th unique,” explained Lt. Col. Michael Arnold, director of operations for the 284th ASOS. “Our training facilities are located on Smoky Hill. Most ASOSs go to Army locations for training.”

Not only does the local training keep troops with their families longer, it reduces extensive traveling costs.

“We did all kinds of stuff with a lot of help from outside agencies and we did it all right here in Salina,” said Lt. Col. Gary Nash, commander of the 284th ASOS.

PAK Energy Systems, a North Carolina developer of light-weight batteries used to run battlefield equipment. Once the training at Smoky Hill came to an end in October, the 284th spent a few more weeks at Camp Shelby, Miss., conducting battle drills. Upon completion of those drills, the squadron was set to move to the final phase of their training at Fort Irwin before heading overseas.

On Nov. 19, 2011, members of the squadron began loading a C-17 from the 183rd Airlift Squadron, Mississippi Air National Guard with Humvees and trailers. Col. J.J. Hernandez, commander of the 184th IW, was on location to show his support for the squadron. Members of the 184th Logistics Readiness Squadron and the 134th Air Control Squadron were also on hand to help the 284th carry out joint inspections of vehicles and equipment.

“It may seem like another working weekend, another nagging task, until you see the Humvees being loaded on a C-17. That’s what it’s all about,” said Hernandez.

“There are thousands of variables that go into a deployment like this and that is where the rest of the wing comes in.”

As a former B-1 bomber crew member, Hernandez has gone through many training exercises throughout his career.

Staff Sgt. Alejandro Saldivar, 284th Air Support Operations Squadron, augmented from the Indiana National Guard, loads ammunition prior to firing his weapon during a predeployment training exercise at Smoky Hill Weapons Range in October 2011. Approximately 40 Tactical Air Control Party members trained on the Common Remotely Operated Weapon System. (Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs Office)

The 284th began putting their team together for this deployment in June 2010. The mission and location of the deployment changed four times before being finalized, making planning for training, personnel and equipment requirements extremely difficult.

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Members of the 284th Air Support Operations Squadron loaded equipment onto a C-17 at Salina Regional Airport Nov. 19, 2011. The Mississippi Air National Guard offered a C-17 from the 183rd Airlift Squadron to pick up and deliver the Airmen and their equipment to Fort Irwin, Calif. (Photo by Maj. DeAnn Barr, 184th Intelligence Wing)

Pre-mobilization Training Assistance and Evaluation team, as well as other support organizations. With the experts on hand, the team was able to ask questions and work out any malfunctions before heading down range.

“If I can’t be with them in Afghanistan, I can sure be with them while they’re training,” said Laura Thiel, president of Medi-

What it’s all about,” said Hernandez.

“There are thousands of variables that go into a deployment like this and that is where the rest of the wing comes in.”

As a former B-1 bomber crew member, Hernandez has gone through many training exercises throughout his career.

Members of the 284th Air Support Operations Squadron prepared themselves for responding to dangerous attacks while conducting convoy patrols at Smoky Hill Weapons Range near Salina, Kan. The training was part of predeployment exercises during November 2011 as they prepared for combat in Afghanistan. (Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs Office)

“I’ve been to Red Flag, Silver Flag, and other training, but they were nothing like the war fighting exercises these airmen are about to receive at the NTC.”

“This was a tremendous undertaking,” he continued. “This training saga, now in its final phase, graduates into combat and that’s something few in the Kansas Air National Guard have done before.”

“One of the biggest challenges to overcome was keeping the guys motivated,” said Senior Master Sgt. Matt Poole, the squadron’s superintendent. “When the mission changes like that, it’s easy to get frustrated and lose focus.”

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Sergeant Major of the Army visits Soldiers in Africa

By Spec. Michelle C. Lawrence
1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery UPAR

The 14th sergeant major of the Army made his first trip to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Dec. 16, 2011, visiting Soldiers with Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa and other units.

His visit afforded him the opportunity to discuss various important topics with Soldiers stationed there.

"I want to talk to you about what’s going on in the Army and where it’s going in the future," said Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III. "We’ve been working an idea - relearning what it means to be a professional." Chandler explained how in some aspects, Soldiers are the same as any professional in the world and the devotion to professionalism engenders trust among Americans.

"The American people implicitly trust you because you wear this uniform to support the (U.S.) Constitution and defend the American people in our nation’s wars," he said. "They believe you’re going to do what’s right." Maintaining the trust of the American people is what defines a Soldier as a professional, Chandler said. A Soldier must have character. They do what they are supposed to do all the time. It’s a constant challenge for Soldiers to be true to themselves and the uniform they wear, he added.

Chandler emphasized the importance of professional pride and how it’s everyone’s responsibility to maintain high standards. He said he tries leading by example, not direction. As the senior enlisted member of the Army, Chandler wants to be remembered for taking care of the Soldiers who come after him. The future of the Army rests with them.

"I try to do what is right and take care of Soldiers and their families," Chandler said. "You’ll decide my legacy, not me." Chandler also noted part of being professional was maintaining a professional appearance and physical fitness. He encouraged Soldiers to break the mold of physical fitness and push themselves to new heights.

An ongoing challenge the Army faces is developing and improving the fitness level of all its Soldiers, said Chandler. He would like to move away from a physical fitness test to a physical readiness test. A physical fitness test measures specific areas of a Soldier’s body, while the physical readiness test measures muscle strength and endurance of the entire body. The battlefield today requires Soldiers to be dynamic, focusing on challenges presented to the entire body and mind, he said. He emphasized appearance and fitness have everything to do with professionalism. His goal is to develop a fighting force capable of handling any possible situation that may arise.

"This is the standard," he said. "And this is all about meeting a standard that’s even more difficult." While meeting the Army standards is a cornerstone of professionalism, there are still other aspects to consider when developing a Soldier, Chandler said.

Soldiers’ development is about commitment, selfless service and confidence, he said. Chandler added that he wants every Soldier to fulfill the obligation they signed up for - to realize they, personally, come last and to gain the confidence to do their job right.

"I hope the younger generation of Soldiers took away the intent of his part on professionalism," said 1st Sgt. Steven Sprawka, 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery. "We need to get back to the basics and be professional Soldiers."

Ambitious new market sells hope to locals of Gerdy Katz

By Staff Sgt. Luke Graziani
Combined Joint Task Force - Afghanistan

Just off the busy Afghan Highway 7, near the village of Gerdy Katz, a little market has emerged out of the dust and debris. Although small, the shop is bursting with promise and hope for the villagers.

The market is only the most recent, albeit essential, addition to a list of achievements the Kansas Agribusiness Development Team and their Afghan counterparts have worked to reach together.

Two years ago, the ADT cleared 10 Jaribs, roughly 50 acres, of land, adjacent to a combat outpost. That initiative resulted in a boom of farming and agriculture greenhouses, a well-supplied irrigation system and a citrus fruit tree and nut tree orchard. Roughly 120 farmers were trained in greenhouse technology, soil analysis, drip irrigation, pest management and animal husbandry.

The culmination of all these projects was the ribbon cutting ceremony of the market, owned and operated by Wasir Kahn, a local. Kahn and his team of laborers own and operated by Wasir Kahn, the proprietor of a new market, the ribbon cutting ceremony of the market, at the USDA to take a moment to speak with Wasir Kahn, the proprietor of a new market the USDA to take a moment to speak with Wasir Kahn, the proprietor of a new market

"The most important thing here is this marketplace is this market," said Phil Blake, USDA agricultural advisor. "This is really the perfect place in this western part of the district to have a facility where we can have a diversity of products." At the moment, the humble market can only boast having poultry selling services, tailoring services and fresh locally grown produce. It holds the potential for growth to other areas.

"We were recently funded to set up a micro-dairy here," said Blake. "This will be the only place in this part of the district where people can stop and pick up fresh cheese and yogurt-milk products.

All of the perishable products for the local villages were brought in by trucks in the past. Before the market, getting fresh products was not cost effective.

"We go to Jalalabad or Mehtar Lam city so we spend more money as a transportation cost," said Kahn, referring to the way they used to conduct business. "For example, one kilogram of sugar you buy at (at) 100 Afghan, but we spend 300 Afghan here for transportation cost, so one kilogram of sugar (cost) 500 (Afghan). Now (that) you can buy the sugar here, the transportation cost will sever."

The market has already been a success story just by being there. Local can enjoy the benefits of fresh products, but not have to dig as deeply into their pockets. The Gerdy Katz villagers are expected to take this development on their own to expand it as their village grows. The future is in their hands.

The most important thing here is this district has now been declared transitioned," said Blake. "We are seeing more and more of a pull-back of advisors and U.S. forces in the coming months. The Afghans are pretty much going to be on their own. We see this as a perfect opportunity for them to stand up for themselves and stand up the business here that is already proving to be successful."

Three Fighting Jayhawks awarded the Bronze Star

Continued from Page 1

your civil engineering team, improving the capability to operate unmanned air systems, that is a direct contribution of the war effort. That’s a direct contribution of actions engaged and enemy threats neutralized."

"Some of your work reduced the response time of close air support call by 45-minutes," Hernandez continued. "That is a 45-minute reduction of time for air support to help our ground troops under fire. I don’t know, no one has ever shot at me, but I think that I can speak for our Soldiers in this room that a reduction of even five minutes would be a godsend, so well done."

The 45-minute reduction was due to the 15 Airmen of the 184th Civil Engineer Squadron making history. They were able to complete a $17 million, 454,000 square feet heliport at Kandahar. The completed heliport is the largest in Air Force civil engineer history, which allowed a faster response time for aerial support. This project was challenging for the squadron, but one that King will remember his entire life.

"It was rewarding to be part of history," King said. "It was a project that was much needed. At points, we would stop working to allow it to be used. Once they would take off, we would get back to the basics."

The Bronze Star Medal was established in 1944 for any person who, while serving in any capacity in or with the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard of the United States, after Dec. 6, 1941, distinguishes, or has distinguished, himself by heroic or meritorious achievement or service not involving participation in aerial flight.

Lt. Col. Russell Richardson (far right), commander of the Kansas Agribusiness Development Team 4, joins members of the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and the USDA to take a moment to speak with Wasir Kahn, the proprietor of a new marketplace, just before the ribbon cutting ceremony near Gerdy Katz, Afghanistan. Dec. 3, 2011. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Luke Graziani, Combined Joint Task Force - Afghanistan)
Spc. Michelle Lawrence, a combat medic with the 35th Military Police Company, became a combat medic, Lawrence called to help people like she does,” said Lawrence. “I wanted to make my dad proud.”

The pen struck the paper leaving her signature – Michelle C. Lawrence – above her father’s, she recalled.

Weeks later, on her 17th birthday, she became the third generation of her family to raise her right hand and recite the Oath of Enlistment, said Spc. Michelle Lawrence, a combat medic with the 35th Military Police Company, currently serving as a unit public affairs representative for the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, Kansas Army National Guard.

“That was her goal (to join the Army National Guard). That’s what she wanted to do and I wasn’t going to stop her,” said John Lawrence, her father, a resident of Dighton, Kan., and a U.S. Army veteran.

A little more than three years after joining the Kansas Army National Guard as a combat medic, Lawrence is covering the efforts of Soldiers deployed to Africa to thank a vacancy within the unit and leadership who realized her potential.

“Specialist Lawrence is one of a select few very influential public affairs representatives in my battalion achieving my communication plan,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Burke, commander of the 1-161 FA. “I knew coming into this mobilization that communication with our military supporters, the general public in the state of Kansas and employers was vital to maintaining both public support for the mission and the mission itself.”

She even volunteered for several others and added, “I didn’t know how to take a good photo. I didn’t even know how to use one of these cameras,” Lawrence said.

Upon being assigned to the 1-161 FA public affairs office, Lawrence was placed in the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa public affairs office as the battalion’s public affairs liaison with the task force. It was there that a U.S. Air Force staff sergeant, skilled in public affairs, helped her tell the story of the Kansas Army National Guard Soldiers serving at Camp Lemonnier and throughout the African continent, she said.

Lawrence wrote stories highlighting what U.S. Soldiers did in countries such as Tanzania, Rwanda, Mozambique, Burundi and Kenya.

“They tell the story of how relationships with our counterparts are going beyond the skills of building partner nation capacity. Soon, it will be that both countries are learning that both countries want peace, stability and better futures for ourselves and our children,” said Burke. “Specialist Lawrence tells these stories together, we can strive to meet that goal.”

“Lawrence does a great job of telling the story from the Soldier’s perspective,” he added.

Although she receives praise for her stories and photos, Lawrence never thought she would be serving her country as a journalist or a photographer.

Lawrence looked forward to becoming a combat medic and serving her country. Although she was inspired by her father to become a Soldier, it was her mother, a nurse, who led her to become a combat medic.

“My mom is a nurse. I have always wanted to help people, like she does,” said Lawrence. “It was while attending advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to become a combat medic, Lawrence called back to her unit and received the unexpected news that she would be deploying.

“I happened to call my unit … out of nowhere they said ‘By the way, we are going to Africa next year and you are going with us’,” said Lawrence.

After the initial shock, Lawrence said she was excited to deploy to Africa.

“I was pretty much pumped,” said Lawrence. “I had never been outside the U.S.”

A year after the phone call, 20-year-old Lawrence arrived at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, and once again received unexpected news.

The mission she was assigned to had one too many people. Although she was a combat medic, she was being reassigned to meet the needs of the battalion and would be working as a unit public affairs representative.

“I didn’t know anything about public affairs. I didn’t know how to write a story. I didn’t know how to take a good photo. I didn’t even know how to use one of these cameras,” Lawrence said.

Upon being assigned to the 1-161 FA public affairs office, Lawrence was placed in the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa public affairs office as the battalion’s public affairs liaison with the task force. It was there that a U.S. Air Force staff sergeant, skilled in public affairs, helped her tell the story of the Kansas Army National Guard Soldiers serving at Camp Lemonnier and throughout the African continent, she said.

The need for this team was uncovered in early December. The National Guard Bureau has their eye on the team as one to emulate. “Our FEMA team is taking the lead nationally in developing the regional FEMA team’s primary focus and mission. We are briefing that mission and seeking approval of it on a broad scale, to include incorporating it into our Joint Operation Center. NGB A1 is following our lead on this, so it is definitely a big deal,” said Lt. Col. Greg Platt, operations officer of the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, Kan. “The need for this team was uncovered in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when officials struggled to define jurisdiction over locating, recovering and identifying victims. Federal officials maintained that ultimately body recovery was a state function, one that most states were ill-equipped to accomplish on a mass scale. The result was the creation of 12 Joint Forces Headquarters Services Teams in each of the FEMA regions. Their role is to provide deliberate crisis planning for National Guard forces for food, water, shelter and fatality management support. The team is capable of deploying within 28 hours of notification and is to be embedded in the state’s Joint Operation Center.”

By Maj. DeAnn Barr

Great Plains Joint Training Center

Public Affairs Office

The Services Command and Control Team, Joint Forces Headquarters and Kansas Air National Guard, commanded by Maj. Trent Shepherd, briefed state leaders in early December. The National Guard Bureau has their eye on the team as one to emulate. “Our FEMA team is taking the lead nationally in developing the regional FEMA team’s primary focus and mission. We are briefing that mission and seeking approval of it on a broad scale, to include incorporating it into our Joint Operation Center. NGB A1 is following our lead on this, so it is definitely a big deal,” said Lt. Col. Greg Platt, operations officer of the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, Kan. “The need for this team was uncovered in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when officials struggled to define jurisdiction over locating, recovering and identifying victims. Federal officials maintained that ultimately body recovery was a state function, one that most states were ill-equipped to accomplish on a mass scale. The result was the creation of 12 Joint Forces Headquarters Services Teams in each of the FEMA regions. Their role is to provide deliberate crisis planning for National Guard forces for food, water, shelter and fatality management support. The team is capable of deploying within 28 hours of notification and is to be embedded in the state’s Joint Operation Center.”

Kansas team a national leader

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Annual report is now online

The 2011 annual report of the Adjutant General’s Department is now available online. The interactive pdf version of the report can be accessed by clicking the link found on the Adjutant General’s Department home page. The URL is http://kansasng.org

The report, compiled by the Public Affairs Office of the Adjutant General’s department, details the events and activities of the Kansas National Guard, Kansas Division of Emergency Management, Kansas Homeland Security and the Civil Air Patrol over the past year.

Included in the report is an overview of the year’s events, a brief history of the agency, information on deployments and homecomings, legislative measures that affected the Kansas National Guard and other divisions of the agency, reports from each of the agency’s officer and National Guard units, fiscal information and a map showing the location of each National Guard unit within the state.

The report and map are interactive with links from each of the major commands information to its location on the map and vice versa.
Agribusiness Development Team 4 gains new lieutenant colonel

By Maj. Ron Boyer of Liberty, Mo., first came to Eastern Afghanistan, he found himself the new guy.

With the official unit commander delayed in the United States, Boyer stepped in and took responsibility, accepting the authority transfer of the outgoing Laghman Province Agribusiness Development Team mission commander.

“My first thought was that I wish I had been part of the team from the beginning so I would have had better knowledge of the team,” said Boyer, discussing his initial reaction to finding out he would deploy the team into Afghanistan.

“Fortunately, we had been together for about seven weeks when I found out, so I had integrated pretty well by that time,” said Boyer.

For his continued support of the U.S. Army and the ongoing mission, Col. Joel Ward, commander, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, promoted Boyer to lieutenant colonel Nov. 1, 2011.

“It was good to get promoted,” said Boyer, after many unit members and other individuals of the base congratulated him.

“I have been fortunate to work with some outstanding Soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers. I have had excellent mentors throughout my career.”

ADT troops embody the counter-insurgency mission of today’s Army. Their primary mission is to create sustainable agricultural projects in Laghman province, to promote economic growth, teach better farming techniques and reverse the deforestation and scorched earth policy that the former Soviet Union left in its wake two decades ago.

After his promotion, troops prodded Boyer for his advice to others considering following in his footsteps.

“I enjoy what I do very much and I would recommend a military career to most everyone,” said Boyer. “My advice is to make sure you are prepared for the next step, but do not be in a hurry for your next position or promotion. Work hard, solve your boss’s problems and take care of the Soldiers you work with and the promotions and accolades take care of themselves.”


TriWest presents Kansas National Guard Foundation with check

By Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office

TriWest Healthcare Alliance presented a check for $10,000 to the Kansas National Guard Foundation, Dec. 5, 2011.

Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, and Janelle Hood, president of the Kansas National Guard Foundation, accepted the donation on behalf of the foundation.

“We’re grateful for TriWest’s willingness to go above and beyond to assist our troops and their families,” said Tafanelli. “This donation comes at a time when there are many needs within the Guard and we want do everything we can to support them and their families in their willingness to sacrifice to serve our country.”

The Kansas National Guard Foundation supports deploying Soldiers, Airmen and their families in a number of ways. Funds donated to the foundation provide financial support for programs including camps for children of Guard members, trainings for family members, as well as the deployment and transitioning home process.

TriWest Healthcare Alliance partners with the Department of Defense to support the health care needs of 2.7 million members of America’s military family. A Phoenix-based corporation, TriWest is URAC accredited, without deficiencies, in Networks, Utilization Management, Disease Management and Case Management. TriWest provides access to cost-effective, high-quality health care in the 21-state Tricare West Region and is the 2007 Tricare Region of the Year. TriWest is a proud Corporate Team Member of America Supports You. Visit www.triwest.com for more information.

Kansas Guard members give thanks to vets in Topeka area

By Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson
Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment Joint Forces Headquarters UPAR

Veterans Day was the idea of Emporia resident Alvin King. Formerly known as Armistice Day after the Armistice ended the fight on the Western Front, Nov. 11, 1918. In 1954, Congress changed Armistice to Veterans Day, due to a campaign led by King to expand it to celebrate all veterans. Therefore, Veterans Day is a good day to honor all men and women who have ever worn the uniform.

On Veterans Day 2011, members of the Kansas National Guard visited veterans in nursing homes in Topeka and the surrounding communities. Many of these visiting Soldiers and Airmen are themselves veterans of Operation Enduring and Iraq Freedom. Maj. Alma Whitelaw, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Susan Brown, Master Sgt. Lewis Shedd, Master Sgt. Lucretia Williams and Master Sgt. Cindy Woulffhale greeted the veterans in residence at McCrite Plaza, Topeka. The staff had assembled the veterans into a dayroom for a brief ceremony. The national anthem was sung and a poem read. Each veteran was called by name and presented a certificate of appreciation.

After handing out the certificates, shaking hands and sharing stories, Woulffhale said, “I enjoyed the experience of being with all these brave people. I wish that I could do more. We should all be honored by those who have come before us.”

Later in the day, ManorCare Health Services was visited by other members of the Kansas Guard. Maj. Maj. Richard Heuertz, Senior Airman Tiffany Kubie and 1st Lt. Dyanne Berglund met the veterans in their dining facility. The residents told of their experiences, mainly from World War II. Some of the nonveterans spoke of their memories of December 7, 1941, and what it was like to see so many go off to war. After the certificates of appreciation were passed out, the residents were served lunch. One of the staff members also received a certificate for his service.

“I am happy that I am able to attend this event,” said Kubie, who was visiting her third nursing facility of the day.

“I did not serve in the military, but since I have joined the Civil Air Patrol I feel close to those who wear the uniform. I am glad that I was able to be here,” shared Berglund.

“I am glad that I had the chance to be here with these members of ‘the Greatest Generation,’ ” said Heuertz.

On behalf of TriWest Healthcare Alliance, Ray Dalton, service area director (center) presents (from left to right) Debbie Doyle, Kansas National Guard Foundation board member; Janelle Hood, president of the Kansas National Guard Foundation; Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, adjutant general and Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Hovorth, state command sergeant major, a check for $10,000 to the Kansas National Guard Foundation Monday, Dec. 5, 2011. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)
Rwandan, U.S. soldiers conduct leadership course at academy
By Spc. Michelle Lawrence
Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa
A team of Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, Kansas Army National Guard, recently returned from a 10-day mission to Gako, Rwanda, where they conducted a company grade and noncommissioned officer course with the Rwanda Defense Force.

The course consisted of sharing different leadership skills that enhance the soldiers’ understanding of what it means to be a leader and how to take care of and command their troops.

According to Capt. Kevin Cadena, 1-161 FA, the course was attended by 51 noncommissioned officers and 20 officers, who were split down the middle into two platoons with no regard to rank. Each platoon then “built three sections with an overall platoon sergeant and leader,” said Cadena. “Each section had a leader and was broken down into different teams, giving multiple soldiers the opportunity to lead.”

During the course, everyone was given the chance to experience all the roles, from a soldier following orders to a leader providing direction.

“It might have been a lieutenant as the team leader, a staff sergeant as the squad leader and a sergeant as another team leader with lieutenants under them,” said 1st Lt. Benjamin Ronning, 1-161 FA. “They rotated roles the whole time to give everyone a chance.”

Along with learning the different leadership roles within a platoon, the RDF and U.S. soldiers were able to share soldiering skills such as land navigation and situational training exercises, despite the language barrier.

“We used about five languages throughout the training,” said Cadena. “We conversed in French, Kirwanda, English, Swahili and a slang of Kirwanda and Swahili.”

According to Ronning, they overcame the language barrier by learning commands in French, using hand signals and learning from the RDF soldiers who knew multiple languages.

“Learning and having the instruction in multiple languages presented some challenges,” said Cadena. “But once we all picked up a few of the key words, the communication between everyone wasn’t much of an issue. The RDF soldiers appreciated us trying to communicate in a language they were more comfortable with. It enhanced the friendships we established during the course.”

The friendships forged between the RDF and U.S. soldiers supported the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa mission statement.

“We felt we followed through with enhancing partner nation capability, one of the pillars of the CJTF – HOA mission,” said Cadena. “The RDF soldiers were very gracious and receptive during the course. I would gladly participate in another mission like this, whether it is back to Rwanda or moving forward to another country.”

Multinational collaboration on mortar systems training

Sgt. Bounna Chantalangsy (center), a member of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, serving with Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, discusses mortar operations with members of the Djiboutian Armed Forces in Ali Ouney, Djibouti, Oct. 24, 2011. The mortar familiarization class reviews key components of firing a mortar, including placement of aiming poles, using hand and arm signals and effective mounting. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Renae Saylock, Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa)
Correctional and law enforcement officers train with 35th MPs

The EST 2000 is a cost efficient way to maintain our personnel safety as a unit. The EST 2000 allows us to simulate the environment in which we train and prepare for, said Col. April Cunningham, commander of the 35th Military Police Command. The EST 2000 is a series of systems that allow us to control all aspects of the training environment, including the weapon, ammunition, and target presentation.

The EST 2000 is a computerized system with a projection system capable of displaying up to 30 targets at a time. The target presentation is customizable, allowing officers to train in a variety of environments, from urban to rural. The system also provides feedback on performance, allowing officers to improve their marksmanship.

The EST 2000 is a valuable tool for training officers in a variety of scenarios, including urban patrol, urban patrol in disturbances, and urban patrol in chemical warfare. The system allows officers to practice in a safe environment, while also preparing them for real-world situations.

In conclusion, the EST 2000 is an essential tool for training officers in a variety of scenarios, allowing them to improve their marksmanship and prepare for real-world situations. The system is customizable, allowing officers to train in a variety of environments, and provides feedback on performance. The EST 2000 is a valuable tool for training officers in a variety of scenarios, including urban patrol, urban patrol in disturbances, and urban patrol in chemical warfare.
By Pfc. Brandon Jacobs

190th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Seven days before Christmas, recruits from 1st Platoon, Company A, Recruiter Sustainment Program Battalion, Lexington, Kan., spent the day helping Kansas City’s hungry.

More than 30 Soldiers in training returned to the Salvation Army Harbor Light Village in Kansas City’s metro area.

“The National Guard is all about service,” said Sgt. 1st Class Steven T. Griffin, a recruiter from the event. “It’s a community-based organization.”

Over the course of four hours, the recruits sorted four pallets of food and boxed and bagged 200 cans for distribution to families across the Kansas City metro area.

“Santa represents the idea of giving, so ‘Coyote Claus’ represents the generous spirit of the 190th,” said Dickey. It was not just members of the 190th, however, who supported the event.

Dickey requested to sponsor a military family for the holiday as well.

Many of the recruits who participated agreed that the event was satisfying.

“…I wanted to do something for families and my company said they wanted to participate. Thank you to BNSF for going the extra mile,” said Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, adjutant general of the Kansas National Guard. “The $10,000 donation will go to the Special Holiday Express Foundation.”
By Sgt. Jessica Barnett

105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment conducts change of command

Changes awaited the 105th Mobile Public Affairs detachment as they gained a new commander along with many new Soldiers.

In a change of command ceremony Dec. 3, 2011, Maj. Michael Wallace passed the unit guidon, signifying change of command authority of the 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, to the new commander, Maj. D. Matt Keane, at Nickell Armory in Topeka, Kan. Lt. Col. Tom Barnett, commander of Joint Forces Headquarters, Table of Distribution and Allowances Battalion, was the senior reviewing officer of the ceremony.

A change of command ceremony is a time-honored tradition that extends back to the time of the Roman legions. The ceremony calls attention to the continuing leadership and unit identity, despite changes in individual authority and symbolizes the transfer of command responsibility from one individual to another. This transfer is formally represented by passing the unit guidon, from the outgoing commander to the new senior commander, to the new commander.

The 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, headquartered at the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Joint Forces Headquarters, in Topeka.

“I am honored to be given the opportunity to lead the great Soldiers of the 105th MPAD, and I look forward to executing this detachment’s important mission in support of the Kansas Army National Guard,” said Keane. “I am proud to have the unit in the unit, who are personally invested in the unit and helped bring the unit into the multiple award-winning media outlets for the Kansas Army National Guard,” said Wallace.

Maj. D. Matt Keane

Maj. D. Matt Keane graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point as a member of its 2002 Bicentennial Class and was commissioned as an Air Defense Artillery officer. After completing his Officer Candidate School training at Fort Bliss and receiving his commission as a second lieuten, Keane was assigned to the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade in May 2007 and redeployed the company from Iraq to Afghanistan supporting OIF 06-08. He served as the brigade’s training, force protection and plans officer until April 2007.

Upon his return to Kansas, Keane attended the Kansas National Guard’s annual leadership course and served as an instructor for the course’s top two honors for leadership and proficiency in tactics, while also completing the leader and group training course.

Maj. Raymond Gillett, HHD, 635th RSG, Hutchinson, with
Pfc. Cody Robbins, ADT #3, Topeka
Spc. Thomas Sureau, ADT #3, Topeka
Spc. Chad Orton, ADT #3, Topeka
Sgt. Thomas Sureau, ADT #3, Topeka
Sgt. Chase Taylor, ADT #3, Topeka
Spc. Darren Schuler, ADT #3, Topeka
Sgt. Paul Olson, ADT #3, Topeka
Sgt. Ryan Pace, ADT #3, Topeka
Capt. Eric Douch, ADT #3, Topeka
Capt. Richard McKley, ADT #3, Topeka
Capt. Chris Hopkins, ADT #3, Topeka
Sgt. Matthew Slater, ADT #3, Topeka
Sgt. Shawn McNicks, ADT #3, Topeka

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Sgt. Bangone Sihongheune, a administration noncommissioned officer with the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, Kansas Army National Guard, picks up trash outside Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, during a Djibouti Pride Initiative Nov. 5. Sihongheune, along with more than 200 Camp Lemonnier service members, volunteered to be a part of the road beautification effort. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen Linich, Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa)

2nd Lt. Schafer takes top honors
By Maj. DeAnn Barr
Great Plains Joint Training Center
Public Affairs Officer
2nd Lt. Georgia Schafer, information technology officer for the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, Kan., graduated in November 2011 from the Signal Basic Officer Leadership Course at Fort Gordon, Ga., as the Distinguished Honor Graduate. Schafer’s cumulative grade point average of a 99.11 percent ranked her first out of 76 lieutenants; the class average was 90.85 percent. Additionally, she was presented the Squier Award for academic excellence. In addition to her academic efforts, she also served as the class personnel officer during the entire 16-week course, ensuring accurate student information dissemination, personnel actions management and management of various rosters. She provided coordination for major administrative events, pay and administrative issues during her free time. Schafer’s leadership skills impressed her peers and cadre alike and contributed greatly to the successes enjoyed by the class. She was nominated as a finalist for the Kiburne Leadership Award as a result of her hard work, dedication and outstanding leadership qualities. Schafer graduated from the Kansas Army National Guard Officer Candidate Course as a Distinguished Graduate in August 2010. She enlisted in the Army National Guard in January 2006 and is currently on duty. She has accomplished so much in a short time.

“I think it is not the overall accomplish-

U.S. service members pick up trash as part of ‘Djibouti Pride’
By Staff Sgt. Stephen Linich
Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa

Hundreds of Djiboutian, coalition and U.S. service members, as well as local residents, came together outside the Camp Lemonnier fence line to clean up the area Nov. 5, 2011. Participants collected and removed trash from the Djibouti-Ambouli International Airport perimeter road as part of a road beautification effort called the Djibouti Pride Initiative.

“Beautifying the area around Camp Lemonnier is just a part of being good neighbors,” said U.S. Navy Captain Scott Hurst.

Camp Lemonnier commandining officer. U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. James Davis, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa command senior enlisted leader, echoed Hurst’s sentiment, saying “When we talk about building partner nations, this is where it starts … coming outside the gate and showing that we are part of the Djiboutian community.”

Although this is the first road beautification effort in recent history, it will not be the last.

“This is just the beginning of the Djibouti Pride Initiative,” Hurst said. “It is going to be a continued effort.”

Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery welcomes new commander
On Oct. 10, 2011, Capt. Jonathan Hines (right), assumed command of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, relieving the outgoing commander, Capt. Phillip Morris (left). The formal ceremony was held Nov. 5, at the Holton armory.

The battalion commander, center, Lt. Col. Christopher Burr, took the battalion colors from Morris and then passed the guidon to Hines. Morris took command of Battery A during the Multinational Force and Observers deployment in Egypt March 2010, and guided the unit through the recent transition to the new High Mobility Artillery Rocket System artillery system. Hines comes to Battery A from his position as the battalion intelligence officer. Morris will move to the battalion headquarters in Hiawatha, Kan., as the battalion fire direction officer. (Photo by Sgt. Russell Z. Richards, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery)
By 1st Lt. Kathleen Aragona-Pangborn
Agribusiness Development Team 4

On Nov. 26, 2011, members of Kansas Agribusiness Development Team 4 formed ranks at Forward Operating Base Methar Lam, Laghman province, Afghanistan, to put the 1st Cavalry patch on their right sleeve, designating them as veterans who have served in a theater of combat.

“For Soldiers, earning the right to wear a right shoulder patch is arite of passage earned through hard work,” says Maj. Carlin G. Williams executive officer for ADT 4, and resident of Olathe, Kan. “These guys have earned it.”

Of the assigned ADT 4 Soldiers, 34 have deployed before, four are veterans of Desert Storm, 27 are Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans, three have deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, four have deployed to Kuwait, two to Bosnia and many have deployed to other humanitarian, noncombat tours.

“Tafanelli said. “I earned my first combat patch in 1990 during Desert Shield, Desert Storm,” recalled Capt. Todd J. Stuke of Topeka, Kan., and ADT 4 officer in charge of the agricultural section. “I was a Stinger gunner assigned to the 4th Battalion, 5 Air Defense Artillery Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. It was an honor for me then to be a member of the 1st Cav, and that honor still remains as I serve in Afghanistan.”

Along with the honor of donning their new combat patches, four Soldiers were promoted.

“They are proud to be the monuments of change,” said Tafanelli. “We are glad to give back to the Trafton family after their years of commitment to the state and our battalion,” said Capt. Adam Johnson, assistant operations officer for the 2-137th Inf. Reg. “Today was only a token of our appreciation.”

Members of the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment pose for a picture with Teresa Trafton, widow of retired Col. James Trafton, after helping her with some household chores at her Kansas City residence, Nov. 18, 2011. (Capt. Rodney D. Seaba, Administrative Officer, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment)

Salina businessmen recognized

Command Sgt. Maj. Greg Kober
Great Plains Joint Training Center

Brig. Gen. Eric Peck, commander of the Kansas Army National Guard and commander of the Great Plains Joint Training Center, recognized two local businessmen in Salina, Kan., Nov. 18, 2011. Dennis Hronek, general manager of BFR Metals, and owner Mike Heath of Heath Salvage were recognized for their contribution of 12 vehicles used during the fourth annual Kansas Technical Rescue Conference at Crisis City. Peck presented each of them with a Kansas plaque and the Kansas Adjutant General’s coin for their contribution to the conference.

Search and rescue professionals from across the state met in Salina, Kan., from Sept. 29 to Oct. 1, 2011, for the fourth annual Kansas Technical Rescue Conference, sponsored by the Kansas Search and Rescue Working Group, Kansas Division of Emergency Management, Adjutant General’s Department, Great Plains Joint Training Center, Crisis City and the Kansas Fire and Rescue Training Institute. This was one of the few times that all seven disaster regions within Kansas collectively trained to the same standards. The turnout was approximately 180 participants and instructors.

The vehicles were used at Crisis City in multiple training scenarios for responders to get hands-on training in extricating victims from simulated accidents. Classes included Vehicle and Machine Rescue Level Two, Search Operations, Advanced Rope Rescue, Technical Rescue Rigging and Advanced Shoring Operations, and culminated with a simulated tornado strike incorporating all the venues.

Approximately 80 Airmen of the 134th Air Control Squadron stand in formation during their welcome home ceremony in front of family and friends at Hangar 41 at McConnell Air Force Base, Nov. 17, 2011. (Photo by Sharon Watson, Public Affairs Office)