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PLAINS GUARDIAN

VOLUME 60 NO. 1 *Serving the Kansas Army and Air National Guard, Kansas Emergency Management, Kansas Homeland Security and Civil Air Patrol* JANUARY 2016

Signal Acquired

KSARNG activates new signal company

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

"We are in the future."

The future is now according to 1st Sgt. James Peeler, first sergeant of the newly-activated 330th Brigade Signal Company of the Kansas Army National Guard.

"It's something out of Star Trek," said Peeler. "That's where we're at right now."

The 330th BSC was officially activated during a ceremony at the Heartland Preparedness Center in Wichita, Kansas, Dec. 5. It will operate as part of the 997th Brigade Support Battalion and serve primarily as the signal arm of the 130th Field Artillery Brigade, KSARNG.

The signal corps' mission is to develop, test, provide and manage communications and information systems support for the command and control of combined arms forces. According to 330th commander Capt. Louis Latimer, it's a significant and uncommon charge.

"It's a significant impact for the state and the signal community in general as this is the second signal company that Kansas has stood up, the first one was the 369th Brigade Signal Company," said Latimer. "(The 330th) is one of ten units like this (Department of Defense) wide.

(Continued on Page 2)

Answering the call

Kansas National Guard patrols help stranded motorists in NW Kansas

Soldiers with a Stranded Motorists Assistance Response Team, Kansas National Guard, assist a stranded trucker on Road 300 off Highway 40 between Winona and Monument, Kansas. Two SMART teams, including four vehicles and 10 personnel, were activated early Nov. 18 to patrol roads and highways across northwest Kansas, searching for stranded motorists. (Photo provided)

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
Public Affairs Office

A late-autumn blizzard that dropped nearly two feet of snow left motorists stranded across areas of northwest Kansas, prompting Kansas Governor Sam Brownback to issue a state declaration of emergency for the areas affected by the storm. First responders were unable to respond to each of the large number of emergency calls.

Enter the Kansas National Guard.

Two Stranded Motorists Assistance Response Teams, including four vehicles and 10 personnel with the recently-activated 997th Brigade Support Battalion, were mobilized early Nov. 18 to patrol roads and highways across northwest Kansas, searching for stranded motorists.

The teams assisted local law enforcement and emergency personnel in providing assistance to motorists whose vehicles had gotten stuck or slid off roadways. The Kansas National Guard teams primarily patrolled roads in four counties: Cheyenne, Rawlins, Sherman and Thomas.

Detachment 1 of the 997th BSB is based out of the Colby, Kansas, armory, which is the westernmost armory in Kansas and one of two located within the northwest region of the state.

Staff Sgt. Cody Breon, detachment readiness noncommissioned officer, 997th BSB, said he didn't have much notice that his service was needed, as he received the call at 2:15 a.m to report.

"We didn't really have a lot of heads up that we were going to be utilized," he said. "So we got really lucky that some of my local guys and myself answered our phones that early."

One of the recovery teams responded by 5 a.m., and headed north on Kansas Highway 25, which was the priority area at the time, according to Breon.

Most of the people that the Soldiers encountered had already contacted a tow company and were waiting for recovery, but Breon said the Soldiers did give four stranded people a ride into town and were able to rescue a wounded dog and take it to a local shelter.

"This is one of the cool things about the National Guard," said Breon. "You get to help your community, and that's what this western Kansas (Colby) station is for, for missions exactly like this."

Emergency response efforts were coordinated by state and local agencies, including Kansas Division of Emergency Management, Kansas Department of Transportation, Kansas Highway Patrol, county emergency managers and local law enforcement.

190th ARW ensures U.S. missions from Guam take flight

By Melissa Brunner, WIBW

ANDERSEN AFB, Guam - Purposely bringing two aircraft within feet of each other is not normal procedure – unless you're the Kansas National Guard's 190th Air Refueling Wing.

They're essentially a gas station in the sky, which is vital for aircraft that couldn't otherwise carry out missions requiring travel over long distances without landing. For Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, the refuelers are essential.

About 100 members of the 190th ARW are in the midst of a deployment to Guam, providing refueling support for the variety of aircraft passing through the vast ocean waters in the Asia-Pacific region.

B52s are among them. The aircraft cannot get across the Pacific without stopping for fuel, and with nowhere to land in the endless waters below, the 190th can take care of the job in mid-air.

It's a task that requires surgical precision from the boom operators. WIBW Channel 13 News in Topeka was along on a flight where Staff Sgt. Gabe Ramirez and Tech. Sgt. Adam Boeckman filled that role.

"It just takes a lot of focus," Boeckman said. "You have to be paying attention to what's going on back there (behind the tanker). You have to tell your pilot where (the other aircraft) is at in case he's making adjustments."

"(Our pilots) fly the plane based on where (the other aircraft) is at," Ramirez said. "If he moves right, we turn our airplane to the right because it's an unsafe environment. You could crash, so it's my job to control all that and make sure he's not too close."

But close is exactly what the B52 must get in order to latch on and fill up the tank. The boom can transfer about a thousand gallons a minute.

"It's not every day you get to see airplanes from 30 feet away in the air," Ramirez said.

Melissa Brunner, news anchor with WIBW Channel 13 Topeka, gives a live shot from Guam as part of her trip there with the 190th ARW. (Photo by Ben Bauman, Public Affairs Office)

While what they're doing in the air is the focal point of the 190th's mission, there's a lot going on the ground to ensure its success.

Typically, a crew of four is on the actual flight, but the current deployment to Guam

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Army, Air Guard participate in third annual Topeka Veterans Day Parade

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers and Airmen with the Kansas National Guard marched, rattled and rolled around the Kansas Statehouse square as a large crowd, waving American flags, cheered and saluted the procession of the third-annual Veterans Day Parade in Topeka, Kansas, Nov. 7.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas, and Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown, senior enlisted advisor, KSNG, served as grand marshals of the parade and stood on the grandstand and saluted as the procession passed.

"What a great opportunity for the adjutant general and I to partake in the Veterans Day parade here in the capital city," Brown said, "to celebrate those that have served before us, those that are currently serving and those who will serve in the future."

The parade kicked off as parachutists descended from the sky, adorned in red, white and blue, as the sounds of patriotic music blared from the grandstand, located on Southwest 10th Street, directly south of the Capitol.

The procession included thousands of participants and featured vintage vehicles, civic groups, veteran-issue awareness groups, marching bands, floats and military equipment.

"I was honored to represent the 190th Air Refueling Wing and the entire Kansas National Guard as the emcee for the Veterans Day Parade," said 2nd Lt. Celestial Arnold, public affairs officer, 190th Air Refueling Wing. "It was humbling to be surrounded by so many veterans, past and present, who have given so much in service to our state and nation."

Past, present and future military members included uniformed service members from the U.S. Marine Corps and Coast Guard; Soldiers with 1st Infantry Division, U.S. Army; 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment; 35th Infantry Division Band; the Color Guard of the Kansas Army National Guard; Airmen from the 190th Air Refueling Wing; Civil Air Patrol cadets; Topeka West High School Junior ROTC members and Veterans of Foreign Wars from local posts.

"It's a great way to honor the families and those who have sacrificed to serve their country," said Brown.

Airmen with the 190th Air Refueling Wing assemble their float for the Topeka Veteran's Day Parade Nov. 7 in Topeka (Photo by Airman 1st Class Emily E. Amyotte, 190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs)

Two children watching the parade show their appreciation to veterans at the 2015 Veterans Day Parade in Topeka Nov. 7. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Kayla Kohn, 190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs)

The 35th Infanty Division Band, "The Official Band of the Kansas National Guard," marches down Southwest Harrison Street in Topeka, kicking off the third annual Topeka Veterans Day Parade. Kansas National Guard Soldiers and Airmen participated in the parade. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Guam

(Continued from Page 1)

involves about 100 guard members in all.

"We have a lot of support staff," said Chief Master Sgt. Von Burns, the 190th's Operations Group Superintendent. "Without the support staff, we couldn't fly."

Burns said personnel is needed to produce flight records and documentation for each mission. Others are in charge of maintaining the aircraft and equipment, from helmets to life preservers. Still, more people are needed to take care of personnel issues such as ID cards and payroll.

There also are people like Capt. Janet Dial, working in intelligence to keep an eye on what's around the crews in the skies.

"(We monitor) anything from assets of friendly forces that are in the area to actual threats from other countries that may be watching us as we're going through our daily missions," she said.

The missions the 190th is conducting out of Guam could involve escorting aircraft from one location in the Pacific to another, providing support to those on an assigned task, transporting medical patients themselves or training runs to ensure all pilots and boom operators get required touches to keep their skills sharp.

> ***"Being a small town guy from Holton, Kansas, it's neat to see what I get to see, the aircraft I get to see, the places I get to see."***
> ***Tech. Sgt. Adam Boeckman, KC-135 boom operator***

No matter how duty calls, all said they're happy to answer the call. Dial does it despite leaving four children at home, including a seven-month old.

"I've been called to do this," Dial said. "This is my service. This is what I'm proud to do."

Burns said the National Guard offered him a chance to finish his education and better himself. He is a Kansas City, Missouri, police detective in his day job.

"There's a lot of opportunities for someone like me or anyone who aspires to do something they never imagined they would do," Burns said.

Things like refueling an aircraft at 30,000 feet.

"Being a small town guy from Holton, Kansas, it's neat to see what I get to see, the aircraft I get to see, the places I get to see," Boeckman said.

More importantly, carrying out their mission is essential to the military's mission – it just doesn't hurt that their task has arguably the best view!

"I couldn't think of a better job to have in the military right now," Ramirez said.

The deployment to Guam is anywhere from three to six weeks. All members should be home by Thanksgiving. But the 190th likely won't be on the ground long. They're coming off their busiest flying year in their nearly 40 years of carrying out a refueling mission.

330th Brigade Signal Company ready to embrace future of signal corps

(Continued from Page 1)

"We will directly support the brigade," he said. "Our mission could be summarized really as an Internet Service Provider. We are like Cox or AT&T coming to your house with our wire saying, 'Here you go, here's the internet.'"

That's no small task, considering a majority of Army operations involve some facet of network communications. Peeler, a 33-year veteran of the signal corps, said it's an ever-evolving, vital component of military practices.

"Signal has evolved immensely," he said. "It's grown leaps and bounds. It's not stopping, it keeps growing and technology keeps getting better. We're performing a mission that's very critical."

Latimer, a six-year signal officer, said that among his immediate goals is to fill the manning requirements for the unit by adding qualified and motivated Soldiers from within the brigade and statewide.

"They're on it," Peeler said about his younger Soldiers. "They're quick learners.

Capt. Louis Latimer accepts the 330th Brigade Signal Company guidon from Lt. Col. Erica Christie, 997th Brigade Support Battalion commander, during a ceremony in Wichita, Kansas, Dec. 5, to officially activate the 330th BSC. Latimer will serve as commander of the unit, which is the second brigade support company in the Kansas National Guard, along with the 369th Brigade Support Company. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

It's their generation. My generation, we had balls on the end of a rubber band. These guys are starting off basically from the crib with technology. Their potential is there."

Peeler also noted that there are a lot of civilian tie-ins with a career in signal, including the equipment used and certifications required.

"They have such an opportunity to expand on what the Army teaches them through courses the Army offers to expand their knowledge base," he said. "The certificates that are out there in the civilian world, they can cost you a lot of money. All the stuff you need on the civilian side, you can pick up through the Army and that can save the Soldiers a lot of money."

Just as the crew of the Starship Enterprise boldly ventured where no one had gone before, the Guardsmen of the 330th hope to lead the way as they fulfill their mission.

"This is really bringing Kansas onto a new playing field and opening up the door to the signal community in general," Latimer said.

Kansas National Guard honors new state chaplain

By Sgt. Brandon Jacobs,
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

In a ceremony known as a Changing of the Stole, retired Chaplain (Col.) William D. Jenkins handed command of the state chaplains over to Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Peter M. Jaramillo Nov. 7 at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, Topeka, Kansas.

"Today is the end of my military career and the transfer of responsibility with the Changing of the Stole," said Jenkins.

Jenkins joined the Army with a direct commission as a chaplain in 1989 and has served the religious needs of several units, culminating with his three-year command of all the National Guard chaplains in the state.

"Chaplain Jenkins has done an outstanding job for the last three years as the state chaplain," said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, adjutant general of the Kansas National Guard. "He's grown the chaplain corps that we have, that outstanding team, from a little over 50 percent to 80 percent."

Jenkins retired with 26 years of honorable service to the Kansas National Guard and will continue his religious mission as the bereavement coordinator for Grace Hospice and the priest in charge of the Episcopal Church of the Covenant in Junction City.

Jaramillo, or "Father Pete" as he is affectionately known, has served the religious needs of the Kansas Guard for 19 years. He comes to the state chaplaincy from the 35th Infantry Division, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

"Chaplain Peter Jaramillo is a dear friend, brother in Christ and an awesome chaplain," said Jenkins.

During his time in the Guard, Jaramillo has deployed to serve the religious needs of service members in Kosovo, Germany and Iraq.

"He always finds time to serve the needs of the Kansas Army National Guard," said Tafanelli. "We really look forward to his leadership in the future."

Left to right, Chaplain (Col.) William D. Jenkins, outgoing state chaplain, Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas and Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Peter M. Jaramillo Nov. 7 at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, Topeka, Kansas. (Photo by Sgt. Brandon Jacobs, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Soldiers, veterans gather to commemorate 30th anniversary of Army Aviation Support Facility #2

Soldiers and veterans gathered at Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in Salina, Kansas, Oct. 24 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the facility. (Photo by Spc. Mikayla Gentine, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

By Spc. Mikayla Gentine
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Army aviators, past and present, gathered in Salina, Kansas, Oct. 24 to celebrate the 30-year anniversary of Army Aviation Support Facility #2, located at the Great Plains Joint Training Center.

Since branching off from Topeka's 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment in 1985 to Salina, Company B, aka the "Shadow Riders," have deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, ran humanitarian aid in Central America and conducted several other international missions.

The Shadow Riders and other past units stationed at Salina's airfield have been found across the world, flying and operating UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

"We're celebrating with camaraderie," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jason Garr, senior instructor pilot in AASF #2, "of anyone who was a member of a unit here or anyone that worked here full time and, of course, friends of all those folks."

Of the 25-person full-time staff, one warrant officer remains from the original crew 30 years ago. That's part of the reason throwing an anniversary celebration was important, said Garr.

A sizeable crowd walked into the hangar that Garr and other full-time Soldiers had set up exclusively for the reunion. Long-retired Soldiers, some sporting 108th Aviation jackets and veteran hats, mingled with old friends and current Soldiers, along with their families. Prize drawings were held and groups took pictures with the UH-60 Black Hawks.

Among the crowd were the original few who had stood up the support facility three decades ago. Current Soldiers and their children joined veterans alongside on-duty Soldiers who mingled to music, listened to speeches by unit leaders and flipped through scrapbooks revealing the brief, yet proud story of the 108th Avn. Regt. in Salina.

Seasoned aviators returning for the 30th anniversary reunion swapped stories and memories with current Guardsmen, bestowing wisdom to those who could one day be in their shoes.

"Train as best as you can," said Garr. "There's going to be good times, there's going to be bad times. But the key thing is to enjoy the friendship of the folks you have here. It's truly unique and it's an opportunity that only a small selection of the U.S. population gets to enjoy. Take advantage of it."

1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment retirees sporting their unit colors embrace each other upon arrival to the 30-year Army Aviation Support Facility #2 reunion celebration held Oct. 24 at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina. (Photo by Spc. Mikayla Gentine, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Kansas Army National Guard welcomes new state command chief warrant officer

By Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The warrant officer cohort of the Kansas Army National Guard welcomed a new leader Oct. 16 as Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael W. Smith took responsibility as the state command chief warrant officer in a change of authority ceremony at Nickell Armory, Topeka.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hector A. Vasquez passed the Warrant Officer Corps flag, signifying authority of the Kansas Army National Guard warrant officers, to Brig. Gen. Robert E. Windham, commander of the Kansas Army National Guard, who then passed the flag to Smith, investing in him responsibility as the command chief warrant officer of the Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas-Land Component, Kansas Army National Guard.

Vasquez will continue his military career on a Title 10 tour as the National Guard Field Artillery advisory for the Professional Education Center at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

"(Chief Warrant Officer 4) Smith has had success wherever he goes," said Windham. "I am excited about what lies ahead for our Warrant Officer Corps. I know he will sustain our momentum and show a whole new generation of men and women the path to success and service."

In his new position, Smith will manage the warrant officer force and represent their interests at all levels of local and state government and to the public. He will be the personal advisor to the Kansas adjutant general on issues regarding the professional development, readiness, training, utilization, health, morale and welfare of the nearly 130 warrant officers of the Kansas Army National Guard.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael W. Smith, left, receives the Warrant Officer Corps flag from Brig. Gen. Robert E. Windham, commander, Kansas Army National Guard-Land Component, signifying Smith's acceptance of role as Kansas state command chief warrant officer during a ceremony at Nickell Armory, Topeka, Oct. 16. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barnett, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

"I am honored to be here," said Smith. "If there is a position in the Kansas Army National Guard as a warrant to aspire to, it's the command chief warrant officer. If someone was to tell me twenty, twenty-five years ago that I would be the command chief warrant officer for the state of Kansas, I would have told them they were crazy, but there is no other place I would be right now."

The custom of a change of authority 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 cohort 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 colors, from the outgoing command chief to the next senior commander to the new command chief.

Adjutant General's Department takes a step toward the future

By Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli
The Adjutant General

For almost 40 years, the Adjutant General's Department has operated from the Cold War-era State Defense Building in Topeka.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli

Although little known by the general public, our simple concrete slab and brick State Defense Building has served as the epicenter of the state's preparedness efforts, ensuring that Kansas and her defenders are always ready. From within its walls, Soldiers, Airmen, and emergency management professionals have dedicated countless hours of service during natural disasters, emergencies and military activities in an effort to assist the citizens of Kansas and our great nation during times of need.

When Gov. Robert Bennett cut the red, white and blue ribbon at the opening ceremony in 1977, none of the 100 people in attendance could possibly imagine the staggering changes coming in the next four decades. The Vietnam War had ended just two years earlier and the aggressiveness of a nuclear-armed Soviet Union consumed most of our attention and anxiety. It was a time filled with uncertainty and concern about the future.

The State Defense Building was a classic model for the time. Designed with nuclear threat and civil defense in mind, the building consolidated all three components of the Adjutant General's Department into the same location: Kansas Army National Guard, Kansas Air National Guard and Division of Emergency Preparedness, which was renamed Kansas Division of Emergency Management in 1993.

For the first time in the agency's history, senior leaders and planners in all three components could communicate and coordinate their actions. This significantly improved the Kansas National Guard's ability to work both its state and federal missions in much closer coordination with civil defense/emergency management professionals. The ultimate beneficiaries of this combined effort were the people of Kansas.

There is no doubt that such a major initiative had its challenges and strong critics, but 39 years later we can clearly say that history has proven it a very wise and timely move.

Today, we face a new set of challenges coming from budget strain, shifting geopolitical environments, new threats, and almost constant reassessment of long-held military assumptions. This makes for a chaotic environment. But we must remember there is always opportunity in chaos, and we intend to seize that opportunity.

This requires us, as individuals, to do something very difficult. We must be willing to set aside preconceived ideas and assumptions, look toward the future, and see what new opportunities we can build as a team. As you read this, we are taking steps to best position the Kansas National Guard to grab hold of emerging opportunities.

As part of a larger strategy, the Adjutant General's Department and Joint Forces Headquarters are moving to Forbes Field in Topeka. The move will accomplish several things:

- It will allow for better partnering opportunities between the 190th Air Refueling Wing, the 108th Aviation Battalion, the 73rd Civil Support Team and Joint Forces Headquarters, and in turn, the rest of our Army and Air Guard units throughout the state.
- It will increase the value of and better position Forbes Field should a future Base Realignment and Closure Commission be authorized by Congress.
- It will enhance the tremendous opportunity for multiagency sharing of ideas and lessons between different players on team Kansas.
- And it will be the first among many new steps in building a bright future for our Soldiers, Airmen and civilian professionals.

My firm belief is that in another four decades, our Soldiers, Airmen and civilian professionals will enjoy a considerable return on the current investment being made. That they will recognize that, in spite of the bumps, challenges and uncertainty, we took clear and bold steps with the country, the Kansas National Guard and future generations in mind.

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.

John F. Kennedy

Warrant Officer call a success

By Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Smith
Command Chief Warrant Officer

The warrant officer call is a chance for me to visit with you, as well as foster networking among warrant officers throughout the state. It also gives some of our Soldiers who are interested in becoming a warrant officer a chance to meet warrant officers within the area.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Smith

The warrant officer call in December was a huge success as there were approximately 30 warrant officers representing many military occupational specialties. Everyone had a chance to visit and catch up, ask questions, and express ideas.

I am planning to hold the next event sometime during the summer in Salina. Once an exact date, time, and location are set I will let everyone know.

Currently, the KSARNG warrant officer strength sits at 83 percent. Last year, we sent a record number of candidates to the state Warrant Officer Candidates School course. Hitting this landmark, we must not relax and remember that we still have a lot of work to do. So please keep an eye out for Soldiers within your ranks that appear to be a good fit for the Warrant Officer Cohort and get them connected with Chief Warrant Officer 3 Morgan Davis (morgan.davis1.mil@mail.mil) or me (michael.w.smith293.mil@mail.mil).

Please continue to keep fit during the winter months since the holiday season characteristically brings with it additional pounds. It's a lot easier to maintain physical fitness than to start an exercises program all over again, so please ensure that you take some time to keep up your physical fitness.

Now is a good time to review and update your military bio and Interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System. Every Soldier is inherently responsible for maintaining his or her own records, so if you don't take care of your records, then no one else will either.

Now that warrant officer promotion boards no longer require Soldiers to appear, it is more important than ever to ensure that your records are correct and up to date. I have received several notifications of warrant officers who are delinquent in various categories. Although warrant officers have been relatively safe from retention boards for many years, we may be at a point where we might not have time to correct deficiencies in our records before it's too late. Therefore, please make every effort to thoroughly and routinely review your records and make updates/corrections.

Finally, all of us who wear warrant officer rank are looked at as subject matter experts, so it is important to not only maintain, but also grow within your respective career fields. The warrant officer rank is very difficult to achieve, and many good Soldiers fall short. Making up around two percent of today's modern Army, we are a small but powerful community, so let's continue to excel at being the leaders, mentors, and subject matter experts that our commanders rely on.

Again, thank you all for the support and dedication that you give to not only the warrant officer cohort, but the Kansas Army National Guard. I look forward to working with all of you throughout this coming year.

Warrior to Warrior

Preserving our past, honoring today, securing tomorrow

By Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown
Senior enlisted leader

This month the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, General Frank Grass, sent a memorandum to all National Guard personnel instructing us to support military associations and other professional groups. AFI 36-2618, 4.1.8 instructs enlisted members to "join professional organizations" and to participate in organization and community events through volunteerism. There are many such ways to accomplish this leadership responsibility. One such way is to support the Museum of the Kansas National Guard.

Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown

The Museum of the Kansas National Guard became a reality in 1997, when it opened its doors for the first time. It had taken 12 years of planning, fundraising, and volunteer work to get our Kansas National Guard Museum open. Within the museum walls, the weapons, uniforms and other artifacts carried or worn by Kansas Guardsmen from the Civil War to the Global War on Terrorism are proudly displayed. These artifacts paint a picture of the Kansas citizen-soldier from the early and bloody days of the birth of our state, to today's Guard mission in a highly volatile and dangerous world. In addition to the museum displays, library, and artifact storage, the facility also houses the National Guard Association of Kansas and the STARBASE youth program. This combination of occupants makes the Museum a true center for the preservation of the militia heritage of the Kansas Army and Air National Guard.

This is "our" museum and we must preserve and support our heritage so that those that follow behind us will know of the sacrifices made and of the stories told by those that served before us. As a profession of arms, it is our responsibility to preserve the past, honor those that currently serve and to secure the museum for tomorrow's warriors. If you are an Airman or Soldier that has not had an opportunity to visit our museum in Topeka, consider this a challenge. You will not be disappointed. For those units that visit Joint Forces Headquarters regularly, bring your troops with you on your next trip and make time to visit our museum. There are currently over 7,500 Soldiers and Airman serving in the Kansas National Guard and thousands more that have served before us. Currently there are only 150 members of the Kansas National Guard Museum. Please consider supporting our Kansas National Guard heritage.

Remember our four focal points - readiness, customer care, communication and partnerships.

I'm honored to serve as your Command Senior Enlisted Leader. Remember always, excellence is an attitude. Proud to Serve!

Plains Guardian

The PLAINS GUARDIAN is published under the provisions of AR 360-1 for the personnel of the Kansas National Guard. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of The Adjutant General's Department PA Officer. Contents of the PLAINS GUARDIAN are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, Department of the Army or The Adjutant General's Department. News, features, photographs and art materials are solicited from readers; however, utilization is at the discretion of the editorial staff. All photos must be high resolution and include complete caption information, including photographer's name and rank. No paid advertisement will be accepted, nor will payment be made for contributions.

The deadline for all submission is the first Wednesday of the month: February, April, June, August, October and December. Submissions may be e-mailed to Jane Welch (jane.e.welch1.nfg@mail.mil).

Circulation: Approximately 15,500
Printed under contract with the U.S. Government Printing Office

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Runnebaum inducted into Museum of the Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame

By Capt. Margaret Ziffer
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Retired Col. Ralph D. Runnebaum became the 107th name added to the list of honored service members enshrined into the Museum of the Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame during an induction ceremony Nov. 8 at the Ramada Inn in Topeka.

Runnebaum is a decorated Vietnam combat veteran with more than 32 years of enlisted and commissioned service. He commanded at the company, battalion and brigade level before his retirement as the chief of staff, Kansas Army National Guard.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, Kansas National Guard, the adjutant general, remarked during the ceremony that Runnebaum's efforts in the maintenance community made immeasurable contributions to shaping the Kansas National Guard.

"He taught me about supporting our soldiers," said Tafanelli. "One of the key things that he made sure of is that his staff and your equipment was always ready so that you could draw it, it was ready to go and that you could train on it.

"On behalf of the people of Kansas, thank you for everything that you have done for the country and for the Kansas National Guard. And thank you for reminding us of what true nobility and what dedicating our lives to something bigger than ourselves is all about."

The Hall of Fame, established by the National Guard Association of Kansas, commemorates and recognizes individuals who have served in the Kansas National Guard or its predecessor, the Kansas State Militia, and who have made a significant contribution to the National Guard achievements, tradition, or history.

Retired Col. Ralph D. Runnebaum. (Photo provided)

Retired Col. Ralph Runnebaum, accompanied by his wife Judy, is officially inducted into the Museum of the Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame by Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas. (Photo by Capt. Margaret Ziffer, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

After nominations are submitted, they go to a selection committee, and are sent to the Board of Governors for final approval.

"We try to really keep the integrity of the process so that the people (that are inducted) really deserve to be there," explained retired Lt. Col. Melvin "Doug" Jacobs, chairman of the Board of Governors since 2005. "The military record is part of it, but also the civilian record. What has the individual done in their community that's brought credit on the National Guard? What did they do to contribute to the community?"

Jacobs said induction into the Hall of Fame is one of the highest honors for National Guardsmen because inductees are selected by their peers.

"The nominations have to say something, they have to show why that individual should go into the Hall of Fame. If you are nominated, and if you are selected, it should be one of the highest honors that you have," Jacobs said.

In addition to thanking the officers, enlisted, warrant officers, and civilians he has served with during his more than 40 years of military service, Runnebaum thanked his wife, children, and family for their support.

"When you put your heart and soul into things, you are going to miss a lot of the family get-togethers, boys' basketball and football games, daughters' dance recitals. You miss a lot," Runnebaum said. "I feel so proud today and rewarded that I will become a member of this distinguished group."

Runnebaum was commissioned as a second lieutenant from the Kansas National Guard Officer Candidate School in July 1966 and attended the Ordinance Officer Basic Course. He was mobilized in 1968 with the 69th Infantry Brigade and was sent to Fort Carson, Colorado, where he was deployed to Vietnam and assigned as the battalion maintenance officer, 7th Psychological Operations Group, United States Army Pacific in Vietnam. He remained in this position until December 1969. After being released from active duty he returned to the Kansas National Guard.

Other assignments include company commander, personnel officer and executive officer for the 169th Support Battalion. He served in several principal staff positions before being selected to command the 287th Maintenance Battalion. After command, he was assigned as the intel/operations executive officer and deputy chief of staff, Headquarters, State Area Command. Ultimately, Runnebaum was assigned as the chief of staff of the Kansas Army National Guard.

Runnebaum was the director of the Mobilization and Training Equipment Site at Fort Riley, Kansas, for 13 years. After retirement from the Kansas National Guard, he became the civilian cite manager for the RETRO Europe Maintenance Program. From this experience, he was selected as the National Guard Bureau's oversight manager for the Readiness Sustainment Maintenance Program.

Runnebaum is an active member of several veteran's organizations.

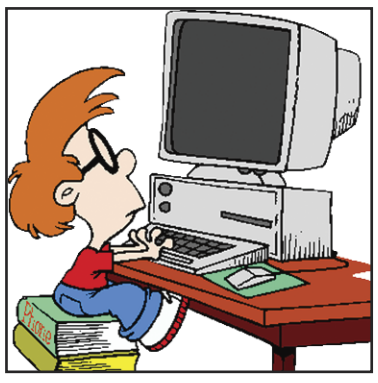
During his career, he received the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star and Meritorious Service Metal as well as numerous other U.S. Army and Kansas National Guard awards.

High-tech toys: Today's scary story

By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Scott Sackrider
Information Assurance Officer

Remember the horror movies about dolls and other toys going on rampages and going violent on an unsuspecting family? Imagine less blood and carnage, but still leaving a family to pick up pieces.

In this edition we bring you two stories, both about toys. The Hong Kong-based company VTech, makers of tablets for kids and such, was hacked. Stolen were the names, addresses, passwords, and children's names of over 6.4 million accounts. The data was not encrypted on their servers.



Luckily the person (as in yes, it only took one person to steal the data) indicated the breach was only to expose the holes in security, and the data would not be released. However, many criminal organizations would pay dearly for such a treasure trove of data. Although no financial data or social security numbers were stolen, just the list of emails can become targets for spammers and those intent on phishing.

Another issue is the information was that of children. There may be no noticeable effects from the breach until the kids become adults and notice their credit is already tarnished.

Unfortunately, this scenario is not uncommon. Many times high tech companies are in such a hurry to get their products to market that security takes a back seat.

VTech is based outside of the U.S., which is another aspect we as parents and consumers need to research. A company's website may have an American address, but that does not mean the information is stored here.

So you may be wondering, "What can be creepier than stealing my kid's information?" How about a toy that actively spies on them?

There is a new Wi-Fi-enabled doll that is interactive in listening to a voice and responding, in the same manner as a home-based artificial intelligence system. Researchers attempted to hack into voice actuated networked dolls, and have been successful. It's possible to hack a doll, enable the microphone, and eavesdrop on conversations.

What's worse is some toys use the cloud for intelligence responses, so your conversations can also be intercepted during the doll's transmission to the internet. In the future, cameras will be prevalent, so it may be possible to not only hear what is said, but video can be captured. It's already proven that sensor bars in the top game consoles are sensitive enough to sense heartbeats and distinguish users by their biometrics, all without the use of a camera.

Toys are tracing the same route as social media. How much information do you dare to publish to the world for the sake of entertainment or convenience? Our children, whose information was just taken, may not bat an eye at the incident, knowing their privacy is less important than ours.

We wish there was a strategy to protect individuals. However, the reaction and degree of protection in these cases are on an individual basis. The paradigm is shifting to a fully-connected society. What scares us may not even faze our kids. Once again, as technology grows, society will have to learn how to use it wisely, and that is usually through trial and error.

184th Munitions Squadron ends long-standing tradition

By Tech. Sgt. Justin Jacobs
184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs

The 184th Munitions Squadron has been a part of the 184th Intelligence Wing for more than 70 years. On Oct. 1, the wing retired the Munitions flag and said goodbye to a squadron that was part of the 184th since the beginning.

As a result of a realignment of Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in 2005, the 184th took on the Standard Air Munitions Package, STAMP, and the Standard Tank, Rack, Adapter, and Pylon Package, STRAPP, missions.

The squadron grew to more than 100 members who were ammo troops, known as the bomb builders, or armament troops, known as the bomb loaders.

The squadron's Regional Munitions Storage Area was responsible for 36 accounts that held 1,100 line items supporting the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserves and the active duty Air Force.

Since 2005, the squadron delivered more than 380 tons of munitions to in-theatre combatant commanders during 15 different contingency operations. Additionally, they provided more than 110 pallets totaling 42,000 pounds of munitions to two special assignment airlift missions.

Despite the shutdown, missions still had to be completed and, at the same time, all remaining assets needed to be packed up and shipped to other units.

"The magnitude of the effort to ship out all the STAMP munitions and STRAPP equipment was enormous," said retired Lt. Col. Jeffrey Maddex, former commander of the 184th Munitions Squadron.

Squadron members retired or transferred to different squadrons throughout the wing and units in different states as a result of the divestiture. Of all the munitions troops, only one full-time and two drill-status Guardsmen were assigned to the 184th Logistic Readiness Squadron.

"To make this transfer happen with no mishaps, while continuing the mission until all assets were divested and getting our folks moving on to new jobs or retirement, is almost unfathomable," said Maddex.

The squadron's accounts were transferred to the active duty and all ordnance was shipped to other bases. Over $350 million of assets were transferred, with the bulk of it going to the 649th Munitions Squadron, Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

To be successful, the shutdown took a team effort from all squadron members.

"I will always look back with pride on how the guys and gals in MUNS performed with such grace and professionalism under adversity," said Maddex.

Mohatt receives general's star

Jennifer Mohatt affixes the rank of brigadier general on her husband, Col. Anthony V. Mohatt's uniform during a promotion ceremony at the Great Overland Station in Topeka, Nov. 6. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Hanson, 35th Infantry Division Public Affairs)

Public Affairs Office

Col. Anthony V. Mohatt, assistant division commander for the 35th Infantry Division, was promoted to brigadier general in a ceremony Friday, Nov. 6 at the Great Overland Station, Topeka.

"I am honored to be promoted and offered the opportunity to continue to serve the citizens of Kansas and the nation," said Mohatt. "I owe my family and civilian employer my deepest gratitude and appreciation for their support during my 30 years of military service."

Prior his current position, Mohatt was commander of 69th Troop Command. During his career, Mohatt has also served as the operations officer, 69th Troop Command; administrative officer and operations officer, and commander of the 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment; and assistant training officer and plans officer, 35th Infantry Division, in addition to various command and staff positions. Mohatt has deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

He is a 1990 graduate of the Officer Candidate School at the Kansas Military Academy. His military education includes the Armor Basic and Advanced Courses, Combined Arms and Services Staff School and Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College. He also attended the U. S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations Criminal Investigator Training Program.

Mohatt's military awards include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Iraq Campaign Medal, and numerous other awards.

His civilian education includes a bachelor's degrees in political science and sociology from the University of Kansas, a Master of Arts degree in administration of justice from Wichita State University, a Master of Science in military arts and science from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and a Master of Arts in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College.

In his civilian job, Mohatt is the special agent in charge, United States Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General Investigations – Midwest Region, Chicago, Illinois.

State surgeon reflects on 39 years of service during retirement ceremonies

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Col. Gordon D. Kuntz has had a home in the military for more than 39 years in a career spanning five decades. He served in the active-duty Army and Army National Guard and held numerous duty positions, including his most recent, commander of the Kansas Medical Detachment and state surgeon.

Kuntz's long career and many achievements were celebrated by colleagues, family, friends and the Soldiers under his command during two separate ceremonies Nov. 8.

> ***"Without reservation, I can say my tour of duty has been incredible."***
> ***Col. Gordon D. Kuntz, Former state surgeon and Kansas Medical Detachment commander***

During the first ceremony, held at Nickell Armory, Topeka, Kuntz was presented the Legion of Merit – an award given for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements – by Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas.

"(Kuntz) has been a tremendous asset to his state and country and we're better from having him," said Tafanelli. "When he took command of the Medical Detachment, they were ranked among the bottom third in the country. He leaves it ranked within the top five."

Kuntz, who enlisted in the United States Army in 1975, briefly addressed his colleagues, thanking them for their support during his career and recognized his family's support.

During the second ceremony, held at the Great Plains Joint Training Center, Salina, Kuntz was presented with gifts from colleagues and honored by the Soldiers of the Medical Detachment.

"Without reservation, I can say my tour of duty has been incredible, providing me with countless opportunities and experiences I would not have had outside the military," said Kuntz. "Looking back over the past 39 plus years, I have truly been blessed to have the unwavering support of my family and to serve with so many outstanding officers and soldiers in the Kansas Army National Guard. While I will miss so many of my colleagues, I look forward to the journey that lies ahead."

Kuntz entered the United States Army March 10, 1975, completing Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He attended Common Basic Electronics Training for Tactical Microwave Repair at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and was stationed at Fort Jackson as a COBET instructor. Kuntz re-enlisted as a patient care specialist in 1978 and was assigned to the pediatrics unit at Madigan Army Medical Center Fort Lewis, Washington. One year later, he completed the patient care specialist course and was assigned to Company B, 1st Medical Battalion, Fort Riley, Kansas, until leaving active duty Feb. 29, 1984, with nine years of active duty.

After one year, he joined the Kansas Army National Guard and was assigned as the medical noncommissioned officer at the Kansas Military Academy in Salina, Kansas, where he entered Class 30 of the Kansas Officer Candidate School. Upon graduation, Kuntz remained as the medical noncommissioned officer while he completed his nursing education. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the infantry and assigned as a junior tactical officer at the KMA until the time of his

(Continued on Page 7)

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas, left, presents Col. Gordon D. Kuntz the Legion of Merit during a Nov. 8, ceremony at Nickell Armory in Topeka honoring Kuntz's career. Kuntz, former commander of the Kansas Medical Detachment, retired after spending more than 39 years in the military. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

AT&T contributes $15,000 to Kansas National Guard Foundation

AT&T presents a check for $15,000 to the Kansas National Guard Foundation at the Governor's Ceremonial Office in the Kansas Statehouse Nov. 9. The contribution is a show of support for the Soldiers and Airmen of the Kansas National Guard and their families. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)

1-161 Field Artillery Soldiers gear up for civil disturbance training

By Spc. Mikayla Gentine
105th Mobile Public Affairs Office

Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery played the role of first responders to a civil disturbance Oct. 24-25 at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina. On the other side of the shields, Soldiers volunteering as mock rioters provided vital experience for trainees, acting the part of an angry mob as they yelled, pushed and attempted to initiate physical altercation with trainees on the riot control lines.

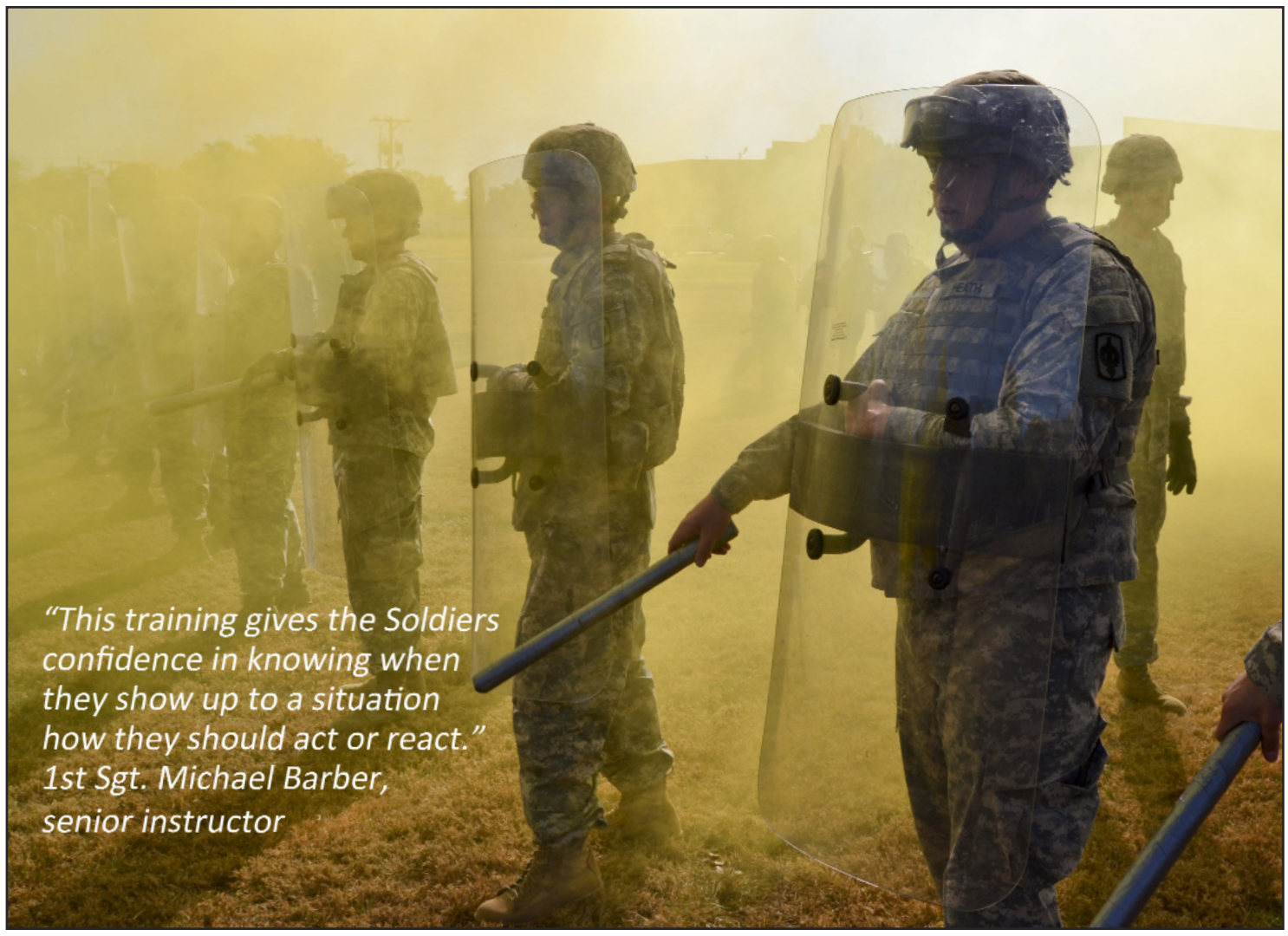
Over the course of the two-day training exercise, approximately 250 Guardsmen learned techniques in escalation of force, personal protection, nonlethal self-defense and riot shield formations. While learning these techniques, Soldiers develop a broader sense of their part in a civil disturbance scenario and how it impacts the overall mission of the Kansas Army Guard if they are ever called to conduct riot control missions.

"The training teaches Soldiers the difference between a de-escalation event and possibly crippling relations with the public," said 1st Sgt. Michael Barber, senior instructor.

A de-escalation event describes the process used by Soldiers in a riot control scenario to diffuse rising tensions before resorting to physical detainment. For instance, a rioter choosing not to leave an area and instead push against shielded Soldiers would first be faced with verbal warnings before apprehension.

"This training gives the Soldiers confidence in knowing when they show up to a situation how they should act or react," said Barber, "not just in regard to a bad person who's doing a bad thing, but just normal people."

Barber said his group is constantly seeking and training instructors, provided they have enough funding, to ensure as many units as possible in the state are trained in case of a civil disturbance emergency. Optimally, explained Barber, trainers would be embedded within battalions to provide training to Soldiers that may find themselves supported by the 35th Military Police Company. Anyone interested in becoming an instructor would first have to keep attend training events by state instructors and show a continual interest and dedication to maintaining peace in the state of Kansas.



Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, are cloaked in simulated gas as they take a stance against mock rioters as part of civil disturbance training at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, Oct. 24. (Photo by Spc. Mikayla Gentine, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Kuntz retires

(Continued from Page 6)

direct commission in the Nurse Corps in January 1988, where he served as the nurse/medical officer at the KMA. Other duty assignments included clinical nurse, nurse practitioner, training officer and head nurse for Physical Examination Team B with Detachment 5, Headquarters State Area Command, Lenexa.

Kuntz served as the executive officer and deputy commander for the Kansas Medical Detachment prior to attending the United States Army War College in July 2006. Upon completion of the War College, he was assigned as the Medical Detachment commander until his deployment to the Horn of Africa in June 2010 as the senior medical nurse with the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment.

His education includes a bachelor's degree in nursing from Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, and a Master of Science degree in nursing from Wichita State University. He is a lifetime member of the National Guard Association of Kansas, a lifetime member of the Disabled American Veterans and a member of the Kansas State Nurses Association.

Kuntz is a graduate of the United States Army War College, Advance Joint Professional Military Education Program and the Medical Strategic Leadership Program.

Kuntz's awards include Meritorious Service Medal with two bronze oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with silver oak leaf cluster, Army Achievement Medal with silver oak leaf cluster and two bronze oak leaf clusters, Good Conduct Medal with bronze clasp, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal with silver oak leaf cluster and two bronze oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Ribbon with bronze star, Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terror Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with silver hourglass and M device, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon with numeral two, numerous Kansas awards, Expert Field Medical Badge, and the order of Military Medical Merit.

Kuntz is a semi-retired psychiatric nurse practitioner.

Kansas Guard partners with United Way to fight hunger, raise awareness

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
Public Affairs Office

When fans of classic rock and holiday music packed the Topeka Performing Arts Center in Topeka, Kansas, for a concert Nov. 21, they were greeted by Soldiers.

But these Soldiers didn't carry rifles; rather hundreds of pounds of food.

Sgt. 1st Class Richard McGuire, surface maintenance mechanic, KSARNG, unloads a barrel full of food collected from local National Guard Armories at the Topeka Performing Arts Center, Topeka, Kansas, Nov. 21. The Kansas National Guard partnered with United Way to raise awareness on hunger. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

The Kansas National Guard partnered with United Way to help fight hunger in Topeka this winter by way of a food drive set up at local armories to raise awareness about hunger in the community.

Approximately 25 Soldiers were on hand at the Topeka Performing Arts Center to greet patrons and unload and deliver the food to Harvesters Community Food Network, a nonprofit organization that distributes the donated food to those who need it.

"We have so many people that really struggle day to day to have enough to eat," said Miriam Krehbiel, president of United Way of Greater Topeka. "We bring all sorts of folks together to help the community understand what's going on.

"The National Guard has been an amazing partner on this in every way possible," said Krehbiel. "Through volunteerism and through food donations. It's been an incredible partnership and we honestly are overwhelmed at how generous the Guard has been with us."

According to Capt. Benjamin Moore, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 635th Regional Support Group, helping out the community is all in a day's work.

"This is a fun part of the job," Moore said. "It makes the National Guard great because we're part of the community."

Moore, who is also the budget officer with Recruiting and Retention Battalion, said that it's a great way for the Guard to interface with the public.

Many of the Soldiers at TPAC were new Guard members participating in the Recruit Sustainment Program, which indoctrinates and prepares ARNG Soldiers for the successful completion of their Initial Entry Training.

Among the RSP Soldiers was Pvt. Hunter Anderson of the 635th RSG, who will join the 35th Military Police Company upon completion of advanced individual training. Anderson said that he enlisted in the National Guard to become a positive role model in his community.

"I wanted to get out and show that you can go out and be a great person and change things in society," he said. "The National Guard is here to help civilians, along with those in need.

"Growing up in my generation, we usually have the idea that everybody that's in uniform is going around busting down doors trying to take out the bad guys, but this is just as important."

Moore echoed that sentiment.

"We support the local community that we are from. It makes you feel good. That's why I joined. We don't just care for your security, we care for your sustainment. We want to be able to help you improve your life and your quality of life that you have within our communities as well as protect your right to have that."

Do you know what to do when the flakes begin to fly this winter?

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

Despite a few bouts of heavy rain, the summer of 2015 was, weather-wise, fairly uneventful. However, the Kansas Division of Emergency Management is reminding Kansans that a mild summer does not necessarily mean winter will be equally as mild and the time to prepare is now. Some areas of Kansas have already experienced heavy snows and ice storms.

"Anyone who has lived in Kansas for any length of time knows Kansas weather changes very rapidly and Kansans can expect both spring-like temperatures and a blizzard warning during the same day," said Angee Morgan, deputy director of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. "The best time to prepare for our challenging and ever-changing weather is now."

The National Weather Service selects a day each fall to remind Kansans of the potential hazards associated with winter weather. In 2015, that day was Dec. 1. State agencies took the opportunity to encourage Kansans to prepare for another Kansas winter by checking the supplies in their disaster kit, reviewing their home emergency plan and winterizing their home.

Road travel is discouraged during extreme storm situations; however, if you must travel in those conditions the Kansas Highway Patrol encourages taking extra precautions to keep yourself and your family safe. Keep at least a half a tank of gas in your car at all times in case you get stranded or stuck in traffic. Arrange travel plans so you can leave well ahead of bad weather and keep a disaster kit in your car.

Dec. 1 marked the beginning of meteorological winter. Frigid temperatures, heavy snow, icy roads, strong winds, flooding and more can make winter particularly dangerous. Make sure you and your loved ones are prepared for the hazardous weather this winter will bring by checking out the National Weather Service's Winter Safety website! http://www.nws.noaa.gov. (Courtesy graphic)

Recommended items to include in your vehicle:

- Shovel
- Windshield scraper and small broom
- Flashlight
- Battery powered radio
- Extra batteries
- Water
- Snack food
- Matches
- Extra hats, socks and mittens
- First aid kit with pocket knife
- Necessary medications
- Blanket(s)
- Tow chain or rope
- Road salt and sand
- Booster cables
- Emergency flares
- Fluorescent distress flag

Information on winter driving tips is available from the Kansas Highway Patrol at http://www.kansashighwaypatrol.org/press/news_info/winter_drive.html You can also follow the Kansas Highway Patrol on Facebook and Twitter at www.kansashighwaypatrol.org.

If you must travel when winter road conditions are deteriorating, then plan ahead to get the latest road information from the Kansas Department of Transportation. Be sure you know road conditions before you leave by calling 5-1-1 or visiting the Kandrive website at kandrive.org.

To find information on road conditions when not in the state, call 1-866-511-5368.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment encourages Kansans dress appropriately for bitterly cold weather and to know the warning signs of hypothermia. Weather conditions can change quickly, so it's important to have warm clothing, and extra layers ready. If you have to stay outside on bitterly cold days, make plans to get inside to warm up on a regular basis. Taking regular breaks from working outdoors in the cold can also help prevent injuries."

For a complete list of items for a home or car emergency kit, go to www.ksready.gov. Additional information on preparing for winter weather is available from FEMA at www.fema.gov, the American Red Cross at www.redcross.org, or your county emergency management office.

More information about staying safe in winter weather is also available at http://www.kdheks.gov/beh/download/winter_weather_safety.pdf

The Federal Emergency Management Agency also has a short animated video on winter weather preparedness. It can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVpGJ_Xl__w or scan the Qcode at the right with a smartphone.

Wolf Creek graded exercise tests coordination of joint agencies

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

Personnel from the state of Kansas, Coffey County and Wolf Creek Generating Station tested their emergency response plan and capabilities in full-scale exercise Dec. 8.

This exercise is scheduled every two years and is graded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The primary focus of the exercise is to evaluate the ability of the state, Coffey County and the utility to protect the health and safety of the public living in the vicinity of the Wolf Creek Generating Station near Burlington.

The State Emergency Operations Center, located in the State Defense Building, Topeka, buzzes with activity during the Wolf Creek Exercise Dec. 8 (Photo by 1st. Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)

Participants in the drill included representatives from Kansas Emergency Management, Kansas Highway Patrol, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Wildlife and Parks, Kansas Department of Transportation and the Kansas National Guard, Coffey County agencies and the Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation.

In a departure from scenarios involving equipment failure and/or natural disaster, this year's exercise involved a hostile action against the nuclear power station by armed assailants.

During the drill, controllers fed information about the scenario to personnel at Wolf Creek facilities, the Coffey County Emergency Operations Center, the Forward Staging Area in Coffey County, the State Emergency Operations Center in Topeka and other locations. Responders reacted as they would in a real situation to ever-changing information and conditions.

All facets of the state, county and Wolf Creek emergency response plans were tested and evaluated with the results revealed in a public meeting in Burlington on Dec. 10. The resuts of the exercise were favorable, rating the exercise a success with no findings of deficiencies.

"Don't Mix Chemicals, Read the Label First" month designated in Kansas

Gov. Sam Brownback signs a proclamation at the Kansas Statehouse Oct. 30 designating November as "Don't Mix Chemicals, Read the Label First" month in Kansas. During the month, the Technological Hazards Section of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management reminded the public "Don't Mix Chemicals! Read the Label First!" The goal of the campaign was to educate the public on the dangers of mixing common household chemicals. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

Kansas Division of Emergency Management
www.ksready.gov

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Brigade building strength and readiness through Soldier care

By Sgt. Anna Laurin
130th Field Artillery Brigade, HHB

Suicide. Soldiers taking their own lives. This sensitive subject is just the topic the 130th Field Artillery Brigade, Kansas Army National Guard, has decided to focus on.

On Dec. 13, a working group of leaders was held to discuss the progress of a preventative support system being created within their organization, the 130th FAB's Suicide Prevention and Intervention Program.

The program stems from the Kansas Army National Guard Suicide Prevention Program, but is focused according to the direction from within the 130th FAB leadership staff.

"It is driven from the desire to improve Soldier care in the area of resiliency and at-risk behavior," said 1st Sgt. Jerald Kracht, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 130th FAB. "The premise behind it is taking the elements of the Suicide Intervention Program throughout the state that already exist and encapsulating the very best practices into a usable format that can be distributed throughout the brigade."

The 130th FAB's Suicide Prevention and Intervention Program will create a supportive and proactive network in which Soldiers and their leadership are fully engaged and aware.

"We want to have a good support structure in place at all levels so we can understand our Soldiers, their problems and see the indicators in order to step in and help by get them the assistance they need," said Col. John W. Rueger, 130th FAB Commander. "We need to be able to react and have a good response when things happen but we must focus on a prevention model. We will establish a total first line leader engagement and try to address some of the root causes."

Once the leadership understands the causes that can lead towards suicidal ideation then they can then ask themselves the question, 'What else can we do as an organization to tackle those areas?'

"We have taken a look at all of the assets available to us and then formed a working group of vested individuals to come up with different kinds of action plans we are able to put together at our level," said Rueger. "In the next 90 days we want to be operational and roll the program out."

The program will include three resources available within the brigade: education, personnel and informational tools.

"The primary tools are going to be education through ACE, ACE-SI (Ask Care Escort- Suicide Intervention) and ASIST (Applied Suicide Invention Skills Training)." said Kracht.

The classes and training tools have been a highly valuable asset for the Guard so far.

"Being able to see stress contributories or flags that a Soldier may be having problems, is very important and it is where the ACE-SI program comes in," said Ronald Marshall, Suicide Prevention Program manager. "It teaches us how to be aware of those flags that show if a person is at risk."

Not only does the program look at educating its personnel, but the goal is to have a complete buy-in at all levels. It will shape the brigade, battalions, companies and battery's into an organized team of leaders and suicide intervention officers, said Kracht. This ensures that every element within the brigade is collectively working towards the same purpose, using the tools and resources provided.

One tool that has been incorporated will be a brigade pocket card, which will be given to every Solider as an accountable item. The expandable card will list the phone number of the brigade suicide intervention officers as well as other Kansas National Guard suicide prevention resources.

The program and the steps taken to make sure that the brigade is using all available assets to reach their Soldiers has been an important project within the 130th Command Staff.

"I appreciate those who have worked hard on this program," said Rueger. "It is important to me and something that is fundamental to the Soldier care within our organization. This program not only falls in with soldier care, but also allows us to leverage our junior leadership to become stronger as an organization."

The focus of this program is about strengthening the support between personnel within the organization and with their families and local community agencies and other sources of support. It focuses on the preventative steps that can be taken before a Soldier is lost to suicide. Even though suicide is a sensitive topic for some, the 130th FAB leadership understands that it is a necessary subject and their Soldiers deserve a supportive and understanding environment.

"When it comes to our Soldiers and Suicide, we must be proactive. If we are reactive, it will be too late." This is a statement that Kracht believes that everyone should buy into. "We can't react after it is done. Because guess what, it's done."

Kansas Guardsman accompanies Senator Moran on visit to Center of Disease Control

U.S. Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), left, who is a member of the Senate Appropriations Health Subcommittee, visited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in October to learn more about how CDC safeguards the United States from health, safety and security threats. Moran was joined by The University of Kansas Hospital Chief Medical Officer Dr. Lee Norman, right. Norman also serves as a major in the Kansas Army National Guard Medical Detachment and is an advisor to Homeland Security and regional disaster preparedness agencies. (Photo provided)

Walmart donates $20,000 to Kansas National Guard Foundation

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation donated $20,000 to the Kansas National Guard Foundation in a ceremony at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, Topeka, on Dec. 22. The grant will be used to provide valuable support services, training and assistance to current service members and their families. Governor Sam Brownback and Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, Kansas adjutant general, accepted the check on behalf of the Kansas National Guard Foundation. (Photo by Jane Welch, Public Affairs Office)

Chaplain's Corner

"The Blessing of the Chaplaincy"

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Peter Jaramillo
State Chaplain

On Nov. 8, the chaplain's stole symbolizing the priestly shepherding ministry of the chaplain was passed from Chaplain (Col.) William Jenkins and placed upon my shoulders to carry on the pastoral mission of the office of Joint Forces Headquarters chaplaincy for the Kansas National Guard.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Peter Jaramillo

As I accepted this responsibility and appointment, I am grateful to Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, for entrusting his confidence in me. I am also reminded of the words from sacred scripture, "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same spirit" 1 Cor. 12:4; "to each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit"; 1Cor.12:7 "But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes" 1 Cor.12:11.

I look back on this past year with sense of gratitude to God for bringing me back from a successful six-month deployment to Kosovo and back into active ministry in the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas. I am grateful for the leadership and personal mentoring of Chaplain Jenkins, for our Chaplain Corps and the support of the command. I am deeply aware of the spiritual gifts and ministries that the Chaplains Corps has been entrusted by God as well as the unique strength of the Unit Ministry Teams provides and operates for our Soldiers and Airmen and their families.

I am grateful for the 11 Army Chaplains and the four Air Force chaplains and their Unit Ministry Teams and the two Army Chaplain Candidates preparing to become "bona fide" Army chaplains, and one Unit Ministry Team deploying from the 137th chaplain detachment in 2016.

I am confident that the Lord will continue to bless these Unit Ministry Teams as they engage in challenging times serving Kansas' finest Soldiers and Airmen to nurture and affirm the spiritual leadership of professional and pastoral support for the caring chaplains and their religious specialists. As state chaplain, I will support and provide the opportunities for professional chaplain training and spiritual enrichment for our UMT that they be ready, responsive and resilient and spiritually and physically fit to meet the many needs that are placed upon them.

Presently, we are recruiting two new chaplains and two new chaplain assistants for the corps, I will do everything that I can to retain quality chaplains in order to meet current future KSNG operational requirements.

My commitment is to be available to my chaplains and to support my command with the finest ministry that military chaplains can offer for vital religious support with moral counsel and strategic leadership consistent with chaplain chain of command entrusted to my pastoral care.

May God bless the Kansas Chaplain Corps in 2016 and keep them faithful and may his face shine upon them and grant chaplains and chaplain assistants his wisdom and peace as they serve those entrusted to the sacred ministry.

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Awards and Decorations

KANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Legion of Merit

Col. Michael Dittamo, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Col. Gordon Kuntz, KSARNG Med Det, Lenexa
Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hector Vasquez, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka

Meritorious Service Medal

Lt. Col. Carla Hale, HHC, 169th CSSB, Olathe, with four oak leaf clusters
Maj. Mark Mullinax, HQ, 235th Rgmt, Salina
Maj. Robert Sands, HHC, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Kansas City, with oak leaf cluster
Capt. Cory Durbin, HQ, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Kansas City
1st Lt. Daniel Arnold Jr., 73rd CST, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Luis Vazquez Jr., JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Sgt. Maj. Terence Hankerson, HHC, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Kansas City, with oak leaf cluster
1st Sgt. Jerald Kracht, HHB, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Hiawatha
Master Sgt. John Kilpatrick, HHC, 635th RSG, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class James Elam, Co A, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Michael Swiercinsky, 995th Maint Co, Smith Center
Staff Sgt. Bruce Curry, Co B, Rec & Ret Bn, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Perry Johnston, Det 1, 995th Maint Co, Concordia
Staff Sgt. Terry McGrath, HHB, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Hutchinson
Staff Sgt. Jay Wilson, HHC, 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster

Army Commendation Medal

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Brown, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Sgt. 1st Class Joshua McCullough, HQ, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Travis Letterman, Co B, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka

Kansas National Guard Strength Management Ribbon

Pfc. Xavier Brown, Co B, Rec & Ret Bn, Wichita
Pfc. Ryan Burr, Co B, Rec & Ret Bn, Wichita
Pfc. Benjamin Harrell, Det 2, Co A, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka

Kansas Achievement Ribbon

1st Lt. Cassandra Hartshorn, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
2nd Lt. Charles Manarang, Co A, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Lawrence
2nd Lt. Michael Shoemaker, 130th FA Bde, Manhattan
1st Sgt. Nancy White, HQ, 235th Rgt, Salina
Sgt. 1st Class Kimberly Fox, Det 2, Co C, 2nd Bn, 211th Avn (GSAB), Salina
Sgt. 1st Class Hector Medina, 2nd Bn, 235th Rgmt (MTB), Salina
Sgt. 1st Class George Villarreal, Det 1, KS Rec & Ret Bn, Wichita
Sgt. 1st Class Brandi Williams, HQ, 235th Rgmt, Salina
Staff Sgt. Joshua Haybarker, HHD, 635th RSG, Topeka
Staff Sgt. James Laning, 2nd Bn, 235th Rgt, Salina
Staff Sgt. Eric Reichert, Det 1, KS Rec & Ret Bn, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Lauren Stout, HQ, 35th Div, Fort Leavenworth
Staff Sgt. Chase Taylor, Co A, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Lawrence
Sgt. Shawna Murphy, 242nd Eng Co (-) (Horz), Coffeyville
Sgt. Robert Schlingmann, 772nd Eng Co (MAC), Pittsburg
Sgt. Chancy Schmidt, 731st Trans Co, Great Bend
Sgt. Casey Tefft, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. Chad Thompson, 242nd Eng Co (-) (Horz), Coffeyville
Sgt. Mychal Thompson, Btry C, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Newton
Sgt. Dylan Wonser, 242nd Eng Co (-) (Horz), Coffeyville
Spc. Mikayla Gentine, 105th MPAD, Topeka
Spc. Daniel Guareca, 287th SB, Wichita
Spc. Jerred Helm, Btry C, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Newton
Spc. Christen Miller, 242nd Eng Co (-) (Horz), Coffeyville
Spc. Taylor Morris, Det 4, Co E, 2nd Bn, 211th Avn (GSAB), Topeka

KANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Meritorious Service Medal

Col. Derek Rogers, 190th ARW, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Lt. Col. Shayna Holman, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Lt. Col. James Wehrli, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Maj. Kelly Wilson, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Capt. Susan Ahlstedt, 190th ARW, Topeka
Capt. Christopher Hogan, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. Matthew Foote, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Lana Burghart, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Gordon Cole, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Robin Lewis, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Ashley Tremblay, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Summer Walters, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Matthew Wisner, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Cory Sprecker, 190th ARW, Topeka

Air Force Achievement Medal

Lt. Col. Peter Austin, 184th IW, Wichita
Lt. Col. Steven Garcia, 184th IW, Wichita
Maj. Amy Blow, 190th ARW, Topeka
Maj. Jeffrey Boyles, 184th IW, Wichita
Maj. Christopher Hill, 190th ARW, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Maj. James McCosh, 184th IW, Wichita
Capt. James Carter, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Capt. Darral Garner, 184th IW, Wichita
Capt. Christopher Hogan, 184th IW, Wichita
Capt. Keith Marshall, 184th IW, Wichita
Capt. Summer Schwindt, 190th ARW, Topeka
Capt. Joshua Thomas, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Akin, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Chief Master Sgt. James Caughron, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Noe, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Brian Norris, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. Brian Willard, 190th ARW, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Senior Master Sgt. Cornelius Hulum, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Mark Wall, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Emily Albers, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Charles Ballard, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Robert Bisterfeldt, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Nathan Burch, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. David Chirinos, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Angela Drummer, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Christopher Dubois, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Matthew Eisenbarth, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Jayme Gabbard, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Aaron Grunden, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. James Hodson, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Clifford Kane, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Melinda Kellogg, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Michael Kingsford, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Jared Nickel, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Alike Peterson, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Eric Scurry, 190th ARW, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. James Shinkle, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Daniel Strickland, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Scott Tanos, 190th ARW, Topeka, with five oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Kathleen Thornton, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Tammy Wells-Switzer, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Roger Williams, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Joseph Andra, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Armstrong, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Austin, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Joshua Bantam, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Aaron Bayes, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. James Behl, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Richard Bowman, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Jesse Diaz, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Alyssa Elder, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. John Fagan, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Tech. Sgt. Cori Fortner, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Sean Greenlee, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. David Grin, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Brian Hartzell, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Joseph Kitchen, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Tech. Sgt. Joshua Kvas, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Ashley Martinez, 190th ARW, Topeka, with four oak leaf clusters
Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Morales, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Jeremiah Rempel, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Christopher Schneider, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Jeffery Self, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Roger Seward, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Jessica Sills, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Jerry Allen, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Casey Blair, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Lourdes Bravo, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Clinton Brown, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Chase Bryan, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Billy Canaan, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Diane Collins, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Kalim Dausuel, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Adam Ellingson, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Blake Elliott, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Lindsay Fawcett, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Mary Greene, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Dominique Hulum, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Cale Janner, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Troy Jones, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Victoria King, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Joshua Langenfeld, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Justin Lewis, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Breona Martinez, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Jeremiah McFerrin, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Adam Nelson, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Norris, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. David Riddel, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Rachelle Schrader, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Christopher Smith, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Kevin Smith, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Trenton Snowbarger, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Stephen Spencer, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. John Stupasky, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Joshua Swilley, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Shaylynn Thompson, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Bradley Weaver, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Jeremy Williams, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Steven Worthington, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Anthony Young, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Evan Amaro, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Blake Ballard, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Matthew Broll, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Shalea Cadoret, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Darius Colvin, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Tiffany Cooper, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Justen Crane, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Mark Deabler, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Dustin Delk, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jennifer Erskin, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Michael Freelend, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jeffrey Henderson, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Kyle James, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Michael Kleymann, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Tyler Martin, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Scott Meyer, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Shawn Moravec, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jason Paul, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Cherrie Rattana, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Austin Sage, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Seth Sanford, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Harrison Shellhammer, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Caleb Spangler, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Ryan Sparkman, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Brian Stiner, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Senior Airman Kyle Swendson, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Kody Truesdell, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Paul Vernacchia, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Cody Wirth, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jordan Wright, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Samuel Bowman, 190th ARW, Topeka
Airman 1st Class Jordan Solomon, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Matthew Steiner, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Warren Storie, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Logan Wilson, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman Daniel Dickson, 184th IW, Wichita

Guard, Reserve service members inch closer to veteran status

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

Many National Guardsmen and Reservists are surprised to learn that, despite years of service, in legal terms they're not considered veterans. Congress looks to change that.

On Nov. 10, the U.S. Senate passed a bill which grants honorary veteran status to retired Guardsmen and Reservists who devoted over 20 years of service but were never federally activated. The bill, however, would bring no changes to benefits afforded to drill-status service members.

The House of Representatives are also working on a plan similar to the Senate bill.

The two bills would introduce legal notes that explain veteran benefits under Title 38 of the U.S. Code. The bills would clearly state that the honorary veteran status wouldn't expand benefits to retirees in any way beyond their current entitlements.

The main concern for lawmakers has been, once retirees are granted veteran status, lobbyists will press for more benefits until drill-status retirees have the same benefits as those who served in an active status. However, associations who advocate for retired Guard and Reserve have made clear that they're only interested in properly honoring the men and women who devoted a career to the defense of their state and nation.

Currently, Guardsmen and Reservist who earn 20 "good years" of drill points don't receive a DD 214, which officially discharges them from active duty and dubs them veterans. To receive that paperwork, a member must serve in an active-duty capacity for a minimum of 90 days under Title 32 or Title 10 military orders.

In many cases, the lack of activation was due to timing. Prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, deployments were rare and very short compared to current activations. Since then, the National Guard and Reserve became integrated into the warfighting package and activations were longer and more common.

Despite the type of service, members of Congress have recognized the level of commitment given by citizen soldiers and seek to honor them appropriately.

Guardsman's family receives "Recycled Ride," other donations

Pvt. Dayquan Boose, his fiancé, Taylan Reed and their children, accept ownership documents of a donated minivan from a representative with Hendricks Body Shop Nov. 17 at Hendricks in Kansas City, Missouri. The vehicle was donated by Recycled Rides, in conjunction with Travelers Insurance. The Boose's also received $2,500 from Enterprise Rent a Car (to help pay a full years' worth of auto insurance, tags and taxes), a $500 gift card to a local men's clothing store for clothing for job interviews from Todd's Clothiers in Overland Park, $1,000 in gift cards from local restaurants, shops and gas cards. The van was also full of wish list items for the holidays along with a car seat, diapers, wipes and a variety of other needed items. Boose is a Soldier with 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, Kansas Army National Guard. (Photo by Tammy Bullard-Alsup)

Retirements

Kansas Army National Guard

Col. Gordon D. Kuntz, KSARNG Med Det, Salina
Col. Michael Dittamo, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Col. William Jenkins, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Lt. Col. Daniel Jones, 130th FA Bde, Manhattan
Maj. Jeffrey Crysler, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Maj. Nicole Knight, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Tiemissen, HHC (-), 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Kansas City
1st Sgt. Joseph Alaniz, Det 1, KS Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka
1st Sgt. James Kipper, HHC (-), 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Kansas City
1st Sgt. Timothy Prine, Btry B, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Paola
Master Sgt. James Ledin, HHB, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Hutchinson
Master Sgt. Emilio Montanez, 287th Sustainment Bde, Wichita
Master Sgt. Eric Thompson, HHB (-), 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Hiawatha
Sgt. 1st Class Charley Finley, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Sgt. 1st Class Donald Flax, HHD, 635th RSG, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Steven Griffin, KS Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Morton Griggs, RTSM, Salina
Sgt. 1st Class John Jarrell, 2nd Bn, 235th Rgmt (MTB), Salina
Sgt. 1st Class Darrin Littlepage, 242nd Eng Co (-) (Horz), Coffeyville
Sgt. 1st Class David Palmer, 35th MP Co, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Eric Rich, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Russell, RTSM, Salina
Sgt. 1st Class Michael Swiercinsky, 995th Maint Co (-), Smith Center
Sgt. 1st Class Karla Weber, 35th ID, Fort Leavenworth
Staff Sgt. Robert Griffiths, 170th Maint Co, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Shawn Hardeman, 1077th Med Co (GA), Olathe
Staff Sgt. Scott Ledoux, Co C, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Lenexa
Staff Sgt. Christian Mayer, BCTS, Fort Leavenworth
Staff Sgt. Kelly Ninabuck, 170th Maint Co, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Annette Ross, 778th Trans Co (-), Kansas City
Sgt. Timothy Greenwood, Det 1, 137th Trans Co, Olathe
Sgt. Amanda Mayfield, Det 2, 995th Maint Co, Norton
Sgt. Roger Moler, 242nd Eng Co (-) (Horz), Coffeyville
Sgt. Joseph Ralston, 35th MP Co, Topeka
Spc. Joanne Crumbly, 731st Truck Co (-), Great Bend

Kansas Air National Guard

Col. Derek Rogers, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Matthew Foote, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Bob Johnson, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Jeff Lockhart, 190th ARW, Topeka

Three changes of command in one day for 184th

Brig. Gen. Jay Selanders, assistant adjutant general-Air, left, passes the flag of the 184th Intelligence Wing to Col. David Weishaar, new wing commander, right, during a ceremony Oct. 4 at McConnell AFB, Wichita, in which Weishaar inherited command of the 184th from Col. Jeffry J. Jordan. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Maria Ruiz, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs)

By Senior Airman Lauren Penney, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs

Three groups assigned to the 184th Intelligence Wing received new commanders during a triple change of command ceremony Oct. 3.

The ceremony began with the 184th Mission Support Group, which consists of four squadrons and one flight providing force support, security, communications, civil engineering, contracting and logistics services.

Col. David A. Weishaar, commander, 184th MSG, passed the group's command responsibilities to Lt. Col. Jason Knobbe, who was previously the deputy commander of the 184th Regional Support Group.

Weishaar joined the Air Force in 1981 as an active-duty aircraft maintenance specialist and transitioned to the Kansas Air Guard in 1985. Other previous positions include 299th Network Operations Security Squadron commander and the 184th Regional Support Group commander.

"Mission Support did their job in supporting the mission," said Weishaar. "Please continue what you're doing for the wing. Because that's exactly what it is -- mission support."

Knobbe assisted in leading the 184th RSG, which was the second largest group in the ANG and consisted of seven unique squadrons, two geographically separated units and more than 640 personnel.

"I'm incredibly excited to be accepting the MSG guidon," Knobbe said. "Thank you for letting me serve the RSG."

Weishaar assumed command of the 184th IW the next day.

Col. Michael T. Venerdi, commander, 184th RSG, relinquished his command to Lt. Col. Timothy J. Smith, inspector general of the 184th IW.

Smith said he has big shoes to fill but is ready for the challenge.

As the new commander of the 184th RSG, Smith plans, "to listen, to support and work directly alongside the professional men and women of the RSG."

Smith began as an active-duty air traffic controller. He became a traditional member of the 134th Air Control Squadron, served in the 184th Civil Engineer Squadron and was called to active-duty for two years in response to the 9/11 crisis.

Lastly, Venerdi assumed command of the 184th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Group, the position relinquished by Col. Kreg M. Anderson.

Venerdi has been the commander of several different squadrons, including the 184th Operations Support Squadron, 184th Intelligence Support Squadron, the 161st Intelligence Squadron and deputy commander of the 184th MSG.

"I'm extremely excited to go back to working where I first cut my teeth in command," said Venerdi. "I look forward to stepping into Colonel Anderson's footsteps and carrying on the pride and tradition of what you Fighting Jayhawks bring to the fight."

Anderson was commissioned in 1989 and has held a variety of positions in both active duty and the Air Guard, including director of operations of the 161st IS and the 161st IS commander.

"I couldn't be prouder of the cyber-network, system specialists and contractors that support our mission," Anderson said. "It's a beautiful thing when you're a commander and the only thing you have to worry about is, not whether your crew is going to do the task, but whether they're being challenged enough."

Anderson retired from the Air National Guard Oct. 30.

Chiefs defensive lineman visits Guard Soldiers at Lawrence Armory

Mike Devito, Kansas City Chiefs defensive lineman, visits Soldiers with Company A, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, Kansas Army National Guard, at the National Guard armory in Lawrence, Nov. 6. Devito was given a tour of the armory and got an up-close look at an M2A2 Operation Desert Storm – Situational Awareness Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the M2 ODS Table Top Full Fidelity Trainer and the virtual fire arms training system. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

Miller takes command of RTS-M

By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brent Campbell
235th Regional Training Center commandant

Soldiers, friends and family members gathered at the Reginal Training Site-Maintenance in Salina Nov. 7 to welcome Maj. Wallace E. Miller III as he assumed command of the Ordnance Training Company, 2nd Battalion, 235th Training Regiment commander.

"It's an honor to be taking command of such a prestigious organization with a long history of professionalism and a commitment to training our nation's forces" said Miller.

"These past 33 months serving as the commander of the RTS-M have been some of the most gratifying times in my career," said Maj. Mark C. Mullinax, Miller's predecessor. "RTS-M is a truly great organization full of professional Soldiers dedicated to their mission. I've known Major Miller for years and he is absolutely the right officer to lead them at this time."

The RTS-M is an ordnance training company providing military occupational specialty qualification, advanced and senior noncommissioned officer education, additional skill identifier and sustainment maintenance training for multiple branches of the armed forces around the country.

Miller began his military career in August 1995 in the U.S. Army serving in Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry at Fort Riley, followed by service in 2002 with the Kansas Army National Guard.

He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the infantry in September 2004 from the federal Officer Candidate School, Fort Benning, Georgia, and in 2008, branch transferred to the Ordnance Corps.

His past assignments include Force Management and Readiness Branch Chief, Joint Forces Headquarters; training administrator, JFHQ; commander, 995th Support Maintenance Company; operations officer, 287th Special Troops Battalion; administrative officer, 287th Special Troops Battalion; executive officer, Company B, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment.

His military education includes Command and General Staff Officer Course, Ordnance Advanced Course, Infantry Officer Basic Course, and numerous other military courses. His civilian education includes a bachelor's in general studies business and a master's in organizational leadership from Fort Hays State University.

Lt. Col. Scott Henry (right), commander, 2nd Battalion, 235th Training Regiment, charges Maj. Wallace E. Miller III (left) with the colors and responsibilities as commander of the Regional Training Site- Maintenance as Maj. Mark Mullinax looks on. (Photo provided)

Miller's military awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Meritorious Unit Commendation, and the Expert Infantryman's Badge.

Miller works full time for the Kansas Army National Guard as the Force Management and Readiness branch chief at Joint Forces Headquarters.

Safety Corner

Knowledge vs Wisdom

By Chief Warrant Officer 4
Marvin Terhune
State Safety officer

Doesn't it just amaze you how people can be exceptionally smart yet make so many mistakes? It is very easy now to gain knowledge. We can "Google" everything in the world and then go to "You Tube" to see how to complete the task. As you research the how to items around the house that you can fix or put together yourself, don't forget to think about what you are about to do.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Marvin Terhune

Everyone has the knowledge to set up a ladder and climb it, but do they have the wisdom to know how far they can reach sideways or how high can they really go on the ladder? Thousands of people are injured nationwide annually or lose their life attempting something as simple as climbing a ladder. Everything that we purchase has operating instructions enclosed with safety requirements for the item. This is the manufactures attempt to teach you the knowledge to operate the equipment and the "wisdom" of what can happen if you don't!

Think of everything that you do that you might have the knowledge to do that task, but have you gained the wisdom to do it safely? Things like operating a weed eater, cutting grass with a lawn mower, or how about driving a car! Everyone is bombarded by the media about wearing seatbelts, don't text and drive, don't talk on your phone and drive. This all relates to do you have the knowledge to do what you are doing, and do you have the wisdom to do it safely. You can "Google" what happens when you are thrown from the vehicle in a rollover accident. What are the odds of being involved in an accident if you are driving and being inattentive such as texting, talking on your phone or eating while driving?

Knowledge is not always the best teacher. You have to gain wisdom through the "hard knocks" or life lessons. You know if you burn your hand on the stove not to do that again. Or better yet, listen to someone else that has burned their hand on the stove to gain their wisdom so you do not repeat their misfortune. It is always better to listen to someone who has the knowledge to do something safely, but better yet if they can pass that wisdom on to you! And with that little bit of wisdom from an old guy. I hope you have enjoyed the safety articles and understood that safety is an important part of our lives and the benefit is not always measurable. As I transition into retirement after almost 42 years of wearing a uniform I wish all of you the happiness and success that life has to offer! And last but not least, be safe!

PLAINS GUARDIAN

Kansas Guard well-represented at 2015 NGAUS conference

By Maj. Jason Inskeep
35th Infantry Division

More than 80 Kansas Guardsmen and their family members travelled to Nashville, Tennessee, Sept. 10-13 for the 137th National Guard Association of the United States General Conference. The Kansas National Guard had excellent representation from its officer and warrant officer ranks, from newly commissioned lieutenants to the adjutant general.

The Kansas National Guard and its service members were recognized for many accomplishments over the course of the four-day event. For the 27th year in a row, the National Guard achieved 100 percent membership for the National Guard Association of Kansas and the National Guard Association United States.

Capt. Kyle Bell, Kansas Army National Guard, and Capt. Naomi Hume, Kansas Air National Guard, were awarded the Theodore Roosevelt Leadership Award. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brent Campbell was awarded the Eagle Rising Award.

The 190th Air Refueling Wing was recognized for their flight safety record with the Maj. Gen. John J. Pesch Flight Safety Award, and retired Col. Ronald Sheldon was recognized among the thousands of attendees as having the most time deployed overseas in support of combat operations. 2nd Lt. James West was also recognized as the most junior commissioned officer in attendance.

This conference was full of excellent guest speakers, industry partner presentations, and professional development sessions. It was also a great opportunity for attendees to socialize with other attendees and sample the hospitality of the host state and all of the other 53 states and territories in attendance. While there were many highlights over the course of the conference, some of the most notable were presentations by both the Army and Air Force chiefs of staff. While Gen. Mark Welsh, the Air Force chief of staff, has spoken at the NGAUS General Conference before, this was the first time for Gen. Mark Milley, the new Army chief of staff. Both emphasized a total force perspective. Milley said he intends to look at a variety of ways to better integrate and utilize the National Guard within the total Army.

Next year's conference will be Sept. 9-12, 2016, in Baltimore, Maryland. For more information on this event, please go to: http://www.ngaus.org

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https://g1arng.army.pentagon.mil

Nelson takes command of 2-137th CAB

Lt. Col. Jason Nelson addresses Soldiers during a ceremony in which he assumed command of 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, Dec. 12 at the Manhattan Armory. (Photo by Master Sgt. Brent Anders, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

By Master Sgt. Brent Anders
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

"I'm excited!"

Lt. Col. Jason Nelson expressed his eagerness in officially taking command of the Kansas National Guard's 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment during a change of command ceremony Dec. 12 at the Manhattan, Kansas, armory.

"It's a big task, trying to live up to the level of achievement that Lieutenant Colonel Denny has achieved," said Nelson. "Filling his shoes is going to be tough, but I'm looking forward to it. I'm excited about the group we've got in this battalion that will take us there."

The mission of the 2-137th is to close with and destroy the enemy by means of fire and maneuver or repel assaults by fire, close combat and counterattack. Units operate the M2A2 SA Bradley Fighting Vehicle and the Army's main battle tank, the M1A2 Abrams.

"You want to empower leaders, empower noncommissioned officers and Soldiers," Nelson said of his leadership philosophy. "These guys know what they are doing. They know the equipment, how to maneuver, and how to shoot it and use it. What we have to get to is putting all those things together against a dynamic enemy. I think my job is to give the company commanders the tools they need to exercise their Soldiers to prepare them to be able to face the enemy."

Nelson said that he plans to train his Soldiers "very hard" to be mission ready, and prepared for an upcoming rotation at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California.

"When you leave commanding the 2-137th," Denney said, "the first thing you realize is you've just given up command of a 900-man battalion and the most lethal battalion in the state of Kansas."

Nelson began his military career in 1990 as a M60A3 armored crewman and was commissioned a second lieutenant through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Emporia State University in 1995.

Nelson's previous assignments include platoon leader; executive officer; personnel officer for the 1st Battalion, 635th Armor; commander, Company B, 1st Battalion, 635th Armor in Junction City, Kansas; operations officer for 1st Battalion, 635th Armor; deputy plans officer for the 35th Infantry Division, and chief of Operations for the 35th Infantry Division. His full-time position is the state training officer for the Kansas Army National Guard.

Nelson's military awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, National Defense Service ribbon with bronze star, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal with Bronze Star, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two bronze service stars, the Global War On Terrorism Service Medal, Combat Action Badge, Parachutist Badge, and the Honorable Order of Saint George.

Nelson deployed to Kosovo from October 2004 through February 2006. He also deployed to Afghanistan from November 2010 through October 2011.

Nelson attended Emporia State University, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. Nelson has completed the Air Defense Artillery Officer Basic Course, Armor Officer Captains Career Course, Combined Arms Exercise, Intermediate Level Education – Common Core, and Advanced Officers Warfighting Course.

Military Youth Deer Hunt

The Quality Deer Management Association, Greater Kansas City Area, hosted the annual Military Youth Deer Hunt Sept. 11. Kansas National Guard youth, Nevyn Gold, left, and Spencer Alsup, right, participated in the hunt. These two families combined to provide 57 years of service to our military, including 11 deployments to the Middle East. The group had the meat processed from the harvested deer and it was delivered to the Gold and Alsup families. (Photo provided)