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OCTOBER 2013

Effects of federal shutdown felt at Adjutant General's Department

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

Although far removed from the political arena in Washington, where wrangling over the federal budget, the debt ceiling, and the controversial federal healthcare law resulted in a partial shutdown of federal offices and programs, the effects of that shutdown were felt even in Kansas. For more than a thousand employees of the Adjutant General's Department, that meant a temporary furlough from their jobs.

Seven hundred seventy-two Kansas National Guard Soldiers and Airmen reported for work Oct. 1 and were notified they would be sent home on furlough until the federal shutdown was resolved. Two hundred nine federal technicians from the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Topeka, 146 from the 184th Intelligence Wing, Wichita, and 417 Soldiers from various armories across the state were furloughed.

The next day, all members of the Kansas National Guard were informed the normal drill period scheduled for the weekend of Oct. 5-6 would be cancelled due to the federal shutdown. The exception to this was for Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Avia-



Empty chairs were seen in offices throughout the Adjutant General's Department in early October as 722 federal technicians of the Kansas National Guard were placed on furlough due to federal government shutdown. Two hundred and sixty-three federally-funded state employees were also furloughed. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

tion, headquartered in Topeka, which was beginning pre-mobilization training.

The decision to cancel was made prior to

the weekend because of the time needed to notify Soldiers and Airmen, food contractors and others involved in drill activities.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, assured Kansans that, despite the federal shutdown, the Kansas National Guard would be ready to respond in emergency situations.

"If there is a tornado, a flood or other emergency, we are allowed under the laws regulating the federal shutdown to deploy the personnel needed to protect the health and safety of the people we serve," said Tafanelli. "However, every day that this shutdown continues it diminishes our operational capability and our readiness."

On Oct. 4 it was announced that an additional 263 state employees who were federally-funded would be furloughed. One hundred twenty-four of these employees worked for the Readiness Sustainment Maintenance program in Salina and at Fort Riley. The remainder fulfilled supply, clerical, facility maintenance and repair, and other support functions and were located primarily in Topeka, Wichita and Salina.

The furlough picture brightened, however, Oct. 7 when the Adjutant General's Department received guidance from the National Guard Bureau that allowed them to recall

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Armenia evaluated to possibly contribute to NATO forces

By Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory R. Kober
287th Special Troop Battalion

The Republic of Armenia recently declared their desire to contribute to the pool of NATO forces and is interested in deploying battalion-sized elements to Kosovo and Afghanistan. Certification for NATO partner nations is a two-year process including a self-evaluation followed by a NATO evaluation. Units assessed to be interoperable in

accordance with NATO standards agreements are certified to be including in the NATO force pool.

Following an Armenian self-evaluation in 2012, it was recommended the Armenian Peacekeeping Battalion refine their task organization to include a headquarters company, which is not a part of established Armenian doctrine. The Republic of Armenia, through the U.S. Embassy, contacted the state of Kansas to provide training in organizing and operating a headquarters company in 2012. A team of Kansas National Guardsmen traveled to Yerevan, Armenia, July 2012 and conducted a week-long seminar on Headquarters and Headquarters Company duties and responsibilities. Examples of training documents, including tactical standard operating procedures and battle tracking charts. These documents were provided to the HHC commander and battalion executive officer to continue to refine HHC operations in preparation for the self-evaluation, which was conducted with Kansas National Guardsmen mentoring and NATO observation in September 2012.

The Armenian Peacekeeping Battalion was provided a critique on their performance in preparation for the NATO evaluations in August/September 2013. A team of five Kansas National Guardsmen, consisting of Lt. Col. Erica Christie, Maj. Rodger Woods, Capt. Kade Garst, Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Kober and Staff Sgt. Brian Martin, were selected as participants in the NATO Operational Capabilities Concept Evaluation and Feedback – 26th Evaluator Training Course in Yerevan. The team left Aug. 23 traveling over two days from Kansas to Yerevan to attend the evaluation instruction course, which included more than 40 hours of instruction, three days of

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Guardsmen instrumental in returning artifact to Afghans

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

It was mid-April 2012 when a U.S. military team conducting demining operations at Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan unearthed a rock.

So?

The singular thing about this worn and weathered rock was it showed unmistakable hard-carved images. The stone was transported to the garrison headquarters, cleaned with water and put on display with other items found in the area.

A year later, in May 2013, land surveyor Jeffery Jalbrzikowski brought the rock to the attention of Kansas National Guardsman Master Sgt. Lyle Babcock, who was serving as command historian for Regional

Command East while deployed with the 102nd History Detachment.

After examining the stone, Babcock knew it was a find of cultural significance for the Afghan people. He didn't know exactly what it was, but he knew it did not belong on a shelf in the garrison headquarters. He recommended it should be returned to the Afghan people.

"The command told me, 'You identified it. You're in charge of making sure it gets back,'" said Babcock. "I contacted Colonel Jerry Brooks, U.S. Forces-A theater historian, asking what process was in place to return it to the Afghan people. I was instructed to contact the State Department representative on Bagram Air Field."

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Master Sgt. Lyle Babcock, command historian for RC-East, and Fahim Rahimi, curator at the Afghan National Museum in Kabul, unpack a stone artifact unearthed by a U.S. demining team near Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Babcock was instrumental in seeing the artifact (inset) was returned to the Afghan people. (Courtesy photo)

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Training benefits Security Forces before boots on the ground

By 2nd Lt. Matt Lucht

184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs

When units deploy, there are a lot of i's to be dotted and t's to be crossed before actual boots are on the ground. Members of the 184th Intelligence Wing Security Forces Squadron spent approximately three weeks at Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas, to do just that.

"Predeployment training consists of everything that we may run into down range," said Master Sgt. Hadi Shaaban, 184th Security Forces Squadron. "It's basically knocking off the rust from the training that we received previously but maybe haven't received in a long time."

"It's training that we have had before," said Senior Airman Kevin Berry, 184th SFS. "It is a refresher for us and, for the new people, it is taking what they learned in technical school and turning it up a notch and making it better and more applicable to where we are going."

The 204th Security Forces Squadron is responsible for pre-mobilization training at Fort Bliss. Their goal is to ensure that each group is mission-trained and deployable for their specific deployed location.

"It depends what your mission is specifically. If you are going outside the wire or staying inside the wire, you are going to be getting a different training package," said Master Sgt. Korin Hutchisson, noncommissioned officer in charge for Desert Defender, 204th Security Forces Squadron.



184th Intelligence Wing's Security Forces Squadron members receive instructions on how to identify possible improvised explosive devices during pre-mobilization training at Fort Bliss, Texas, Aug. 9. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Matt Lucht, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs)

According to Shaaban and others, not only was the training preparing the personnel for their mission, but the location as well.

"The weather is hot, but it is something that we have to get use to," said Shaaban. "I am glad that we are actually attending the combat readiness training here in El Paso because I believe that it will acclimate us a little bit better."

"Being in this environment is similar to the environment that we will see over there," said Master Sgt. Dale Brooks, 184th SFS. "Without that type of training and ex-

perience before we leave, they [deployers] wouldn't know what to expect. So, being here gives them an idea of what to look for over there and helps prepare their minds for the training, as opposed to just loading up bags and heading straight there."

The 184th SFS has many lower ranking and first-time deployers on this deployment. Several Airmen volunteered for this deployment before attending basic training and technical school.

"We have a couple of Airmen that are a month or two out of technical school," said

Shaaban. "It's not rank heavy. We do have a lot of senior airmen, a lot of airmen, a few staff sergeants here and there, and a few technical sergeants, but it is a very young group."

Even though the unit deploying is relatively young, senior leaders are confident in the few noncommissioned officers to complete the mission successfully.

"The noncommissioned officer corps that we have has a lot of different experiences and backgrounds going with us," said Brooks. "I think that we are able to use that experience and spread that out among the Airmen to teach them the job that they are doing and are expected to do while they are there."

Before getting to El Paso, there was a lot of time preparing the Airmen to deploy. Multiple days and weeks were spent training, qualifying and filling out paperwork at McConnell Air Force Base. Many had to ensure that their families were prepared for this deployment.

"I tried to get everything done that I could get done before I left so it would be easier on them," said Berry. "Even something as simple as school enrollment, I did that for a day."

The 184th SFS were paired up with two other Air National Guard units from Michigan. All were ready to get the mission started.

"We all understand that someone has to do it and if we all do some then some don't do all," said Brooks. "It is our turn and it is our responsibility, so that is why we are here."

35th Infantry Division participates in first XCTC program exercise

35th Infantry Division Staff

With the sound of artillery and helicopters vibrating their command post, a staff of 12 Kansas Army National Guard Soldiers from Fort Leavenworth, Kan., worked intently at Fort Stewart, Ga., Sept. 7-15 on their Command Post of the Future terminals, phones and other command and control devices for sustainment, aviation and artillery fires.

The Kansas Soldiers were acting as a division-level command element to issue guidance, find answers to requests for information, plan and write operations orders, and give advice to a Georgia National Guard Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

The Kansas Army National Guard members drew on their own deployment experiences to help make the training realistic and to pass their knowledge and advice to Georgia Army National Guard Soldiers in a command post and field training exercise.

Georgia's 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team is one of 11 brigades aligned with the Kansas National Guard's 35th Infantry Division for training support and was hosting the eXportable Combat Training Capability program at Fort Stewart to provide Soldiers with an experience similar to combat missions overseas, including working with coalition forces.

The 35th Inf. Div. Soldiers taking part in the exercise performed all functions of a division headquarters to present a realistic environment for the training brigade: command, operations, intelligence, sustainment, force protection, fires, aviation and planning. The 35th Inf. Div. even provided an experienced officer to take charge of the opposing forces for the computer-simulated portion of the battle.

The exercise control element running the exercise was a combined force from several locations. In addition to the 35th Inf. Div. personnel, there was a doctrine training team from the Joint Maneuver Training Center at Camp Atterbury,

Ind.; Fort Stewart's mission command training complex; and Soldiers from First Army. Together, the control element made up a joint force of active duty Soldiers, civilians, contractors and National Guardsmen from different states.

One of the Kansas Soldiers received special recognition from the exercise control leadership and the brigade commander for her performance. Sgt. Amina Norris, an air traffic controller, used her experience in aviation operations and air traffic control from her combat deployments, according to brigade leadership.

Norris, who in civilian life is a manager at the Wal-Mart in Leavenworth, personally mentored the brigade aviation officer in air combat mission operations, enabling the brigade's Soldiers to successfully complete their training objectives.

"She is an example of the citizen Soldier, flexible with strong leadership qualities, able to take on any task and even tutor those who outranked her," said Lt. Col. Robert Stinson, officer in charge of the 35th Inf. Div. staff.

"This entire exercise is an example of the ingenuity that is required by our nation's armed forces and es-

pecially its National Guard, to integrate and conduct realistic training under extremely constrained resources," said Lt. Col. Melanie Meier, after witnessing the brigade's combined arms rehearsal.

The exercise was a combination of live, virtual and constructive methods. Live Soldiers were involved – real people, using real systems, from pilots flying helicopters to

(Continued on Page 5)



(Left to right) Maj. Dean Knauss, Maj. Ryan Hofstra, Master Sgt. Antonio Slaughter, Lt. Col. Melanie Meier, Lt. Col. Robert Stinson and Staff Sgt. Megan Albert, all members of the Kansas National Guard 35th Infantry Division Staff, plan out possible strategies using a brigade-level "sand table" during a command post and field training exercise at Fort Stewart, Ga., Sept. 7-15. (Courtesy photo)

Armenia evaluated to possibly contribute to NATO forces

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evaluations and two days of evaluation input into the database followed by commanders' briefings on the ratings. There were 42 officers and senior enlisted from 21 nations that participated in the course.

A second team of six Kansas National Guardsmen – Maj. Dallas McMullen, Maj. Wesley Topel, Maj. John Lane, Capt. Kendrea Shingleton, Sgt. 1st Class David Kennedy and Sgt. 1st Class Samantha Wier – were selected to assist the Armenian Ministry of Defense replicate a higher headquarters during the exercise to issue orders and receive battalion reports from the headquarters company, which consists of a recon platoon and three companies.

The team presented a course on the military decision making process at the request

of the Armenian Peacekeeping Battalion commander, Lt. Col. Artur Vasakvetisyan, prior to the evaluation in order for his staff to revisit the tasks involved in analyzing the missions. The team assisted throughout the exercise by providing injects to the battalion for mission assignments and received reports over a 48-hour exercise period.

At the conclusion of the exercise, both Kansas teams met with their counterparts to discuss all the aspects of the evaluations that went well and the areas that needed improvement. After action notes were taken and plans for 2014 will be developed from the collective feedback in preparation for the next NATO evaluation. A cultural dinner was hosted by the Armenian Ministry of Defense for all the partner nations and Kansas participants on the final evening.

On the final day, Christie, Woods, Garst, Kober and Martin were presented graduation certificates as evaluators at a NATO ceremony completing two weeks of training and evaluation.

The five Kansas National Guard members were added to a small registry of certified United States service members worldwide that are NATO certified evaluators. According to the NATO Course Director Lt. Col. Morton Mo, Norway; and Evaluation Director Roger Ericsson, Sweden; the five Kansans are the first and only National Guardsmen they know of that have ever attended and graduated the certification course in his 12 years with the program.

There are many planned events in 2014 through the State Partnership Program in-

cluding demining operations, medical training, disaster response and the next Peacekeeping Battalion evaluation.

In 2003, Kansas and the Republic of Armenia were linked under the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program. The State Partnership Program, a National Guard Bureau program, pairs developing nations with state National Guard organizations to foster mutually beneficial relationships, both military and civilian. The Kansas National Guard works closely with the Armenian Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Health, Rescue Service and other governmental offices and agencies. Types of cooperation include military-to-military, military-to-civilian and civilian-to-civilian events as well as law enforcement exchanges.

190th Air Refueling Wing Aircrew members rock babies

By Tech. Sgt. Emily F. Alley
190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

The 190th Air Refueling Wing regularly accepts aeromedical evacuation missions, flying military patients between hospitals all over the world. Recently, a 190th ARW crew picked up their youngest passengers yet.

Lt. Col. Mike O'Brien, Maj. Rufus Forrest III, Master Sgt. Mike Money and Staff Sgt. Gabe Ramirez, members of the 117th Air Refueling Squadron, 190th Air Refueling Wing, moved two premature infants on separate flights between Hawaii and San Diego for medical treatment. The babies were carried in incubators, which had to be lifted onto the plane with cargo loaders.

"They even had cute little baby-sized hearing protectors," said Ramirez.

Both infants flew with their families. One was flying to medical treatment in Dallas, while the other was returning to Hawaii.

During a medical flight, the crew often accommodates a patient's needs for specialized cabin pressure or altitude. Sometimes, if they are alert enough, the patients just like having someone to talk to. Ramirez gave a tour to one infant's three-year-old brother. The boy got to visit the pilots on the flight deck and sit in the boom pod.

While Ramirez said the boy didn't really know what was going on, he said he enjoyed it.

The babies, meanwhile, spent most of the flights in their incubators. A flight nurse took out one infant for a feeding, and the mother briefly held her baby. It was a moment that Ramirez described as very touching. Even as a younger crew member among older, married men with children, he found the mission – his first aeromedical evacuation – meaningful.

"It's really rewarding doing that kind of mission," said Ramirez.



190th Air Refueling Wing aircrew members and medical professionals oversee the loading of a premature infant aboard one of the wing's KC-135R Stratotankers to be flown between Hawaii and San Diego for medical treatment. The infant was carried in an incubator, which had to be lifted onto the plane with cargo loaders. (Courtesy photo)

Effects of federal shutdown felt

Continued from Page 1
most of the federal National Guard technicians who had been furloughed. On Oct. 14, 126 of the 263 federally-funded state employees who worked for the RSMS program began returning to work when it was determined they worked under Fiscal Year 2013 funding. The remaining 137 employees

were recalled Oct. 17 and resumed work Oct. 18 after Congress passed a continuing resolution to fund federal offices and programs.

"We are relieved to be able to get our employees back to work," said Tafanelli. "This will allow us to begin the process to return to normal operations."

University of Kansas commissions five Guardsmen



Congratulations to the latest University of Kansas Reserve Officers' Training Corps commissioned officers of the Kansas National Guard (from left to right) 2nd Lt. Blake Horvath, Company C, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment; 2nd Lt. Kaleb Gilmore, 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment; 2nd Lt. Kayla Fletcher, Medical Detachment; 2nd Lt. Travis Clark, Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery; and 2nd Lt. Josh Robinson, 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment. The University of Kansas ROTC commissioning ceremony was held May 20. (Photo by Cadet Howard Ting, University of Kansas Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps)

Tech Savvy Front lines of a cyber-war

By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Scott Sackrider
Cyber Security Officer

We are in a digital foxhole on the front lines of a cyber-war. Many of our enemies believe that a long, protracted war (even covering generations) can be won by patience and relying on our complacency.

One example of this type of warfare is identity theft. Your personally identifiable information identifies you as an individual apart from anyone else. The most susceptible of this information is your social security number. Even your "last four" is no longer safe, as there are now automated tools to guess the rest of the number. The first three digits of your social security number are dependent on where you enrolled and the second two can be

guessed. The numbers of those whose identities is stolen is staggering, not only due to the ease of obtaining them, but the lack of diligence by the potential victims.

Here's how it works: The adversary will pay a small amount (usually \$7 to \$15) for a social security number. This enables anyone to be a potential belligerent. The kid down the street that goes through your garbage, or the war driver that sniffs your signal as you attach to your wireless internet is able to obtain your PII if you do not take the proper precautions. Once the enemy obtains an identity, they will register for as many credit cards as possible and will max them out. The victim never knows this due to false address and contact information, causing the problem to worsen until the victim attempts to purchase something on credit and the damage is revealed.

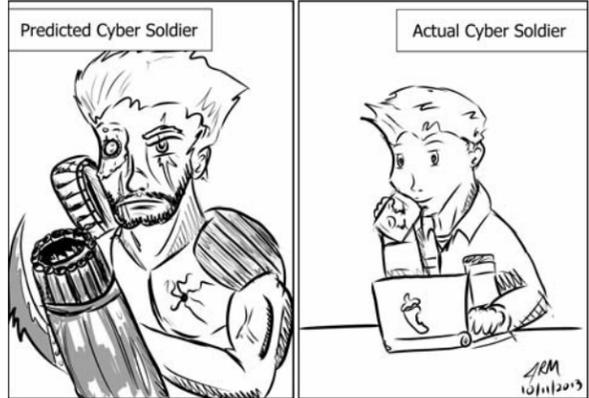
Imagine having \$1,000 in credit card debt you didn't know about. Now imagine only one percent of Americans being victims. That is three million people, each with \$1,000 of stolen debt. This may not affect the individual, who is able to contact the bank, which forgives it, but the banking industry is now down three billion dollars. Think that's a high number? In October 2012 the Revenue Department of the state of North Carolina reported their entire database stolen. That is 3.6 million victims in just one incident. The state offered a year of credit protection, which expires in October 2013. It is believed many of those citizens will not continue that protection nor put a lock on their credit, causing another swell in thefts. This is now considered economic

warfare on a national level.

So what can we do to protect our identities? Be vigilant of your social security number. Shred all personal, financial and even medical information

that's no longer needed. Check to see what protection is offered through your financial institution, and check your credit scores at least annually. The Federal Trade Commission is a good resource for free information at www.ftc.gov.

If you are willing to pay for more protection, another step is to enroll in a credit protection service. As for your computer, ensure wireless has proper passwords and do not use your "out of the box" username. Instead, create a new login that does not have administrative rights. Also ensure your computer is updated and has a current antivirus and protection programs. Remember, you're not only protecting yourself, but the nation as well.



What we thought cyber Soldiers would look like.

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Positions are filling up fast, so contact me to get your packet started today!

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Reflect on what we've come through, prepare for what lies ahead of us

By Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli
Adjutant General

Once again the year has flown by and we find ourselves with just a few weeks of 2013 remaining. I consider November a very special month because we have the opportunity to honor and thank our service members and veterans for all of the sacrifices they have made for the sake of future generations.



Maj. Gen.
Lee Tafanelli

These past several years have been challenging for our National Guard members, many of whom have deployed multiple times to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and many other locations across the globe. Thank you for all that you do. And for those veterans who have fought in previous wars, thank you, too.

Our country stands strong today because of the willingness of great men and women who have gone the extra mile and fought for our country's freedoms as well as

served our nation and state during disasters here at home. Just this month we sent approximately 45 Soldiers of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, to Afghanistan and we welcomed home more than 75 Kansas Soldiers and Airmen from a mission in Colorado rebuilding roads washed away by flooding.

In a few days, during the Thanksgiving holiday, we'll have a chance to remember the many blessings in all areas of our lives and I encourage you to reach out to service members and veterans and their families to express your gratitude for their efforts to keep us safe and for their sacrifices. It will mean a great deal to them. I also encourage you to remember your emergency management community and the sacrifices they make to keep our state safe and to stay ready to respond to the needs of Kansans should a disaster occur.

It's been a challenging year for our employees and our department as we have weathered financial difficulties with furloughs and other staff reductions, including the loss of approximately 100 positions in our Readiness Sustainment Maintenance Sites in Salina and Fort Riley. We are committed to assisting staff through these challenges.

Unfortunately, it is likely we will continue to see more federal reductions in the next year and beyond. We recognize the furlough was difficult for you and raised a significant amount of concern for families. We will continue to do everything we can to minimize the effects of any future reductions on our staff and we will keep everyone informed as we receive budget information from Department of Defense and National Guard Bureau and from the state.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate our Kansas National Guard Family Programs Office for undertaking a pilot program which will result in accreditation from the Council on Accreditation. Later this year we will receive accreditation through the Military and Family Readiness Program which assures military members and their families that the support the Kansas National Guard Family Programs provides meets the highest standards of reliability and professionalism. Although a part of the Adjutant General's Department, the Kansas National Guard Family Programs provides services to members of all military branches, including active duty and reserve components. To receive accreditation, the Family Programs staff had to completely review their existing administrative, management, and service delivery functions and provide documentation to the Council on Accreditation. The accreditation

process took a full year and has helped the program to improve its policies and procedures in addition to being recognized for the hard work of all of our staff involved in this challenging process. Congratulations to all of our Family Programs staff!

Since our last edition of the Plains Guardian, Sgt. Theresa Vail, also known as Miss Kansas, went on to represent our state proudly at the Miss America pageant. She was voted as America's Choice by the public, making it into the top 15 candidates. She carried an important message to the youth of today, promoting her platform of breaking down stereotypes and empowering women. She has certainly done that in her role in the National Guard and in many other areas of her

"... we have the opportunity to honor and thank our service members and veterans for all of the sacrifices they have made for the sake of future generations."

- Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli
adjutant general of Kansas

life. Please join me in congratulating Sgt. Vail!

As we head into December, we know the nice Kansas weather won't stick around long, so please take some time to get prepared and ensure your family is prepared. It only takes a few minutes to stock an emergency kit for when you have a power outage and need some extra supplies. Don't forget your car emergency kit to help you in case you get stranded in winter weather. These simple steps now could make a significant difference for you and your family later. For more information on preparing your emergency kit, go to our website at www.ksready.gov.

Be a safe and cautious driver

By Chief Warrant Officer 4 Marvin Terhune
Safety Officer

School has started up again so kids are running around with the excitement of the new school year.

We must refocus our driving near schools and anytime we are around a stopped school bus that has its stop sign out with its lights flashing. Remember, too, that there are older kids that now have drivers license for the first time and are driving to school.



Chief Warrant Officer
4 Marvin Terhune

For those who you live in a rural community, be aware the annual harvest is going on. The slow-moving tractors, combines and grain trucks are out on the roads in numbers. The changing of the weather also means deer will be active in the twilight hours.

What does this all mean to us? The in-

creased volume of traffic and pedestrians requires an increased attention span while operating a motor vehicle.

Keep driving distractions at a minimum. The call or text on your cell phone can wait, along with that hamburger you just bought at the drive-thru. When you are driving, give it your full attention!

With the time change coming in November, do not forget to replace the batteries in your home smoke detectors. Remember to also test the detectors after battery replacement to ensure they are still working. Home fires increase as the weather becomes colder with people trying to stay warm.

Now is the time to rehearse your fire evacuation plan and meeting place at your home. Practice with the kids to make sure they know how to safely get out of the house. Several things to check out now are portable room heaters, fire place chimneys, heater/furnace filters and any other heating device that you have in your home. Be prepared for the fall and cold weather and it won't catch you by surprise. Be safe.

Kansas Warrant Corps update

By Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hector Vasquez
State Chief Warrant Officer

Now that the Warrant Officer Candidate School Class 13-001 has graduated, it is time for all of you who are interested in becoming a warrant officer to start or finalize your pre-determination packets. The next class is to begin in five months, so now is the time to start filling out a packet as it takes about five months to approve. Once your packet is approved, you will have a distance learning course to complete prior to the class starting.

The Kansas Warrant Officer Corps currently has 40 traditional Guard vacancies. If you are interested in becoming a warrant officer, please contact Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sam Bonham, recruiter and strength manager, at (785) 274-1823 or samual.c.bonham.mil@mail.mil.

A Warrant Office/Officer Symposium was held Nov. 2, in Wichita at the Heartland Preparedness Center. The purpose of the symposium was to educate interested



Command Chief
Warrant Officer 5
Hector Vasquez

Soldiers and civilians about officer and warrant officer opportunities in the Kansas Army National Guard. Commanders were given the opportunity to invite well-qualified future leaders of the Kansas Army National Guard, including current Kansas Army National Guard members, significant others and/or parent(s), and all Kansas Army National Guard leaders to attend this informational/interactive presentation about the following officer training opportunities:

- Officer Candidate School
- Reserve Officer Training Corps
- Warrant Officer Candidate School

Symposium participants were given the opportunity to interact with recent graduates of the Officer/Warrant Officer Candidate Schools. They also heard from subject matter experts on officer bonuses and incentives, officer unit vacancies and opportunities to excel as a leader in the Kansas Army National Guard. This is a good time to ask question about becoming a warrant officer or officer.

I will have a "Warrant Officer Call" in Wichita and will notify the Warrant Officer Corps once I finalize a location. This will be my last "Warrant Officer Call" for the calendar year, so I encourage all warrant officers, retired, future and present, that are in or live near Wichita to please

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State Chaplain's Corner

New program "Partners in Care"

By Chaplain (Col.) William Jenkins
Kansas National Guard State Chaplain

Partners in Care is a new program endorsed by Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, that is being implemented by our Kansas National Guard chaplains. Partners in Care invites faith-based and civic/veteran organizations to partner with the Kansas National Guard to provide additional support to service members and their families who may be at risk. Partners in Care organizations provide another layer of crucial personal support.

All faith communities and civic/veteran organizations are welcome to participate as Partners in Care organizations. The organization provides a list of services offered, as well as a point of contact for coordination and communication of information, referrals and support. Support is

given to Kansas National Guard members and families equally without regard to religious belief. Services provided to Guard members and families are free of charge, with no obligation and assume no liability for either party.

Partner in Care organizations agree to provide support to the extent that resources are available. Support services may include: pastoral support for individuals, couples, children or youth; support groups; study groups; finance/budgeting classes; child care; transportation to/from appointments and activities; home and auto repair classes; yard/snow removal assistance; food pantry; clothing closet or thrift shop; community referrals; and other services.

If you would like to nominate a congregation or civic/veteran organization to become a Partner in Care organization, visit with them about the idea and talk to one of our Kansas National Guard chaplains. For more information, please contact Chaplain (Maj.) John Potter at 785-274-1514 or john.r.potter.mil@mail.mil.

Your Partner in Care! Pro Deo Et Patria... For God and Country.



Chaplain (Col.)
William D. Jenkins

PLAINS GUARDIAN

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Warrior to Warrior

Noncommissioned Officer Leader Development vital to readiness

By Command Sgt. Maj. James Moberly
Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas

Selection for promotion to a noncommissioned officer rank is based on a Soldier's potential to serve at increasing levels of responsibility, and this potential stems from a leader's assessment of a Soldier in his or her current rank.

The description of an NCO as a leader is based on the core roles derived from the duties, responsibilities and authorities of the NCO Corps. Our NCOs lead, train and educate, care for Soldiers and equipment, and maintain and enforce standards. These four roles establish the foundation for NCO development and serve as measurements of success throughout an NCO's career. Leaders must continuously assess how Soldiers perform in their current rank and, when successful, identify those who show the capacity and potential, with training, to perform at higher levels of responsibility.



Command Sgt. Maj.
James Moberly

Soldiers should be considered for promotion to the next higher grade when they achieve competency in their current rank and exhibit the potential to serve successfully at the next higher NCO rank. These Soldiers display a progression of competencies and attributes in the Army profession, professional competence, team building, adaptability, lifelong learning and comprehensive fitness. The implementation of individual leadership development plans by our company command teams is critical to this process.

With proper coaching, teaching, mentoring and education of our subordinate Soldiers, we depend on our company, battalion and brigade-level command teams to ensure that only those Soldiers that have truly shown potential are recommended for promotion annually and that the leaders continue to work with all Soldiers to ensure they all can achieve their full potential.

The training and education of our NCO ranks is vital to the readiness of the Kansas Army National Guard. Policy changes under a Department of Army newly defined select-train-promote methodology will help ensure that NCOs are prepared to assume their next grade and/or position by completing the requisite training and education

before their advancement. These changes will better prepare our NCOs for the complexities of today's operational environment while reinforcing the benefits of a deliberate, continuous, sequential and progressive professional development strategy.

One year ago, in the October 2012 issue of the Plains Guardian, I provided an update to our Enlisted Promotion System and notification of improvements to this system that were implemented with our 2013 promotion boards. We have been very pleased with the results thus far with approximately four months remaining in this year's board cycle. We have significantly reduced the number of NCO vacancies and continue to work hard at all levels to fill all of our NCO positions with fully qualified NCOs.

The memorandum of instruction for our 2014 enlisted promotion boards will be published by the end of October and we will continue with the changes implemented last year. The eligibility criteria date to be considered by the 2014 promotion board (boarded) is Feb. 1, 2014. Soldiers must ensure that their NGB Form 4100 is accurate and signed in a timely manner to ensure their accurate and fair consideration by the 2014 board.

Structured Self-Development, noncommissioned officer promotions

By Sgt. Maj. James Crosby
Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas

Significant changes have been made to the 2014 noncommissioned officer promotion eligibility criteria recently. Most levels of NCO promotions are now dependent upon the completion of Structured Self-Development. Regardless of what you think about SSD, it's here and it's serious.

Army Directive 2013-15, signed by the Secretary of the Army July 1, establishes Army policies that link completion of SSD and professional military courses under the newly defined select-train-promote methodology. This directive is applicable to all Soldiers, active Army, Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve. We've already experienced the impact of SSD completion with regard



Sgt. Maj.
James Crosby

to the Noncommissioned Officer Education System enrollment. Effective April 1, our trainers were prohibited from enrolling Soldiers for NCOES unless they reflected completion of their respective level of SSD in the Army's system of record, a.k.a. ATRRS.

Effective Jan. 1, 2014, completion of SSD is officially tied to our NCO promotion criteria. This requirement is non-waivable; there are no exceptions allowed. We must all work very hard at all levels to be successful and ensure SSD completion improves and benefits our Soldiers.

This really is nothing new. Leader development has been based on three pillars during my nearly 30 year career – professional education, operational assignments and self-development. Senior Army leaders designed and implemented SSD for two reasons:

1) Too few of our Soldiers and NCOs were applying themselves in self-development and it was reflected in current NCO performance and potential and unit readiness and mission accomplishment.

2) Many of our current NCO Corps were promoted very quickly due to the needs of

the Army and did not obtain the expected experience at each level prior to promotion. Too many were promoted before they were truly ready. SSD is an Army-wide institutional approach designed to help improve the quality and performance of our NCO Corps. Our Soldiers and families have the right to expect the highest quality of leadership at every level.

SSD is an online course with each level consisting of 80 academic hours. SSD has reached the level of maturity where Soldiers are auto-enrolled in their respective level of SSD. For specifics with regards to SSD enrollment, completion and other SSD issues talk with your first line leaders, training/readiness NCOs and first sergeants.

At all ranks, completion of the appropriate SSD level is required before you may be promoted. If you have not completed the course for your rank, you will be passed over for sergeant, but not removed from the list, and the next qualified Soldier will be considered. Staff Sergeants and above will not board at all and will have to wait for the next boarding year.

The 2013 promotion list remains in effect until the 2014 list is published.

The following is the specifics regarding each level of SSD and NCOES and promotion impacts:

SSD Level 1: Specialist/corporals must complete SSD Level 1 before attaining eligibility for promotion to sergeant. This means you can be considered for sergeant, but you cannot be promoted. Soldiers must also complete SSD-1 before they can enroll in Warrior Leader Course.

There is no SSD Level 2. The common core phase of the Advance Leaders Course serves this purpose. ALC-CC is an online distance learning course which students have 90 days to complete. There is no auto-enrollment for this course. You are assigned to a structured class through your normal unit NCOES enrollment process. Completion of this level of training is not tied to promotion eligibility. However, graduation from ALC with all required phases per your MOS is a prerequisite for SSD-3.

SSD Level 3: Staff sergeants must com-
(Continued on Page 7)

35th Infantry Division in first XCTC program exercise

Continued from Page 2

artillerymen firing their cannons.

Virtual training involved people operating simulators, such as unmanned aerial systems. Constructive training, which uses both simulated personnel and systems, is similar to computer war games. People provided input to computer simulations and the algorithms in the simulations determined the outcome of the virtual combat.

The Fort Stewart exercise included the brigade and battalion tactical operations centers in the field, with troop movement and combat being performed by a combination of Soldiers and equipment and by computer simulations.

The exercise ended with an air assault of various objectives using UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

Due to the exercise's importance, the training area was visited by a number of Army leaders, including Gen. Dan Allyn, commanding general of Forces Command; Lt. Gen. Michael S. Tucker, commanding general of First Army; Lt. Gen. William E. Ingram, Jr., director of the Army National Guard; and Brig. Gen. Joe Jarrard, commander of the Georgia Army National Guard.

Former Kansas Guardsman, Father pins son's promotion



Spc. Justin Lero (center), Pittsburg, satellite communications operator with 369th Signal Company, salutes his father David Lero (far left), Iola. The elder Lero pinned the rank of sergeant on his son during a ceremony held outside the Kansas City, Kan., armory, Sept. 8. David Lero was a sergeant in the Kansas National Guard, serving as a company clerk for Company C, 891st Engineer Battalion from January 1976 to January 1983. (Photo by David Lero Jr.)



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Guard Bureau Chief visits Kansas National Guard Headquarters

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office

“When I come out here and I have the chance to see the great Army and Air Guardsmen from Kansas and across the states, I see the huge value that exists in the Guard today,” stated Gen. Frank J. Grass, chief of the National Guard Bureau, and the highest ranking National Guard officer in the U.S. military. “There is nothing like it.

It is very economical to maintain for the nation and for the governors to respond to their communities.”

Grass spoke to Soldiers and Airmen of the Kansas National Guard about staying in the fight amidst the federal deficit predicament during a Town Hall meeting Aug. 5 at the State Defense Building, Topeka.

“The Guard is the best buy for the money,” said Grass.

The National Guard, a force of more than 463,000 members, makes up approximately 10 percent of the defense budget. Currently, 150,000 of those Guardsmen are deployed to almost every military operation around the world, while at the same time, another 8 to 10,000 are just getting home and another 8 to 10,000 are getting ready to deploy, according to Grass.

“This generation of Guardsmen and women expect to deploy,” said Grass. “[Deployments] are not going to stop. We will see a shift though from combat to support skills: transportation, engineers and quartermasters.”

Grass said he spoke with Gen. Ray Odierno, U.S. Army chief of staff, about keeping Guard units involved in traditional deployments to Kosovo, Kuwait, the Sinai Peninsula and the Horn of Africa in coming years. Grass would also like to see the Guard continue missions in other countries for several months conducting humanitarian relief allowing traditional Soldiers and Airmen to deploy for a two- or three-week annual training.

He also noted the National Guard is not exempt from the Budget Control Act of 2011.

“When you work inside the national capital region,” said Grass, “you sometimes deal with some frustrating issues for all the right reasons.”

“We have to deal with the Budget Control Act,” continued Grass. “We have to figure out how we are going to obtain the saving for the future. We have to deal with the deficit as a nation.”

In the Kansas National Guard, the recent furloughs ordered by the Department of Defense affected 54 percent of the full-time employees of the Kansas National Guard, including approximately 1,100 technician positions. Grass said the balancing act is maintaining the Guard’s size and readiness while still finding efficiencies.

Due to efforts at the Department of Defense and help from Congress, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced a reduction in furloughs from 11 days to six for civilian employees just a day after Grass’ visit.

During his visit, Grass met with Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, and senior leadership of the Kansas National Guard. Tafanelli said he and Grass discussed several ways Kansas is partnering with agencies to stretch resources and capabilities.

Before visiting the Kansas National Guard, Grass also met with Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback.

Grass assumed his duties as NGB chief Sept. 7, 2012. Prior to this assignment, Grass was deputy commander of the U.S. Northern Command.

The chief of the National Guard Bureau became a statutory member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Dec. 31, 2012.

Grass routinely visits the National Guard headquarters in states to discuss NGB issues and policies and hear about state concerns from the adjutants general.

“It’s really just a great opportunity to come out and look into the eyes of our great men and women that serve our nation,” said Grass.



Gen. Frank J. Grass, chief of the National Guard Bureau and the highest-ranking National Guard officer in the U.S. military, speaks to Soldiers and Airmen of the Kansas National Guard about staying in the fight amidst the federal deficit predicament during a Town Hall meeting at the State Defense Building, Topeka, Kan., Aug. 5. During his visit to Topeka, Grass met with Gov. Sam Brownback and Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett, Public Affairs Office)

Warrior Leadership Course... A sergeant's insider view

By Sgt. Thomas Sureau
Company C, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion,
137th Infantry Regiment UPAR

It started with a long drive down the heart of the Midwest United States. I travelled south, along the Kansas-Missouri border, through Arkansas, Texas and finally into Louisiana. I was on my way to Camp Cook, La., for Warrior Leadership Course having recently made my promotion to sergeant.

I had talked with a Soldier who had gone to WLC only a few months prior and had some idea of what to expect. Despite this, there is always the anticipation of how I will handle this foray into another Army Tradoc school and revisit the questions I answer every day since I decided to join the military: “How do I measure up?” “What am I made of?” My paperwork said, “Sureau, Thomas Sgt. Gunner/Assistant Tank Commander from Overland Park, Kansas.”

I checked in 11 hours later, grabbed my linens, unloaded my gear and sized up the Soldiers around me. We had a physical fitness test in the morning, orientation briefs and classes.

The moisture in Louisiana is palpable at this time. The humidity is visible in the air. I could feel it on me, feel the weight of it in my clothing and my lungs. I am not in a bayou, but the swamps and marshlands that exist in this

part of the United States extend their influence beyond their geography. The sun wasn’t even in the sky yet, and cool showers were already in my thoughts.

WLC is an introduction to skills expected from the Army’s Noncommissioned Officer Corp. The next 19 days consisted of instruction in three core areas: training, leadership and warfighting.

I was up at 3 a.m. to work with my study group on physical readiness training. After breakfast we moved to the classroom for training on Army correspondence and the Army writing style.

I was evaluated on drill and ceremony, the Army writing style and oral presentation. Like much of Army training, I struggled to attend to detail while working with less than normal amounts of sleep.

My study group was a good mix of personalities from all over and we worked well as a team. As we progressed from crawl to walk then run, this dynamic would help keep our momentum going. There were thousands of PowerPoint slides to see, hours of study and preparation and evaluations to complete. As NCOs, we would be the trainers of Soldiers. It was our duty to learn how to do just that.

The final evaluation commenced during a field training exercise, 36 hours of executing leadership in a tactical environment. The moisture of Louisiana in June dominated the training. We found comfort in the realization that we

weren’t here in August. When it was over, all of us walked away with a greater understanding that we had far more to learn, volumes of understanding and execution remaining in order to perform in the field successfully, and more than our share of mosquito and chigger bites. I was one of the few NCOs from combat arms; this was my bread and butter. I may be called to do this for real one day.

With graduation just a day away, we were allowed three hours of letting it loose. We had a great time knowing we had accomplished what we set out to, and we knew we were better Soldiers than when we had arrived. The following day’s graduation ceremony was a formality. We knew everything was done but the paperwork.

The NCO Creed has a line in it which says, “I am a non-commissioned officer, a leader of Soldiers,” that line is on my mind as Louisiana fades in the rearview mirror. I still double-take when I hear “sergeant” or when an enlisted Soldier stands at ease before me. I probably will for some time to come. I do know I am better prepared for what it means to be an NCO. I am better for having trained at Camp Cook. I am aware of my role as an NCO.

I worked hard. I answered questions about myself. I met Soldiers from different parts of the U.S., shared experiences and made lifelong friendships. I learned strength, humility and perseverance all over again. Most of all, I learned that I am proud of the corps.

Kansas warrant officer candidates graduate from Phase III

By Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Smith
1st Battalion, 235th Regiment

Warrant officer candidates from the Kansas Regional Training Institute, Warrant Officer Candidate School, graduated from their two-week phase of training at Camp Atterbury, Ind., Sept. 21.

The graduates are David Burgoon, Victoria Elbert, Brian Gage, Jesse McAnelly, Leo Nickel, McKindree Perrin and Robert Williams.

The two-week training included classroom academics, the Army Physical Fitness Test, a staff ride and culminated in a seven-day field training exercise. The field exercise consisted of a Leadership Reaction Course where skills at receiving an operational order and leading a squad through a mission were evaluated; land navigation; Situational Training Exercise lanes; Forward Operating Base occupation, including Entry Control Point training; Tactical Operation Center set-up and operation; Quick Reaction Force, Warrior Task and Battle



(Left to right) Warrant officer candidates Robert Williams, David Burgoon, Brian Gage, Leo Nickel, McKindree Perrin, Victoria Elbert and Jesse McAnelly pose for a group picture as they graduate from Phase III of Warrant Officer Candidate School at Camp Atterbury, Ind., Sept. 21. (Courtesy photo)

Drills; and Military Operations on Urban Terrain exercise. Training was also conducted in the Improvised Explosive Device

Battle Drill and Reconfigurable Vehicle Tactical Trainer. Their training began in April with the first of five drill weekends.

“The Warrant Officer Candidate School ensures that Soldiers who become warrant officers have the leadership skills relevant to an Army at war and are thus better able to operate and survive on today’s ever-changing battlefield in the Global War on Terrorism,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hector Vasquez, command chief warrant officer. “The Warrant Officer Candidate School is no longer just ‘basic training on steroids.’ It is a leadership school that helps candidates develop skills they need to effectively lead Soldiers in the contemporary operational environment.”

“When a Soldier becomes an Army warrant officer, their ability to affect change within their command increases exponentially,” continued Vasquez. “The Warrant Officer Candidate School focuses on teaching ‘how’ to think, as opposed to teaching ‘what’ to think. Candidates are led to understand that their decisions and actions often have an impact well into the future.”

169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion changes command

By Spc. Jen Bjorgaard
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers of the Kansas National Guard's 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion gathered at Lone Elm Park in Olathe, Kan., Sept. 8 to conduct a change of command ceremony.

Outgoing commander Lt. Col. Matthew J. Bedwell, Belton, Mo., relinquished command to Lt. Col. Carla F. Hale, Shawnee, in a ceremony witnessed by the battalion and a large group of family and friends.

"The 169th CSSB is an outstanding organization due to the efforts and professionalism of our Soldiers, and the support of their families and loved ones," said Bedwell. "It has been an honor and a privilege to command the battalion."

Maj. Teresa Riedel, executive officer of the 169th CSSB, acted as the master of ceremonies for the event and welcomed Hale back to the battalion.

"I look forward to Lieutenant Colonel

Hale coming on board," said Riedel. "She was company commander of the 137th Transportation Company a few years ago, and it will be nice to have her back in the battalion."

Hale said she was glad to be returning to the battalion, and hoped to build on the unit's successes.

"Lieutenant Colonel Bedwell has done an amazing job in leading the battalion during his tenure," said Hale. "I plan to build upon his success by continuing to foster an environment where Soldiers, their families and our local communities feel proud serving as a member or supporter of the 169th CSSB and the Kansas National Guard."

The headquarters for the 169th CSSB is located in Olathe. The battalion's subordinate units are the 137th Transportation Company, Olathe and Topeka; the 778th Transportation Company, Kansas City, Manhattan and Wichita; and the 1077th Ground Ambulance Company, Olathe.



Soldiers of the 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion present arms as they welcome their new commander, Lt. Col. Carla F. Hale, to the battalion during a change of command ceremony held at Lone Elm Park, Olathe, Kan., Sept. 8. (Photo by Spc. Jen. Bjorgaard, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

18th annual Adjutant General's Physical Fitness Competition

By Staff Sgt. Veronica K. Almazan-Chapman
235th Regiment UPAR

The Modular Training Battalion of the 235th Regiment hosted the 18th annual Adjutant General's Army Physical Fitness Competition and National Guard Fitness Challenge. The event kicked off Sept. 21 in Salina with 157 competitors. All participants were scored according to the Army Physical Fitness Test age and gender classifications and standards. The participants were briefed on three events: push-ups, sit-ups and the two-mile run with demonstrations of the push-up and sit-up events.

The event attracted a wide range of competitors this year. Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps and high school teams from Salina's St. John's Military Academy; Wichita High School, North West Wichita High School, Wichita East High School Topeka High School and Junction City competed against civilians and Soldiers of all age groups. The top high school team was from Junction City consisting of Heather Blair, Jeff Hamilton, John Welton and Karen Wilson with an overall combined score of 1,121 out of a possible 1,200



More than 150 Soldiers, Airmen and civilians launch from the starting line of the two-mile run event during the 18th annual Kansas National Guard Adjutant General's Physical Fitness Challenge at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, Kan., Sept. 21. The event consisted of push-ups, sit-ups and the two-mile run, conducted to Army standards. The fastest runner, Capt. Jared Fox of the Medical Detachment, came in at a time of 10:50. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Veronica K. Almazan-Chapman, 235th Regiment UPAR)

points. The second place team was from Wichita South High School with a combined score of 1,026. The Wichita South team was comprised of Dominic Hoheisel, Mary Kuhnert, Dalson Powel and Brandon Williams. Team members Greg Ransom, Andrew Reed, Daniel Sundine and Cheney Tran from Wichita North East High School came in third place with a score of 756 points.

The military team competition was close again this year, with only 12 points separating the first and second place teams. The first place 35th Infantry Division team consisted of Col. Dave Johnson, Lt. Col. Rob Thompson, Maj. Michelle Hannah and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Green. Their combined score was 1,325 out of a possible 1,200 points; competitors scoring on 100 percent or more in all three events are scored on an extended scale. The second place team had a combined score of 1,313 and came from the Medical Detachment. Team members were Col. Gordon Kuntz, Capt. Jared Fox, Capt. Judee Herring and Capt. Amanda Ponn. The third place team, also from the 35th Inf. Div., consisted of Maj. Scott

(Continued on Page 14)

New Air Force Physical Fitness Test standards took effect Oct. 1

By Staff Sgt. David Salinitri
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

Air Force senior leadership announced enhancements to the Air Force's Physical Fitness Assessment program that were implemented Oct. 1.

In a letter to Airmen Aug. 20, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III explained the results of the comprehensive review, highlighting the strength of the program and the need for slight improvements.

"We have a tremendous program that has fundamentally changed the Air Force's overall fitness level over the past few years," said Welsh. "The Physical Fitness Test itself is not going to change. But even the best program can be improved, so we are making changes in four different areas to enhance the overall program."

Of the changes that took effect Oct. 1, the most significant is to the abdominal circumference portion of the test. The abdominal circumference assesses an Airman's body composition.

Since the Air Force implemented the newest fitness program guidelines in October 2010, only .03 percent of Airmen have failed the abdominal circumference portion of the test and passed the other three components with a composite score of 75 or higher.

"In the future, if an Airman fails the (abdominal circumference) portion of the test, and passes each of the other three components, we'll measure that Airman using the Body Mass Index taping guidance in (Department of Defense) instructions," said Welsh. "If the Airman meets the DoD BMI standard, they pass the PFT."

Because abdominal circumference measurement is integrated into the testing procedure, the Air Force is currently the only branch of the Department of Defense not required to have a separate weight management program.

The other program modifications include realigning the fitness appeal process back to wing commanders, adjusting passing standards for Airmen who can only test on one component of assessment, and changing and simplifying the walk test.

In addition to these efforts, senior leaders are reviewing how fitness performance is documented on performance reports as part of a larger effort to examine the performance report itself. Those results are expected in the near future.

Though senior leaders are looking to improve the current fitness program, Welsh said he is proud of the Air Force program, and the physically fit culture it has helped to cultivate within the branch.

"I believe we have DoD's best designed, best run fitness program, and as a result, we have a force ready for any mission our nation asks us to execute," he said. "I'm extremely proud of how far we've come with our fitness culture."

Structured Self-Development, non-commissioned officer promotions

Continued from Page 5

plete SSD Level 3 to attain eligibility for promotion consideration to sergeant first class. Staff sergeants who have not completed SSD-3 by Feb. 1, 2014, are not eligible and will not be boarded for promotion. They will have to wait until the 2015 board to be considered. Staff sergeants must complete SSD-3 before they can be enrolled in the Senior Leaders Course.

SSD Level 4: Sergeants first class must complete SSD Level 4 to attain eligibility for promotion consideration to master sergeant/first sergeant. Sergeants first class who have not completed SSD-4 by Feb. 1, 2014, are not eligible and will not be boarded for promotion and will have to

wait until the 2015 board to be considered.

Master sergeants/first sergeants desiring to be considered for the U.S. Army Sergeant Major Academy Sergeant Major Course must have completed SSD-4 to be eligible. The packets for USASMA SMC that Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Haworth and I review require proof of SSD-4 completion.

We have the finest and strongest NCO Corps the KSARNG has ever had. We must work hard to continuously improve. We can always get better and Structured Self Development will help us do so. The KSARNG has never failed to fully and successfully execute any mission ever assigned and I know you all will successfully complete your SSD requirements.

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Crown the Camo:

Kansas Guardsman competes in 2014 Miss America Pageant

By Spc. Brandon Jacobs
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

“Be fearless,” said 22-year-old Sgt. Theresa Vail of Manhattan, Kan. “It doesn’t matter how, just go for it.”

Not only is this advice Vail gives women everywhere, it’s her attitude on life.

“In everything she does, Theresa not only succeeds but excels,” said Kathy Wehmhoff, a cousin of Vail. “Tell her she can’t do something and she will.”

Vail’s philosophy stems from growing up in a military family.

“My dad was in the Army for 33 years,” said Vail. “I saw the benefits serving his country gave him.”

From an early age, Vail knew she would follow in her father’s footsteps.

Guardsmen and women are capable of, not only as a Soldier but in their civilian life as well,” said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas.

Keeping up with college and her pageantry requires a sense of discipline she gained from her military service. Vail not only uses her military training and discipline during drill weekend and at school, but also to give her an edge in the pageant race.

“The long nights and mind games here are like basic training,” said Vail. “It’s a mental game and basic training has prepared me for this.”

Vail credits the National Guard for several traits that have helped her stand out from the other 52 Miss America contestants.



Sgt. Theresa Vail, a dental technician with the Kansas Army National Guard’s Medical Detachment and 2013 Miss Kansas, proudly kicks up her combat boots during the 2014 Miss America “Show Us Your Shoes” Parade held on the Atlantic City Boardwalk, Atlantic City, N.J., Sept. 14. (Photo by Spc. Brandon Jacobs, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

“He always told us the motto ‘Others before self,’” said Vail. “That’s what we live for, to serve other people.”

Vail, a dental technician with the Kansas National Guard’s Medical Detachment, Lenexa, who recently re-enlisted for an additional six years, has used her service in the National Guard to help achieve her personal goals.

The great part of the National Guard is that it gives freedom to go to school and pursue an education while serving your country, said Vail, who also holds a 3.8 grade point average in Chinese at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kan. As well as a Chinese major, Vail is pursuing a major in chemistry and is in K-State’s pre-dental program.

“Sgt. Vail is great representation of what

“I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for the leadership, maturity and confidence I’ve gained from my service,” said Vail.

It’s that maturity and confidence that helped Vail adapt and overcome obstacles in her path. One such obstacle presented itself only two days before the Kansas state-level competition, when she was informed that she would be unable to perform archery as her talent.

“Miss America’s insurance policy has a ‘no projectiles’ clause,” explained Vail.

With only 48 hours until the talent competition, Vail decided she would add a new skill to her already extensive repertoire: opera singing.

“I’d never sung opera in my life,” said Vail. “I had an appreciation for it and I sang soprano in choir back in high school, but I



Miss Kansas 2013, Sgt. Theresa Vail of the Kansas National Guard, thanks the crowd and viewers at home shortly after being announced the first semifinalist into the top 15 by winning America’s Choice of the Miss America 2014 competition at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, N.J., Sept. 15. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett, Public Affairs Office)



Miss Kansas 2013 Theresa Vail (center) reacts as she is revealed as one of the top 10 finalists during the Miss America 2014 Pageant at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, N.J., Sept. 15. Vail is a sergeant in the Kansas National Guard, serving as a dental technician with the Medical Detachment. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett, Public Affairs Office)

hadn’t sung since then and certainly never opera.”

Not only did Vail learn to sing opera, she chose to sing *Nessun Dorma*, traditionally sung only by male voices in Italian.

Vail said she learned *Nessun Dorma* by watching videos on YouTube. She only then worked with a vocal coach after being crowned Miss Kansas.

The drive that allowed Vail to learn such a difficult skill in a short time is a product of her experiences growing up in a military family and her service in the National Guard.

“At eight years of age she started developing the maturity and confidence that goes

win, but to promote her platform of breaking down stereotypes and empowering women.

“I just want to show the judges that I can be this poised, graceful and elegant woman,” said Vail. “I have this dichotomy. I can wear camo; I can rock combat boots and tattoos. I can carry a gun.”

Miss America 2014 attendant Brig. Gen. Michaelene Kloster, commanding general of the 98th Training Division (Initial Entry Training) at Fort Benning, Ga., and a previous Kansas National Guard member from 1994 to 1999, was proud to see Vail be a front runner for women’s opportunities and the National Guard.



Sgt. Theresa Vail – Miss Kansas 2013 – walks the runway wearing a blue dress in the evening gown portion of the final Miss America 2014 competition night at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, N.J., Sept. 15. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett, Public Affairs Office)

with it,” said Vail’s father, retired Col. Mark Vail.

Vail has also adapted the Army values to serve her well in the pageant world.

“Honor and humility, Theresa exemplifies that very nicely,” said her father. “The ‘H’ in the Army values should really be both honor and humility.”

Vail showed off that humility when, despite winning the popular vote, she did not make it to the final five contestants.

“I made ‘America’s Choice.’ I won the people’s choice and that’s what matters to me. That’s Miss America,” said Vail. “America wanted me. So, I’m happy with my performance.”

Shortly after being announced “America’s Choice,” Miss America 2014 co-host Lara Spencer asked Vail her reaction on winning the online popularity vote.

“I am so honored,” said Vail. “To be fair, I did have the backing of an entire Army, literally.”

Vail’s goal in the pageant was not just to

“Any time we have the opportunity to showcase what we do as Guardsmen and Reservists is great,” said Kloster. “We are twice the citizen, when you think about it. We have our civilian job and our civilian career and then we turn around and are a Soldier. I think that any young girl that is lacking in confidence needs to look at someone like Sgt. Vail and say ‘Wow, I can do this too. I have that chance to do something like this.’”

Many of Vail’s followers have responded via social media sites thanking her for changing people’s perception of the type of women that compete in pageants.

Throughout the competition Vail experienced these sentiments firsthand when teenage girls approached her on the boardwalk in Atlantic City. Vail was thanked for being an inspiration to these young women, and encouraging them to break stereotypes and be themselves.

Vail’s response: “That’s what makes it worth it. Win or lose, I know I’m changing something.”

184th Intelligence Wing venture out with inaugural combat dining in

By Staff Sgt. Maria Ruiz

184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs

What do flying mashed potatoes, squirt guns, games, combat boots and face painting have in common? The combat dining in, of course!

The 184th Intelligence Wing held its inaugural combat dining in Aug. 4. The wing's dining in event allowed wing members to socialize, share a meal and play games in a relaxed environment.

Approximately 550 wing members attended wearing combat dress uniforms with accessories, face and body paint, costumes and squadron T-shirts. Raffle prizes were awarded to attendees along with dinner and games throughout the evening.

The traditional dining in format, dating back to the 1930s, is a military-only formal dinner for the members of a wing, unit or organization. The combat dining in originated from these traditional functions and turned it into a less formal dinner.

"The overall goal was to make as many people feel involved," said Capt. Amanda George, current operations officer in charge of the 161st Intelligence Squadron and Company Grade Officers Council president. "We really wanted it to be affordable, comfortable and less formal."

The CGOC organized the event with the assistance of community members, wing organizations and volunteers. This event marked the council's first project since it was established in February 2013.

"It took everyone from around the wing to make this possible. It was a team effort. We (CGOC) depended on the squadron representatives to distribute information and fundraise," said Capt. Jennifer Vogt, 184th IW Commander's Action Group, and the



Chaplain (1st Lt.) Justin Moody, Wichita, 184th Intelligence Wing, crawls through mud under camouflage nets as part of the 184th Intelligence Wing's inaugural combat dining in held Aug. 4. (Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs)

CGOC vice president. Approximately five months of fundraising, coordinating, sponsorship and advertising went into transforming an idea into a reality.

As an example of one of the dinner's "rules of engagement," the dinner didn't commence until all attendees ran through a muddy obstacle course or were marked with chalk if choosing to forego the course.

Other examples were the pounding of fists on tables instead of clapping when expressing approval, not pointing with your finger and not quibbling with the president or vice president.

"I have never been to a dining out or a dining in, so this was my first. I had a great time and enjoyed the camaraderie the

most," said Staff Sgt. April Carron, an information technology specialist with 184th Communications Flight.

The guest of honor was Wichita native and retired U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Anthony Clark. He spoke of his deployment experiences and hardships that past and current veterans experience after their service commitment.

"I was fortunate enough to serve in Afghanistan after 9/11," said Clark. "Me and my wife, Angel, are very passionate about helping out veteran causes. We have done fundraisers for the Wounded Warrior Project and Operation Freedom Memorial through my ultra-marathon running."

He has raised more than \$32,000 for vet-

eran support and nonprofit organizations by running distances up to 224 miles. Clark was accepted into Bad Water 135, known as the world's toughest footrace, in 2011 and 2012. This marathon covers 135 miles nonstop from Death Valley to Mount Whitney, Calif., in temperatures up to 130 degrees Fahrenheit.

The combat dining in fundraiser donated \$1,000 to the Gallant Few, Inc., organization. Their mission is to reduce U.S. Army Ranger veteran unemployment, homelessness and suicide. The program uses one-on-one mentoring by a veteran, now successful in the civilian sector, with a veteran just departed from active-duty service. This connection allows the mentor to assist with physical, social, professional and emotional support.

This event, organized around formal ceremony procedures such as the honor guard presenting the colors and the prisoner of war and missing in action table, promoted camaraderie.

"I feel that it helped a lot with the morale and esprit de corps," said Tech. Sgt. Christopher Hines, customer service non-commissioned officer in charge of the 184th Logistics Readiness Squadron. "I think that unit members will go back to their prospective shops and talk about this for days or even months to come."

The future looks promising for another dining in event. "People from all around the wing raved about what a good time they had and the much cherished memories that were made that night," exclaimed Vogt.

"The CGOC voted to have a dining in every three years," said George. "There is a lot of time and preparation that goes into this event. We want the next dining in to be just far enough apart where you want to go back because you want to relive that feeling."



Retired U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Anthony Clark (center), Wichita, accepts a \$1,000 donation from the 184th Intelligence Wing's combat dining in fundraiser on behalf of the Gallant Few, Inc., a nonprofit organization, Aug. 4. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs)



Master Sgt. Clint Spitler, Falun, of Detachment 1, Smoky Hill Weapons Range, sprays Tech. Sgt. Chris Hines, Derby, of the 184th Logistics Readiness Squadron, as he crawls out of an obstacle course at the 184th Intelligence Wing's inaugural combat dining in Aug. 4. (Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs)



Attendees of the 184th Intelligence Wing's inaugural combat dining in earn their way into the event by climbing, crawling and running through an obstacle course. Rain from earlier in the day made the course muddy, which added to the fun. The event was held Aug. 4. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Maria Ruiz, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs)



Crisis City hosts sixth annual Kansas Technical Rescue Conference

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office

Search and rescue professionals from across the state converged at Crisis City near Salina Sept. 24-26 to sharpen their skills at the 6th annual Kansas Technical Rescue Conference.

Disasters can happen at any time and anywhere. This conference provides an opportunity for all seven regions within Kansas to collectively train to the same standards to be prepared for those inevitable disasters.

"The state is prepared for different types of natural or manmade disasters or events," said Doug Jorgensen, Kansas Fire Marshal. "And the state can respond whether it's a search and rescue or hazmat team probably within an hour of an event happening."

Approximately 125 first responders participated in this year's conference, which allowed them to get more hands-on practice than in previous years. Available lane training included breach and break, shoring operations, technical rope rescue, cut/burn and lift/move, technical search and K-9 search and rescue.

"Today we have been working on our structural tech, part of the shoring part of the class," said Lt. Tim Riggs, Chanute Fire Department. "We have been working with the Paratech Rescue Support System. It secures a building in case it might collapse or a partial collapse."

K-9 search and rescue personnel took advantage of the conference for its close to real-world environment.

"Having a tech conference like this really allows us to get around things like that," said Heather Swift, K-9 coordinator. "It helps the dogs ignore all that stuff and look for the person. One dog is equal to 50 foot searchers. They can go in and pinpoint where the person is in the pile, and then the first responders and tech rescue guys come in and extricate."

The conference not only provided training to first responders, but gave participants an added benefit of networking.

"This kind of event allows everyone to really know what everyone has and network," said Kevin Weyland, fire captain at the Olathe Fire Department. "That way when a disaster strikes some location within the state, we'll know who to call because they have more water resources or structural collapse technicians, whatever the event may be."

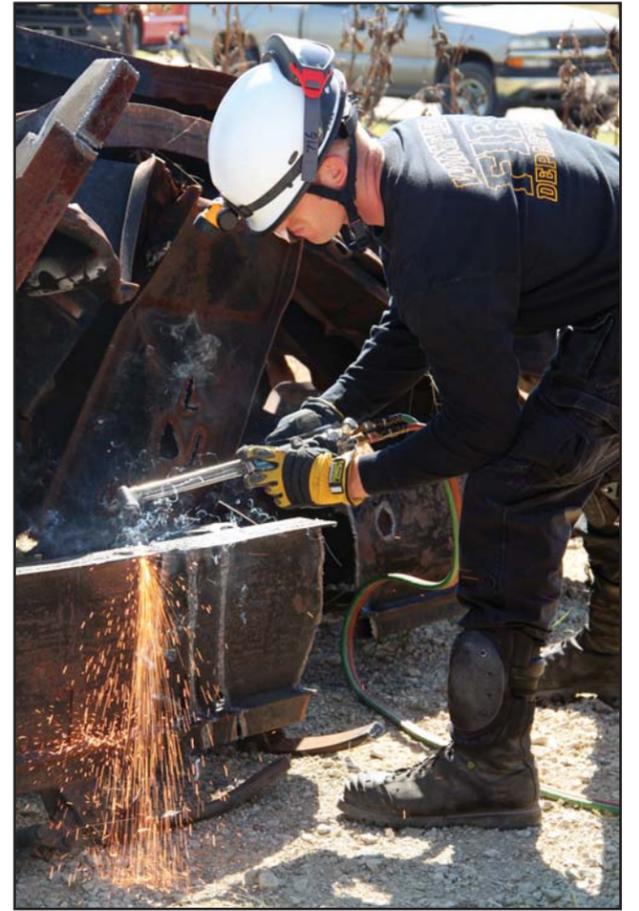
Dirk Christian, volunteer fire chief with Shawnee County Fire District #4, says that the event offers first-rate, hands-on training not available anywhere else.

"That's the reason we built Crisis City about five years ago, so we can all come together in a place that is specially built to hold a conference like this," said Christian, who is also a lieutenant colonel in the Kansas National Guard.

A Vendor Appreciation Night was held the evening of Sept. 25. During the evening's activities the second annual William C. Brubaker Memorial Award was presented by retired Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, former adjutant general, to Staff Sgt. Mark Allgood, a section chief with 1077th Ground Ambulance Company, Olathe. The William C. Brubaker Memorial Award is given annually in memory of Bill Brubaker, who passed away unexpectedly while deployed to Elwood, Kan., during the Missouri River Floods of 2011. The award recognizes an individual, team or organization whose efforts exemplify the passion and dedication that Bill demonstrated for search and rescue in Kansas. (See related story on Page 11)

Crisis City is a state of the art first responder, military and private industry training center located approximately 10 miles southwest of Salina. Crisis City opened in October 2009 and is operated by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management.

This year's conference was sponsored by the Kansas Search and Rescue Working Group, Kansas Division of Emergency Management, Adjutant General's Department, Great Plains Joint Training Center, Crisis City, and Kansas Fire and Rescue Training Institute.



Jason Emley, Task Force 5, Winfield Fire Department, practices cutting and burning with a cutting torch as part of the cut/burn and lift/move training lane at the 6th annual Kansas Technical Rescue Conference. The conference was held at Crisis City, near Salina Sept. 24-26. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett, Public Affairs Office)

Murdie joins KDEM staff

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office

The Kansas Division of Emergency Management welcomes Bryan Murdie to their team.

Murdie was hired Aug. 21 as the new resource management planner in the Planning and Mitigation Branch. Murdie will be responsible for administering the Comprehensive Resource Management and Credentialing System, and the state's Resource Management/Credentialing Plan. Murdie will be the primary point-of-contact for the division regarding resource management plans.



Bryan Murdie

Murdie is a graduate of Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in criminology, and worked for the Manhattan Fire Department. He is currently pursuing a master's in business administration.

Murdie received logistical training by the United States Army as a transportation management coordinator during his time as a noncommissioned officer in the U.S. Army Reserves. His logistical civilian experience includes working for the 100th Logistic Readiness Squadron in Royal Air Force Station Mildenhall located near Suffolk, England, and as a shipping coordinator for Pegasus Steel in Goose Creek, S.C.

Murdie lives in Lawrence with his wife, Ashley, and 8-month-old son Beau. Murdie fills his down time competing in sports, rebuilding antique cars and playing Texas Hold-em poker.

Fairgoers learn about preparedness and public safety

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office

People enjoying the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson got the opportunity to learn about the need for emergency preparedness in the home, workplace, schools and community. Numerous state and local agencies, and community emergency response organizations, provided disaster preparedness and public safety information, as well as displayed emergency response equipment for Kansas Preparedness Day at the State Fair in Hutchinson Sept. 9.

Gov. Sam Brownback signed a proclamation Aug. 29 designating September as "Kansas Preparedness Month." The signing took place in the governor's ceremonial office in the Kansas Capitol.

"I'm urging every Kansan to take a few simple steps this month to ensure they are prepared for any emergency that may arise," said Brownback. "Take a little time to assemble a basic home emergency kit. You don't have to do it all at once; add just a couple of items every month or so. Then make an emergency plan and practice it with your family. The steps you take now can make a big difference if you're faced with a major emergency."

"The storms we had this past winter are perfect examples of why preparedness is essential to our safety and well-being," said Robert Moser, M.D., secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Numerous disaster preparedness and public safety information booths, as well as displayed emergency response equipment were made available to the public during Kansas Preparedness Day.

Fred, a two-year-old German Shepherd, was on hand for children and adults alike to remind them of their pets when creating a preparedness plan and emergency kit. Fred is the mascot for an educational campaign by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Preparedness Program. KDHE and Fred work together to increase family and pet preparedness for all types of emergencies.

"The State Fair gives first responders and emergency organizations the opportunity to reach out to people from not only just the state of Kansas but all over the country and provide them with preparedness information," said Bill Guy, director of emergency management for Reno County. "Preparedness starts with the individual. So many times during disasters we see that there are people who don't know what to do, so we try to get them to have an emergency go kit ready, some kind of plan, and to exercise that plan. That way they know what to do in the case of a natural disaster or man-made disaster like 9/11 or a train wreck with hazmat materials. It has been proven over the years that the more prepared people are the less actual victims we end up with, because folks know what to do. They can take care of their families and possibly neighbors."



Erin McGinnis, state training officer of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, teaches two young boys about chemical hazards and spills using a diorama at the 2013 Kansas Preparedness Day held at the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson, Kan., Sept. 9. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett, Public Affairs Office)

Home emergency kits should include a gallon of water for every person per day, nonperishable foods, flashlights and batteries, a battery-powered radio, a first aid kit, medicines, an alternate heat source, blankets and other necessities to sustain a family for a minimum of three days. Information on building a home emergency kit can be found on-line at <http://www.ksready.gov>, <http://www.red-cross.org/prepare/location/home-family> and at <http://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>.

Agencies and organizations participating in the event included the Adjutant General's Department/Kansas Division of Emergency Management/Kansas National Guard, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Department of Transportation, Kansas Fire Marshal, Kansas Highway Patrol, Reno County Emergency Management, Reno County Sheriff's Department, Hutchinson Fire Department, Hutchinson Police Department, American Red Cross, Citizen Corps, Community Emergency Response Team, Kansas Search and Rescue Dog Association, National Weather Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

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State sends Kansas National Guard to rebuild roads in Colorado

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office

A joint task force of approximately 75 engineers from the Kansas National Guard deployed to Colorado Oct. 16 to aid in rebuilding efforts of highways damaged by recent flooding in that state. Nearly a year's worth of rain fell in a matter of hours causing the devastation.

The Kansas National Guardsmen deployed from Salina and reported to the Colorado National Guard armory in Boulder, Colo. They were deployed for approximately three weeks. The equipment for the mission was supplied by the Colorado National Guard.

The Guardsmen are from the 891st Engineer Battalion (Iola), 226th Engineer Company (Augusta), 242nd Engineer Company (Coffeyville), 772nd Engineer Company (Pittsburg), 190th Air Refueling Wing Civil Engineering Squadron (Topeka), and 184th Intelligence Wing Civil Engineering Squadron (Wichita).

"Our Guardsmen are always ready and willing to respond when a disaster hits, either at home or to help our neighbors in other states," said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general. "Just last year, some of our helicopter crews responded to assist in combatting wildfires in Colorado and I know our friends out there would be just as willing to come to our aid, if we ever need them."

The joint team of Army and Air Kansas Guardsmen manned bulldozers and dump trucks as they picked up on



Approximately 75 engineers from the Kansas Army and Air National Guard deployed Oct. 16 from Salina, Kan., to Colorado to assist in rebuilding highways damaged by recent flooding in that state. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett, Public Affairs Office)

repairs where the Utah National Guard left off along U.S. Highway 36 leading up to Rocky Mountain National Park. The Tennessee National Guard relieved the Kansas Guard engineers.

"We will be assisting (Colorado Department of Transportation) on the roads," said Maj. John Adam, mission commander and a member of the 184th Intelligence Wing, Civil Engineering Squadron. "We're working about a

forest fires, aid in recovery after hurricanes and for other disasters.

"If we can get out there and help other communities, plus do our skill that we were trained through the military to do," said Master Sgt. Randy Rice, supervisor of the Joint Operations Center, "that is a win-win situation for the service members because they can stay proficient in their job, while helping a community to do that."

twenty-five mile stretch of road on Highway 36 and Highway 7. This is extremely important as (Colorado citizens) can't go back and forth between Lyons and Estes Park so we hope that our efforts will assist in doing that."

Conducting domestic missions after a disaster is just one of many reasons National Guardsmen serve in their branch of military.

"This is just one way of helping my country, civilians and the state of Colorado," said Senior Airman Sebastian Adame, a member of the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Civil Engineering Squadron. "It gives me a sense of pride and is why I joined the military"

The assistance to Colorado was arranged by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, a division of the Adjutant General's Department, through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. EMAC is a multistate, mutual aid agreement that facilitates interstate assistance in response and recovery operations during a disaster. Kansas Guardsmen have deployed to other states under the EMAC agreement to battle

Jackie Miller takes home "Employee of the Quarter"

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback recognized 43 state employees as "Employees of the Quarter" for the second quarter of 2013 at a reception Aug. 21 at Cedar Crest, the Governor's official residence. Eight state agencies were represented by the employees.

One of the employees honored was Kansas Division of Emergency Management's own Jackie Miller as "Employee of the Quarter" for the Kansas Adjutant General's Department.

"Jackie volunteered to serve as the Emergency Management Accreditation Program manager as our state prepared for the assessment," said Angee Morgan, deputy director of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. "This position was critical to our success! It's great that Governor Brownback appreciated what our hard-working state employees do and recognized them for their dedication."

"I was honored to be considered for the accreditation manager," said Miller. "I like a challenge and knew it was an opportunity to learn more about emergency management," said Miller. "I was looking forward to increasing my personal level of professionalism as well as that of KDEM."

"I understand the significance of becoming accredited and I had the opportunity to work closely with almost everyone at KDEM from the deputy director down," continued Miller.

Miller, the Southeast Regional Coordinator, started working for the Kansas Division of Emergency Management July 2004.

The State Employee Award and Recognition Program was created by the State Legislature to recognize employees with monetary and non-monetary awards worth up to \$3,500 per employee, per year. The funds must come from the

(Continued on Page 13)



Governor Sam Brownback (left) congratulates Jackie Miller (center), Southeast Region coordinator with Kansas Division of Emergency Management, as KDEM's "Employee of the Quarter" as they pose for a photo with Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli (right), adjutant general. A reception was held Aug. 21 to honor 43 state employees. (Photo provided by the Office of the Governor)

Kansas Guardsmen receives William C. Brubaker Memorial Award

By Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett
Public Affairs Office

Staff Sgt. Mark Allgood, a section chief with 1077th Ground Ambulance Company, Olathe and firefighter with the Leavenworth County Fire District #1, is the 2013 recipient of the William C. Brubaker Memorial Award.

The award was presented during the vendor appreciation night of the 6th annual Kansas Technical Rescue Conference held at Building 365 of the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina Sept. 25.

The award was created in memory of long-time Kansas Division of Emergency Management employee, Bill Brubaker, who passed away unexpectedly while deployed to Elwood during the Missouri River floods of 2011. Brubaker served the citizens of Kansas in the areas of public safety and emergency management for more than 40 years, most recently as a regional coordinator for the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. One of his responsibilities was the development of deployable resources in the state, which included search and rescue. Brubaker's efforts and support for disaster preparedness, response and training were instrumental in the initial de-

velopment of a statewide search and rescue capability in Kansas.

"Bill was the most passionate. He did so much as a person in search and rescue to get our capabilities to where they are today," said retired Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, former adjutant general. "He also worked on the initial task to come up with deployable resources. For some of our storms we wanted to make sure we had some of the basic resources throughout the state since the local resources were normally exhausted. He said 'If we are really going to talk about deploying resources anywhere in the state, we need more than one search and rescue team so that we can get to people quicker because sometimes minutes matter in search and rescue.' So he took it upon himself to start all this and six years ago was our first search and rescue conference."

Allgood demonstrates this same spirit by ensuring he and his coworkers are up to date with the latest technology and techniques to accomplish their search mission at the Leavenworth County Fire District #1.

"(Allgood) exemplifies that because not only is he a firefighter, but he goes the extra

(Continued on Page 13)



Staff Sgt. Mark Allgood (center), a section chief with the Kansas National Guard's 1077th Ground Ambulance Company, Olathe, Kan., and a firefighter with the Leavenworth County Fire Department, is presented the second annual William C. Brubaker Memorial Award by the Brubaker family. The award was presented during the Vendor Appreciation Night at the 6th annual Kansas Technical Rescue Conference in Salina, Kan., Sept. 25. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessica Barnett, Public Affairs Office)

Civil Air Patrol supports two-day emergency drill

By CAP Maj. Michael Mathewson
Civil Air Patrol Kansas Wing Public Affairs Officer

More than 20 emergency management agencies in Northeast Kansas came together in the State Emergency Operations Center, Topeka, to conduct an emergency preparedness exercise for the Wolf Creek Nuclear Generating Station, Aug. 21-22.

Although this is a regularly scheduled event, this was the first time that Civil Air Patrol members participated. One senior member and three cadets, all members of the same family, reported for duty with the rest of the staff. Senior Member Maria Settanni is the older sister to Cadet/Senior Airman Dominic Settanni, Cadet/Airman 1st Class Joachim Settanni and Cadet/Airman Ecclesia Settanni, Rossville. The Civil Air Patrol is a family tradition. Their grandfather, William Linn, Saint Marys, was a cadet. Their mother, Christine Settanni, is a first lieutenant with the Topeka Squadron.

Maria Settanni, an active duty Airman 1st Class on leave from the Air Force, volunteered her free time to work in the SEOC.

"This is very similar to what I do in the Air Force," she said. "I have seen a few things that I can take back to my unit."

Cadets Dominic and Ecclesia Settanni were assigned to the Joint Information Center, passing messages between the Joint Information Center and the SEOC. They also hand-carried news releases from the JIC to the media center in the Nickell Armory conference room.

The Settannis did a lot of leg work, not very glamorous, but very important. For every passed message, they saved someone else from stopping what they were doing to walk the message to the proper person. By their actions, the Civil Air Patrol members saved numerous hours of nonproductive time during the exercise.

"They were respectful and professional," said L'Tanya Christenberry, Public Outreach Officer for KDEM's Technical Hazards section. "They were of great help and I hope that we will be able to work with them again."



Cadet/Airman Ecclesia Settanni, a member of the Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, delivers a news release from the Joint Information Center to Vivian Wise, media registrar, during an emergency drill for Wolf Creek Nuclear Generating Station Aug. 20. (Photo by CAP Maj. Michael Mathewson, Kansas Wing Public Affairs Officer)

All American Beef Battalion feeds Soldiers

By Sgt. Michael Mathewson
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

If you were a cattle rancher in Western Kansas, what could you do to thank the men and women in uniform who are serving the United States, at home and overseas? This was the question that Bill Broadie of Ashland, Kan., asked himself. His answer; the All American Battalion.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment were looking forward to a break from their two-week annual training at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina with a scheduled morale and welfare day halfway through. This was the first major training event since their return from their deployment to Kuwait. Although the regiment knew they were getting a day off from training Aug. 3, they were surprised when the convoy of the All American Beef Battalion pulled into the parking lot.

Broadie, along with 25 volunteers, set up their mobile ovens and unloaded all their supplies. In all, 250 steaks with baked potatoes, vegeta-

bles, roll and dessert were prepared. The food and labor were donated from a variety of sources.

"This is our way of supporting the troops," said Broadie.

As a means of funding, Broadie described a cattle auction where a calf was sold, put back into the auction and sold over and over again. The money from each sale was donated to the battalion. The Beef Battalion covers the cost of volunteers' fuel, but all other travel costs are out-of-pocket.

"We have fed Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen and their families in over 22 states," said Broadie. "At Fort Bliss (Texas), we fed over 6,000 people in less than two hours."

"I am very happy that we are able to do this for our Soldiers," said Lt Col. David Leger, commander of the 1st Bn., 108th Avn. Regt. "We have been training very hard for the last two years and this is a good way to say thank you to them."

In addition to the meals, entertainment was provided by Merry Vandergresen and Melinda Lynn Wanner. In their alter-egos of Minnie Pearl and

Urlean Kept-A-Heifer, they sang and flirted with the Soldiers.

The visit was more than a year in planning.

"I heard about the All American Beef Battalion last summer while the battalion was still deployed," said Maj. Patrik Goss, operations officer for the 1st Bn., 108th Avn. Regt. "I contacted Lieutenant Colonel Leger. After he gave his whole hearted approval, I contacted Broadie."

The Soldiers, used to waiting in the chow line, took their turn in the fast-moving line.

"This is great that they (the All American Beef Battalion) would go through all this for us," said Spc. Stephanie Hodges, Headquarter and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 108th Avn. Regt.

Senator Jerry Moran was also in attendance. In his remarks, he thanked the Soldiers of the 108th Avn. Regt. for their service to both the nation and the state of Kansas. He also thanked Broadie and the volunteers of the Beef Battalion for their support to the nation's fighting men and women.



Urlean Kept-A-Heifer (seated at left), a.k.a. Melinda Lynn Wanner, and Minnie Pearl (standing at right), a.k.a. Merry Vandergresen sang to and flirted with Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiments during their morale and welfare day from annual training at the Great Plains Joint Training Center, Salina, Kan., Aug. 3. The regiment was treated to prime rib steaks provided by the Kansas-based All American Beef Battalion. (Photo by Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

History comes alive for the Civil Air Patrol

By CAP Maj. Michael Mathewson
Civil Air Patrol Kansas Wing Public Affairs Officer

The Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol took advantage of its proximity to the Strategic Air & Space Museum in Ashland, Neb., to take a tour of the museum June 29.

"Almost 10 percent of the wing is here today," said CAP Col. Rick Franz, Kansas Wing commander, "a very good showing considering all the summer activities that the wing members are attending."

Greeted by an SR-71 Black Bird in the entry way, the cadets and senior members toured the modern museum dedicated to the Strategic Air Command. The Strategic Air Command was established in 1946 under the United States Army Air Force. Its mission was the command and control of the nations' land-based strategic bomber aircraft and land-based intercontinental ballistic missile strategic nuclear arsenal. The museum's exhibits ranged from a World War II B-25 to the B-52 and B-1 bombers and almost every SAC aircraft in between.

As the noon hour arrived the CAP members had their lunch under the horizontal stabilizer of the massive B-36 bomber.

"The box lunches were provided by the dining staff of the St. John's Military School in Salina," said CAP Maj. Danny Phillips, Salina. "They have been great supporters of the wing."

The museum not only displays aircraft, but restores aircraft. Mike Maden, a museum volunteer and a former Civil Air Patrol cadet, guided members on a tour of a C-54 that was in progress of being restored.

"We are restoring this aircraft for display only, she will

never return to flying condition," said Maden. "When she is finished, the plan is to place her on display on the pad in front of the museum."

This visit was a great education for senior members and cadets. Many of the senior members could remember the days when the need for the Strategic Air Command's motto "Peace is our Profession" was part of their daily lives. For the cadets it was history outside of a history book.



Members of the Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol pose in front of an SR-71 Blackbird in the lobby of the Strategic Air & Space Museum, located in Ashland, Neb., June 29. Almost 10 percent of the Kansas Wing made the trip to tour the museum. (Photo by CAP Maj. Michael Mathewson, Kansas Wing Public Affairs Officer)

Join the Civil Air Patrol

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

The Civil Air Patrol is an auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force with three primary missions:

- Aerospace education
- Cadet programs
- Emergency services

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Challenging mud builds strength and friends

By Master Sgt. Allen Pickert
190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Tough Mudder events are billed as a challenge and not as a race. With challenges involving leaping over fire, ice water submersion, and live electrical wires, there is no doubt that Tough Mudder events are hard core obstacle courses designed to test your all-around strength, stamina, mental grit and camaraderie, according to their web site.

More than 20 190th Air Refueling Wing Coyotes put themselves to the Tough Mudder challenge when the roving event came to Heartland Park Topeka Raceway, Topeka, Sept. 21-22.

"I had no idea how much fun it would be"

- Col Ron. Kruger, 190th Air Refueling Wing commander

Tough Mudder courses run between 10 and 12 miles and have at least two dozen obstacles to tax participants' strength and play on their fears.

First-time Tough Mudder Senior Master Sgt. Shawn Willard, a telephone technician with the 190th ARW Communications Flight, said he approached the event as a per-

sonal challenge and "completing the course provided a specific goal to achieve."

A Tough Mudder course clearly provides a daunting physical challenge, but the course organizers and most participants like the team work and camaraderie participating in the course promotes. Wing commander Col. Ron Krueger said, "I knew Tough Mudder would be physically challenging, but I had no idea how much fun it would be. Our whole team had a blast!"

Many Coyote Mudders are already planning to participate again when the Tough Mudder comes back to Topeka in May 2014.

Maj. Chris Hill, commander of the 190th ARW Communications Flight, who has run marathons prior to running the Tough Mudder says, "Marathons are physically challenging in a different way, in a personal and individual way. The Tough Mudder is a lot of fun because you have to help and rely on other Mudders and it is a great team building event."

Beside the camaraderie and the physical accomplishment the Tough Mudder has another mission, to raise money for the Wounded Warrior Project. Since Tough Mudders first began four years ago, the events have raised more than \$5 million for the worthy cause.



1st Lt. Josh Thomas, executive officer of the 190th Air Refueling Wing Communications Flight, and Maj. Chris Hill, commander of the 190th ARW Communications Flight, feel the frigid shock of the ice water obstacle of the Tough Mudder at Heartland Park Topeka Raceway, Topeka, Sept. 21. Tough Mudder events are hard core obstacle courses designed to test all around strength, stamina, mental grit and camaraderie, according to the Tough Mudder web site. (Photo by Master Sgt. Allen Pickert, 190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs)

William C. Brubaker Memorial Award

Continued from Page 11

miles to take the Soldiers in his ambulance company to bring them out (to Crisis City) to teach them that anyone might be put in the situation where they might have to do search and rescue," said Bunting. "He was the one that embodied going the extra mile, teaching extra people about search and rescue and taking the time to travel the distance to come out here and maximize the training opportunity. He was the most passionate nominee and the one who was more like Bill, which is 'More people need to do this and I need to be a cheerleader to bring people in to this important discipline.'"

Allgood initiated and coordinated a convoy for the entire 1077th Ground Ambulance Company to travel to

Lansing, Kan., in order to provide training for search and rescue tactics, according to his platoon leader, 2nd Lt. Calli Wheeler, 1077th Ground Ambulance Company.

Allgood recognized the need for his company to train and be prepared for a possible crisis. With few opportunities for Soldiers to be exposed to a disaster situation, Allgood introduced them to search and rescue equipment they may never have been able to see otherwise.

"While deployed to Katrina we worked with local responders quite a bit while conducting our Guard missions," said Allgood. "I looked at it as the opportunity to get the military side of my life to see and understand the civilian side, how they operate. I

wanted the Soldiers to get some familiarization, so when they get put into that kind of situation like I was, they'll have something to kind of go by."

The award is presented annually by the Kansas Search and Rescue Working Group and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management to recognize an individual, team or organization that promotes and supports search and rescue efforts in Kansas.

"The state of Kansas is blessed to have a citizen like Mark Allgood who chooses to use his skills to serve, lead and inspire others to do the same," said Wheeler. "He does not just go through his daily duties, but recognizes the importance of sharing the knowledge he continually works to develop."

Jackie Miller: "Employee of the Quarter"

Continued from Page 11

agency's existing budget. Employees recognized by Brownback received a variety of different awards from their respective agencies but all were designated as "Employee of the Quarter" and received a certificate signed by the governor.

"We have thousands of outstanding state employees, and we need to do a better job of recognizing their efforts in the workplace and in their communities," said Brownback. "Today's reception is just a small way to say thank you for what you are doing to make Kansas a great place in which to live and work."

Miller lives in Lyon County, just west of Emporia, with

her husband Monte and daughter Miranda, 17. The Millers have two adult children, Chase, 23, a second year law student at Washburn and Kaitlyn, 20, a junior at the University of Kansas.

Miller enjoys running for fun. She regularly participates in organized running events from 5K races to a marathon. Her hobbies also include yoga, weight lifting, scrap booking and modeling. She likes spending her spare time with her children.

Miller will soon pursue classes to become a certified personal trainer and currently does some modeling in print and television in the Wichita area with Models and Images.

DOD, VA improve online access to benefits information

Courtesy story

The Defense and Veterans Affairs departments have released improvements to the functionality of eBenefits, a joint, self-service Web portal that provides registered users with secure online information and access to a variety of benefits resources for service members and veterans.

"The increasing capabilities of eBenefits give veterans and service members greater flexibility in securing the information they are looking for," said Allison A. Hickey, the undersecretary of veterans affairs for benefits.

The latest release, eBenefits 4.3, allows for easy navigation of the online disability compensation claim submission process using interview-style questions and drop-down menus similar to tax-preparation software, instead of a traditional fill-in-the-blank form. The latest release also populates the application with information from a veteran's record in VA's secure database.

Veterans also can view processing times for each phase of their claim.

Other site improvements include a tool to help in determining if a veteran is eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits, a calculator for military reservists to determine retirement benefits, and a search function that identifies a claimant's appointed veterans service representative, with links to Google Maps indicating the location of their nearest representative's office.

Service members and veterans also can access records such as Post-9/11 GI Bill enrollment status, VA payment history and DOD TRICARE health insurance status.

To access eBenefits, veterans and service members must obtain a DOD Self-Service Logon, which provides access to several benefits resources using a single username and password.

The service is free and may be obtained in person at a VA Regional Office, DOD ID Card station or online at <http://www.ebenefits.va.gov>.



eBenefits
www.ebenefits.va.gov

Kansas National Guard Foundation offers scholarships

The Kansas National Guard Foundation announced the formulation of scholarships available to Kansas resident high school seniors who have at least one parent in the Kansas National Guard. The scholarships will be available for the 2014-2015 college academic year.

Scholarships will be awarded in increments of \$1,000 up to a total of five scholarships given for each school year. Deadline for submission of applications will be March 1 of the year the scholarship will be used.

Eligibility and selection criteria can be found in the Scholarship Program Application found on the Kansas National Guard Foundation website at <https://sites.google.com/site/kansasnationalguardfoundation>. Questions can be addressed and applications can be submitted to the foundation's e-mail address at ksngfoundation@gmail.com.

The mission of the Kansas National Guard Foundation is to enhance programs to support, educate and train Kansas National Guard military families and Kansas youth from urban and rural communities in areas of the Kansas National Guard mission, deployment, leadership, teamwork and good citizenship.



Awards and Decorations

KANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Legion of Merit



Col. John D. Muther, KSARNG Med Det, Lenexa

Meritorious Service Medal



1st Sgt. Kevin L. Rieschick, Btry A (-), 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Holton
Sgt. 1st Class Rodney D. Cole, 2137th FSC, Manhattan
Sgt. 1st Class Carolyn J. Davis, HHC, 287th SB, Wichita
Sgt. 1st Class David J. Dunbar, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Michael E. Osborne, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class James E. Surber, Co A, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Sgt. 1st Class Herbert C. Wischnack, 73rd CST (WMD), Topeka, with oak leaf cluster

Army Commendation Medal



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Shawn K. Burrell, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Abra N. Cloyd, 287th SB, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
1st Sgt. Joseph A. Alaniz, Co A, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka, with four oak leaf clusters
Sgt. 1st Class Philip L. Clayton, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Ralph A. Coy, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka, with eight oak leaf clusters
Sgt. 1st Class Lisa M. Martin, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. John D. Alderson, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. James M. Elam, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Wayne L. Ryba, Det 1, 995th SMC, Concordia
Sgt. Michael L. Carr, Rec & Ret Bn, Topeka
Sgt. Iris N. Marston, 635th RSG, Hutchinson, with two oak leaf clusters
Spc. Samantha A. Coleman, HHD, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka

KANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Meritorious Service Medal



Col. Joel Darbro, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Maj. Todd Kavouras, 184th IW, Wichita
Maj. Michelle Neugent, 190th ARW, Topeka
Maj. Jesse Sojka, 184th IW, Wichita
Maj. Steven Thomas, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Beach, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Brian Norris, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Chief Master Sgt. James Weldy, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Mark Angelini, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Richard Hines, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Master Sgt. Elisabeth Lind, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Brian Martin, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Master Sgt. William Montgomery, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Skala, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Tracy Vanstory, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. John Baxter, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Paul Bliss, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. William Brown, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Randall Davidson, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Greg Dotson, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Ronald Jackman, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Jason Junghans, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Dennis Lanham, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Robin Lewis, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Leland McKinley, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Scott Moser, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Michael Paquette, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Timothy Trapp, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Lenice Turner, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Jeromy Williams, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Steven Williams, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster

Air Force Commendation Medal



Lt. Col. Tamra Buettgenbach, 190th ARW, Topeka, with four oak leaf clusters

Maj. Joseph Blubaugh, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Maj. Mark Kelly, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Maj. James Wehrli, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Amy Buchanan, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Senior Master Sgt. David Butler, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Senior Master Sgt. Tiyouna Evans, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Senior Master Sgt. Randi Hill, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Jennifer Allen, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Sean Cochran, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Jameson Dunbar, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Glen Godsey, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Robert Herbig, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Kent Niebuhr, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Tech. Sgt. Edward Benoit, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Ryan German, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Erik Rollefson, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Randall Tindle, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Zuercher, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Sean Ireland, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. John Moore, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Sean Piper, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Alesa Riendeau, 184th IW, Wichita

Air Force Achievement Medal



Maj. Christopher Hill, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Maj. Marjorie Norton, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Capt. Elisha Jones, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Casey Batterton, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Shad England, 190th ARW, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Hugh Fraser, 184th IW, Wichita, with six oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Scott Moser, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Master Sgt. Stephen Munn, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Jeffrey Norling, 190th ARW, Topeka, with two oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Kristina Perkins, 190th ARW, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Master Sgt. Joseph Smith, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Tech. Sgt. Bryan Byers, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Jacob Goldenstein, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Tech. Sgt. Aaron Grunden, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Paul Jones, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Matthew Miller, 184th IW, Wichita, with one oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. John Montgomery, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Tech. Sgt. Leroy Wyckoff, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Keri Christian, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Steven Clark, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Jerling Hidalgo, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Shana Sanders, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Daniel Snyder, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Robert Snyder, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Staff Sgt. Michael Stochl, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Justin Tompkins, 190th ARW, Topeka, with four oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. Angel Wendell, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Matthew Winzer, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Chad Broome, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Billy Canaan, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Vincent Casper, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Senior Airman Jody Cope, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Frank Crandon, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Justen Crane, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Ashlei Dinkel, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Brittany Jacobson, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Dennis Manisap, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Sarah Marsh, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Matthew Otte, 184th IW, Wichita, with oak leaf cluster
Senior Airman Nicholas Yeager, 184th IW, Wichita
Airman 1st Class Joseph Wallace, 184th IW, Wichita

Guardsman instrumental in returning artifact to Afghans

Continued from Page 1

It was ultimately decided the artifact would be transferred to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Aghan National Museum in Kabul, where it would be authenticated.

“They flew us to Kabul for a meeting at the U.S. Embassy,” said Babcock. After the meeting they went to the Afghan National Museum. “The director told me I am the only U.S. Soldier ever to set foot in the museum. I was given full access to the museum and allowed to take pictures. I have a few hundred, most have never been seen by Western eyes. It was amazing!”

An examination by the museum director, Omara Khan Masoudi, and his curators concluded the carvings dated from the 3rd or 4th century AD when the Bagram Plain was at the heart of the region’s Buddhist culture. The museum’s officials believe the

carvings depict Buddha and his mother, Queen Maya of Sakya, along with several other human figures.

Babcock’s satisfaction at his role in returning the priceless artifact to the Afghan people was highlighted by his encounter with the driver of their vehicle.

“The highlight of the day for me, and what made everything worth it was at the end,” said Babcock. “My driver was Afghan, and only knew that he was transporting something the U.S. government was giving back to the Afghans.”

“Well, news travels in their culture,” said Babcock. “I’m not sure if he ever saw it, but when we were leaving he asked the interpreter to tell me ‘Thank you for making sure that the stone made it back to the Afghan people.’ Physically and mentally, I was tired and worn out, but his statement made all the effort worth it.”

18th annual Adjutant General’s Physical Fitness Competition

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Chew, Maj. Molly Gillock, Master Sgt. Antonio Slaughter and Spc. Justin Cartright. They had a combined score of 1,269.

The top overall individual score for the civilian participants was earned by Steve McGaughey with a score of 333; Arica Jackson was second place with a score of 295 and Curtis Davis finished a very close third place with a score of 294.

The top overall score for the military was earned by Capt. Ray Fields, Texas National Guard, with a score of 377. In second place was Brig. Gen. Eric Peck, assistant adjutant general and commander of the Kansas Army National Guard, with a score of 330 and 2nd Lt. Anthony Henely of Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, came in third with a score of 323.

Fields also earned the top honors in the individual push-up event, completing 111 Army push-ups and 109 sit-ups. Capt. Jared Fox of the Medical Detachment finished first in the two-mile run event with a time of 10 minutes and 50 seconds.

Four year-old Anna Jackson was awarded a coin from Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, adjutant general of Kansas, for completing the APFT Challenge alongside her brothers and parents. Anna was the youngest competitor this year, one of 10 children under the age of 12 that participated.

The event was sponsored by the Salina Airport Authority, the Salina Military Affairs Council, the Retired Enlisted Association, USAA and Papa Murphy’s of Salina.

Kansas Warrant Corps update

Continued from Page 4

attend. The Warrant Officer Call has been increasing in size. There has been great dialog among technical and aviation warrants expressing concerns and sharing ideas. Also, the Warrant Officer Call is a great ice breaker for all Kansas warrant officers to meet and get to know one another. I sincerely hope you all can attend. If you have a warrant officer prospect, please bring them so they can ask questions and see how supportive our corps is.

Now that deployments have slowed down, it is time to start mentoring. Mentoring is a powerful tool for personal and professional development. Many organizations believe that mentoring improves individual performance, retention, morale, personal/professional development and career progression. Mentoring offers many opportunities for mentors and mentees to improve their leadership, interpersonal and technical skills, as well as achieve personal and professional objectives. I would like to share some Warrant Officer Mentoring Philosophy... “A sound mentoring program will ensure that every warrant officer is provided the opportunity to receive the necessary tools for success throughout his/her career. Mentorship is a two-way street. The mentor must be willing to share knowledge, training and experience in a trusted, respected and confidential atmosphere. In turn, the indi-

vidual receiving the mentorship must trust and respect the mentor, while being open and receptive to the process. Caring is the core of mentorship.”

We owe it to our warrant officer candidates and junior warrant officers to clarify their goals and help develop short- and long-term career strategies toward advancement. We must share our knowledge and instruct them in technical, leadership and management skills. It is also encouraged that all warrant officers participate as members of appropriate military professional associations and organizations. This becomes another strong avenue to develop additional mentoring relationships. We should also provide personal and job counseling where appropriate. Above all, senior warrant officers must be role models.

Inherent in the mentoring is the responsibility to closely watch the enlisted Soldiers to seek out the potential warrant officers of the future. This not only includes monitoring duty performance, but ultimately encouraging them to apply for and assist in the nomination and selection process.

In closing, if you know of any warrant officer news such as promotions, graduations, retirements or changes; and you would like to see them in the Plains Guardian, please send them to me at hector.a.vasquez4.mil@mail.mil or (785) 274-1903.

Thank you all for everything you do.

Retirements

Kansas Army National Guard

Lt. Col. Gregory Mittman, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Capt. Darby Prine, Det 1, 287th Sustainment Bde, Hays
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Gregory Overfors, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
1st Sgt. Danny Crumpton, 287th Sustainment Bde, Wichita
Sgt. Maj. Robert Johnson Jr., JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Jerrod Hays, Det 1, Btry B, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Lenexa
Sgt. 1st Class Darren Joe, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class Randall Phalp, KSARNG Med Det, Lenexa
Sgt. 1st Class Scott Winter, Co C, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Lenexa
Staff Sgt. Thomas Cooper, 35th MP Co, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Christopher Huslig, Co A, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Lawrence
Staff Sgt. Jamie Jackson, Det 1, Btry A, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Marysville
Staff Sgt. Michael Miller, Det 1, Btry A, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Liberal
Staff Sgt. Daniel Morgan, 287th Sustainment Bde, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Mark Yeager, 778th Trans Co (-), Kansas City
Sgt. Steven Burks, 995th Maint Co (-), Smith Center
Sgt. William Cejka Jr., Det 1, 250th FSC, Hiawatha
Sgt. Christopher Gross, Btry E (TA), 161st FA, Great Bend
Sgt. Michael Hare, Det 1, Btry A, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Marysville

Sgt. Joseph Kean, Co A, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Lawrence
Sgt. Vincent Lombardi, Det 2, 250th FSC, Clay Center
Sgt. Nathan Sparks, Co C, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Lenexa
Sgt. Daniel Welch, Btry B (-), 1st Bn, 161st FA, Paola
Sgt. Norman Worden, HQ, 235th Rgmt (RTT), Salina
Spc. Adam Brown, Det 1, 995th Maint Co, Concordia
Spc. James Davis, Co E (-), 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Topeka
Spc. Larron Harrison, 772nd Eng Co, Pittsburg
Spc. Maurice Hornbuckle, Det 2, HHC, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Junction City
Spc. Victor Nall, HSC (-), 35th Inf Div, Fort Leavenworth
Spc. Kenneth Taylor, 226th (-) Eng Co, Augusta

Kansas Air National Guard

Senior Master Sgt. Jim Marklevits, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Tom Skala, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Peggy Becker, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Paul Bliss, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Randall Davidson, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Greg Dotson, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Robert Herbig, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. David King, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Dennis Lanham, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Leland McKinley, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Michael Paquette, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Steven Williams, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Joan Holup, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Kevin Tomlin, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Randy Hutcherson, 184th IW, Wichita



Kansas Guard Soldier's future will come with strings attached

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

Staff Sgt. Jimmy Boss has been playing the guitar since he was 10 years old.

"It was in 1975," said Boss. "I got a guitar for Christmas. It was just something that a little boy wanted to do. I bought a John Denver guitar book and taught myself."

Boss, a full-time chaplain's assistant for Joint Forces Headquarters, Kansas National Guard, developed his skills over the years, as well as an appreciation for the craftsmanship that goes into the instrument itself. In 2011, singer-songwriter Boss decided to expand his skills and become a luthier — a maker of stringed instruments, a profession that has its roots in the 1600s.

"I was working at the National Guard Bureau in Virginia, thinking about how long I wanted to be in the military and what would I want to do when I retire," Boss recalled. "I thought about what my interests were. I like guitars, I like playing guitars and I thought maybe I could build them."

After doing some research, Boss began assembling the tools and equipment he would need and started on a design.

"If you're going to do this, either in a part-time business or a full-time business, everyone has a unique design for the body and at the end of the neck where you have your signature headstock," Boss said, comparing it to early automobiles where each manufacturer could be easily identified by the design of the grill. "It's the same thing with instruments. Every luthier has a unique design."

To create his personal signature look, Boss looked at "many dozens" of designs by other luthiers.

"You don't want to copy someone else's patented headstock," he said. "By looking at others I came up with something that looks good, that I like and that no one else has."

One feature that sets Boss' design apart from most other luthiers is the placement of the sound hole.

"The vast majority of acoustic guitars have a center sound hole," said Boss. "My guitars have an off-set sound hole. There's a reason why I use that. The more 'real estate,' the more surface area that vibrates and sustains, the better-sounding guitar you're going to have."

Gaining more "real estate" is also the reason Boss uses a cantilever fret board that floats above the neck, allowing more surface area to vibrate.

Boss said his guitars will also have side ports, depending on the customer's preferences. He explained the use of side ports allows the sound to go directly to the player's ear. The innovation, while not unique to his guitars, is still not in widespread use.

"Ever since the modern guitar came into existence in the 1800s, guitars have been made pretty much in the same way," said Boss. "There are some luthiers out there bucking the trend, doing something different and stretching that envelope."

Having settled on a design, the next step is to select the woods to be used in the body, sides and neck.

"Common body materials are either a cedar or spruce top and rosewood back and sides," said Boss, "but there is a whole range of different materials you can use -- curly maple, walnut, koa, all kinds of different exotic woods you can get into."

For his first, experimental model, however, Boss went a different route.

"I only went as far as building the neck, building the body and putting them together," Boss said. "I just used basic woods you can get at a hardware store just so I could get the technique down. Everything was trial and error and if I made a mistake it wouldn't cost me a whole lot of

money."

Satisfied that his design would work, Boss began his first playable guitar using spruce for the top and rosewood for the back and sides.

"Rosewood and spruce are easy to work with, very easy to bend, shape and manipulate and glue together," said Boss. "That's where I'm starting at."

Boss noted that different woods will give the guitar different tones.

"The top of the guitar vibrates to make sounds from the vibration of the strings," he explained. "The harder the sides and back are, the more reflective it is, very much like a bathroom or cathedral hall where you have hard surfaces that reflect and sustain the sound."

"So, if you have a cedar top," he continued, "compared to a spruce top, the spruce is a little harder and will give more of a treble or mid tone. A cedar is a softer wood so you get a mellower type of tone."

Once the woods are decided on, the parts are traced onto the materials, purchased from a luthier supply house, and cut out. Then, the sides have to be bent to the proper shape to match the curve of the top and bottom.

"It is an art called side-bending," said Boss. "There are several methods of doing that. The most basic way would be by hot pipe. This is the method I use. You steam it by placing the wood on the hot pipe — about 300 degrees — and you rock it back and forth so the wood fibers become pliable like plastic and it slowly bends."

This process requires great care, said Boss, so the wood does not break, noting that the wood is generally less than 1/8 of an inch thick. This thickness is also why it is important that the guitar is properly braced inside.

"There's about 186 pounds of tension that all six strings place between the guitar neck and body," Boss pointed out. "Without the proper bracing underneath the top of the guitar, that top would just rip right off."

Boss uses a modified "A" and traditional "X" bracing to give the sound board stiffness with the freedom to vibrate, producing maximum tone sustainment.

The neck, with its hand-carved headstock, may be attached by either gluing or bolting it on. "I prefer (bolting) just because it's so much easier if there is any repair to be done and the neck has to be taken off," said Boss.

In a marketing presentation he has developed, Boss notes that the strings on his guitars will also be attached by a method that is out of the ordinary.

"I designed a tail piece built within the guitar body from which the strings are attached instead of underneath the bridge plate. There is no twisting or pulling from the string tension because there is no tension applied to the top from underneath the bridge." This technique permits Boss to use less bracing, making the guitars lighter and allows the top to vibrate more freely.

Once the body and neck are joined and the frets properly



Constructing a guitar requires a number of steps involving exacting craftsmanship. Here, Staff Sgt. Jimmy Boss, a chaplain's assistant in the Kansas National Guard, smooths the edges of the side sound port on the guitar he is constructing. A self-taught luthier, a maker of and repairer of stringed instruments, Boss hopes to turn this into a full-time enterprise after he retires. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Jimmy Boss)

placed on the fret board, Boss will finish the guitar with applications of gunstock oil.

"It's very simple to apply," he said. "You can apply several coats and just build up the coats. It's very durable and you don't have to use any spray equipment."

Completing his first experimental model took Boss approximately three months of working nights and weekends. He is currently about two months along in building his first playable guitar.

"I'm going to keep that one," said Boss, who will use it as an example of his design and craftsmanship. While he is still new to the field, Boss already has one commission lined up.

"Right now, I have a person in North Carolina I used to work with in Virginia," said Boss. "He's a chaplain in the Army National Guard. He's commissioned me to build his acoustic guitar. That's going to happen this fall."

Although being a full-time luthier is still some time away—he still has seven more years before he can retire—Boss is starting now to allow his home-based business to gain momentum and attract customers, perhaps even a big-name talent.

Who knows? Maybe someday Bruce "The Boss" Springsteen will be playing a custom-made Jimmy Boss Guitar.

Family time in the fast lane

By Spc. Anna Laurin, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment; Spc. Alexander Bush, 369th Signal Company; Spc. Melissa Herren, 731st Medium Transportation Company; Staff Sgt. Grant Gawith, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery

Sgt. Paul Ewert, bassoon player for the 35th Infantry Division Band, Olathe, began drag racing when he was 18 years old in his hometown of Blue Springs, Mo. Ewert's father, Doye, was the one who introduced him to the sport.

"It runs in my blood," said Ewert. "My father was a big gear head in his younger days and still is."

His parent's first date was at the Kansas City International Raceway. They shared their love of racing with Ewert by taking him to races when he was a young boy. When Ewert decided to start racing, his father not only offered to coach him, but helped him pick

out his first race car, an electric-green 1999 Mustang Cobra.

Ewert currently drives a 2006 Mustang GT. With personal modifications that include an upgraded suspension and a super charger, Ewert has been able to boost his engine's output to 475 horsepower. These modifications and higher horsepower have aided Ewert in clocking his fastest drag time of 12.3 seconds at 117 mph on a quarter-mile track at the Kansas City International Raceway.

"With these vehicles and races you get as much out as you put in," said Ewert.

Ewert has raced several places around the local region, including Tulsa, Okla., and Mo-Kan Dragway, in Asbury, Mo., and enjoys the speed of the race and the community surrounding the sport.

Ewert would like to compete on a larger scale at some point in the future, but right now is focused on getting his car ready for the upcoming racing season.



Sgt. Paul Ewert, bassoon player for the 35th Infantry Division Band, Olathe Kan, began drag racing when he was 18 years old in his hometown of Blue Springs, Mo. He currently races a 2006 Mustang GT, with an upgraded suspension and a super charger. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Paul Ewert, 35th Infantry Division Band)

Command and General Staff College International Student enjoys Kansas

By Maj. Andrew Parker
Joint Forces Headquarters

Over 7,000 International Military Students have attended the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth since its inception in 1881. CGSC Class 13-01, which graduated in June 2013, had more than 70 IMS from around the globe.

One member of the class was Maj. Jan Trobisch, a member of the German Army, Federal Republic of Germany. Trobisch is an infantry officer whose last assignment was as the operations officer of the German Special Forces Detachment in Afghanistan conducting operations in support of the International Security Assistance Forces.

Trobisch was selected to attend CGSC even though he has completed the German Army equivalent of the course. Attendance at CGSC is reserved for only the most qualified officers and is considered to be the most beneficial course to attend as part of the military's educational exchange program.

"I was recommended by the German General Staff School," said Trobisch. "Normally, General Staff Officers will only be sent to the United States, United Kingdom or France. So, I was selected and happy."

Trobisch said CGSC offered a great year of learning and cultural experience along with the opportunity to see how another military plans and conducts operations.

Trobisch arrived in Kansas in June 2012 to take part in the International Military Student preparatory courses given before the beginning of the CGSC courses.

"My first goal was to get to know your country and the people," said Trobisch. "The second goal was networking with my American colleagues."

As part of these courses, Trobisch and his IMS classmates participated in the Kansas Government Day, during which they toured the state Capitol in Topeka. The students also met Governor Sam Brownback and toured the Kansas History Museum. Part of the visit included a briefing on the Kansas National Guard. Trobisch particularly enjoyed the visit to the Kansas Supreme Court, where the IMS participated in a role-playing exercise. He felt that it was a good representation of the American legal system.

"Hopefully, I am able to use my knowledge in two ways," said Trobisch. "First, to prepare my general officer to understand what is going on with the U.S. Army if we are cooperating (i.e. in Afghanistan or somewhere else). Second, for working in a multinational staff/environment led by Americans."

Trobisch is accompanied by his wife, Claudia, four-year-old son Constantin, and his six-month old daughter, Elise, who was

born in Kansas City, Kan. They live off-post in Leavenworth and have enjoyed their stay in Kansas.

Each IMS has three sponsors, one from Fort Leavenworth, one from the Leavenworth/Lansing area, and one from the Kansas City Area. These sponsors, along with other German nationals in the area, have provided the Trobischs with many opportunities to become involved in the community. Trobisch and his family enjoy walks and have had the opportunity to meet many local Kansans along their route. They have been struck by the politeness, of the local population and enjoyed the interest taken in their heritage.

Trobisch learned a good deal about American through his interaction with his sponsors and classmates. He has pursued discussion and insight into ordinary American political and economic thought as well as the tax system, farming and even gun control. He believes that the European Union countries will never understand the American stance on gun ownership, but being in Kansas and gaining perspective on the people, culture and geography have given him a good understanding of the prevailing feeling here.

Trobisch said, Leavenworth is a great place to live as it provides a great small town community with the ability to travel to the rest of the country with little effort. Trobisch and his family have taken advantage of this and visited many sites in Kansas and around the country. They own an RV back home in Germany and enjoy renting one here and travelling. They also enjoy hiking and being close to nature. They have visited and explored the Grand Canyon and Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado as well as sights in North and South Dakota and Montana. They have visited several historic sites including the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kan., the Truman Library in Independence, Mo., and the Hoover Library in West Branch, Iowa. They have toured Kansas, visiting Wichita, Topeka, Manhattan, and all over the Kansas City Metro area. They have visited Omaha and San Francisco and particularly enjoyed Chicago.

Trobisch has been selected to also attend the School for Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, meaning another year here. He and his family are quite excited about this prospect for the opportunity to gain even more knowledge and experience and also to enjoy their new friends and take advantage of the opportunity to continue to explore the U.S.

"(When I arrived) I expected to find a farmland area, original and true to life," recalled Trobisch, "the Heartland of America, so to speak. I was not disappointed."

Kansas Guardsman throws first pitch at Kansas City Royals game



2nd Lt. George Weston, Leavenworth, a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, throws out the first pitch at a Kansas City Royals baseball game at Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City, Mo., Sept. 3.

Weston said he's been a Royals fan "as long as I can remember" and is also an avid Twitter user. He combined the two interests by sending more than 3,800 tweets overall with about 10 percent of them about the Royals, earning enough points in the "Royals Rewards Program" to make a dream come true.

"It's been a dream of mine to even step on Kauffman field," said Weston. "And now I'm going to be stepping onto the mound at Kauffman to throw out the pitch for my favorite team." (Photo courtesy of 2nd Lt. George Weston)

Osborn first Kansas Guardsman to attend Army Flight Paramedic course

By Sgt. Gabriel Castel
Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment

Sgt. Tammy Osborn began her first day of training at the Army Flight Medic Course at Fort Rucker, Ala., Jan. 7. Numerous flight medics have graduated this course prepared to apply their training in theatre. However, Osborn would be using it as a foundation to build on.

Immediately after graduating the course, Osborn was scheduled to attend the Joint Enroute Care Course. Following the course, she would be the first ever Kansas National Guard Soldier to attend the Army Flight Paramedic Course. Although the duration and intensity of these three back-to-back schools may intimidate some Soldiers, Osborn met the challenge head-on and tackled each course with dedication and perseverance.

The Army Flight Medic Course lasted four weeks. Osborn said the course provided a foundation for her to build on and made it easier to grasp subject material while attending more advanced courses later. The training she received helped her to become more comfortable with her hands-on skills, as well as develop a better understanding of flight medicine and treatment.

Osborn's next two weeks were spent at the Joint Enroute Care Course. Although this course was comparatively shorter, it had plenty of valuable training and experiences. Osborn studied side-by-side with students from many ranks and levels of experience. She was partnered with a variety of medical providers such as emergency room doctors, Navy SEALs, a respiratory therapist and others.

The final course Osborn attended was the six-month Army Flight Paramedic Course. As the first Soldier from Kansas to attend this course, therefore she was determined to represent her state to the best of her ability and learn all she could. She was taught and mentored by military providers with years of experience and encouraged to ask ques-

tions and participate in class discussions. The course also came with opportunities such as ambulance ride-alongs and emergency room experience. As training continued, Osborn gained more hands-on experience with patients. These courses and real-world experiences were the most valuable training, according to Osborn.

Osborn graduated the Army Flight Paramedic Course with the highest grade of 91.26 percent. This earned her the title of Distinguished Honor Graduate for her graduating class. Osborn also showed motivation and dedication outside of the classroom; she was the only student in her class to attain a score of 300 on her Army Physical Fitness Test. In

addition to these achievements, Osborn served as a class peer instructor for the Flight Paramedic Course and volunteered her time outside of

class hours to help other students grasp concepts and subject material. Her actions directly contributed to a 100 percent pass rate for her class.

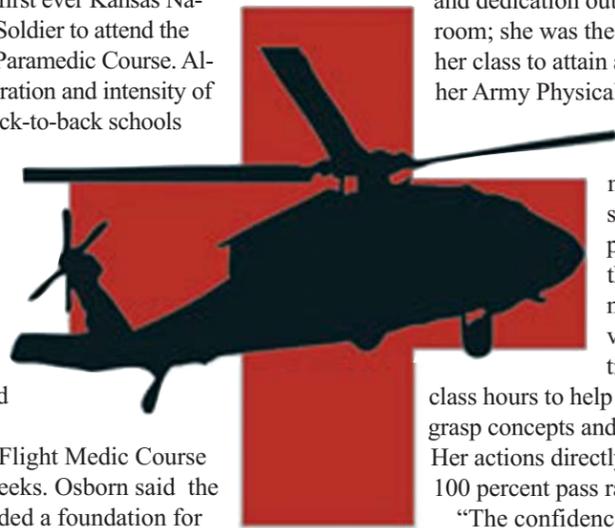
"The confidence I have when I approach a patient is a hundred times what it was on that first day of training," said Osborn.

She said that confidence is paramount when treating patients, for trust in one's own skills, as well as the perception of the patient.

Osborn has since returned to her unit Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment in Topeka. Osborne deployed with them to Fort Hood, Texas, followed by Afghanistan in November as a flight medic.

"Her ability is a valuable asset for training other Soldiers and applying her own training in theatre," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Chartrand, unit training officer. "Her positive attitude in regards to training makes her a valuable asset toward the mission of this unit. She is an approachable and effective leader."

"Osborn's training not only enhances mission readiness, but will also save lives on the battlefield in Afghanistan," added Maj. Kevin Kennedy, commander of Co. G, 2nd Bn., 235th Avn. Regt.



Maj. Jan Trobisch, an infantry officer of the German Army, Federal Republic of Germany, enjoys Kansas with his wife, Claudia, four-year-old son Constantin, and his six-month old daughter, Elise, who was born in Kansas City, Kan. Trobisch is currently an International Military Student at the School for Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. (Courtesy photo)