Fun and friendships at Operation Kid's Camp . .5

In Guard History: "God, country and family" 6

K-State event promotes preparedness 8

PLAINS GUARDIAN

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New Abrams model rolls off the rails to Kansas tank battalion

By 1st Lt. Matt Lucht
Public Affairs Office

Fourteen brand-new M1A Abrams tanks sat on railcars at Fort Riley's railhead May 7, ready to be offloaded to their recipients, the Soldiers of the Kansas Army National Guard's 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment.

"We are pretty excited about it," said Maj. Robert Sands, executive officer, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf. "It is a new upgrade for our tanks, the existing fleet is approaching 30 years of age and these are brand new, off-the-line production."

The 30-year time span has seen a lot of advancement in tank technology and these tanks have numerous upgrades from the current fleet.

The 2nd CAB, 137th Inf. is the first battalion in the National Guard and one of the few Guard units that will receive these new tanks. This new model has significant upgrades, including improved crew survivability, improved engine, improved fire control system and improved optics.

"A lot of the lessons learned in Iraq have gone into these tanks," said Sands. "They have an improved gunnery system, improved computers, improved engines, everything top to bottom in these tanks are an improvement of what we have now."

Just like getting a new phone or computer, training is needed to learn how to operate the new features. The Soldiers of the 2nd CAB, 137th Inf. will start their training on the new tanks June 1 to get them up to speed.

(Continued on Page 2)

Fourteen new M1 Abrams tanks wait to be offloaded at Fort Riley's railhead May 7. The tanks were being delivered to the Kansas National Guard's 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment. The 2nd CAB, 137th Inf. is the first battalion in the National Guard and one of the few Guard units that will receive these new tanks. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)

Air refueling tankers keep nation's military jets airborne

By Samatha Sexton
Public Affairs Office

From Topeka to New Mexico to West Virginia and back, several journalists joined a group of civic leaders who were invited to participate in an orientation flight June 12 with the Kansas Air National Guard's 190th Air Refueling Wing, based at Forbes Field.

The civic leaders and media representatives were invited on the refueling flight to learn first-hand about the mission, position and economic impact of the Kansas Air National Guard on the local community.

The flight wasn't a joyride, however. The 190th and KC-135R air refueling tankers were there to assist seven F-16 jets, flown by the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds, as they traveled from Nevada to the East Coast, filling the jets' fuel tanks as they sped through the air thousands of feet above the earth.

After being briefed on the history of the 190th Air Refueling Wing by Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, and Maj. Joe Blubaugh, 190th community manager, the guests were ready to ship off on the cross-country mission at 8:45 a.m. The civic leaders, including several business owners, boarded one plane with the media on another. The four-man crew gave a short tour of the plane and handed out ear-plugs.

The guests were given full access to all areas of the plane, asked only to not interrupt the pilots or photograph any sensitive materials. Each guest was given the opportunity to witness the refueling up close from the boom control.

The tankers refueled the jets three times during the mission while guests "oohed" and "awed" over the red, white and blue Thunderbirds conducting their air tango just outside the windows.

"I thought it was really impressive how effortless it seemed to line up the plane just right," said Megan Hart, a reporter for the Topeka Capital-Journal. "How they managed to keep formation was really neat."

A KC-135 air refueling tanker, flown by the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas National Guard, extends its refueling boom toward an F-16 jet flown by the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds during a flight June 12. (Photo by Jane Welch, Public Affairs Office)

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Armenian delegation observes 73rd Civil Support Team exercise

By 1st Lt. Matt Lucht
Public Affairs Office

Anyone visiting the Emporia fairgrounds May 6 was greeted by an unusual sight: dozens of trucks, a variety of monitoring equipment, people in blue and orange chemical suits and other support personnel. This response was all for practice as the Kansas National Guard's 73rd Civil Support Team and Emporia's Fire Department responded to a hazmat exercise scenario.

"We are down here training with the Emporia Fire Department in order to develop a good working relationship, understand each other's way of doing business and prepare for conducting joint operations in the event that we are called down here to support them," said Maj. Robert Cole, commander of the CST.

"That partnership with the Civil Support Team out of Topeka is just an additional hand and really some technical resources that nobody else has," said Jack Taylor, Emporia fire chief.

The 73rd CST exercises with state emergency responders to keep partnerships strong, but this exercise also had an international audience. A five-member team from the Republic of Armenia's Ministry of Emergency Situations was on hand to observe how the responders operated.

"The main goal of our visit to Kansas is learn about bio-safety and bio-security training for personnel of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture," said Col. Bajhiyah Valery, Ministry of Emergency Situations, Republic of Armenia.

In coordination with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and Kansas State University, the team from Armenia wanted to see first-hand how their counterparts in Kansas respond to hazmat situations.

"We were referred from DTRA, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, that the Armenians were looking for help with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear sampling and emergency response activities," said Joe Fund, program manager, National Agricultural Bio-Security Center at Kansas State University. "It was a natural fit for us in Agbio-security to engage them and help them come here and observe and participate in the activities of the Civil Support Team."

A delegation from the Armenian Ministry of Emergency Situations, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture observes members of the Kansas National Guard's 73rd Civil Support Team go through their paces in a joint exercise with the Emporia Fire Department May 6. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)

The Armenians spent two weeks in Kansas observing and participating in several hazmat training scenarios. They were able to see the training exercise in Emporia at the beginning of their trip and spent their last week in the state participating in an exercise at Crisis City near Salina.

The state has been partnered with Armenia in the National Guard's State Partnership Program for the past 10 years. This visit showed not only the strong military partnership, but Kansas' commitment to helping Armenia.

"This is just one hand reaching out over to Armenia to show them how we do things and let them observe and interact with it and help them set up their program," said Fund.

772nd Engineer Company welcomes new commander

By Spc. Trent Ramsey
772nd Engineer Company

On April 6, Capt. Kraig L. Buffington received the company colors for the last time as the commander of the 772nd Engineer Mobile Augmentation Company, turning over command to 1st Lt. James N. Puckett.

Puckett joined the active duty Army in November 2008. He was assigned to the 130th Engineer Brigade in Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, after attending Officer Candidate School in Fort Benning, Georgia.

Puckett's first role with the 130th Engineer Brigade was as a brigade staff officer. He then transferred to the 82nd Engineer Support Company, 65th Engineer Battalion as a platoon leader. While serving as a platoon leader in the 82nd, he deployed to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn. Upon completing his deployment, he came back to the 130th Engineer Brigade as the brigade tactical officer.

After joining the Kansas Army National Guard, Puckett was attached to the 772nd Engineer Mobile Augmentation Company as a platoon leader. He then served as the executive officer for the 242nd Engineer Company before taking command of the 772nd Engineer Company.

"Right now I just want to focus on the task at hand and grow into my role as company commander," said Puckett. "I have enjoyed my time in the Guard and look forward to a long career."

Buffington has served 18 years in the Army, beginning his career in 1996 with the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Division out of Fort Riley, Kansas. After four years of active duty with the battalion, he enlisted in the Kansas Army National Guard with the 635th Armor Division as an M1A1 crewmember. With six years as an M1A1 crewmember and reaching the rank of sergeant, Buffington became a Simultaneous Membership Program cadet for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 891st Engineer Battalion. After becoming commissioned in May 2006, Buffington became a platoon leader for the 242nd Engineer Company, then moved to Detachment 1, 242nd Engineer Company, as a platoon leader. This was followed by being a platoon leader at Detachment 1, Forward Support Company. Buffington was then deployed to Afghanistan in 2010 as the company construction officer for the 226th Engineer Company, and upon returning home he became the company commander for the 772nd Engineer Mobile Augmentation Company.

Buffington will continue his career in the Kansas Army National Guard with the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantryin Kansas City, Kansas.

Capt. Kraig L. Buffington (right) passes the 772nd Mobile Augmentation Company guidon to Lt. Col. Eric Blankenship (center), the 891st Engineer Battalion commander, while 1st Lt. James N. Puckett waits to receive the guidon, symbolizing his role as the new company commander. (Photo by Spc. Trent Ramsey, 772nd Engineer Company)

New Abrams tank model

Continued from Page 1

"These are pretty advanced over our last models so all the Soldiers and crews are going to have to learn how to put the tanks into operations so that is going to take up our training," said Sands. "Our training plan for the next couple of years means that we are going to be on the tanks 10 out of the 12 months of the year, so they will get pretty heavy use. Our training will involve maneuver training, how the crews, platoons and companies can deploy the tanks, and then also gunnery training, which is firing the big bullets."

An employee of General Dynamics Land Systems unhooks the safety chains securing an M1 Abrams tank to a railcar. General Dynamics is the designer of the M1 Abrams, the main battle tank of the U.S. Army. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)

An M1 Abrams tank rolls through the railhead compound at Fort Riley. Its ultimate destination is the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, headquartered in Kansas City with subordinate units in Emporia, Junction City, Lawrence, Lenexa, Manhattan, Topeka and Wichita. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)

Hiawatha Guard unit earns award for maintenance excellence

By Maj. Chuck Levian
2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery

On May 3, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery Regiment received the prestigious "Major General James F. Rueger Award of Excellence" for achieving 90 percent or better on all five inspection checklists. The battery commander, Capt. James Pope, received the award on behalf of the unit from Master Sgt. Jeffery Aumen, the Command Maintenance Evaluation Team program manager.

The COMET Program provides the Kansas adjutant general an appraisal of the quality of unit maintenance and the current readiness status of the inspected unit.

"Less than 10 percent of all units inspected achieve a qualifying score to earn this award," said Aumen.

The award was the result of a three day inspection conducted Jan. 23 by a certified evaluation team from Topeka. The battery earned an average score for five distinct areas of 98.6 percent.

"The Major General James Rueger Award was established in the mid 1990s as an incentive for units as well as in recognition of Rueger's contributions to the maintenance community," said Aumen.

Rueger began his career as an officer as a platoon leader with the 250th Ordnance Company of Marysville in 1962 and served as the 32nd Kansas adjutant general from 1990-1999. He passed away in 2005.

"We continue to honor his memory by presenting this award for those units that excel in maintaining their equipment," said Aumen.

All four units in the 2-130 FA stood this inspection in a two-week period and all units passed with distinction. The Rueger Award was also earned by Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 130 Field Artillery, Abilene, and the 250th Forward Support Company, Ottawa. These units are scheduled to receive the award at Fort Riley during annual training in June.

Master Sgt. Jeffery Aumen (left), program manager, Command Maintenance Evaluation Team, presents the COMET Award of Excellence to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery. Capt. James Pope, battery commander, accepts the award on behalf of the unit. (Photo by Spc. Jessie Barr)

Kansas training sets Soldiers up for success at Air Assault School

By Spc. Jen Bjorgaard
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

One year ago, Soldiers of 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment traveled to Fort Riley to participate in the Pre Air Assault Course. Those who proved themselves worthy would be considered for a coveted slot at Air Assault School. Of dozens who participated in the PAAC last June, Capt. Tyler J. Wamsley, Manhattan, was one of only five Soldiers to make the cut. When he returned from the course in November, proudly displaying his new Air Assault Badge, he knew that the training he received at home was at least partially responsible for his success.

"The PAAC was an intense two-and-a-half-day event that prepared us physically and mentally for the challenges that would await us at school," said Wamsley. "It focused our attention to detail, taking directions, and prepared us for the other big events of the school."

Air Assault School takes place several times a year at multiple installations, but interest in participating in the course is very high, which can sometimes make getting a spot challenging.

"Just because a person completes the training and makes the Order of Merit List, does not mean that they will receive an actual school slot," said Wamsley.

By participating in the PAAC, Soldiers are able to improve their skills and increase their odds of success if they are able to move onto the actual training course. Wamsley believes that this is what makes the PAAC such a precious tool for Kansas Soldiers.

According to Wamsley, the opportunity to travel to Fort Benning, Georgia, with his fellow PAAC graduates was another advantage.

"It provided readily-available study partners and teammates with a vested interest in keeping each other motivated," he said.

The rigorous 11-day school consisted of a zero day obstacle course and two additional training phases.

"The ability to practice and prepare for the obstacles while at Fort Riley proved to be invaluable," said Wamsley. "All five of our contingent easily completed the initial obstacle course and moved into phase one."

Phases one and two consisted of a multi-event obstacle course, written examinations, sling load training, numerous rappels and a 12-mile ruck march.

The obstacle courses and sling load training proved to be the most difficult challenges, and were responsible for the highest number of Soldiers being dropped from the course. Both of these events were a part of the PAAC at Fort Riley.

"The sling load test was included in phase two of the course," said Wamsley. "Because we had already been trained on two of the loads prior to arriving at Fort Benning, we were quickly able to refresh our training on those loads and move on to learn and master the two new loads."

Wamsley is such a believer in the PAAC that he has returned as this year's officer-in-charge to help prepare a new group of

(Continued on Page 9)

Enlisted Professional Military Education expands opportunity

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

A year after successfully launching the satellite Noncommissioned Officer Academy, the 184th Intelligence Wing has created a model for the Airman Leadership School scheduled to open in 2015.

The satellite Noncommissioned Officer Academy has held two classes since it was organized in March 2013.

The NCOA opened up opportunities for Airmen interested in experiencing an in-residence Professional Military Education, but may have had circumstances that didn't allow them to leave home for six weeks.

"The students get the full, in-residence experience with the convenience of being at home," said Master Sgt. Stacy Harvey, lead site facilitator.

The classes met two evenings a week for 13 weeks. Each class included every aspect of an in-residence school, including classroom instruction, open ranks inspections and professional accountability.

"We have to treat the students like they're in-residence," said Harvey. "The students are expected to be on time, have outstanding uniforms and adhere to military customs and courtesies at all times."

While the students were in class, they viewed briefings and interacted with instructors via satellite television. They also communicated with other classes from all over the United States. Group discussions and break-out sessions were held in the classroom without satellite communication.

The course also had a physical fitness program called human performance.

"Human performance isn't your typical Air Force physical training,„ said Tech. Sgt. Chris Schulte, site administrator.

> ***"The students get the full, in-residence experience with the convenience of being at home."***
> ***Master Sgt. Stacy Harvey***
> ***lead site facilitator***

Once the 13-week training was complete, the students attended another two-week course at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, Tennessee, prior to graduation. The graduates earned the same honors as those who attended a traditional, in-residence PME, including a certificate of training and the PME ribbon.

Schulte, one of the course's biggest advocates, said the main selling point for him was the fact that it empowers Airmen with training options.

"It gives Airmen one more option for getting PME accomplished," said Schulte, "and it's a good way to network and meet people from around the wing."

Not only is it another option, but the satellite course offers more openings. On average, the wing is allocated six slots per year for off-site, in-residence NCOA. The satellite course offers a minimum of eight openings per class and tops out at 14, allowing the wing to potentially train 28 students per year.

In addition to training opportunities for students, the satellite course offers a chance

(Continued on Page 10)

Business receives Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve award

By Capt. Steven Gettman
35th Infantry Division Public Affairs

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve recognized Original Juan Specialty Foods for its outstanding support of its employee Sgt. Miles Samuels, an intelligence analyst with the 35th Infantry Division, Fort Leavenworth. The award was presented April 11.

Samuels left active duty after sustaining injuries on a deployment to Taji, Iraq, in 2008. His injuries require him to attend two to three medical appointments per week and he requires frequent time off to receive medical treatment.

"Original Juan has always been more than understanding when it comes to my medical appointments," said Samuels. "They have always supported my military activities. I am very appreciative."

Joe Polo, president and owner of the company, shut down operations so that all employees could be present for the presentation.

"I was raised in a military family," says Polo. "I'm honored to give back to the military personnel and their families that sacrifice so much for our country."

"Original Juan has had a long history of supporting past and present military personnel. From job opportunities to shipping hot sauce care packages overseas, we do what we can as a company to give back," said Lindsay Howerton, senior vice president of Original Juan.

"We've gotten some amazing letters and notes over the years from service members," Howerton said. "They mostly have the same message: Our hot sauce makes the food more tolerable and gives them a little piece of home. What an honor!"

Sgt. Miles C. Samuels (right), an intelligence analyst with the 35th Infantry Division, presents an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve award to Joe Polo, owner of Original Juan Specialty Foods, for the company's outstanding support for him and the armed forces. (Photo by Capt. Steven Gettman, 35th Infantry Division Public Affairs)

Summer brings opportunities to train, test response

By Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli
The Adjutant General

This summer our agency will bring together more than 2,000 civilian and National Guard responders to test our capabilities to respond to numerous disasters at once in the state. It's one of many events we are involved in to improve our preparedness for whatever challenges may come.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli

This disaster exercise, called Vigilant Guard 2014, is larger than most we do and involves multiple partners and other states. The event, hosted by U.S. Northern Command and National Guard Bureau, gets underway for Kansas National Guard members during weekend drill training on Aug. 2-3 and moves into full swing Aug. 4-7. It involves participants from the Kansas Division of Emergency Management and other state partners, as well as National Guard members from Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska.

We're excited about this opportunity to bring together so many participants face-to-face, to prepare for the potential for a catastrophic series of events. This type of training takes months of planning, but when it happens, it allows us to see how our civilian and National Guard resources work closely with their counterparts in disaster response, including those in other states and federal organizations, to resolve large-scale problems together.

Much of the activity the public might notice will occur Aug. 5- 6 in Salina at our Crisis City location near Smoky Hill Weapons Range. Also, a bioterrorism aspect of the exercise is planned for Wichita to help local officials and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment exercise their capabilities.

In addition to Vigilant Guard, our National Guard troops have been participating in their two-week annual trainings across the state, ensuring they are ready to respond not only to a disaster, but remain ready to respond to the call to protect our nation in war.

Despite the ongoing budget challenges we have been facing for some time, there are many great things underway in our department. On any given day, our National Guard troops are serving on various continents around the globe, while thousands more stand ready to deploy as needed, whether in the U.S. in response to tornadoes, hurricanes and wildfires, or overseas to fight for our freedom.

While our deployments have slowed with the drawdown in Iraq and Afghanistan, we still have troops deployed and anticipate that will continue. Currently, approximately 45 troops with Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment (General Support Aviation Battalion) are in Afghanistan. Our role in Kosovo has been ongoing for many years, and we will soon be sending a second rotation of troops there to take the place of the approximately 25 Guardsmen from the 35th Division who went there this year.

Meanwhile, our state partnership country, Armenia, hosts our troops numerous times a year in exchanges that focus on learning how we conduct military operations in the U.S. and Kansas. Later this year a team of civilians will go to Armenia in September to assist with a disaster response exercise involving preparation for an earthquake response. We continually learn from them and they learn from us, while at the same time we improve our relationships in that region of the world.

Once again this fall, we will be focusing on ways to improve our level of individual preparedness in Kansas. We will work with our local and federal counterparts to urge citizen preparedness.

One way we do this is to encourage Kansans to join us for Preparedness Day each year at the Kansas State Fair. We will be there Sept. 8 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and our displays will involve Kansas Division of Emergency Management, many of our state agency and local emergency response partners along with FEMA. We believe keeping Kansans safe starts at home and we will work to continue to educate everyone on the many ways we can keep our families safe in disaster.

During summer months, we often see an increase in accidents and injuries due to travel, vacation, and summer activities, in general. Please remember to focus on safety as you and your family take time to enjoy the summer months ahead.

Brig. Gen. Scott Dold, chief of the Joint Staff, Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas, welcomes military and civilian participants to the final planning meeting for Vigilant Guard 2014, a week-long, multi-state emergency response exercise scheduled for August. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

Kansas Soldiers participate in Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon

"We come here to remember those who were killed, those who survived and those changed forever…"

More than 19 years ago, tragedy struck in the heartland when a domestic terrorist bombing attack took place at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995.

On April 27, 2014, Sgt. 1st Class Beverly Claycamp, Staff Sgt. Veronica Bartley, Sgt. Sarah Cowell, Sgt. Johanna Forgy and Sgt. Elissa Hobbs, from the Standard Installation and Division Personnel Reporting System section of Joint Forces Headquarters in Topeka participated in the 14th annual Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon – Run to Remember.

"I didn't realize how much it would affect me until we got to the memorial and saw the empty chairs and people at the survivor tree," said Bartley. "It was so quiet and eerie. There was definitely a strong presence. It didn't take much to get pumped up for the run after seeing someone with their loved ones picture or in memory of sign on the back of their shirt."

(Left to right) Sgt. Sarah Cowell, Staff Sgt. Veronica Bartley, Sgt. Elissa Hobbs, Sgt. 1st Class Beverly Claycamp and Sgt. Johanna Forgy, Standard Installation and Division Personnel Reporting System section of Joint Forces Headquarters in Topeka participated in the 14th annual Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon – Run to Remember on April 27, 2014. (Photo provided)

> ***"I didn't realize how much it would affect me until we got to the memorial and saw the empty chairs and people at the survivor tree."***
> ***Staff Sgt. Veronica Bartley***
> ***marathon participant***

More than 26,000 runners participated in the various races held to honor the 168 killed in the bombing. The Kansas Soldiers participated in the relay marathon with more than 700 other teams. A relay leg consisted of two 6.2 mile legs, two 3.1 mile legs and one 7.6 mile leg. The team finished in just under 4 hours and 30 minutes.

From its inaugural race in 2001 with just shy of 5,000 participants, the event now hosts over 25,000 runners and walkers from every state and several foreign countries. The mission of the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon is to celebrate life, reach for the future, honor the memories of those who were killed and unite the world in hope. The Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum is the sole beneficiary of Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon event proceeds.

"I remember the Oklahoma City bombing like it was yesterday," said Hobbs. "Seeing the memorial and then running in the marathon with the community lining the streets brought tears to my eyes and is an experience I will never forget."

Plains Guardian

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Fun and friendships abound at Operation Kid's Camp

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

People of a certain (older) age may remember a song by comedian Allan Sherman recounting the plight of an unnamed boy shipped off to "Camp Granada," with the pleading refrain "Take me home, oh mudda, fadda. Take me home, I hate Granada."

The chances are good, however, that parents of children attending the Kansas National Guard Kid's Camp never receive letters like that, because Kid's Camp, in the words—or word—of eight-year-old camper Jaxon, is "Fun."

Operation Kid's Camp is conducted annually in Salina for children ages 8 to 12 of Kansas National Guard families and is jam-packed with fun team activities such as marching.

Marching?

Yes, marching, because while fun may be a result of the week's activities at Kid's Camp, that's not the goal.

"We try to give them a little idea of what their parents do or have gone through so they kind of understand their parents a little bit better when they go home," explained Staff Sgt. Dawn Michael, drill sergeant for Kid's Camp. "That's what the purpose of Kid's Camp is, to make sure the kids understand their parents better and the parents can talk to them a little bit easier and they can talk with other kids their same age."

"We bring them in, they have a great time for a week, but they also get the opportunity to learn a little about the military," said Maj. Joe Blubaugh, 190th Air Refueling Wing, "maybe what their dad or their mom may be going through when they go on a deployment or when they go away to basic training."

Through the week, the campers learn how to march, how to call cadences, engage in a little physical training, all designed to give them a small taste of the military life their parents lead.

"Right now they're working on cadences and formation," said Darcy Meyer, lead Child and Youth Program coordinator for the Kansas National Guard Family Programs Office. "This year we added in a little PT (physical training) and they get to sleep in the bays (barracks) and they get to eat at the chow hall. So they really get to see what their service member does when they serve."

"I like feeling like my dad," said Corah, a fourth-year camper. One of her favorite activities was using the shooting simulator.

"That was fun," she said. "It's like a video game and there's a bunch of different guns and you have to load them and put the magazine in it."

"I did good," she added.

But lest one think Kid's Camp activities are all centered on military life, there are also field games, model rocketry, an afternoon of swimming at a Salina water park and an end-of-the-week pizza party and dance celebration.

And, as important as the fun and games are, Kid's Camp is also about building relationships.

"The first time I came here I felt weird, but they just welcomed me in and it was awesome," said Cashe, a fourth-year camper. "All the leaders helped you and it was easy to make friends. I've made a lot of friends here."

Led by two junior squad leaders and listening to the cadence called off by their squad leader, Yellow Squadron marches off to lunch at Operation Kids Camp in Salina May 29. The week-long camp is for 8-12 year olds with family members in the Kansas National Guard. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

Blue and Navy Squadrons take their turn at a rousing game of kickball during Field Day at Operation Kid's Camp 2014 in Salina. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

"I remember that there were a lot of kids the first year and it was all crazy," said Tayrn, also a fourth-year camper. "It was fun. It was really fun. It was hard getting used to new people. Then I met a lot of the girls and then we started being friends.

"We've kind of gotten into a relationship where we're not best friends, we're more like sisters," she continued. "We know a lot about each other."

Getting to know other kids like them is one of the primary goals of Kid's Camp. That process starts with the camp's "buddy system."

"We always want to make sure that a camper is always with their buddy," explained Blubaugh, "whether they're going to the restroom, whether they're going to fill up their water, whatever they might be doing. We're never going to send a camper out alone. It's always two by two."

Having a battle buddy also means there's always someone to talk to about their common bond as military kids, something that they often find difficult to share with non-military peers.

"We get them talking to each other about 'This has happened to me,' 'My dad, my mom deployed and when they came back, they can't do this or they have problems with that,'" said Michael. "It helps kids to be able to talk to someone who's gone through the same thing or maybe they're getting ready to go through the same thing and they're nervous about it. It helps them to talk to somebody and maybe not be so afraid."

"When I went through school, there were no other kids that were military kids; I was the only one," Michael continued. "And nobody understood me except my brothers and they were much older than me. But here, they get to be around kids that are exactly their same age and maybe when they go back to school they can see them in the hallway and they can say 'Hey! I know them!' Then they have somebody they can talk to."

"My friends here, I can relate more because they have family in the Army, too," said Cashe. "It's easier to talk to them sometimes because you agree on most of the same things."

If the kids come for the fun and camaraderie, what attracts the leaders to Kid's Camp?

Tech. Sgt. Eric Stanley, 190th Air Refueling Wing, is in his fourth year as a squad leader.

"I enjoy working with kids," said Stanley. "I work with kids in my community back home as well and this is just an added bonus with the military and helping other military families. I always try to work with the eight-year-olds because it's their first year, so it's a new experience. I like to see the way that they handle it."

"This is my second year," said Blubaugh. "(I came back for) a couple of different reasons. One, I had a blast last year. I love working with kids, so this gives me an opportunity to get out and let my hair down, so to speak. There are some things (in the military) that we don't get to do on a day-to-day basis. One of the biggest reasons is

(Continued on Page 11)

Maj. Joe Blubaugh directs his squadron to their proper seats in preparation for a rehearsal of the awards ceremony. Blubaugh, a member of the 190th Air Refueling Wing, is a second-year volunteer for Kid's Camp. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

Lunch in the dining hall at the Kansas Regional Training Center is just one of the many benefits campers enjoy at the annual Operation Kid's Camp. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

In Kansas National Guard History

"God, country and family" describe Guardsman's life

By Retired Staff Sgt. Ray Simmons
Originally printed in the
February 2000 Plains Guardian

On Aug. 19, 1969, Kansas Army National Guard Capt. Jose Llamas, known as Joe to his friends and "Pep" to his parents, was killed by hostile fire at Cai Doi Hamlet near the Cambodian border in the Republic of Vietnam. Llamas was serving as an advisor to a Republic of Vietnam Army battalion reaction force.

Today, nestled among Kansas' prairie elm and cedar, surrounded by a green carpet of trimmed prairie grass in St. Mary's Cemetery, Newton, Kansas, rests Joe's gray Army headstone, which reads, in Spartan style:

JOSE LLAMAS
KANSAS
CPT ADVISORY TEAM 85
VIETNAM BSM & 2 OLC PH
NOV 8 1925 AUG 19 1969

Two miles west, three simple bronze plaques hang in the foyer of the Newton Armory in memory of Llamas, Spc. 4 George F. Martinez and Pfc. Robert L. Boese, also killed in Vietnam in 1969.

On May 13, 1968, the 69th Brigade, Kansas Army National Guard, was activated for federal service in Vietnam. At the time, Llamas was the commander of Company C, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry. Although he was 42 years old, had served in Europe in World War II, had enough service years to retire, had a good job as a machinist with the Coleman Company in Wichita and had a young wife and four grade school children, Llamas accepted the call to duty without complaint.

"I have to go with my men," he told his wife, Mary.

The brigade went to Fort Carson, Colorado, for training. Llamas' anticipation, to serve with his men, was short lived. From Fort Carson, approximately 65 percent of the enlisted men and 97 percent of the officers of the brigade were sent to Vietnam. Then-2nd Lt. Lloyd "Gene" Krase assumed command of Company C and Llamas was "on the first levy out" to Vietnam. Krase, retired major general and formerly the 35th Division commander, and other Kansas Guardsmen followed shortly. Llamas initially served with the 1st Infantry Division. In March 1969, he was assigned as Senior Advisor, Mobile Advisory Team TV-62, Advisory Team 85, Delta Military Assistance Command, United States Army Advisory Group, IV Corps Tactical Zone, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). The last months of Llamas' life are chronicled in his letters home and the citations to three Bronze Star Medals awarded posthumously.

On June 1, 1969, in a letter to Mary, Joe wrote: "Haven't been able to write lately but as I have told you this ARVN Battalion that I am working with is the Reaction Force for this province so whenever anything comes up we are flown in. We've been constantly on the go for the past weeks so I really haven't had time to write. I'm glad to be here at base camp. I'm tired and filthy. You can probably smell me clear from home if you try real hard. Had three letters from you when I got here and you really don't know how much a letter from home means not just to me, but everybody over here.

".... It's so hot and humid and now everywhere we go, we are waist high in water. Early this morning we made an airborne assault and when I jumped off the chopper I caught my foot on something and fell flat on my face in three feet of water. The VN Commander got a big bang out [of] it, but I got even with him when we were sweeping the area and he stepped in a foxhole which you can't see because of the water and went completely out of sight. I'm getting to get pretty fond of some of them. They are always looking out for me. I don't worry too much in the field because I blend in with them pretty well from a distance, but my three NCOs (American) stick out like a sore thumb. They stand about 2-3 foot above the Vietnamese.

Capt. Jose "Joe" Llamas had already served his country during World War II and was eligible for retirement from the Kansas Army National Guard when he was called to duty in Vietnam in May 1968. "I have to go with my men," he said. He was killed on Aug. 19, 1969. (Archive photo)

"I received your letter where you sent a copy of the services for (Maj. Robert E.) Turner, (a Kansas Guardsman, from McPherson, also assigned to MACV). I was certainly shocked when I heard it, but you get used to having old and new friends going to their Maker, not really used to it, rather resigned I guess is a better word. All of us over here think well it can't happen to me but I guess when the Good Lord decides to call you home, you go..."

Fifty-seven days later, on July 27: "... at approximately 2245 hours (10:45 p.m.) an estimated Viet Cong platoon attacked the village of Cai Doi and the 858 Regional Forces Company Compound. Capt. Llamas immediately deployed the team members to predetermined positions. When it was learned that a reaction element had suffered severe casualties, he immediately organized litter teams with a reaction element and, under intense automatic weapons fire, led these elements into the area of contact. He then deployed the reaction element to provide security and directed the evacuation of the casualties. After the evacuation was completed and while still under heavy automatic fire from the enemy weapons, Llamas assessed the situation and personally adjusted mortar fire on the enemy positions. After the hostile positions were neutralized he directed a sweep of the area of contact under adverse conditions," according to General Orders, No. 5146, Posthumous Award of Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device, 28 August 1969.

Nineteen days later and four days before his death, on Aug. 15, from Moc Hoa, "about 1,500 yards from the Cambodian border," Joe wrote to Mary:

"It's raining cats and dogs outside right now and I've just finished taking a shower under pure rain water! I took all my clothes off and enjoyed it. Lately it's been raining so much that the rivers and canals are extremely muddy and a lot of debris in them. We just got back from an operation and although it was pretty much a success it cost me a very good friend. Maj. Hamrick who was the Forward Air Controller was with us and was killed by a B-40 Rocket. He helped us out a lot by giving us many of the things we needed as well as doing a good job getting us air support when we needed it. He was a lot of fun and now it leaves us all sad to see one more familiar face gone forever. I realize that this is going to happen but it never makes it feel any better."

Four days later, on Aug. 19, a month before his tour in Vietnam was to end, at Cai Doi Hamlet, Llamas' unit:

"...suddenly came under intense enemy mortar fire. At the same time the enemy launched a three pronged ground attack bringing the team under intense small arms and machine gun fire. Llamas immediately rallied the members of the team and had them establish defensive positions within the team house. Under his direction the team began to repulse the attack. While thus engaged the team house received a direct hit from an enemy mortar round resulting in the death of Llamas." Taken from General Orders, No. 5147, Posthumous Award of Bronze Star Medal (First Oak Leaf Cluster) with "V" Device, 28 Aug. 1969.

In addition, Llamas was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart for his sacrifice

(Continued on Page 7)

Vietnam Traveling Wall coming to the Museum of the Kansas National Guard

Veterans and active members of the United States' armed services travel great distances and make great sacrifices to preserve and protect freedom and liberty.

The American Veterans Traveling Tribute and Vietnam Traveling Wall will visit the Museum of the Kansas National Guard at Forbes Field/Topeka Regional Airport from 12 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 28, to 3 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 31. American Legion and Patriot Guard riders will escort the wall to the museum in the afternoon on Wednesday, Aug. 27.

The Traveling Wall is an 80 percent scale version of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington D.C. Across its 360-foot length, the wall contains every single name etched on the original.

The mission of the project is to travel the nation to honor, respect, and remember men and women who served, and to pay specific tribute to those who gave all in that service.

The mission of the museum is to preserve the heritage of the Kansas National Guard and honor the memories of the Soldiers and Airmen who, for over 150 years, have served Kansas and the United States whenever called. The museum is located at 6700 S.W. Topeka Blvd., the main entrance to Forbes Field, Topeka.

To learn more about the Traveling Wall and the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, visit www.avtt.org and www.kansasguardmuseum.org.

The Vietnam Traveling Wall is an 80 percent scale replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. pictured above.

"Some gave all...": 69th Brigade Honor Roll

In memory of those Soldiers of the 69th Infantry Brigade who lost their lives serving in the United States Army after mobilization in 1968.

Pfc. Michael G. Allendorf
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 69th Infantry Brigade
Killed in Action March 10, 1969

Pfc. Phillip Baker
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action March 3, 1969

Spc. 4 Terry L. Barr
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action Aug. 17, 1969

Cpl. Lawrence E. Bauer
Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 130th Artillery
Killed in Action April 30, 1969

Sgt. Roger C. Beall
Company C, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action Feb. 3, 1969

Pfc. Ralph N. Bickford
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action March 22, 1969

Spc. 4 James L. Bishop
Company B, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action June 23, 1969

Spc 4 Douglas R. Bittle
Company A, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action June 21, 1969

Pfc. Robert L. Boese
Company C, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action May 23, 1969

Spc. 4 Michael J. Brull
Company B, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action May 8, 1969

1st Lt. Ronald I. Buchanan
Company C, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action July 17, 1969

Spc. 5 Larry R. Clark
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action June 19, 1969

Spc. 4 Steven V. Crum
Company C, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action Aug. 13, 1969

Spc. 4 Charles W. Dornon
Company B, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action June 18, 1969

Spc. 4 Peter A. Drouhard
Company B, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action July 14, 1969

Sgt. John J. Elsenrath
Company B, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action March 29, 1969

Pfc. Norman K. Fork
Company C, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action Sept. 26, 1969

Pfc. Arlin D. Franken
Company B, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action July 17, 1969

Spc. 4 Ronnie L. Herriman
Troop E, 114th Cavalry
Killed in Action July 25, 1969

1st Lt. Kerry E. Hess
Company B, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action June 5, 1969

Platoon Sergeant – Sgt. 1st Class Blaine L. Honeycutt
Company A, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action March 8, 1969

Spc. 4 David A. Lefler
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action May 12, 1969

Capt. Jose Llamas
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action Aug. 19, 1969

Spc. 4 Robert Lyons
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action April 12, 1969

Spc. 4 George Francis Martinez
Company C, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action June 9, 1969

1st Lt. Dale L. Milbradt
Company B, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action April 11, 1969

Spc. 4 Floyd C. Nevins
Company B, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action May 15, 1969

Spc. 4 Duane E. Olson
Company C, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action June 11, 1969

Pfc. John H. Platt
Company C, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action May 24, 1969

Sgt. Clarence L. Rouse
Company A, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action March 11, 1969

Spc. 4 Larry Eugene Scott
Company B, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action June 9, 1969

Pfc. James Clarence Strube
Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Artillery
Killed in Action June 11, 1969

Sgt. Raymond T. Talburt
Company A, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action June 7, 1969

Spc. 4 Akke J. Timmer Jr.
Company B, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action Aug. 6, 1969

1st Lt. Corbin C. Tindall
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action April 11, 1969

Maj. Robert E. Turner
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 69th Infantry Brigade
Killed in Action May 8, 1969

1st Lt. Donald F. Wood
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry (Mechanized)
Killed in Action Aug. 19, 1969

Pfc. Richard S. Carmona
Company C, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Training Accident Oct. 9, 1968

The 69th Brigade

The shape of the insignia is the distinctive shape used for all brigades. Blue and white are the colors for infantry. The sunflower is the state flower of Kansas, the home state of the brigade. The blue funnel-shaped cloud represents a tornado, of which the whirling winds refer to the meaning of the Indian word Kansa, i.e. "People of the Wind." The funneling cloud charged with the sunflower stands for the brigade which strikes with the swiftness and devastation of a Kansas tornado.

Pfc. Sherman L. Campbell
Co C, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Training Accident Oct. 9, 1968

2nd Lt. Arlen D. Richardson
Company A, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action Feb. 17, 1970

Capt. David Head
Company A, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry
Killed in Action Feb. 20, 1971

"God, country and family"

Continued from Page 6

and a third Bronze Star Medal with second oak leaf cluster for his service with MACV.

In the days that followed, Joe's wife and family were personally notified of his death. Joe's sister, Carmen Sauceda, received the Western Union Telegram delivered by compassionate Army personnel; together they informed Mary. At the request of the Llamas family, his friend, Maj. Bill Krehbiel, a retired Kansas Army National Guardsman from Halstead, escorted Joe's body home. Krehbiel was also serving with MACV.

On Saturday, Aug. 30, Joe's funeral was held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, in Newton, and military services were conducted at his gravesite at St. Mary's Cemetery. Newton's mayor, the VFW and American Legion post commanders and the local G.I. Forum chairman jointly proclaimed that Saturday as "Capt. Jose Llamas Day." Mary Llamas received written condolences from President Richard Nixon and from Senator Bob Dole.

The details of Llamas' Vietnam service only partly describe him. Although diminutive in stature, Joe was a giant among men. Three words more aptly depict him: "God, country and family."

Llamas was born in Grants, New Mexico, to Pablo and Maria Llamas, who immigrated to the United States from Mexico. The Llamas family eventually moved to the Walton, Kansas, area, where Pablo Llamas worked for the railroad. There, in the heart of America, Joe, his sister and seven brothers were raised devout Catholics, to love each other and to love this country.

"Tell my kids I love them and that I will be home soon. My darling I miss you very much and soon I hope I will be able to hold you in my arms again. I love you my Darling and I'll write whenever I can." – from Joe Llamas final letter home, Aug. 15, 1969

In February 1944, three months after his 17th birthday, Joe dropped out of Walton High School to enlist in the Army. After basic infantry training, he became a heavy mortar crew-man. Llamas served with the 272d Infantry Regiment and the 541st, 861st, 914th and 994th Ordnance Companies in France, Belgium and Germany. He was promoted to technician fifth grade as a small arms weapons mechanic and light truck driver.

In 1946, upon his separation from service in WWII, Llamas was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, the American Defense Service Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the American Theater Ribbon, Victory Ribbon and the EAMET Ribbon.

After serving in the Reserve Component for a short time, in 1947 Llamas enlisted in the Kansas Army National Guard as a master sergeant. He was assigned as a mortar section leader in Company C in Newton. He distinguished himself as a 60mm expert gunner, was promoted to weapons platoon sergeant and, after completing Army Extension Courses, was commissioned as a second lieutenant and assigned as the weapons platoon leader. Llamas continued to serve in Company C, eventually becoming the company commander.

Llamas loved the Guard and the friendships he developed in it. Krehbiel remembered Joe, saying, "He was a good citizen, a good soldier and a good buddy." Other Guard officers, now retired, including Chief Warrant Officer Wally Bacon, remember Llamas in equally kind expressions. Retired Col. Robert Baker said, "Llamas was an outstanding leader; he was a 'people guy' who cared about his troops; he was well liked by the men in his unit; he never asked anyone to do something he wouldn't do himself."

In his civilian trade, Joe first worked as an electrician in Newton and eventually began a career at the Coleman Company in Wichita, first as a welder, then as a machinist. Llamas' wife said "Joe's friends were in the Guard," and that he didn't associate very much with his civilian co-workers.

Others in Llamas' family followed his example. His brother, Guadalupe Llamas, retired from the Kansas Air National Guard. One nephew, Robert Llamas, served as a squad leader in Company C, 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry, before the battalion was retired from service. Another nephew, Mike Llamas, retired from Battery F, 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery.

Aside from the Guard, Joe was devoted to his family and to his church. Joe was married to Mary Sauceda in 1954, and with her had four children, Stephen, Patricia, Elizabeth, and Richard. With his several siblings, his family and his extended family in Newton, family gatherings were large in number. Although quite serious and shy by nature, at family gatherings, Joe was the prankster.

"Joe was normally introverted, except for the military," said his wife Mary, but he had a humorous side. "Sometimes he would get up early in the morning and wake up all of us, playing military band marches on the phonograph," she said.

Joe was also a devoted fan of the Newton High School Railroaders football team. "I would see him at all the home games," said Guillermo Monares, of Newton. "Jose was a very nice, very likeable, loving person."

In life, Joe was devoted to God. He was a member of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Newton. Through education from the Diocese of Wichita, in 1961 Joe became a qualified instructor of Christian Doctrine and taught catechism in the church. He was active in church organizations and was vitally interested in the youth of the community, supervising various groups and sports programs.

In each of Joe's letters home to Mary, he expressed his deepest love for her and his children. Joe's Aug. 15 letter home to Mary arrived after word of his death. It read, in part:

"When you see Mom and Dad tell them I'm fine and in the best of health. Tell my kids I love them and that I will be home soon. My darling I miss you very much and soon I hope I will be able to hold you in my arms again. I love you my Darling and I'll write whenever I can."

K-State event promotes student involvement in emergency preparedness

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

For many college students, emergency preparedness probably consists largely of making sure there's some cash stashed away for that all-nighter cram-session pizza delivery. Several student, first response and community service organizations came together April 15 to promote disaster preparedness at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

"Many college students are not prepared," said Lynda Bachelor, project coordinator with HandsOn Kansas State at the School of Leadership Studies. "A third of our college students live on campus and a lot of times there are a lot of people (living) together. So being prepared or having a preparedness kit is sometimes a challenge for space, as well as knowledge of what happens in case of disasters – Where do I go? My friend's house? Who do I connect with? I don't live on campus, so how can the campus help me?"

"Student population is different than a population of citizens in a city or even an organization like a university," said Bob Stamey with Kansas Citizen Corps. "Students have a unique living environment and often are much more independent than they were when they were living at home.

"When they're at home over the summer, they may have a plan of what they're going to do in a disaster," he continued. "Students generally, when they get to the university, are living in different organizations, different environments and, therefore, a plan that worked at home doesn't fit here."

Bachelor said the goal was to help students become knowledgeable of what the campus and the local community can offer them during times of disaster.

"It was in 2008 that we had a tornado that actually hit our campus as well as various places in the community," said Bachelor. "That's exactly why this discussion about being prepared on our campus started to happen. A lot of our emergency services were stretched, extremely stretched to the limit. Many volunteers wanted to help. Part of why HandsOn Kansas State is here is mobilizing those volunteers in case of disaster to help our emergency managers."

A number of emergency response agencies and civic organizations took part in the Preparathon Day of Service at Bosco Plaza outside of the Student Union.

"We are excited to have a lot of county, state and local entities that are here that represent being prepared in case of disasters," said Bachelor. "We have the Riley County Police, our fire department, our emergency management coordinator, Salvation Army and CERT (Citizen Emergency Response Team)."

Other participants included FEMA Corps, Riley County Emergency Management and several student groups, such as the Red Cross Club.

"We're kind of an extension of the Red Cross chapter from the Kansas Capital Area Chapter," explained Kelsie Cole, president of the American Red Cross Club at K-State. "We help K-State students, faculty and community members get involved with the Red Cross and become educated on disaster preparedness, CPR and first aid. We help with the blood drive and we just try to get as many people involved as we can."

Bachelor urged students to look for volunteer opportunities with one of the groups present, but said there are other alternatives.

"If volunteering with one of these organizations is a bit too much for them, they can look at the school's leaderships studies website (www.HandsOn.ksu.edu) where they can sign up for a variety of other volunteer opportunities," said Bachelor.

Lynda Bachelor, project coordinator with HandsOn Kansas State at the School of Leadership Studies, instructs student volunteers from Job Corps on how to assemble personal health kits that will be distributed to community members in times of disaster. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

Lt. Doug George, Riley County EMS, demonstrates a hands-only CPR technique for two participants of the Preparathon Day event at Kansas State University April 15. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

Student volunteers pass out donated emergency kits at Kansas State University's Bosco Plaza during a Preparathon Day event April 15. (Photo by Steve Larson, Public Affairs Office)

2014 Kansas LEPC Conference held in Junction City May 7-8

By Jennifer Clark
Kansas Division of Emergency Management

The Technological Hazards Section of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management hosted the 2014 Local Emergency Planning Committee Conference in Junction City May 7-8. The conference was focused on assisting LEPCs in understanding their roles and responsibilities, discussing best practices, overcoming obstacles, and identifying ways to get their communities involved with the LEPC.

This year the theme of the conference was "Purpose and Passion: The Pathway to Success." By working together, local leaders can prepare their citizens and their community for any disaster. All of the speakers really stressed that the LEPC is the perfect organization to address all aspects of community preparedness.

Jack Taylor, chairman of the Commission on Emergency Planning and Response, and Timothy F. East, chairman-elect, opened the conference with a presentation on the organization and responsibilities of the CEPR and its role in supporting the LEPCs. Dawn Warren from Missouri Emergency Response Commission focused on how to succeed at building relationships between all entities in the public and private sector in support of the LEPC.

This year's conference was heavily focused on industry and how to incorporate them into the LEPC because this is one of the major challenges some of the smaller counties face. Other sessions included: Improvements to the Tier II System, Spill Notification and Reporting, LEPC Involvement in County Planning, Environmental Protection Agency Laws and Regulations, Grant Writing, Railroad Hazmat, and LEPC basics.

Overall, close to 100 people attended the conference, giving smaller counties and new LEPC members the opportunity to attend a conference in close proximity to their home, to learn about what their LEPC should be doing, how to get it done, and to start building relationships with other county LEPC members from across the state.

All of the presentations given at the conference can be found on the KDEM LEPC website at: http://www.kansastag.gov/KDEM.asp?PageID=177.

Harry Heintzelman, Local Emergency Planning Committee coordinator with the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, discusses the responsibilities of LEPCs at the 2014 Local Emergency Planning Committee Conference May 7-8 in Junction City. (Photo by Jennifer Clark, Kansas Division of Emergency Management)

Kansas National Guard stays ahead of the game in Salina

By Spc. Nancy Baez, UPAR
170th Maintenance Unit

Starting in early morning hours on Feb. 7 through the evening of Feb. 9, Soldiers from multiple Kansas Army National Guard units kept busy maintaining the vehicles and equipment stored in the Unit Training Equipment Site facility in Salina. Units represented included the 242nd Engineer Company, Coffeyville; 891st Engineer Battalion, Iola; and 170th Support Maintenance Company from Colby and Norton.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kevin Herrman, Salina; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Andy Laffery, Iola; and Master Sgt. Mark Zafran, Norton, worked together to bring a task filled weekend for the Citizen Soldiers around the area. Service and repair of over 15 pieces of equipment kept Soldiers focused and helped sharpen their skills. Five pacing items were brought from the 891st Engineer Battalion and two were brought from non mission-capable to fully mission-capable status.

Also restored were two Humvees, vehicles designated as Equipment Readiness Code A items, which mean they are items necessary to complete a mission. These tactical vehicles are critical to maintain since they play a vital role during annual training exercises and also when being used out at the range.

In addition to maintaining mobile equipment, small arm maintenance was carefully detailed. A vault full of M-16s were cleaned and stored, ready for action. Between the UTES and the Kansas Regional Training Institute in Salina, there were quarterly services and biennial adjutsments on 139 M16A2s rifles, 90 Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services and 48 pre-embarkation inspections on M9 9mm pistols, services on five MK-19 grenade launchers, annual services on two M2 .50 caliber machine guns and some additional services on various sniper rifles.

Sgt. Jay Gordon and Sgt. Tim Frecks, Detachment 1, 170th Support Maintenance Company, Colby, troubleshoot an issue on a piece of construction equipment. (Photo provided)

Your computer is a mini-office

By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Scott Sackrider
IT Security Analyst

Just how does a computer work? What processes happen "under the hood" and how can you ensure your data is secure? Perhaps the best way to think of a computer is as an "office." This "office" has a desk (memory), a file cabinet (hard drive), a typewriter (printer), and a Central Processing Unit or CPU (electronic brain).

Valerie is in charge of accounts for the Acme Manufacturing Company, which makes roadrunner traps. Within her office is another "office," her computer. When she gets to her office, she turns on the "office lights" (powers up the computer) and unlocks it (logs in) with a special card and a Personal Identification Number.

Valerie's first task is to gather the accounts of a client named Mr. Coyote and bill him for goods. She opens her "file cabinet," but instead of physically pulling the file from storage, she copies the information onto the paper that's on her "desk." It is not nearly as large as the "file cabinet," so she has a special drawer (virtual memory) to hold information she uses quite a bit while she works the file. Copies of the file are spread out over her desk, and she reads them and uses her short-term memory to work the small bits of the file at a time (cache). Her electronic brain (CPU) analyzes the data and Valerie writes out the bill for the last month (still using memory).

Valerie electronically "prints" up the bill and puts it in an envelope (attaches it to an email). She writes the return and recipient's addresses (creates the header). Being somewhat medieval, Valerie seals the letter with wax and her ring (digitally signs), and sends out the invoice (e-mail). She can send it registered (asks for a read receipt), and/or send it in a special code only Mr. Coyote knows (encrypted).

Once the invoice is sent, Valerie no longer needs the file. Instead of throwing the file in the trash, she simply erases the label at the top of the file, which tells her she can overwrite what's in the file folder (deleting). However, the actual data is still there until it is overwritten, so if anyone ever stole the cabinet, they could rebuild her files even after deletion (forensics).

Valerie is finished for the day, so she prepares to leave. She knows to turn off the "office" lights on the way out. Her "light switch" is set to automatically shred any papers on her desk (clear memory) and lock her file cabinet (data at rest, aka bitlocker), and the "office" door automatically locks (logoff). This security setup ensures that if anyone stole her desk, there would be no papers left out to read; if the filing cabinet was pilfered, the data could not be stolen.

Then Valerie can leave her office with the knowledge her "office" is secure and ready for work the next day.

Success at Air Assault School

Continued from Page 3

Soldiers for Air Assault School.

"Every battalion in the state could benefit from their Soldiers being trained to sling load equipment and establish landing zones in support of their state or federal mission," said Wamsley. "Personally, though, I joined the Army to take part in new experiences that most never will, and Air Assault School was an amazing experience!"

Sketchers donates boxes of Crocs... or is that boxes of Croc-es?

On June 5, more than 4,700 pairs of Sketchers Crocs™ were delivered from the H.E.R.O.E.S. Care Warehouse in Missouri to Kansas by USF Holland Trucking Company to await "Operation Shoe Pickup" by military members from the 137th Transportation Company, Olathe. The Crocs shoes were donated to H.E.R.O.E.S. Care from Sketchers through Fashion Delivers to give to military members and their families. Jon Jerome, president of H.E.R.O.E.S. Care, a 501c(3) nonprofit organization, was given several pallets of Crocs™ and asked to get them to military members and their families. He contacted Tammy Alsup at the Family Assistance Office in the Lenexa National Guard armory to coordinate the best way to disperse these donated items to military families. Alsup worked with Sgt. 1st Class John Burns at the 137th Transportation Company and USF Holland to make this happen. The donated shoes will be taken to the geographically dispersed Family Assistance Offices in the state and distributed at unit family picnics, family days, and other events involving military members and their families. (Photo by Sgt. Dru Swann, UPAR, 137th Transportation Company)

Topeka military members honored

Six members of United States military branches located in Topeka were recognized as Armed Forces Personnel of the Year at the April 8 Topeka City Council in a brief ceremony sponsored by the Topeka Military Relations Committee.

This year's honorees were Spc. Joshua R. Joynt, Kansas Army National Guard; Sgt. 1st Class James J. Riddle, United States Army Reserve; Sgt. Andrew S. Slater, United States Marine Corps; Staff Sgt. Luke A. Broxterman, Kansas Air National Guard; Yeoman 1st Class Joshua R. Lee, United States Coast Guard; and Yeoman 2nd Class Steven E. Rogers, United States Coast Guard Reserve.

The invocation for the ceremony was given by Chaplain (Maj.) John Potter, Kansas National Guard.

The recipients were selected by their respective military branches to receive the Military Person of the Year Award from the Topeka Military Relations Committee. The committee was formed in 2003 by a group of Topeka businessmen to promote the military within the community.

Topeka Mayor Larry Wolgast congratulates Spc. Joshua Joynt on his selection as Armed Forces Personnel of the Year for the Kansas Army National Guard. Joynt was one of six members of the Topeka military community honored during a ceremony April 8 in Topeka. (Photo by Maj. Joe Blubaugh, 190th Air Refueling Wing)

The new Air Force inspection program is here

By 2nd Lt. Angela Brees
190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

2014 is already shaping up to be a busy year for the 190th Air Refueling Wing.

Since January, 190th members have deployed to Guam, Central Command and other locations around the globe, in addition to participating in two wing-wide exercises. As part of the Air Force's new Commander's Inspection Program, wing members can count on more exercises throughout the year.

The new inspection program seeks to end the bell curve of no inspections for several months, followed by a couple of months to build-up before an Operational Readiness Exercise or Inspection. Instead, units should be always ready, always testing themselves because we now remain continually within a Unit Effectiveness Inspection cycle.

For the new program to be successful, it depends on the individual Airman finding and fixing problems and communicating deficiencies of any type to supervisors.

The second tier to readiness is group and squadron self-assessment program managers who monitor each section's inputs with the Management Internal Control Toolset program. The final tier of monitoring readiness and compliance at the wing level is the wing inspection team, managed by the 190th ARW inspector general, who will periodically assess MICT inputs, interview wing members during Airmen to Inspector General Sessions, and report findings to the wing commander under the CCIP.

"Wing inspection team members are a key component of a successful Commander's Inspection Program," said Lt. Col. Dan Skoda, director, Commander's Inspection Program. "Their integrity and commitment to honestly assess their program areas will ensure our wing is operating at the highest level of readiness. The single most important component to the new CCIP is you, the individual Airman, finding and fixing problems, and a commander or supervisor who is supportive and rewarding of those efforts."

"Our wing inspection team members will complete formalized training in the next quarter of this fiscal year and gain access to the Inspector General Evaluation Management System," Skoda continued. "IGEMS is a system used by the command inspector general for several years. It will automate report production and the inspection findings 'fix and repair' process. IGEMS and MICT will be available for viewing by major command and National Guard Bureau inspector general during our continual UEI cycle."

On the horizon for the remainder of 2014, the 190th ARW inspector general plans to complete Air Force Inspection System roadshow presentations to the Maintenance Group, Civil Engineering, and Security Forces during the June Unit Training Assembly, while continuing to assist preparations for the Nuclear Operational Readiness Inspection in July 2014, complete the final reporting process for the March 2014 major accident response/tornado exercise, and the April Nuclear Operational Readiness Exercise. The inspector general will also facilitate a combat skills refresher event during the September drill.

Senior Airman Benson Cessna, 190th Security Forces Squadron, maintains flightline security for the April readiness exercise. (Photo by Master Sgt. Allen Pickert)

Warrior Dash: A muddy mess of fun for 190th Air Refueling Wing

By Tech. Sgt. Emily Alley
190th Air Refueling Wing

Competition was dirty during this year's Warrior Dash, conducted May 3 at the 190th Air Refueling Wing.

Competitors from around the wing began the race by diving into a mud pit, but they ended by crossing a finish line to cheers and high-fives from the other teams. The obstacles got messy, but most participants seemed to enjoy the opportunity to spend time outdoors in the warm spring weather.

After the mud pit, teams of four worked together to climb over a hay bale. Other obstacles included a low crawl under netting, flipping tractor tires and carrying sandbags. The course concluded with a three-fourths mile race back to the end of the flight line. Each team had to finish the course as a complete group- with no one left behind. The rules were written by the First Sergeants Council, who planned the event.

"We've got good comments," said Master Sgt. Kevin Wagner, headquarters first sergeant. "I think we're improving every year."

This year's winner was the Weather Flight, who finished in just over 13 minutes.

A mire of mud was one of the obstacles faced by participants in the 190th Air Refueling Wing's Warrior Dash May 3. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mandy Johnson, 190th Air Refueling Wing)

House approves Congressional Gold Medal for Civil Air Patrol

When the founding members of Civil Air Patrol, the U.S. Air Force auxiliary, risked life and limb to help protect the home front during the early days of World War II, they weren't looking for recognition.

Some seven decades later, though, they're receiving it, thanks to the U.S. House of Representatives' voice vote May 19 to award CAP a Congressional Gold Medal for its volunteer service during the war, when more than 120,000 members stepped up to support the military effort and help keep the nation secure. The Senate approved the gold medal legislation a year ago. A new CAP website provides full coverage of CAP's Congressional Gold Medal journey, including vintage photos, bios of living World War II veterans, nationally renowned veterans, B-roll video and blog posts.

CAP was founded Dec. 1, 1941, a week before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Within three months, CAP members were using their own planes to fly anti-submarine missions off the East and Gulf coasts, where German U-boats were sinking American ships carrying oil and other vital supplies to the Allies. By the time that mission ended Aug. 31, 1943, CAP's coastal patrols had flown 86,685 missions totaling 244,600 hours and more than 24 million miles. Seventy-four planes sent out from coastal patrol bases crashed into the water; 26 CAP members were killed.

Elsewhere, CAP's airborne missions throughout the U.S. included border patrols, target-towing for military trainees, fire and forest patrols, searches for missing people and aircraft, disaster relief, emergency transport of people and supplies, and orientation flights for future pilots. Many from the organization's ranks went on to join the Army Air Forces.

Civil Air Patrol's national commander, Maj. Gen. Chuck Carr, said, "The heroic service provided by our members during World War II helped save lives and preserve our nation's freedom. I am very grateful they are finally receiving the recognition they so deserve."

Awards and Decorations

KANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Meritorious Service Medal

Maj. Dana W. Graf, 1st Bn, 235th Rgmt, Salina, with oak leaf cluster
Sgt. 1st Class Karl M. Brown, 2137th FSC, Manhattan
Sgt. 1st Class Steven A. Churning, 1161st FSC, Hutchinson, with oak leaf clusters
Sgt. 1st Class Douglas E. Morris, 73rd CST, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class James E. Nixon, HHC, 169th CSSB, Olathe
Sgt. 1st Class Phillip D. Witzke, 105th MPAD, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Edward H. Nearing Jr., Det 1, 778th TC, Manhattan

Army Commendation Medal

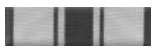
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Matthew W. Jessop, Det 37, OSACOM, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Sgt. 1st Class William R. McGinnis, 105th MPAD, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Joseph W. Duncan III, 73rd CST, Topeka, with three oak leaf clusters
Staff Sgt. John R. Tejada, 73rd CST, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Jarrod D. Smith, 73rd CST, Topeka
Sgt. Daniel T. Forrest, HHD, JFHQ-KS, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster

KANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Meritorious Service Medal

Lt. Col. Cody Jacobs, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Lt. Col. Jason Knobbe, 184th IW, Wichita with oak leaf cluster
Lt. Col. Charles Remboldt, 190th ARW, Topeka, with oak leaf cluster
Lt. Col. Randolph Whitely, 184th IW, Wichita
Chief Master Sgt. James Scheidel, 184th IW, Wichita, with three oak leaf clusters
Senior Master Sgt. Charles Ballard, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Master Sgt. Keith Decker, 184th IW, Wichita, with two oak leaf clusters
Senior Master Sgt. James Spurlock, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. James Dickinson, 184th IW, Wichita

Air Force Commendation Medal



Maj. Brandi Staniec, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Marc Cox, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Stella Johnston, 190th ARW, Topeka

Retirements

Kansas Army National Guard

Command Sgt. Maj. Edward Boring, HHD, 635th RSG, Hutchinson
Master Sgt. Steven Haag, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Master Sgt. David Raska, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. 1st Class John Cunningham, 2137th FSC, Manhattan
Staff Sgt. Harold Bechtle, HHC, 891st Eng Bn, Iola
Staff Sgt. Bryan Clark, Co C, 2nd CAB, 137th Inf, Lenexa
Staff Sgt. Angela Lewison, KSARNG Med Det, Lenexa
Staff Sgt. Joseph Marshall, 250th FSC (-), Ottawa
Staff Sgt. Jacob Millias, Btry B, 2nd Bn, 130th FA, Abilene
Staff Sgt. Gregory Osborne, 35th ID Band, Olathe
Staff Sgt. Brandon Seibel, FSC, 891st Eng Bn, Iola
Sgt. Shawn Francis, Det 1, 778th Trans Co, Manhattan
Sgt. Robert Jackson, Btry B (-), 1st Bn, 161st FA, Paola
Sgt. Clayton Kidd, Det 1, 778th Trans Co, Manhattan
Sgt. Kevin Landers, Det 1, 995th Maint Co, Concordia
Sgt. Michael Mathewson, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Spc. Brian Vansteenberg, 995th Maint Co (-), Smith Center

Kansas Air National Guard

Chief Master Sgt. Clark Hansen, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Jim Scheidel, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Frank (Bill) Cook, 184th IW, Wichita

Professional Military Education

Continued from Page 3

for PME graduates to serve as facilitators. The 184th IW has seven facilitators.

A satellite PME facilitator isn't the same as an instructor. A facilitator provides the link between the student and the instructor. Throughout the course, they lead classroom sessions, mentor students and maintain class discipline. Facilitators are required to meet high standards of professionalism. Applicants are required to have an associate's degree or higher, a passing physical fitness score without exemptions and must encompass the wing's goals.

Those interested in serving as a facilitator must submit an application package which is vetted locally and then sent to the Air National Guard Training and Education Center at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base. They must also interview for the position.

"It's a competitive process," said Harvey. "You really need to want to mentor Airmen."

If selected, the applicant will attend the instructor certification program. They can only facilitate up to the highest level of in-residence PME from which they've graduated. For example, a graduate of Airman Leadership School can facilitate ALS, but not NCOA. A graduate of NCOA can facilitate both courses. However, an Airman who completed correspondence courses isn't eligible to facilitate the satellite class.

Cost reduction remains on the forefront of many Air National Guard programs. According to the base education and training office, the wing saves an average cost of $3,000 per student by enrolling them in the satellite course instead of an off-site NCOA.

Clearwater Guardsman carves out a way to honor fallen Soldiers

By Fred Mann
Used by permission of The Wichita Eagle

Each piece is carved in careful detail. The helmet. The rifle. The boots.

It took two years for Sgt. Philip Crabtree to hew his fallen soldier sculpture out of the red cedar trees he cut down in a roadside ditch. It stands about 4 feet tall and is enclosed in a glass case.

Crabtree, who mows lawns for a living, takes the sculpture to funerals of military veterans. Next to it, he places a wooden donation box. His goal is to raise money to help retired veterans buy some groceries or make a utility payment or a house payment.

"I wanted to give back to the troops, especially those of the Vietnam era who were spit on when they came home," he said.

Crabtree, 34, said he used to lead the honor guard team with the Kansas Army National Guard. He and his team served at more than 450 funerals over three years.

Crabtree said he served at the funerals of veterans from wars including the Civil War and the Spanish American War, whenever remains were identified with DNA technology.

The team has a curious role at funerals, he said. It is around the families and friends of the veterans, but doesn't interact with them. Its job is to remain anonymous.

"We're kind of like ghosts. We're there before a family gets there, and by the time they turn around, we're gone," said Crabtree.

He emerged from that duty with a desire to help veterans.

One day he decided to carve a memorial for soldiers. His mom had started him in carving when he was a kid, and he enjoyed it for about a year until he accidentally jammed a knife blade into his hand.

He didn't take up carving again until later in life, when he decided to try making log furniture.

After he cut down the cedar trees, he let them dry for eight months. Then he went to work on them at his home outside Clearwater, mostly with a chain saw, finally with carving knives.

He used his own military boots as a model for the boots. He tried to carve the rifle from memory, but finally used an AR-15 as a model. The helmet is a standard battle helmet.

He finished in March. Hoppers Glass of Wichita donated glass for the display case.

So far, Crabtree has displayed the work at four funeral services. Crabtree has created a Facebook page called "Once Upon a Soldier Memorial." Veterans may go there to sign up for help. Families of deceased veterans may go there to ask him to bring the sculpture to their funerals.

Crabtree said he still serves in the Army National Guard. He no longer leads the honor guard, but joins it as needed. Meanwhile, he mows lawns for his ASAP Lawn Care Service, which he started 14 years ago.

He used to have seven employees, but now it's just him. He's still rebuilding the business after thieves wiped it out two years ago by stealing all his equipment, which was worth $25,000. It was never recovered.

Crabtree was at Guard training in Salina when the theft occurred. He had to start over with push mowers.

"You keep getting back up, and you just move along with whatever God puts in front of you," he said.

Busy as he is, Crabtree vows to get the sculpture to as many veteran funerals as he can. He also hopes to display it at other events in the region.

"There's so many people who are afraid to speak up and admit that, 'Yeah, an extra 100 bucks or 500 bucks sure would help out,' " Crabtree said. "That's the type of person I'm looking for. I don't have millions to hand out."

National Guardsman Sgt. Philip Crabtree has carved a cedar sculpture of a Fallen Soldier Battlefield Cross that he takes to funerals of veterans to raise money to help other veterans. (Photo by Mike Hutmacher, The Wichita Eagle)

Pour up the coffee! We've got cookies!

Staff Sgt. Al Daniels, 184th Intelligence Wing, Wichita, loads cases of Girl Scout cookies into a van for transport to the wing headquarters. Similiar vans were loaded and taken to the 287th Sustainment Brigade and 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, both in Wichita, and Joint Forces Headquarters in Topeka. More than 500 cases of cookies were donated in March by the Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland, Wichita, to be distributed Soldiers and Airmen throughout the Kansas National Guard. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)

"...It is a proud privilege to be a Soldier – a good Soldier … [with] discipline, self-respect, pride in his unit and his country, a high sense of duty and obligation to comrades and to his superiors, and a self-confidence born of demonstrated ability."

— George S. Patton Jr.

Veterans mark 46th anniversary of mobilization to Vietnam

By Maj. Chuck Leivan
2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery

On May 3, retired Col. James Patton hosted the 46th annual 130th Field Artillery Regimental Reunion. Every year, the officers and noncommissioned officers have a reunion to commemorate their mission, fellowship and memorialize comrades who passed away since the last gathering. This year's event was attended by 74 people.

1st Lt. Kyle Kobe, acting chaplain, gave the invocation and recited the roll call of members who passed away since May 2013: James Bunck, Vernon Burnett, Hadley Fitzpatrick, James Gilmore, Kenneth Hampton, Larry Hayes Sr., Gerald Herald, John Jasper, Michael Jasper, Richard Liberty Jr., Thomas Moulding, Ronald Rupe, Gary Sesna, Steve Timmer, Thomas Thronton, Dale Vandruff, Randy Wenger and Edward Wieger.

The 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery Regiment, Hiawatha, was mobilized May 13, 1968, with the 69th Infantry Brigade in support of the Vietnam conflict. On May 23 of that year, 468 citizen-soldiers from northeast Kansas reported to Fort Carson, Colorado. The mobilization order read, "Mobilized for 24 months unless sooner relieved." Upon arrival at Fort Carson, the unit replaced the 3rd Brigade of the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) as they were immediately deployed to the Republic of Vietnam.

While stationed at Fort Carson, many of the battalion officers and enlisted men were selected for service as individual replacements in Vietnam for one-year tours. Numerous awards were granted to the individuals from the battalion for the heroic service in Vietnam including the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, and numerous awards for meritorious service.

Jan. 25, 2014, marked the 10th anniversary of the battalion's deployment to Baghdad, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Four hundred and twenty one Kansans conducted various missions as a unit, including VIP personnel protection escorts, base entry and perimeter security, quick reaction force and off-site area security missions. The unit returned with many individuals receiving commendations for valor and service, Purple Hearts and campaign medals. The battalion earned a permanent Meritorious Unit Citation and two campaign streamers for the regimental colors.

Operation Kid's Camp

Continued from Page 5

I have an eight-year-old here myself."

Michael admits to being "kinda scared" when asked about volunteering the first time as an assistant squad leader.

"Back then we had two adults instead of an adult and juniors, like we have now," said Michael. "But my squad leader got sick and she couldn't do the job, so I wound up having to step forward and take over… and I've loved it ever since." That was 12 years ago.

Michael and the other leaders also find a great sense of satisfaction in watching the campers grow over the years, physically and emotionally. Michael pointed to one of her "new girls."

"She's nervous, but I'm watching her bloom over the week," said Michael. "Now she's sitting in a group of five girls and two boys. The progress they go through is amazing."

"(The experienced campers) always take them under their wing," she continued. "We teach them that you help the one who doesn't know what they're doing. That's what you do in the military, you help those that can't help themselves. They help them along until they're walking beside them and then they're each running together."

"One thing that's great about military kids is they're used to parents being gone, siblings being gone so they kind of have a different perspective of things," said Blubaugh. "It's been really remarkable. Those three new kids that I have, they came in they fit right in, but more importantly, the group of kids that already knew each other brought them in and made them feel right at home."

With all the fun and friendships built over the years, it is not surprising that some campers want to return as junior squad leaders when they turn 15.

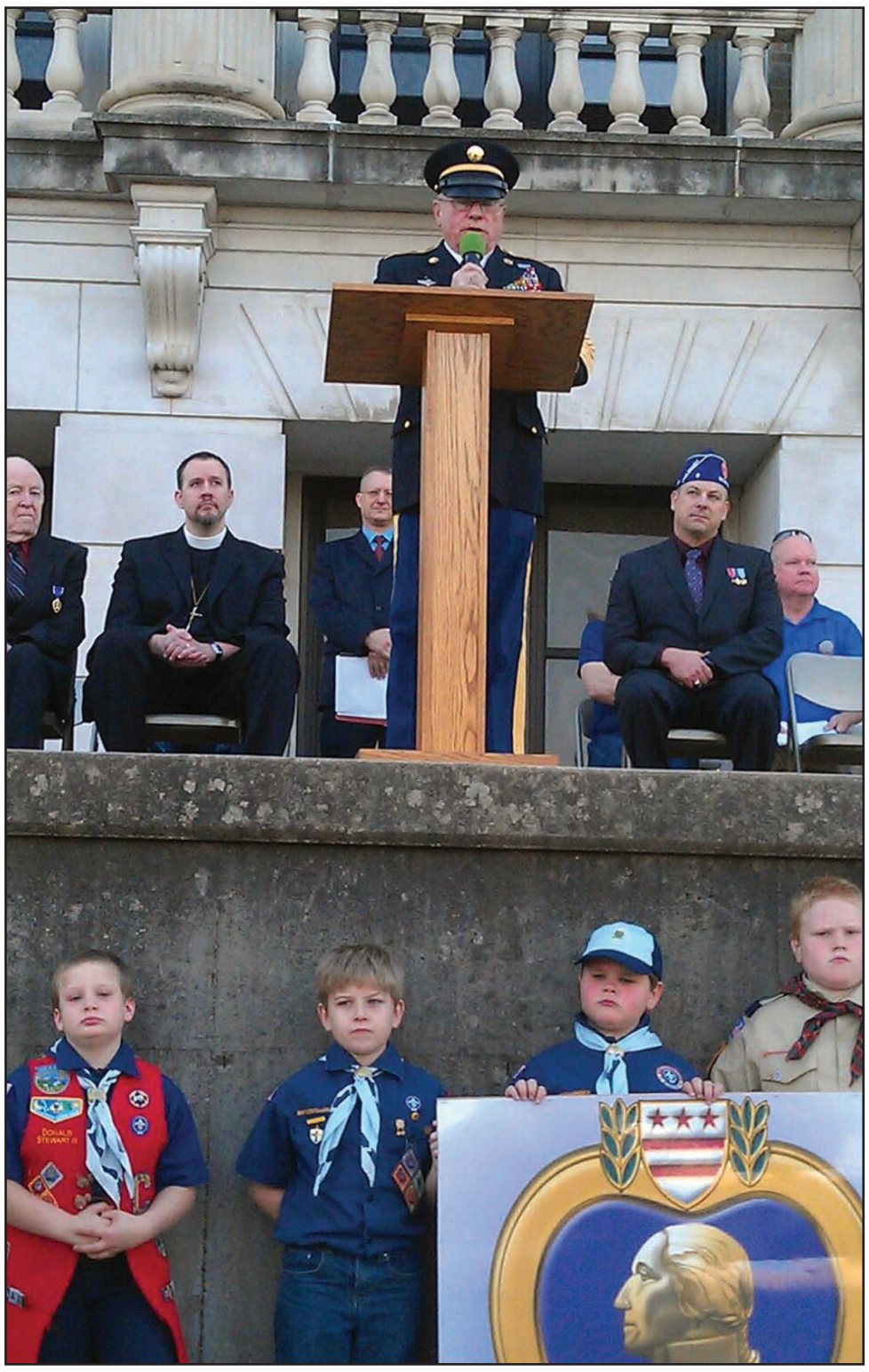
"I've seen a lot of the same kids come through and now they're back as juniors," said Michael. "It's great because they had so much fun coming here they want to keep coming back."

And Meyer doesn't find it surprising that the majority of the camp's adult volunteers are repeats.

"They come in really super nervous," said Meyer "and then they leave saying 'I can't wait for next year.'"

Plains Guardian

Roll of Honor



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Stauffer reads the roll of Jackson County veterans who have received the Purple Heart Medal during an April 21 ceremony designating the city of Holton as a "Purple Heart City." The ceremony took place outside of Holton City Hall. The Jackson County Commission also read a proclamation during the ceremony. (Photo provided)

Kansas Guardsmen compete in 2014 Bataan Memorial Death March

By Spc. Thomas James, UPAR
Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery

On March 23, members of Abilene's Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery participated in the 25th annual Bataan Memorial Death March put on by White Sands Missile Range, N.M. Team competitors included 2nd Lt. Anthony Henely, 2nd Lt. Ryne Relford and Spc. Andrew Mathews of the Abilene battery. Rounding out their five-man team were Cadets Carlos Wiley and Ian Powers from the University of Central Missouri's Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Also competing as an individual, was 2nd Lt. Travis Clarke from Abilene.

The event is held annually to honor American and Filipino Soldiers captured by the Japanese during World War II and force-marched 80 miles in what has become known as the "Bataan Death March." The event is one of several prestigious events held in honor of our nation's POW's and veterans of foreign wars.

The team participated in the National Guard heavy division of the 26.2 mile march. The heavy division requires the marchers to carry a 35-pound minimum ruck sack with full Army uniform.

This is the second consecutive year that Battery B Soldiers competed in the event. In 2013, the team won the event with a time of 8 hours, 41 minutes. The team was not satisfied with just winning the competition and looked to compete again in order to improve upon their time.

"We believed that we could come in a lot faster with more rigorous training," said Henely, who led the team.

This year's team came up short of the win, but improved their march time by 36 minutes, coming in at 8 hours, 5 minutes.

"It was bittersweet," said Henely. "We came in faster, but didn't come home with the win. Ultimately, we did accomplish our goal of finishing faster, so I'm not disappointed in our performance."

The Soldiers hope to continue building on this strong tradition by competing in the 2015 Bataan Memorial Death March.

"We will continue to train for the competition with some desire to win again!" said Henely.

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Highway sign honors Coffeyville National Guard company

By Andy Taylor/Yvonne Hull
Montgomery County Chronicle

The 242nd Engineer Company based in Coffeyville was honored April 5 with the official unveiling of a highway sign paying tribute to the company. The sign is posted on a segment of U.S. 169 highway north of Coffeyville.

In 2013, the Coffeyville Area Chamber of Commerce and the city of Coffeyville were looking for a way to honor and recognize the sacrifices and service above self of the 242nd Engineer Company. Yvonne Hull, executive director, noticed that other military units had been given recognition in the naming of a designated highway.

Hull reached out to Representative Jim Kelly who explained the process. First, a bill must be introduced and passed by both the Kansas House of Representatives and Kansas Senate. Once it passes both chambers, it would then be sent to Gov. Sam Brownback for approval and signature. Following all approvals, signage would need to be paid for and ordered from the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Kelly immediately offered to write the legislation and submit the bill to the Kansas House of Representatives. Kelly, R-Independence, was responsible for having the official highway designation pushed through the Kansas Legislature. House Bill 2357 passed with flying colors. Senator Jeff King introduced the bill in the Kansas Senate and it, too, passed with ease. Brownback signed the legislation, marking a portion of Highway 169 as 242nd Engineer Company, Kansas Army National Guard Highway and signage was ordered.

Funding for this project was provided by the Coffeyville Area Chamber of Commerce, city of Coffeyville, and private donations, including those from a few Kansas legislators.

Members of the 242nd Company signed their names to the back of the two signs that will honor the National Guard company. Members of the Coffeyville City Commission and Coffeyville Chamber of Commerce were present at the April 5 ceremony.

Two highway signs like this mark a section of Highway 169, honoring the 242nd Engineer Company in Coffeyville. (Photo by Andy Taylor)

Museum of the Kansas National Guard
UNIT BRICK PATIO PROJECT

With the purchase of 30 new bricks, the Museum Board will purchase two specially painted and engraved header stones to outline your unit area. This can be your unit crest or your own design.

The goal is to have every Battalion/Squadron, Regiment, Brigade, Wing and Division level unit represented, but companies or deployed unit symbols can also be engraved.

To purchase header bricks, e-mail your design to the Museum with check or money order.

- $150 for 8x8 color engraved stone for Company/Battalion/Squadron
- $200 for 8x12 color engraved stone for Regiment, Brigade, Wing and Division

The 35th Division Annex and Brick Patio area is complete and available for the project. This is the time to honor your unit, your service or your family by ordering your inscribed brick. This tax deductable gift helps support the museum. These engraved bricks make great birthday or holiday presents.

To purchase individual bricks for your unit area, return your desired inscription and check or money order payable to the Kansas National Guard Museum to the address below. Please indicate which unit area you wish to have your brick placed.

Exterior Brick ($50 each) Inscription is 3 lines, max; 14 characters per line

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Indicate which unit area this brick belongs to: _____

Kansas National Guard Museum
ATTN: Unit Brick Project
6700 S Topeka Boulevard, Bldg 301
P.O. 19285
Topeka, KS 66619-0285

Questions? Please contact the museum at office@kngmuseum.org or retired Col. Robert Bloomquist at bbloom843@aol.com