

# Prairie Soldier

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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**Blue Angels pay early visit to Lincoln, Nebraska**

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**Guard engineers get down to business at Afghanistan base**

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**Nebraska Army Guard Soldier takes field against NFL players**



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### More Nebraska Army National Guard units deploy in January

#### Heading To Kosovo

## Grand Island aviation Soldiers wished farewell

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon  
Assistant Editor

Sgt. Corey Scheidemann is no stranger to deployments. He has already deployed once in support of Operation Noble Eagle and twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

So deploying a fourth time to Kosovo in support of Operation Enduring Freedom should be old hat. Right?

Scheidemann's fourth deployment will be different, however, for this is the first deployment he will be leaving two young children at home.

Scheidemann, a wheeled vehicle mechanic, joined approximately 50 members of the Grand

Island-based 1-376th Aviation Battalion headquarters who were wished farewell during a ceremony held at the Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in Grand Island, Jan. 3, before beginning a nearly year-long mission to Kosovo.

Less than a month after Scheidemann returned from his last deployment in 2006 his daughter was born. He has since also had a son with his wife of five years, Jami. He said he's excited for the deployment, but obviously sad to leave his family.

"I am actually anxious," said Scheidemann. "It's a new country. I'm always willing to go somewhere different and meet new people. It's a different experience for me. I come from a really small town..."

See FAREWELL on 3.

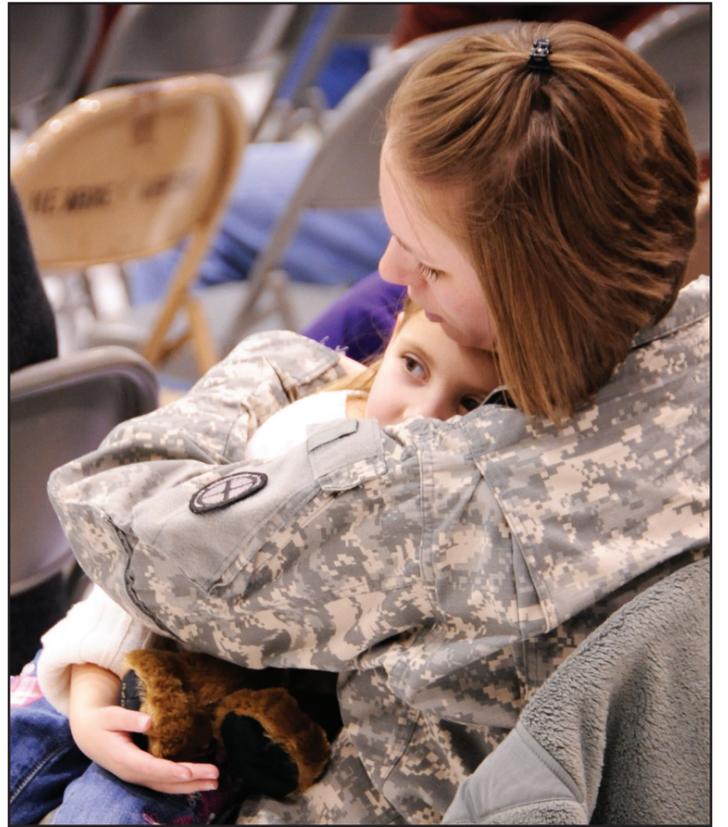


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

**Hard to let go:** Sgt. Carisa Aldrich, a flight operations sergeant, holds her daughter Emry, 4, during the farewell ceremony for the 1-376th Aviation Battalion headquarters held at the Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in Grand Island, Neb., Jan. 3. Aldrich joined approximately 50 other Soldiers of the 1-376th who began a year-long mission in Kosovo.

## Omaha-based paratroopers begin new mission

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

Giving deploying Soldiers and their families a rousing send-off before the start of a lengthy deployment is becoming old hat for the Nebraska Army National Guard.

It's probably pretty understandable, too, considering the fact that since last May, the Nebraska Army National Guard has conducted six send-offs for approximately 1,050 Nebraska Soldiers who have deployed for

operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Still, for the approximately 100 Soldiers assigned to Omaha's 195th Forward Support Company (Airborne), a Jan. 3 ceremony wishing them and their families well before the start of a year-long deployment in which the Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers will be providing support to U.S. Army Special Forces units operating overseas, was special indeed.

"Emotions... that's what it is," said Sgt. John Scholes as he took turns bouncing his two children, Haley and Jack, on his knee during

the send-off ceremony at Omaha North West High School.

For Scholes the ceremony wasn't the first time he'd felt the sting of an upcoming separation from his children and wife, Kristi. Scholes previously deployed to Iraq as a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1-167th Cavalry.

Still, the upcoming deployment was bringing back a lot of memories. "We're doing it all over again," said Scholes.

According to Maj. Ted Hanger, commander of the Omaha-based unit, the company will soon be

responsible for providing logistical, transportation and direct maintenance support for Army special operations forces engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom.

In order to prepare for what he expects to be a challenging deployment, Hanger said the unit has spent months preparing itself.

These preparations have included conducting several parachute operations, during which the unit has practiced parachuting equipment and

See PARATROOPERS on 6.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Olmstead

**Class Is In Session:** Spc. Chase Sund, Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry, conducts a class on basic infantry tactics for members of the Afghan National Army.

## Cavalrymen working hard to influence Afghan trainees

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

There are times when Lt. Col. Tom Rynders likes to compare the mission of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1-134th Cavalry (Reconnaissance and Surveillance) in Afghanistan to pushing water uphill using only one's hands.

"You'll get some over the edge, but most will trickle back down," said Rynders via e-mail from the squadron's current base at Camp Phoenix in eastern Afghanistan.

While that might be acceptable when a person is simply dealing with

water, when it comes to mentoring local Afghan National Army and Police Force units where the results are much more critical, the situation becomes even more frustrating.

The key, said Rynders, is keeping expectations manageable and progress - while often slow - constant.

"Staying focused on our mentoring goals will be the key to success for the squadron," said Rynders. "Mentoring Afghans can be very frustrating because they have a completely different culture than Americans."

"If we can manage our own expectations and accept that success will

See CAVALRY on 9.

## National Guard leaders looking for ways to combat suicide trend

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon  
Assistant Editor

So many questions why. Why didn't I see it coming? Why didn't I ask if there was something wrong? Why didn't they ask for help? Why?

These are just a few of the many questions left unanswered when someone takes his or her own life.

Suicide is far from a new phenomenon, but it's an issue that the military, especially the National Guard, is fighting to stop. The National Guard is leading the way in a mission aimed at reducing, or better yet, eliminating, suicides among members of the National Guard.

Recent national statistics have shown an increase in the number of suicides within the National Guard and Reserve. Those statistics have prompted a push to raise awareness and

prevent suicides from claiming the National Guard's greatest assets - its people.

Guard officials understand everyday life is full of stressors. When one includes the stress of serving in the National Guard, it can become a heavy burden to bear. To combat suicide, officials want to raise awareness by taking a proactive approach.

"Education is probably the key," said Chaplain (Capt.) Scott Ehler, Nebraska's full-time support chaplain. "We're teaching people how to better cope because everybody has hard times, everybody goes through rough patches, everybody makes mistakes... how do we cope with those things, how do we get through and keep moving forward?"

Whether it is problems with a relationship, substance abuse, family or finances, issues that contribute to suicide or suicidal thoughts are extremely varied.

"If you look at the majority of our suicides, a lot of it has

See COVER STORY on 7.

### Cover Story

# NEWS DIGEST

## ■Gates: North Korea becoming direct threat to United States

BEIJING (AFPS) – If it continues on its current path, North Korea could be a “direct threat” to the United States in five years or less, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Jan. 11.

Gates has shared with Chinese officials America’s concern about North Korea and the need for stability on the peninsula. The secretary spoke to reporters at a roundtable following meetings with Chinese President Hu Jintao.

Gates told reporters that North Korea is not an immediate threat to the United States.

“But on the other hand, I don’t think it is a five-year threat,” the secretary said. “Let me be precise: I think that North Korea will have developed an intercontinental ballistic missile within that time frame.”

The secretary thanked Chinese officials for the constructive role they have played in dampening tensions on the peninsula. “They clearly have played a helpful role,” he said.

There are two major events that have changed the status quo on the Korean peninsula, Gates said. The first is North Korean leaders continuing their development of nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles. “North Korea is becoming a direct threat to the United States and we have to take that into account,” the secretary said.

The second event, he said, is “the sea change in the attitude of the South Korean public in their willingness to tolerate the kind of provocations the North Koreans have engaged in for many years.”

In March last year, North Korea torpedoed the South Korean ship Cheonan and killed 46 South Korean sailors. In November, North Korea shelled Yeonpyeong Island, killing two civilians and two South Korean marines.

“Clearly, if there is another provocation, there will be pressure on the South Korean government to react,” Gates said. “We consider this a situation of real concern and we think there is some urgency to proceeding down the track of negotiations and engagement.”

## ■Retired Guard member helps subdue Arizona gunman

RAPID CITY, S.D. – A retired South Dakota National Guard officer was one of the bystanders who subdued the gunman who allegedly killed six people and shot U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson, Ariz., Jan. 8.

Bill Badger, 74, a former Army colonel who now lives in the Tucson area, tackled suspect Jared Loughner, although Badger himself was wounded by one of the rounds fired during the shooting.

Badger said his military training took over after he was shot and then faced the suspected shooter. While living in Pierre, S.D., from 1965 to 1973, he served in the South Dakota National Guard, flying helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. The former Guard member said he communicates regularly with Giffords and her staff, and he was invited to attend the event

the congresswoman was holding in a supermarket parking lot. He said he was waiting to speak with Giffords and was talking with other people when he heard the shots, he said.

Giffords, a federal judge, and a 9-year-old girl already had been shot when he saw what was happening, Badger said.

“He was just coming right down the line. He wasn’t walking. He was just aiming and just shooting everybody that was sitting in a chair there,” Badger said. “Some of them who were being hit were falling over and the rest started to hit the pavement.”

As he tried to get to the ground, Badger said, he felt “a burning sensation” in the back of his head and knew he had been hit by a bullet. Once he heard the shooting stop, he added, he stood up and saw the suspect standing in front of him, going right to left.

As the suspect walked past by him, Badger said, someone hit the alleged assailant with a folding chair. At the same time, he recalled, Badger and another man grabbed the suspect by the arms and shoulders, pushing him to the pavement and kept him there until police arrived.

During the takedown, Badger said, he saw the suspect try to throw away a small plastic bag full of money and personal identification, Badger said, and he pointed out the bag to law enforcement officers.

Badger, one of 19 people injured in the shooting, said he didn’t have time to worry about being killed. His military training simply took over.

“I have to be the luckiest person in the world,” he said. “Some individual told me I should go and buy a lottery ticket. I said, ‘I just won the lottery by not being killed.’”

## ■Air Force to issue new camo uniforms to Afghan deployers

WASHINGTON (AFNS) — Airmen deploying to Afghanistan in 2011 will see a new uniform issued to them as part of their deployment gear beginning in March.

While Airmen have been faced with a slew of uniform changes in recent years, this new uniform is not a matter of image or heritage but instead has resulted from a joint initiative that ensures all outside-the-wire deployers in Afghanistan, regardless of branch of service, have the best ground combat uniform in order to enhance combat effectiveness.

According to Lt. Col. Shawna McGowan, the Air Force future programs branch chief, Air Force leaders collaborated with Army experts to develop a solution to meet evolving camouflage and fire-retardancy demands in theater.

The new uniform, called the Operation Enduring Freedom Camouflage Pattern, or OCP, is the same uniform recently fielded in Afghanistan to U.S. Soldiers, McGowan said.

The plan is for the OCP uniform to eventually become the only ground-combat uniform worn by Airmen in Afghanistan both inside and outside the wire, she said. This also will minimize the number of bags Airmen will carry into and out of the theater.

## Gates reveals \$154 billion in new budget efficiencies

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – The Defense Department has found \$154 billion in efficiencies over the next five years and will be able to invest \$70 billion of that saved money in more deserving accounts, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Jan. 6.

The secretary announced the savings and reinvesting of the efficiencies during a Pentagon news conference. Gates emphasized that the nation is at war and faces a range of future security threats.

“It is important to not repeat the mistakes of the past by making drastic and ill-conceived cuts to the overall defense budget,” he said. “At the same time, it is imperative for this department to eliminate wasteful, excessive and unneeded spending.”

Gates said he wants every dollar invested in defense spent in the smartest manner. The efficiencies continue a process to reshape and re-balance the defense budget that has already saved the nation \$300 billion, he noted.

The secretary announced efficiencies in modernization accounts. He said he agrees with the Navy and Marine Corps recommendation to cancel the expeditionary fighting vehicle program, which already has consumed \$3 billion to develop and would require another \$12 billion to build. Gates said he also will restructure the F-35 joint strike fighter program. The Air Force and Navy variants of the fighter are on schedule, but the short take-off and landing variant is experiencing significant testing problems.

“As a result, I am placing the STOVL variant on the equivalent of a two-year probation,” Gates said. “If we cannot fix this variant during this time frame and get it back on track in terms of performance, cost and schedule, then I believe it should be cancelled.”

The secretary said he also wants changes to the military’s TRICARE medical program, noting that fees have not risen since the program was introduced in 1995. He said he will propose modest increases to fees for working-age military retirees. These changes also will be part of the fiscal 2012 budget request.

The Army will cancel procurement of the SLAMRAAM surface-to air-missile and the non-line-of-sight launch system.

The efficiencies will change the way the department uses information technology, consolidating hundreds of information technology centers to save more than \$1 billion a year, Gates said.

“At the same time,” he added, “I am not satisfied with the progress we have made in this area since August and expect to make a follow-on announcement with a specific plan of action by next month.”

The efficiencies will cut the number of contractors. “Overall, we will cut the size of the staff support contractor cadre by 10 percent per year for three years and

realize nearly \$6 billion in total savings,” the secretary said.

A third efficiency will trim the size of the defense work force and place more in areas with the most pressing need, he said. This should yield \$4 billion in savings, he added.

Gates also said he’s initiating changes in the defense intelligence apparatus and will eliminate or downgrade general and flag officer positions. He will also eliminate or downgrade 200 senior executive positions.

The efficiencies will eliminate the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Network Intelligence and Information, the Business Transformation Agency and the U.S. Joint Forces Command, Gates said, though roughly 50 percent of Joint Forces Command will survive and be assigned to other organizations.

In April, Gates instructed the services to find at least \$100 billion over five years in overhead savings that they could keep and shift to higher-priority programs. They have done so. In addition, defense agencies have found \$54 billion in possible efficiencies.

Air Force leaders have proposed efficiencies that will total \$34 billion over five years. The Army has proposed \$29 billion in savings, and the Navy looks to savings of \$35 billion over five years.

Of the \$100 billion in savings, the services will use about \$28 billion to deal with higher-than-expected operating expenses. These costs include health care, pay and housing allowances, sustainment of weapons systems, depot maintenance, base support and flight hours and other training.

“Frankly, using the savings in this way was not my original intent or preference,” Gates said, “but we have little choice but to deal with these so-called ‘must-pay’ bills — and better to confront them honestly now than through raiding investment accounts later.”

But this still leaves the services with \$70 billion to reinvest in higher priority systems. In the Air Force, this will mean the service can buy more Reaper unmanned aerial vehicles and enable the service to move this capability from the war budget to the base budget. It will also allow the service to increase procurement of the evolved expendable launch vehicle and to modernize radars aboard the F-15 Eagle to keep the fighter jet flying and fighting longer.

The Air Force also will be able to invest in development of a long-range, nuclear-capable bomber.

The Army will invest in Soldiers by improving suicide-prevention and substance-abuse counseling. The service will also modernize its battle fleets of Abrams tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles and Stryker wheeled vehicles. The service also will accelerate fielding of the newest tactical communications network and will invest in more unmanned aerial vehicles and a new unmanned helicopter.



Photo by David Nore

## Nebraska National Guard leader receives second star

Judd Lyons, Nebraska National Guard adjutant general, stands at attention as Governor Dave Heineman and Amy Lyons pin the two-star rank of major general onto his shoulders, Jan. 24, at the state capitol. Lyons, the 32nd adjutant general for the Nebraska National Guard, was first appointed to the top Nebraska National Guard position on Aug. 23, 2009, in a change of command ceremony held at the Nebraska National Guard air base.

## Prairie Soldier

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Letters, articles, notices of events, photographs and art are welcome, but may be edited for clarity or brevity. Publication of any submission is at the discretion of the editor. Submissions can also be emailed to kevin.hynes@us.army.mil. All photos must be high resolution and include complete caption information.

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Photos by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

**Official Sendoff:** Officials wish the 1-376th Aviation Battalion headquarters farewell during a ceremony held at the Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in Grand Island, Neb., Jan. 3. Approximately 50 Soldiers of the 1-376th deployed for a year-long mission in Kosovo where they will form the command and control headquarters for an Aviation Task Force that will consist of approximately 160 Soldiers from units based in Arkansas, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

**FAREWELL** continued from page 1.

where not too many people even get the opportunity to do what I get to do.”

“It bothers me to leave my wife and kids and my normal way of life,” he added. “But I think mentally, me having this be my fourth tour, I think it gets me more mentally prepared.”

Scheidemann and the rest of the Soldiers were wished farewell by state and local officials during the ceremony.

“We all know it’s never easy,” said Nebraska Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy. “While we know your mission is focused on supporting the peace-keeping effort in Kosovo, we know it comes with many of the same challenges as deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan. It is a mission that helps ensure the stability of a country and its people that have seen difficult days. It requires extended time away from home and from family.”

“I want you to know how proud Nebraskans are of our Soldiers and our veterans and the missions that you do,” added Sheehy. “We are so grateful for your service.”

Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons, Nebraska adjutant general, said that families and friends should be proud of their Soldiers and reassured the Soldiers that their loved ones will be cared for while they are away.

“Your Soldiers are going to be part of Nebraska’s continuing engagement in the international landscape,” said Lyons. “It’s a significant span of responsibility that your Soldiers are about to undertake that daily impact the lives of the citizens of Kosovo...it’s a responsibility that the Soldiers of the 1-376th are well prepared to take on.”

“So as we say farewell tonight to the Soldiers of the 1-376th, know that we will take care of your families as best we can,” he added. “We look forward to a year from now to welcoming the 1-376th home.”

After the ceremony the Soldiers departed Grand Island for Camp Atterbury, Ind., where they conducted mobilization training before departing for additional training in Germany. The Soldiers will form the command and control headquarters for an Aviation Task Force that will consist of approximately 160 Soldiers from units based in Arkansas, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

As the Scheidemanns said goodbye before the Soldiers departed, Jami Scheidemann said she thinks she is ready for the separation, but is more worried how the couple’s children will handle it.

“I feel like I can handle it a lot better,” said Jami. “We’ve been through it before. I can handle my own emotions but as far as their understanding of the whole thing and where daddy is and when daddy’s coming home – that’s the hardest part for me.”

“I think the separation is the hardest part of it,” she added. “I feel like he’s going to a better place than he’s been before...I don’t feel as worried about his safety, it’s more the separation and especially for our kids.”

Scheidemann said he looks forward to explaining to his children why he had to be away.

“It stinks to leave them and I hope someday I’ll be able to sit down and explain to them, when they do understand, why I had to leave and hopefully they understand,” he said.

And like many of the speakers during the ceremony stated, the Soldiers wouldn’t be able to complete their mission without the love and support of their family and friends. Not many know that more than Jami Scheidemann.

“I support him 110 percent,” she said. “When he came back last time I said I would never wish this upon anybody, to go through it, but if I have to 20 times...if I have to go through it that many times to be with him, then we’ll do it – it’s just something we have to do.”



**Tearful Goodbye:** Spc. Michael Iverson, an aviation operations specialist, shares a teary-eyed hug with his wife, Lisa, following a farewell ceremony for the 1-376th Aviation Battalion headquarters held at the Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in Grand Island, Neb., Jan. 3. Iverson joined approximately 50 other Soldiers of the 1-376th who began a year-long mission to Kosovo.



**Patriotic Exit:** Members of the 1-376th Aviation Battalion headquarters get a hand from the Patriot Guard on the way to their buses following a farewell ceremony held at the Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in Grand Island, Neb., Jan. 3. The 1-376th began a year-long mission to Kosovo.



**Some fun with Dad:** Sgt. David Porto, a medic with the 1-376th Aviation Battalion headquarters, lets his daughter, Winter, 4, have some fun with the “Operation Give a Hug” doll bearing his likeness during a farewell ceremony held at Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in Grand Island, Neb., Jan. 3.

## Nebraska Army Guard general guides Fort Riley rear division element through long deployment

Courtesy of 1st infantry Division  
Public Affairs Office

FORT RILEY, Kan. – Monday, Oct. 26, 2009, is not a day Brig. Gen. David Petersen will soon forget. On a day that usually earns the most complaints from the average working American, Petersen got a phone call from Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks, asking him to consider stepping in as the rear commander of Fort Riley and the 1st Infantry Division as the division headquarters deployed.

"I asked if I could have some time to think about it, and he said 'How about 24 hours?'" Petersen said.

Twenty-three hours later Petersen was at Fort Riley to talk with Brooks. After all, Petersen said, if he was going to consider such a drastic move, he should probably at least see the post. In short order, Petersen had taken the position.

"I saw this as a great opportunity that had never been done before by a traditional Guardsman," Petersen said. "The most difficult part of coming here was telling my commander that I was leaving. That was really tough."

The 35th Infantry Division, which Petersen was attached to, is a National Guard division headquartered at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., with personnel from around the region. Prior to coming to the "Big Red One" division, Petersen was an assistant division commander of the 35th Inf. Div., and worked as the deputy adjutant general of the Nebraska National Guard.

Even though his past military experience was extensive, Petersen said it was still a shock to the senses to lead a division and an installation from the rear.

"The sheer magnitude of what goes on at Fort Riley is enormous," Petersen said. "It's a very active (Forces Command) post with units deploying and redeploying and resetting all the time."

The 1st Inf. Div. and the subordinate units that Petersen was responsible for include eight brigades, spread across three different states and is usually run by a major general who has two brigadier generals to assist him. The nearly seamless transition between Brooks and Petersen at Fort Riley is a testament to the interoperability of the Army's active and reserve forces.

In the year that the 1st Inf. Div. Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion has been deployed, the operational tempo at Fort Riley never slowed. Petersen has overseen



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Fort Riley Leadership:** Brig. Gen. David Petersen (far right) speaks to a group of Nebraska Army National Guard "Bosslift" visit to Fort Riley, Kan., on Sept. 8, 2010. Petersen, a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard, has served as the 1st Infantry Division rear commander at Fort Riley, Kan., for more than a year.

21,000 Soldiers and the mobilization of five brigades. In the course of 12 months, the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat returned from Iraq and began the reset process, while 1st Sustainment Brigade, the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team and 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team all trained and then deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan.

Petersen said his part as a senior trainer was a new experience for him and proved to also be a challenging responsibility as the dates for units to leave the country shifted by as many as 100 days for one and more than a month for another.

"That was my summer – spent at the National Training Center and the Joint Readiness Training Center," Petersen said. "Our first three brigades stacked up on each other back to back as far as when they had to go through the collective training cycle."

Another accomplishment Petersen is proud of is the conception of the Resilient Spouse Academy.

The thought process for the academy began after a suicide in February, one month after Petersen took over as the division's rear commander.

After some sensing sessions with spouses on several levels, Petersen and the Fort Riley garrison command began to put together a five-day course for spouses, designed to as-

sist them in a variety of areas of Army life.

"We're training our spouses in how to do things," Petersen said. "Sometimes it's something like finances – which can be a big stressor sometimes when a spouse is deployed. There's also two days of applied suicide intervention training. It doesn't make them experts, but it gives them tools to use – maybe not necessarily for their spouse, but with others they know as well, to listen and then help guide that person to more professional help."

The journey of the past year has been rewarding, Petersen said.

"What you get back from working with Soldiers – you just can't make it up in any way," Petersen said. "And the relationship that's here between the post and the Big Red One units and those outside in the communities is absolutely remarkable."

As his time at Fort Riley draws to a close, Petersen said he's not sure what is in store for him next. The process for National Guard general officers to obtain command is typically based more on an interview process than assignment. Petersen said he's been looking, but nothing is set in stone.

"No matter what, I hope to get at least one more military job," Petersen said. "And I hope I'm able to use the skills I've been able to learn here, wherever the next stop is."

## Long-time Military Department artist dies after brief battle with cancer

By Maj. Kevin Hynes

Editor

A long-time Nebraska Military Department graphic artist was honored during a memorial service held Feb. 11 at Lincoln's Wyuka Funeral Home.

Gerald Bruce Lawson, 57, died on Feb. 7, 2011, after a short battle with cancer. Lawson worked for the Nebraska Military Department for 37 years as a graphic artist.

In his obituary, Lawson was described as a talented artist, dedicated employee and valued friend.

"He enjoyed visiting with people at length and found any topic interesting. He was a good listener and helping others was second nature to him. He loved art, music and life."

"He had a passion for college football, especially Notre Dame, and took many trips over the years with his friend, Drasis Pajeda, to see the Fighting Irish play."

Lawson

*"He was a good listener and helping others was second nature to him. He loved art, music and life."*

Lawson was born on April 10, 1953, to Eugene Vernon and Jeanette Francis (Eberline) Lawson. He married Carol Eckland on Oct. 7, 2000, in Scottsbluff, Neb. Lawson is survived by his wife Carol, mother Jeanette, sisters Nancy (Boyd) King, Susan (Jerry) Bradford, Jane (Kent) Alderin, brother Tom (Kate) Lawson, sister-in-law Pat Lawson, parents-in-law Aldon and Donna Eckland, many nieces and nephews, and many special life-long friends including Drasis Pajeda, Todd and Rhonda Ball, Paul and Margi Morrison and Jerry Belford.

He was preceded in death by his father Eugene Lawson and brother Donald Lawson.

## Nebraska Air National Guardsmen participate in strategic exercise

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon  
Assistant Editor

Airline travelers flying in and out of the Lincoln Municipal Airport often look on curiously at the multiple dull-gray Nebraska Air National Guard KC-135R Stratotankers resting on the tarmac, many not knowing the capabilities these unassuming aircraft possess.

What many of those travelers – and many members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard – don't know is that the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing plays a pretty major role in the national defense picture.

That role was put to the test recently when the 155th ARW participated in an exercise in conjunction with U.S. Strategic Command designed to test their reaction to real-world scenarios and stress the capabilities of base personnel and equipment as they pertain to national defense.

Called "Global Thunder," members of the 155th ARW were put through the process of quickly responding to the needs of USSTRATCOM.

"The purpose of Global Thunder is to employ a real-world scenario and test the reaction capabilities of U.S. strategic forces," said Maj. John Williams, wing plans officer. "Only by testing our capabilities do we highlight areas that need improvement."

During the exercise air crews were put in a quick-react posture

to provide their primary role as far as USSTRATCOM is concerned – aerial refueling.

"We had them prepare the aircraft for a rapid launch, put them on alert... then we periodically alerted them to test their reaction time," said Williams.

That then culminated in what unit leaders call a "live fly," or an alert launch.

Williams said multiple B-52s participating in the exercise were transiting the country on a strategic mission and the 155th launched multiple tankers to refuel the B-52s.

In addition to the 155th's aerial refueling mission, Brig. Gen. Jon Fago, Nebraska Air National Guard chief of staff, recently expanded the role the Nebraska Air National Guard plays in national security when he became an airborne emergency action officer.

"The airborne emergency action officer position that I hold flies on what's called the Airborne Command Post piece of the nuclear enterprise," said Fago.

"I work with the battle staff in the back of the airplane every time

the airplane flies," he said.

Fago said the Navy-flown E-6B aircraft is on alert 24-hours a day, 365-days-a-year at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, Neb., and is the back-up to the Global Operation Center for USSTRATCOM.

In the event of an emergency the aircraft, along with its battle staff, could be airborne in short order and provide the command and control aspect of any conceivable response.

Fago's position as AEAO is unique in the fact that he still maintains his regular National Guard Title-32 job, but switches to active duty Title-10 position when he's on alert for the AEAO position.

He said he is the first Nebraska National Guard member to hold that position, which is important for the Nebraska National Guard.

"One of the primary mission sets for the Air Force that the chief of staff has come out and said is... nuclear enterprise is his number one priority," said Fago. "The Nebraska National Guard is involved in what I do and also what the wing does. We all play a part in that."

"It's a mission that sets right

*"I think that when there is a job to be done, when there's a mission out there to be handled...we get the call because we have the reputation for being able to get the job done and for being a unit that is going to say 'Yes, we'll take care of it.'"*

—Maj. John Williams  
155th Air Refueling Wing

# Nebraska military policemen answer call in Iraq

## ■ Army National Guard Soldiers fill many roles during year-long deployment to Baghdad base

By Sgt. Tresa L. Allemang

United States Division-Center

BAGHDAD — As 13 Soldiers, each in need of medical attention, were brought out of a Camp Victory dining facility, Nov. 30, Nebraska Army National Guardsmen with the 192nd Military Police “Law and Order” Detachment, 402nd Military Police Battalion, 199th Garrison Command, United States Division-Center, were among the first to arrive on the scene.

The operation was part of a mass casualty training exercise on Victory Base Complex in Baghdad design to test the first responders capabilities.

The rapid movement and chaos set a realistic tone as all first responders worked together to

treat and evacuate the simulated casualties, including one who had to be detained after displaying psychological issues.

“With the various first responders who operate on VBC, a mass casualty exercise gives insight to what roles everyone plays as they arrive on scene,” said Sgt. Michael J. Gillott, a patrol supervisor for the Guard military police detachment and a Murray, Neb., native.

“It not only enhances the flow of information and communication between first responders, but also shows what areas need improvement in the event that the worst does happen.”

The 192nd of Nebraska City, Neb., deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, now Operation New Dawn, in July 2010 to help maintain law and order within VBC as well as the International Zone—both in Baghdad—during the critical time of the responsible reduction of U.S. Forces and equipment in Iraq.

A typical day can be anything but typical to the military policemen as they respond to a wide array of calls.

“We respond to calls ranging from traffic accidents, to escorting casualties to the hospital, to indirect fire attacks,” said Gillott.



**First Aid Training:** Spc. Mario Chavez (center), 192nd Military Police “Law and Order” Detachment, and Spc. Kenneth Ramsay (right), 192nd M.P. Det., assist a fireman with casualty evacuation following a simulated attack on a dining facility.



Photos by Staff Sgt. April Davis

**Saving A Buddy:** Spc. Mario Chavez (center), a military police officer with the 192nd Military Police “Law and Order” Detachment headquartered in Nebraska City, Neb., and Sgt. John Ferguson (right), a military police officer with the 192nd MP Det., evacuate a Soldier pretending to be a casualty as Spc. Kenneth Ramsay (left), a military police officer with the 192nd MP Det., assists with a radio antenna, following a simulated attack on a dining facility at Victory Base Complex in Baghdad. The training exercise was designed to give multiple groups of Soldiers the opportunity to work together before a real mass casualty event occurs, causing the need for the Soldiers to provide rapid response and evacuation.

After the mass-casualty training exercise, Gillott responded to a call from the Camp Victory Post Exchange about a counterfeit money attempt.

Lt. Col. Donald Buettner, the VBC provost marshal, said the military police maintain control of residents of the Victory Base Complex to help prevent the diversion of military resources from the overall mission in Iraq.

Along with enforcing traffic regulations, the detachment has

fielded more than 700 calls for service, assisted in 15 inspections of compounds where almost 900 personnel were vetted and contraband was seized.

In November, they coordinated with the Criminal Investigation Detachment to recover \$500,000 in stolen vehicles from the Baghdad International Airport.

“I’m proud and honored to serve with this group of M.P.s. They have accomplished more than I ever thought possible,” Buettner said.

“With limited law enforcement experience, this group quickly developed their skills and abilities to a level that rivals those with years of experience.

“They continue to execute a valuable and difficult mission on VBC and in the International Zone in a professional manner, despite the challenges they face on a daily basis.”

The 192nd M.P. Detachment expects to deploy back to Nebraska sometime later this spring.

## Air Guard transportation specialists receive on-the-job training in Germany

By Airman 1st Class Mary Thach

Staff Writer

The 155th Air Refueling Wing Logistics Readiness Squadron sent 16 air transportation specialists to Ramstein, Germany, recently to learn and perform the duties required in small air terminal operations.

According to Master Sgt. Adam Dytrych, air transportation flight chief, the Nov. 27-Dec. 12 annual training exercise was designed to prepare the Nebraska Air Guardsmen to learn and practice their individual and collective jobs to better support the Air Force mission.

“There are a lot of new people to the Air Force and a lot of members who are cross-trained,” said Dytrych about the Airmen who participated in the Germany exercise.

“We all gained real world knowledge to take back home to be good in this career field. In this shop there is no sense of complacency because there has not been any time to get used to a routine.”

A few of the Guardsmen who traveled to Germany had trained there before, however in different jobs. Others, like Senior Airman Evan Littrell, experienced training in a foreign country for the first time. “I had never been on an annual tour, so I did not know what to expect,” he said. “It was very heavy training-based. We were not pushed in the corner because we were the ‘Guard guys.’”

Dytrych said the Guardsmen, after flying to Germany from Lincoln, hit the ground running. The training involved learning core tasks such as passenger processing, ticketing, flight line procedures, air terminal operations, ramp operations, paperwork, customs, baggage, cargo processing and more.

The Guardsmen also spent time learning more about air transportation few others ever get to see, like building pallets, wrapping and packaging the pallets, labeling the pallets and then loading them onto an aircraft.

To an untrained person, one could see similarities between UPS and the job duties

of an air transportation specialist, said the Guardsmen.

The exercise definitely was an important training opportunity as evenings were used to study air transportation manuals and then the following morning the Nebraskans were required to put their newly-learned skills to the test, said Littrell.

“The training was very useful. We do not have a (passenger) terminal, so we have nowhere to get that training at all except through web-based training,” Littrell said.

Dytrych said he was glad to have 16 out of 24 members in the air transportation unit participate in the training together because they do not get to work at this job every day. The 155th ARW does not have planes coming in or out of the terminal hourly or even daily, so it is easy to get out of practice.

The experience the Airmen gained in Germany, he added, was vitally important.

“We train as a group so that we can stay current on how to do the job, so we can deploy and support the mission and be beneficial to whoever we serve,” said Dytrych

Even though the days were long as the training and studying kept the Airmen extremely busy, the Nebraskans still had the opportunity to soak in a little German culture during their one day off. Tech. Sgt. Jarrod Tisthammer, a former Marine, joined the Air Force last January and was a major contributor to the training. He and a few others traveled to a town named Trier where they enjoyed sightseeing, eating authentic German food and meeting some of the locals.

“We got called Yankees,” said Tisthammer. “I don’t know if that was good or bad, but we didn’t respond. We had a great time, we loved the people and the food.”

The Nebraska Air National Guardsmen definitely left a lasting impression on the trainers at Ramstein AFB as well. Four Airmen, who trained, worked and excelled in passenger processing, were requested to return for more training during this summer, which is the busiest time of the year at the German base.

## ‘Guardians of Freedom’ air show planning officially begins in January

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Assistant Editor

The Nebraska Air National Guard kicked off the new year with a bang by holding a media conference at the Nebraska National Guard air base, Jan. 3, to officially begin formal planning for the 2011 ‘Guardians of Freedom Air Show’ featuring arguably the best aerial demonstration team in the world, the Navy’s Blue Angels.

Making the media conference even more special were two members of the Blue Angels who flew to Lincoln in a distinctive blue and gold F/A-18 Hornet, which served as a backdrop for the event, giving members of the media a glimpse of what they can expect during the Sept. 10-11 show.

Lt. David Tickle, the Blue Angels’ narrator, and Lt. Todd Royles, events coordinator, landed in Lincoln just minutes before the press conference to speak with the media and assist in the coordination of the air show.

Col. Rick Evans, commander of the 155th Air Refueling Wing which will host the event, began the media conference by expressing how pleased he was the Blue Angels selected Lincoln to perform in, especially on the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

“About a year ago we were very pleased to find out that the Blue Angels had chosen Lincoln, Neb., to include in their 2011 air show schedule,” said Evans. “We were even more pleased to find out that the dates that they selected were September 10th and 11th, 2011.”

Not only is the air show scheduled on the anniversary of 9/11 and Patriot Weekend, it will also coincide with the 100th anniversary of naval aviation, which led U.S. Navy officials to declare the air show a “Tier 1 Event,” meaning they will provide their full support.

Governor Dave Heineman also expressed his excitement about the upcoming event.

“I’m really pleased to be starting this new year with the members of the Nebraska National Guard,” said Heineman. “September

11th is a solemn day for our nation, but I am very pleased that this year the Blue Angels will be part of the Patriot Day tributes taking place in our state.”

Representatives from the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce and the Lincoln Airport Authority, who have partnered with the Nebraska Air National Guard to ensure the Air Show goes off without a hitch, also spoke during the conference.

Tickle, known as ‘Blue Angel Seven,’ said they have a big year planned, especially with the 100th anniversary of naval aviation.

“We couldn’t be more excited about coming to Nebraska and sharing the centennial with the folks of Nebraska,” said Tickle. “We’re looking forward to putting on a great air show.”

Royles, ‘Blue Angels Eight,’ said that during the show the pilots will display the full capabilities of their F/A-18s.

“From slow speed flight all the way up to just short of supersonic flight,” said Royles. “Then the four diamond pilots will demonstrate the precision capability of the F-18... they’re going to fly all four aircraft within 18 inches of each other wingtip to canopy.”

“It takes a lot of training and a lot of focus, concentration, dedication and professionalism to put that on safely in front of millions of spectators throughout the year,” he added.

Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons, Nebraska adjutant general, said the air show will allow patrons to see what their service members do every day.

“The Nebraska National Guard has been actively involved in the war on terrorism since September 11th (2001),” said Lyons.

“So we really look to this event to demonstrate once again to those that we support in our local communities the roles that all the services play. The event is really not going to be about any one particular service...but it’s about service. So Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, Army and Air National Guard will all be represented here and we’ve all contributed since 9/11 to defending our nation and we look forward to celebrating that.”

# Hitting the ground running

By Maj. Kevin Hynes

Editor

Army engineers often say that one of the most enriching parts of their job is the fact that at the end of the day, they can look back and see the fruits of their labors.

If the past few weeks are any indication, Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers from the Wahoo and Hastings-based 623rd Engineer Company are going to have a lot to be proud of by the time their deployment to Afghanistan comes to an end.

"Everything has been going real well so far," Capt. Chris Pelchat, company commander, said Feb. 1 via e-mail. "All Soldiers for the 623rd are conducting construction missions as expected. There are no limits to what we are asked to do and so far, we have been able to deliver."

Have they ever.

Since arriving at Forward Operating Base Sharana, located in eastern Afghanistan, in early December, the 150-person unit has been conducting a variety of construction projects designed to help improve the infrastructure at FOB Sharana and several combat outposts. By the end of January, the Nebraska Army Guard engineers had constructed two large pole barns, nearly 10 "B-Hut" housing structures for U.S. and Afghan National Army personnel, several

## ■ Nebraska engineers building solid reputations in Afghanistan

prefabricated guard towers, well houses, a tactical operation center, living quarters and offices. The engineers have also helped work on a field detention center while also developing a power grid for combat outposts and rewiring a soils lab.

Pelchat said the work started almost immediately after the Soldiers stepped onto FOB Sharana and has continued almost non-stop since.

"We literally hit the ground running," Pelchat said. "There were projects waiting."

"It is a very large mission with very little downtime," he added. "The squad leaders and platoon leaders have been challenged with work/rest schedules, but are doing a good job of monitoring their Soldiers and maintaining morale."

He said his Soldiers are already developing an impressive reputation.

"(The Soldiers) have responded to the challenge with flying colors," Pelchat said. "They have prepared for this mission for so long that they were ready to go as soon as we hit the ground. All projects they have been working have been completed on or ahead of schedule."

According to several Soldiers, the experiences they're gaining while working on construction projects in Afghanistan are making them better engineers, better Soldiers and more importantly, better American citizens.

"Personally, I am experiencing things that many people will never (experience) in their lifetime and it is giving me a great sense of pride to serve my country in this way," said Sgt. Josh Graham, a carpentry and masonry specialist from Norfolk, Neb.

"The biggest surprise for me is probably the fact that you always hear stories and news on Afghanistan, but it is an experience that is very hard to explain... something that you have to experience yourself to really know," said Graham. "It is very difficult at times, but it is not as bad as portrayed on the news sometimes. Many people don't want us to be here, but we are truly working to make a huge difference in Afghanistan and it shows when you see it firsthand."

"You really learn to appreciate the small things we have back home in the U.S. in a whole new way," he added.

Prior to deploying to Afghanistan, the 623rd Eng. Co., one of the newest organizations in the Nebraska Army National Guard, spent countless hours preparing for the mission by conducting numerous engineering projects and competitions, and also by constantly working to maintain an awareness of the missions underway in Afghanistan and how they might pertain to the Nebraska Army Guardsmen.

Those preparations have paid numerous dividends, Pelchat said.

"We worked really hard on our training and preparation," he said. "We focused on leadership at the lowest level, which has paid big dividends. Many of our jobs are spread out and our team leaders and squad leaders have been prepared to manage those jobs."

"They are doing a fantastic job," added Pelchat.

Spc. Jeremiah Johnson, a carpentry and masonry specialist from Lincoln, Neb., agreed.

"We were prepared to operate anywhere," said Johnson, who added that the training the unit received in Nebraska and later during its deployment training in Texas was extremely valuable. "Our teams have worked together for nearly a year,



Photos courtesy of Capt. Chris Pelchat

**Important Work:** A 623rd Engineer Company Soldier cuts wood while other members of the Nebraska Army National Guard unit from Wahoo and Hastings, Neb., construct a "B-Hut" in Afghanistan. Since arriving in Afghanistan, members of the Guard unit have been involved in numerous construction projects.

(so) our transition was seamless."

That has been especially important considering that several of the 623rd Eng. Co.'s projects have received a considerable amount of attention.

"The detention center was a project the 623rd picked up from the local nationals. The project has been a high profile project here on Sharana and has been visited many times by the VIPs here," Pelchat said.

"Each visit results in many compliments on the quality of the craftsmanship and work ethic of our Soldiers," he said. "I am very proud of the job the unit has done so far. It is never a concern to me to have individuals visit our jobsites because I am confident of the job our Soldiers are doing. I have yet to receive any negative feedback from a customer of the 623rd."

Pelchat said as busy as the unit has already been, they will only get busier as the weather improves in Afghanistan.

Members of the unit say they're ready for whatever happens, adding that they know the work that they're doing – and the sacrifices that their family members back home are making – is having a direct impact in Afghanistan.

"Our little unit from Wahoo, Neb., has already had a huge impact on the working and living conditions for many Soldiers in Afghanistan," said Johnson.

"I feel that being on a deployment in a war zone is an accomplishment in itself and I hope my kids see my example when they get older for what it is and the sacrifices that we as a whole family make for our country and why we do it."



**Building Walls:** Members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 623rd Engineer Company, construct walls for a living quarters while serving at Forward Base Sharana in Afghanistan.

## PARATROOPERS continued from page 1.

themselves from aircraft.

All of that was put on hold for a few moments on a January evening as a near capacity crowd filled the high school gymnasium to wish the Nebraska Soldiers well as they prepared to start an extremely important mission.

"I understand the sensitivity of your mission and the environment that you're going to operate in," said Governor Dave Heineman, one of several governmental and military leaders who spoke to the Soldiers and their families.

"I also understand the mission," said Heineman, himself a former Army Ranger and qualified paratrooper.

As such, Heineman said, the Soldiers and their families can be extremely proud of the work that their Guardsmen are being called upon to do. "They're putting their lives on the line to defend our freedoms and our liberties."

U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson echoed those comments.

"We're all proud of you," he said, adding that the contributions of the Soldiers – especially those who were deploying for the second or third time – cannot be underestimated. "Americans will forever remember your valor," he said.

That's especially true considering the fact that the Guardsmen and families are joining a long line of American service members who put their lives on hold to defend America, said U.S. Representative Lee Terry.

"Our country was based on the premise of freedom and liberty. But what makes America great are not just those principles, but also the people who voluntarily defend them," Terry said. He then pointed out to where the 195th FSC Soldiers



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Army Strong:** Pfc. Laura Rasmussen (center) and a group of supporters mug for a photograph after the send-off ceremony for Rasmussen's unit, the Omaha-based 195th Forward Support Company (Airborne), which is deploying for duty in Afghanistan.

and their families were sitting and said: "They are the individuals that make us great. They are the ones who say, 'I'll do that.'"

According to Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons, Nebraska adjutant general, the 195th FSC is well-led and well-equipped to meet the challenges ahead.

He then asked the unit's non-commissioned officers to stand up. Pointing to the sergeants, Lyons said: "I know these leaders personally... this is the leadership of the 195th. They are best we have."

The Soldiers weren't the only ones who received words of advice

during the send-off ceremony as the dignitaries each took time to thank the families for their sacrifices while also pledging their support to ensure the families receive the help they need.

"Families, you're an integral part of this," said Heineman before encouraging them to take advantage of the Guard's family support program.

Heineman also gave the families his personal and encouraged them to call him if they need help.

"We will make sure that we take care of your individual situations," he said.



**'And The Army Goes Rolling Along...'** Soldiers, families and their supporters stand for the Army Song.



**Sharing A Moment:** Sgt. John Scholes whispers into his son, Jack's, ear as he plays with an American flag during the Jan. 3 send-off ceremony for members of the 195th Forward Support Company (Airborne).

The biggest cheers, however, were reserved for Hanger as he stepped onto the stage to speak. He promised to do all that he could to make sure that the unit is successful during its mission before ending his comments with a quote

from Proverbs 27:17.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another," Hanger said. "We will take care of each other."

The 195th FSC's mission is expected to last one year.

# Army unveils suicide data for active duty, reserves

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – Suicides among active duty Soldiers dropped slightly last year to 156 confirmed deaths, from 162 in 2009, the Army vice chief of staff said Jan. 19.

At the same time, suicides among National Guard Soldiers increased, Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli told reporters at a Pentagon news briefing.

“While we achieved modest success in reducing the number of suicides of these Soldiers on active duty, we saw a significant increase in the number of suicides of Soldiers not serving on active duty, to include a doubling in the Army National Guard,” he said.

In 2009, the number of Guard and Reserve soldiers who committed suicide while not serving on active duty was 80. In 2010, that number nearly doubled to 145.

“In 2010, we’ve got two obvious questions,” said Maj. Gen. Ray Carpenter, acting director of the Army National Guard. “First of all, what happened? And second, we have to be able to respond and tell people what we are doing about it.”

The analysis for 2010 shows that suicide is more complicated than single-issue stress triggers such as deployments or job loss, Carpenter said.

More than half of the Army National Guard suicide victims had never deployed and only about 15 percent were without a job. More than half who committed suicide were experiencing problems in a romantic relationship, he said.

“As you look at it, part of it is a significant relationship problem, because over 50 percent of those who committed suicide had some sort of a partner problem that they



Defense Department photo

**Top Army Generals:** Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, Army vice chief of staff (center), speaks to reporters at the Pentagon Jan. 19 about the latest suicide statistics with (on left) Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, chief of the Army Reserve, and Maj. Gen. Ray Carpenter, acting director of the Army National Guard.

were dealing with whether it was marriage, divorce, or boyfriend, girlfriend, that kind of thing,” he said.

To curb suicides, the Army must train Soldiers to withstand all types of stresses, Carpenter said. “Our effort is to build resiliency in Soldiers,” he said.

To help understand the factors involved with suicide, the Army has partnered with the National Institute of Mental Health on a program called Army STARRS — the Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Service Members — which began in late 2008.

NIMH and the rest of the

research team — including the Uniformed Services University of the Health Services, University of Michigan, Harvard University and Columbia University — hope to identify the risk and protective factors that affect a Soldier’s psychological resilience, mental health, and potential for self-harm during the study, which runs through 2014.

They are slated to work with more than 400,000 Soldiers.

Col. Chris Philbrick, deputy director of Army Health Promotion, Risk Reduction Task Force, said in an earlier release that research and analysis of the suicide cases of 2010 continue to reinforce that there are

no universal solutions to address the complexities of personal, social and behavioral health problems that lead to suicide within the Army.

Chiarelli, though, said he is hopeful that suicides will continue to drop as leaders focus more on the problem.

“The positive thing I see is that some of our programs are beginning to work, but more important than anything else, our leaders are fully engaged with this problem right now,” he said.

“We’re getting at the stigma issue, we’re getting people the help that they need and I hope you’re

going to see these numbers go down significantly in the coming year.”

While the stresses of the current wars, including long and repeated deployments and post-traumatic stress, are important potential contributors, experts point out that suicidal behavior is a complex phenomenon.

The study will examine a wide range of factors related to and independent of military service, including unit cohesion, exposure to combat-related trauma, personal and economic stresses, family history, childhood adversity and abuse, and overall mental health.

Suicide is the fourth-leading cause of death among all 25- to 44-year-olds in the United States, according to the NIMH.

Historically, the suicide rate has been lower in the military than among civilians. In 2008 that pattern was reversed.

“I really believe when we put more time between deployments ... that is going to be a huge factor in helping get at a lot of these problems,” Chiarelli said. “I really believe that (time at home) is one of the things we have to look at, and has an impact on all kinds of problems, not just suicides, but you know, all the things that fall short of suicide from relationship issues to drug and alcohol abuse, to high-risk behavior, to all those things. The more time we can get between deployments, the better off we’ll be.”

Soldiers and families in need of crisis assistance can contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Trained consultants are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and can be contacted at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

## COVER STORY continued from page 1.

stemmed from either a substance abuse issue, a relationship ending, having turmoil or having both together. Those seem to be the big red flags,” said Viola Raschke, Nebraska’s director of psychological health.

“Soldiers are amazingly resilient people,” said Ehler. “It’s just when stuff starts to pile up that we have the tendency to see problems.”

“Finances and relationships,” he added. “Those are the big ones and usually it’s a combination. You very rarely see just one because normally it’s the stress of finances, it’s the stress that finances might be causing in the relationship. So it’s just one problem on top of the other.”

Knowing that these issues cause stress is the reason the Nebraska National Guard has dedicated tremendous resources and personnel to creating programs to provide education and awareness.

“We have our ‘Strong Bonds,’ which is our marriage and relationship program, and we have ‘Pick,’ which is our single-Soldier relationship program,” said Ehler. “We have our ‘Peer to Peer’ program, which really is more of a stand-in-the-gap intervention program where if someone’s going through a rough time, then we have somebody to come alongside of the Soldier — stand in the gap — until they can get professional help.”

There are programs available to assist with financial issues including Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, which helps Guard members with employment opportunities, and Financial Peace University.

The National Guard is also working on a “Resiliency” program, which will let people know they will face stressors and teach them how to cope with it.

Additionally, MilitaryOneSource.com has multiple avenues for assistance.

“We’re bringing awareness to the Soldiers,” said Col. Kevin Neumann, Nebraska Army National Guard chief of staff.

“We’re saying, ‘Hey this is a

*“There’s a huge ripple effect when a person commits suicide. The sad part of it is usually when a person is to the point of wanting to commit suicide they think they’re making it better for those they leave behind. They don’t see the devastation of what they leave behind, especially when there’s family members, spouses, children, parents.”*

— **Chaplain (Capt.) Scott Ehler**  
Nebraska National Guard chaplain

problem, these are things you can do to mitigate these problems, these are the things Soldiers can do...be aware of the buddy program, the battle-buddy concept, the Peer to Peer concept,” he added.

Nebraska National Guard leadership is firmly committed to the goal.

“The most important piece is command awareness,” said Neumann. “It’s for key leaders to know their Soldiers, understand what’s going on in their personal lives outside of the one-weekend-a-month.”

Neumann stressed that problems in one’s life are temporary and can be fixed. Suicide, on the other hand, cannot be undone.

“There’s nothing so bad where you take a permanent solution to a short-term problem,” he said. “Some of these Soldiers have deployed and they survived a deployment. What could be so bad that could cause you to commit suicide back home where you’re safe, where you’re secure?”

People who have committed suicide or have suicidal thoughts often feel things will be better off without them, when in fact the opposite is true.

“There’s a huge ripple effect when a person commits suicide,” said Ehler. “The sad part of it is usually when a person is to the point of wanting to commit suicide they think they’re making it better for those they leave behind. They don’t see the devastation of what they leave behind, especially when there’s family members, spouses, children, parents.”

“If a person could step back and see what happened and see the second and third order effects, if you

could see into the future, nobody would ever commit suicide,” said Neumann. “It hurts the ones they love. It hurts the ones that love them. It has a profound effect on families; it has a profound effect on parents.”

“It doesn’t stop today when someone commits suicide,” he added. “It stops for them, but some of these people are going to have to carry this on for the rest of their lives...they leave a path of destruction that could have easily been avoided had the Soldier just asked for someone to help them.”

Not only does it cause pain for loved ones, suicide devastates the entire Nebraska National Guard.

“Even a single suicide affects the Nebraska National Guard in a huge way,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Eli Valenzuela, Nebraska Army National Guard state command sergeant major. “Not only just the loss of the Soldier... but it affects the family and it affects the organization.”

“We take it personally,” Valenzuela added.

Everyone feels the pain of it, officials say. “It affects the Army,” said Neumann. “It affects national security when a Soldier commits suicide, because not only do we lose a member of the team, but we lose a human being.”

Simply coming forward to ask for help can save a life and avoid immeasurable pain, but some never come forward before it’s too late for fear or repercussions, fear of what coming forward might do for their military career, or fear of appearing weak.

“Seeking out help is a sign of strength in a person, not a sign

### Warning signs of suicide:

- Failed relationships
- Legal/financial/occupational problems
- Previous suicide attempts
- Suicide threats
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Statements revealing a desire to die
- Sudden changes in behavior
- Prolonged depression
- Making final arrangements
- Giving away prized possessions
- Purchasing a gun or stockpiling pills
- Feelings of humiliation, hopelessness or helplessness
- Comments such as, ‘Things will never get better,’ or ‘There is no hope for the future’

### If your buddy shows some of the signs above:

**Identify the need:** Listen. “How can I help?”

**Ask:** “Are you thinking about suicide?”

**Act:** Take to one of the helpers below that fits the need

### Important Phone Numbers:

- Chaplains:** Capt. Scott Ehler (402) 309-7448; (402) 326-4258  
Maj. Philip Houser (402) 309-7275; (402) 326-4254  
Viola Raschke (402) 309-7438; (402) 314-4092
- Mental Health:** 911
- Police/Ambulance:** 911
- Military One Source:** militaryonesource.com 1-800-342-9647
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-8255

*\*Source Army Suicide Prevention Program*

of weakness,” said Ehler. He added that anyone who comes to a chaplain for help always has complete confidentiality.

“Soldiers that are coming to my office are saying ‘I don’t know if I should be telling you this, I’m really worried how it’s going to affect my career...’ and then once we talk and we start moving forward they have a great sense of relief,” said Raschke. “We have to get them past those fears of ‘What’s going to happen to my career?’”

“If they come to see me, I am in no way obligated to pass anything along to the National Guard,” she added.

Very simply, when it comes to suicide prevention, every member of the Nebraska National Guard has an obligation to their battle buddy or wingman.

“Leaders, family members, you have to know your Soldier and your service member,” said Raschke. “If something just seems off, that’s a time to have a discussion.”

“As humans we have pretty good gut reactions,” she added. “If you

notice something or see something that just seems off, say something.”

With increased awareness, the hope is to decrease or eliminate suicides within the Nebraska National Guard and the entire military. Multiple programs and specially trained staff are available at all times for confidential assistance. It’s simply a matter of taking advantage of the options available.

“There’s a lot of programs out there to get help for basically every conceivable situation,” said Neumann. “Don’t be afraid to ask for the help.”

“Nothing is so bad that it warrants taking your own life,” he added. “Everybody has a battle buddy. Everybody has a wingman. Don’t be afraid to tell somebody, because somebody knows where to get help.”

“Know that there are options besides suicide,” said Valenzuela. “There is no stigma and no repercussions for a Soldier asking for help... we’re here to help you and it’s okay to say ‘I need help.’”

# Nebraskans make inroads in Taliban stronghold

By 2nd Lt. Sean Polson  
1-134th Cavalry

KABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers are strengthening the Afghan National Police's security and influencing the hearts and minds of locals in the Musahi District here, once a Taliban stronghold.

A key district in maintaining Kabul's security, the Musahi District is located in the mountains directly south of Kabul city limits, separating Logar Province from downtown Kabul. Like most of Afghanistan, Musahi District suffers severe poverty and damaged infrastructure.

Afghan National Security Forces and U.S. and coalition forces have known Musahi is a Taliban stronghold and infiltration route into Kabul for Taliban forces from Logar Province. The district had little mentor presence and the Taliban had complete freedom of movement through the valley.

The Nebraska Army National Guard's 1-134th Cavalry assumed authority on Dec. 1. Since then, Alpha Troop's Musahi Police Mentor Team has conducted about

two-dozen missions in the Musahi District.

The missions led to Operation United Front, a complex plan spanning the winter months with three goals: Partner with ANSF for every mission, influence the populace through humanitarian assistance and fortify vulnerable Musahi Valley ANSF positions.

"We are not going to say we are not coming to help because it is too hard or too dangerous," said 1st Lt. Dennis Frey Jr., who has led the Troop A, 1-134th Cavalry, Musahi District PMT missions. "The hardest challenge with the insurgent forces hiding within the community is trying to help the police district without spreading (intelligence) to the Taliban.

"If the police get engaged and stay engaged with the villagers and put their faces out there rather than staying in the police station and checkpoints, ...the Musahi police



Photo by 2nd Lt. Sean Polson

**Something To Hold On To:** An Afghan boy from the village of Qaleh-ye Janan, cherishes his new blanket during a humanitarian assistance operation partnering the Afghan National Police and Nebraska National Guardmembers in Qaleh-ye Janan Village of Musahi District, Afghanistan.

have the potential to overthrow any Taliban or insurgent force from the district. Otherwise, Musahi will be a stronghold for the Taliban for years to come."

The Musahi District PMT and

the Musahi ANP, with the assistance of Afghan soldiers from the Zone 1 Security Kandak commanded by Afghan Col. Amirsalem Adamkhail have conducted four humanitarian aid missions to Musahi District villages. A kandak is equivalent to a battalion.

The teams have delivered more than 25 tons of humanitarian aid in the two months since Operation United Front kicked off.

"The people like it, and they are working with us now," Adamkhail said. "The Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police and coalition Police Mentor Teams all worked together to make this happen. It brings the people together to work with the

government."

A new police department is 75 percent complete and fortification upgrades to five key ANSF security positions throughout the valley have started.

Operation United Front focuses on making strides during the winter months. Long-term projects are also in the works. The Musahi District PMT has conducted partnered reconnaissance with district leaders to several potential school and clinic sites.

"I want to know the poorest villages and the villages with the most problems with insurgent forces and I want to build the schools there and provide humanitarian assistance there in order to combat the Taliban's efforts," Frey said during a meeting with Col. Amdullah Oria, Musahi Police District Chief.

The efforts may seem marginal when compared to the work to be done, but the Musahi District PMT has already developed a strong bond with the ANP and community elders, and Frey has great ambitions for the district.

"Think about the small strides," said Capt. Zachary Labrayere, Troop A, 1-134th Cavalry, commander. "Two months ago the insurgent forces had the ANP and coalition forces speculating as to what was happening in the Musahi Valley.

"Now we have them wondering the same things."

## 'Infamous date' takes on new meaning for Nebraska Soldiers

By 2nd Lt. Sean Polson  
1-134th Cavalry

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan – "December 7th, 1941, a date which will live in infamy," — **Franklin D. Roosevelt.**

Everyone in the United States will always remember the day Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. However for members of the 1-134th Cavalry (Reconnaissance and Surveillance), Dec. 7 now has a new memory attached to it.

For members of this Nebraska Army National Guard organization, currently deployed to Afghanistan, Dec. 7, 2010, will now also be remembered as the day that the squadron conducted a "Right Shoulder Patch Ceremony."

The right shoulder patch, better known as a combat patch, signifies a Soldier's wartime service in the military.

Soldiers are authorized to wear a combat patch once they reach the combat zone. Traditionally the Soldiers will wear the patch of the unit they are attached to.

Lt. Col. Thomas Rynders and Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker, the 1-134th Cavalry's commander and senior enlisted leader, started the ceremony at Camp Phoenix by placing the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade Patch – better known as the "Pike Patch" – on each other's right shoulder.

They then proceeded to place the patch on each of the troop commanders and unit first sergeants. The patch ceremony then continued as the leaders of the individual cavalry troops placed the patch on the shoulders of the platoon leadership, who then placed the patch on their squad leaders.

Finally the squad leaders placed the right shoulder patch on each Soldier of their squad.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Sean Polson

**Patched:** Lt. Col. Thomas Rynders presents the right shoulder patch to Maj. Spencer Giles, commander of Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry, during a Dec. 7 ceremony at Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan.



Photo courtesy of 2nd Lt. Sean Polson

**Hilltop View:** 1st Sgt. Kenneth Winn, Staff Sgt. Cody Trindle, Sgt. Robert Bare and Spc William Devine from Charlie Company stand on top of a hill overlooking Mosahi Province.

## Crete Army Guardsmen training Afghan National Army Soldiers to develop more self-sufficiency

By Staff Sgt. Cody Trindle  
Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan – On Dec. 15 an Embedded Training Team from Troop C (Long Range Surveillance), 1-134th Cavalry, met with the Mosahi Afghan National Army (ANA) company commander to discuss various events that have been occurring in the Mosahi District of Kabul Province.

For more than a month the ETT from Troop C has been working to increase the capabilities of the fledgling Afghan Army; however the going has been slow and tough.

"The hard part is squaring away logistics and fuel," said Sgt. Robert Brewer, the team's logistics sergeant. "It's impossible for these guys to stay in the fight without gas for their trucks."

Soldiers from Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry – normally based in Crete, Neb., — have been working every day, shaana ba shaana (side by side) with the ANA to see that such

issues are addressed by conducting logistics training and evaluating the ANA's progress to help ensure the Afghan soldiers not only have the materials they need to secure their country, but so that they can self-sustain long after the Americans are gone.

Additionally, Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry, assists the ANA by conducting training classes on small unit tactics. Spc. Nicholas Schwanke, Spc. Eric Cruz and Spc. William Devine recently conducted a class on Individual Movement Techniques and Movement as a Buddy Team. These classes were designed to teach the ANA Soldiers how to move under direct and indirect fire; a crucial skill for survival in combat.

These classes were widely praised by the ANA as some of the best training they had received so far.

While it will be a long, hard struggle to make the Afghan National Army proficient, the Nebraska Soldiers say they are committed and armed with a Midwestern work ethic and the best training the military has to offer.

## Nebraska cavalry mentoring team meets with Afghans to assess needs of local village

By 2nd Lt. Sean Polson  
1-134th Cavalry

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan — The Shakar Darreh Police Mentor Team led by 2nd Lt. Joshua Metcalf and Sgt. 1st Class Randy Freye of Troop B, 1-134th Cavalry discussed issues with the police teams and the village of Shakar Darreh with the Police District commander prior to visiting a bridge project in the area, Dec. 8.

According to the Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers from Fremont, Neb., who are currently serving in Afghanistan as members of the 1-134th Cavalry, the visit was an interesting experience.

"While working with the Afghans does have its challenges because of language and cultural differences, it is interesting to learn how a different culture approaches tasks and problems presented to them," Freye said.

"Also it is good to build the relationships with the mentorees," said Freye.

According to Freye, the police mentor team

leaders will meet with the police commander periodically to discuss how the team's training is going and any additional improvements the teams will need to work on.

During the discussions, the police mentor team leaders will also gather information about the welfare of the villages and assess if there are any emergency needs the villages have.

The police mentor teams will then nominate these emergency needs to the civil affairs team.

The civil affairs team is part of the Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP).

After approval of the projects, the civil affairs team will award the projects to local contractors who will build anything from schools, drinking wells and clinics to dams,

roads and bridges.

Freye said the mission in Afghanistan has already been fulfilling.

"I like our mission. It gives us the opportunity to impact the lives of the (Afghans) through the police by providing security to their everyday lives," said Freye.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Sean Polson

**On The Road:** 2nd Lt. Joshua Metcalf, Sgt. 1st Class Randy Freye and Staff Sgt. Brett Vance walk with a Shakar Darreh Police escort to a Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) vehicle bridge project to inspect its progress, Dec. 8.

# Cavalrymen work to leave lasting impact on Afghan people

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

For members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1-134th Cavalry Squadron (Reconnaissance and Surveillance), the work they're doing to help mentor members of the Afghan National Army and Police Force in the Kabul Province won't be their only lasting impact in the troubled, war-torn country.

Far from it, in fact. Since arriving in Afghanistan last fall, members of the 1-134th Cavalry have been conducting numerous operations designed to benefit ordinary Afghan people.

According to Lt. Col. Thomas Rynders, squadron commander, the organization has been involved in a number of different humanitarian assistance operations in and around Kabul.

"We have delivered literally tons of humanitarian assistance to multiple villages in preparation for winter," he said via e-mail. "This assistance consists of food, coal and winter clothing."

Rynders said the squadron is

also managing over \$5 million in civil projects involving local schools, clinics, water wells and the delivery of medical supplies.

He added that the projects are designed to help deliver a visible message that American and NATO forces are determined to help ordinary Afghan civilians develop better lives than they've known in the past.

"These are on-going projects, under the umbrella of 'money as a weapon system,' and are the most visible evidence of U.S. and NATO commitment here in Afghanistan," Rynders said.

The projects are an important part of the overall strategy in Afghanistan, said 2nd Lt. Sean Polson, project manager for the Commander's Emergency Response Program—more commonly referred to as CERP—who has worked on several different project and humanitarian assistance operations.

He said the job has given him a greater appreciation for the work that still needs to be done and for what he left behind in Nebraska.

"(It) has really given me an appreciation for what I have back



Photo by 2nd Lt. Sean Polson

**Helping Out:** Pvt. 1st Class Matthew Emery stacks a bag of beans into the arms of a local Afghan man from the village of Qaleh-ye Janan during a humanitarian assistance operation partnering the Afghan National Police and the Nebraska National Guard's 1-134th Cavalry, in Qaleh-ye Janan Village of Musahi District, Kabul, Afghanistan on Jan. 30. The project is one of many the 1-134th Cavalry has taken on since arriving in Afghanistan.

home," said Polson. "Working as project manager, I get to see first-hand the positive impact and immediate relief our presence here provides to the local Afghan population and how CERP changes the populace's stance on supporting the Taliban."

For example, Polson said, the squadron recently began several

projects in the Musahi District of the Kabul Province, which is the only district south of Kabul City that separates Kabul from Logar Province, which is a Taliban stronghold.

As such, Musahi was a known infiltration route into Kabul for the Taliban and a safe haven for Taliban prior to the arrival of the

1-134th Cavalry.

That, said Polson, makes Musahi key to maintaining security in Kabul.

"Currently (through) the use of CERP, Alpha Troop has been able to sway the hearts and minds of many people in Musahi District to stop supporting the Taliban in the area," he said.

## CAVALRY continued from page 1.

be measured in very small amounts, we'll be successful," he added.

By all accounts, the 1-134th Cavalry's mission in Afghanistan is both huge and critical to the overall success of U.S. and NATO operations in the war-torn country. According to Rynders, the 1-134th Cavalry Squadron is currently responsible for advising and training Afghan police and Afghan Army units in the Kabul Province, Afghanistan's national capitol.

The mentoring mission involves nearly each and every one of the more than 300 Nebraska Army Guardsmen assigned to the squadron.

Currently, members of the squadron's Headquarters Troop and Troops B and C are located at Camp Phoenix while members of Troop A and the squadron's maintenance company from the Iowa Army National Guard are located at Camp Dubs in southwestern Kabul.

A platoon of Nebraska Army Guard cavalrymen are also assigned to downtown Kabul where they are currently providing transportation support to the International Security Assistance Force—better known as ISAF—and other senior leaders. The mentoring takes various forms and involves approximately 95 percent of the squadron, Rynders said.

"Most of the squadron is configured into mentor teams ranging from eight to 12 Soldiers. They travel across the province to various police and army compounds for training," he said. "Squadron Soldiers not assigned to mentor teams still have mentoring responsibilities at Afghan police and army headquarters units."

"Mentoring takes many shapes, but mostly consists of teaching the Afghans to effectively use their doctrinal methods of administration and training," he said. "Some days our mentor teams might teach a tactics class to an Afghan police platoon while on other days they might be assisting an Afghan army kandak (battalion) with an equipment inspection."

"It's a very comprehensive responsibility for our mentor teams, but comes naturally to them from simply being an American Soldier," Rynders added. "Accountability is paramount."

Rynders is aided by the fact that



Photo by Spc. Michael Olmstead

**Getting Down To It:** Spc. Jeffrey Milner, Troop C, 1-134th Cavalry, teaches a class to the 2/111 Kandak (battalion) on basic infantry tasks and drills, Dec. 27. Members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1-134th Cavalry have been involved in a number of different mentoring missions since they arrived in Afghanistan late last year.

many of the Soldiers in his squadron are veterans of recent deployments to Iraq, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kuwait.

The organization spent months preparing for this latest deployment, beginning last spring when the 1-134th Cavalry participated in the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade's eXportable Combat Training Capability exercise at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., and later at Camp Shelby, Miss., and the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., as part of the Iowa Army National Guard's 2-34th Brigade Combat Team, under which the Nebraska Army Guard squadron is currently assigned.

Rynders said the training and deployment experiences allowed the squadron to prepare itself for



Photo by 2nd Lt. Sean Polson

**Shouldering A Load:** Staff Sgt. Tyler Powell, Troop A, 1-134th Cavalry, carries a bag of coal as Troop A Soldiers and Musahi Police prepare to distribute family winterization kits to the local Afghan people of Qeshlaqe Ul'ya Village of Musahi District, Kabul Province, Afghanistan, on Jan. 11.

the rigors of operating in a combat environment. Still, like any mission, some things simply had to be learned on the spot.

"The Afghan police are paramilitary and have a structure

and mission similar to an army unit," said Rynders. "Together, the Afghan police and army in Kabul are responsible for the security of the province."

"Our job is to partner with them to improve their readiness, which has considerable shortcomings," he said. "Their biggest challenges are accountability of personnel and equipment, corruption and training. Our mentoring teams are tackling these problems by mentoring the Afghans to use their established systems of logistics and training effectively, which will ultimately make them an effective, corruption-free security force."

That's a huge goal that could have considerable impact in the ultimate success in Afghanistan, Rynders said.

*"Some days our mentor teams might teach a tactics class to an Afghan police platoon while on other days they might assist an Afghan army kandak (battalion) with an equipment inspection."*

— Lt. Col. Tom Rynders  
1-134th Cavalry commander

"A critical component of the NATO counter-insurgency strategy is mentoring and developing the Afghan security forces until they are ultimately capable to conduct security operations themselves. So, our mentor team-level operations are directly linked to the NATO-level mission for success," he said.

To prepare for this mission, a major portion of the organization's pre-deployment training focused on training the organization's Soldiers on cultural awareness and how to interact with Afghan leaders and civilians. That's particularly important considering the role that the squadron's individual Soldiers play in the ultimate success of the mission.

"The Soldiers understand how important their job is, even though it is not a traditional cavalry mission," said Rynders. "Every Soldier in every squad has a mentoring role. No one is simply a driver, gunner or crewman for the team."

"I think this adds considerable value to the Soldier's deployment experience. Our most junior ranking Soldiers are teaching first aid, radio operations, map reading and various other Soldier skills to the Afghans," he said.

"Our mentor teams also have considerable autonomy in planning their own mission and conducting operations," added Rynders. "In a seven-day period, they are usually mentoring their Afghan counterparts five days. The other two days are dedicated to maintenance and downtime."

The squadron's mission in Afghanistan is expected to last until mid-Summer.

# Twenty Years Later

## Nebraska Army Guard aviators made big impression during Desert Storm

By Richard Clark, PhD.  
State Command Historian

Twenty years ago this month, members of two Nebraska Army National Guard units were in the midst of an unexpected deployment to the Saudi Arabian peninsula as the United States and its allies prepared to expel the Iraqi Army and Saddam Hussein from Kuwait.

Operation Desert Storm, as the operation would be named, was the Nebraska Army National Guard's first war-time deployment since the early days of the Korean Conflict and the first actual combat missions for Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers since World War II.

The lessons the Soldiers of the 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) and the newly-organized Detachment 1, 1267th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) learned and the experiences they gained while serving in the desert of Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait would serve them well during future operations that continue today.

The following is the second part of a two-part series detailing their deployment.

### Desert Storm

The personnel and equipment of the 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) arrived in Saudi Arabia before the equipment of the 1267th had even shipped from Houston, Texas. The Army assigned the 24th Med. Co. to the 56th Medical Battalion — an active Army unit from Fort Bragg, N.C.

Initially staged near Dhahran, the unit served most of its tour at Log Base Charlie (LBC), a series of small, independent camps with maintenance, supply and medical assets. The unit's base, Medicine Warrior II, was six miles south of the Iraqi border and initially closer to Iraq than the frontline troops of the 18th Corps to the south. However, once combat troops crossed the border into Iraq, the 24th Med. Co.'s initially perilous position would allow for the more effective completion of the unit's mission.

The 1267th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), a unit made up of Army National Guard Soldiers from the Missouri and Nebraska Army National Guard, arrived at the King Fahd International Airport on Feb. 13, and the Army assigned the unit to the 818th Medical Battalion — a North Dakota National Guard unit — of the 332nd Medical Brigade.

### Second of a Two-Part Story

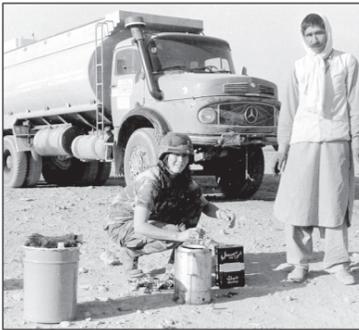


Photo by retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ken Merlin

**Teamwork:** Staff Sgt. Karla Welding and Mohd Ziaf, a Pakistani driver, prepare to service a Saudi water truck, one of many jobs that Welding and other members of the 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) motor maintenance section had to perform while serving overseas.

From the Port of Dammam, the 1267th Med. Co. proceeded into the desert to a location 125 miles east of Medicine Warrior II where they established Camp NEMO — NE for Nebraska and MO for Missouri — on Feb. 20. The mission of both units was the medical evacuation of wounded Soldiers, civilians and prisoners of war. However, a large number of the units' evacuations were from traffic accidents.

The only road in the region was a paved, two-lane highway, which ran east to west through northern Saudi Arabia. The four-foot diameter Trans-Arabian Pipeline (TAP) paralleled the road and Soldiers named the highway Tapline Road.

A combination of dangerous drivers and no speed limit meant that the road was a death trap.

The 1267th and 24th Medical Companies provided backhaul to patients along the entire United States front during and immediately following the ground campaign.

Prior to the ground war, the 24th backhauled exclusively American patients, however during the ground war, which lasted 100 hours, the unit evacuated Iraqi prisoners of war and American Soldiers. After the ground war, the unit evacuated mostly American Soldiers with both Iraqi prisoners of war and Iraqi civilians.

"I can remember one mission," said Sgt. 1st Class Deb. Tankesley of the 24th Med. Co., "when we had an American, an Iraqi and a Kuwaiti



Photo courtesy of retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ken Merlin

**Desert Home:** Chief Warrant Officer Ken Merlin, 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) poses by his UH-1 "Huey" helicopter, which became his "temporary" quarters at Intermediate Staging Point Victor on Jan. 15, 1991.



24th Medical Company archive photo

**Taking A Welcome Dip:** Members of the 24th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) and other U.S. Army Soldiers take time off from their work to enjoy a makeshift hot tub at Log Base Charlie. The tub, which was used to heat water for the base's showers, proved to be a popular place following the conclusion of the conflict.

all on the same helicopter."

On April 8, Chief Warrant Officers Glen Lang and A. J. Stricker from Missouri, Flight Medic Staff Sgt. Don Austin from Lincoln, and Crew Chief Sgt. Tracy Smith from Ashland, Neb., of the 1267th Med. Co., discovered two wounded children in the center of a minefield. Tracy and Austin carefully retraced the tracks of the children into the minefield in order to reach the

children.

The medics provided medical treatment to the children before the crew evacuated the children and their parents to a forward support hospital.

Operation Desert Storm ended almost as quickly as it began and units left the combat zone in the order they arrived. Thus, the 1267th and 24th Medical Companies were among the last units in their bat-

talions to leave Saudi Arabia.

"The general mentality of the military," said Maj. Steve Peterson, who commanded the 24th Med. Co. at the time, "was first in, first out."

The 24th Med. Co. left in small groups, but by the end of April, the main body of the unit had returned to Lincoln. Less than a month later, the Nebraska members of the 1267th Med. Co. had likewise returned to Lincoln.

The 24th and 1267th Medical Companies challenged the traditional attitudes about reserve component units that abounded at the time. Historian and retired Capt. Douglas Hartman writes, "The Nebraskans outperformed their regular Army counterparts in most phases."

Peterson agreed, saying, "We had more experienced medics, maintained our vehicles better and could fly circles around their pilots."

The National Guard mobilized experienced, career Soldiers for Desert Storm. In contrast to the relatively young Soldiers of the active Army, as much as 40 percent of Nebraska Pilots in Desert Storm had recorded combat experience in Vietnam.

"By the time they (the active Army) left," said Tankesley, "they could not say enough positive things about our pilots, medics, and maintenance section, our experience really paid off."

## Nebraska Army National Guard welcomes new state command chief warrant officer

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon  
Assistant Editor

The Nebraska National Guard welcomed a new state command chief warrant officer during a change of responsibility ceremony held at Camp Ashland, Feb. 6.

The CCWO flag was passed from outgoing Chief Warrant Officer 5 Steven L. Weber to new Chief Warrant Officer 4 John F. Regan.

Weber thanked his family for their support and the state's leadership for their confidence in him over the years. He recounted some of the success from his five years as the CCWO.

"Together we have accomplished much over the last five years," said Weber. "As a result of the hard work of many warrant officers, we now have a Warrant Officer Candidate School here at Camp Ashland. In the last three years we have graduated 25 warrant officers."

He also expressed his confidence in Regan after the CCWO "Eagle Rising" flag was passed to him from Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, Nebraska's adjutant general.

"I'm confident that Chief Regan will rise to the challenge set before him as though he is riding on the eagle's wings," said Weber. "I know you will be right there soaring on those eagle wings with Chief Regan, just as you have been with me."

"It's been my highest honor to have served you and served with you," he added. "Thanks for all your support."

Weber enlisted in the Nebraska Army National Guard on Sept. 13, 1969, and began full-time employment with the Guard in 1970. He rose to the rank of master sergeant as a member of the Brigade Supply Office, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 67th Support Battalion. He

was then appointed a warrant officer in October 1983 as a member of HHD, 67th Support Bn, 67th Infantry Brigade.

Weber served in a number of different roles as he progressed through the warrant officer ranks until he was selected as Nebraska's state command chief warrant officer in 2006. It was the first time the state had a full-time CCWO.

A graduate of Norris High School in Firth, Neb., he received his bachelor's degree in Industrial Management from Doane College. He and his wife, Dr. Sandra Sattler Weber, reside in Papillion, Neb.

Regan, too, thanked his family for their support and the state's leadership for their confidence in him.

"Thank you for this opportunity to serve the organization as command chief. I look forward to working on the command group team," said Regan.

He went on to thank Weber for his work with the warrant officer program in Nebraska.

"On behalf of the entire Warrant Officer Corps, I want to thank Mr. Weber for the tremendous leadership he has provided over the last five years," he said. "Through your leadership, vision and determination you leave the Warrant Officer Corps here in Nebraska in the best shape it has ever been in. Your legacy in this organization is assured."

Regan promised to continue to work hard and do his best for the Warrant Officer Corps.

"My pledge to you is that I will serve the Warrant Officer Corps to the utmost of my ability and that I will be your voice in the command group," he said.

"I am committed to carrying on the tremendous legacy Mr. Weber has left and to rise to new challenges that will no doubt occur. I am honored by the trust that General Lyons has placed in me and I will work diligently to earn your trust



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mark Roland

**New Command Chief:** (From left) Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, Nebraska adjutant general, presents the warrant officer 'Eagle Rising' flag to Chief Warrant Officer 4 John F. Regan, Feb. 6.

in the months ahead."

Regan enlisted in the Nebraska National Guard in 1981 into the HHD, 67th Support Battalion. After completing his college degree, Regan accepted a full-time job in the Nebraska National Guard and attained the rank of Sergeant 1st Class.

In 1994, Regan was selected to become the Standard Installation Division Personnel Reporting System chief for the State Area Command and was appointed a warrant officer. Regan has served a variety of roles as a warrant officer, most recently as the Chief Warrant Officer 5 Human Resources technician, the top Adjutant General Corps warrant officer position in the state.

Regan and his wife, Natalie, reside in Lincoln and have four children, Aaron, Abby, Anna and Adam.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Patriotic Tunes:** (From left) Spc. Brent Ramsey, Spc. Elizabeth Purdham, Staff Sgt. Mandi Crick and other members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 43rd Army Band play a patriotic song during the opening ceremony of the governor's inaugural event held Jan. 8 at the Qwest Center in Omaha, Neb.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Honoring The Commander-In-Chief:** Members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard Honor Cordon salute Governor Dave Heineman and his wife Sally Ganem, Jan. 8, at the Qwest Center in Omaha, Neb.

## Nebraska Guardsmen help state inaugurate commander-in-chief

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
Editor

Approximately 120 members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard helped the state celebrate the inauguration of Gov. Dave Heineman to his second term in office when they supported several inaugural events across Nebraska, Jan. 7-8.

According to Terri Kattes, Nebraska Military Department special events coordinator, members of the Nebraska National Guard were responsible for several aspects of the four "Celebrate Nebraska" events designed to allow more Nebraskans to participate in the inaugural galas than ever before.

The events kicked off with breakfast and lunch held in Gering and Grand Island, respectively, where the Nebraska National Guard provided the color guard. During larger ceremonies at Lincoln's Cornhusker Marriott Hotel on Jan. 7 and Omaha's Qwest Center on Jan. 8, the Nebraska National Guard was responsible for providing opening patriotic music as well as a color guard, an honor cordon and military escorts.

Supporting the events were members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 43rd Army Band as well as members of both the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard.

According to Guardsmen who provided support to the Lincoln and Omaha events, it was an interesting experience.

"It's not only patriotic, but there's a lot of honor to it," said Staff Sgt. Jarell Roach, a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Civil Engineering Squadron who was part of the joint Nebraska Army and Air National Guard Color Guard team that presented the colors before the start of both the Lincoln and Omaha events. "There's a lot of history in presenting the colors. Regardless of what the night looks like, it's something that



Photo by David Nore

**Standing Tall:** Members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard Color Guard present the colors during the inaugural ceremony held Jan. 7 in Lincoln, Neb., at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**'Oh Say Can You See...'** Spc. Matthew Erb of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 43rd Army Band sings the Star Spangled Banner during the opening of the governor's inaugural event at the Qwest Center, Jan. 8, in Omaha, Neb.

everybody participates in... standing to honor the colors."

As a seven-year member of the Nebraska Air Guard Color Guard, Roach said he's participated in many different events. Still, the inaugural

event was definitely something special, he said.

"There is just so much going on," he said. "Typically, when we come to present the colors, that's it. Usually there's not so many facets going on."

"(Here) you've got the Army and the Air working together. You've got the band and high school drama teams and musicals and different bands coming... you've just got so many things going on in this thing. I just love it. It's really cool," Roach added.

Another person enjoying the events was Pfc. Trey Neumann, a member of the 754th Chemical Company in Omaha who just completed his basic training about a month before the inauguration. The University of Nebraska-Omaha Army Reserve Officer Training Corps cadet was part of the honor cordon at both the Lincoln and Omaha events.

Neumann said it was definitely a new experience for him.

"It was just really a nice privilege to serve the governor of Nebraska and a really unique experience that I probably won't ever do again," said Neumann. "It's nice to be in the Guard and get to have these experiences. I know as a civilian I'd never get to do this. "It was very cool."

## Army Guard aviator leaves lengthy legacy after 30-year career

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon  
Assistant Editor

Following a military career spanning nearly 30 years, a long-serving Nebraska National Guard aviator has retired.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Burdette Chappell, state standardization officer for rotary-wing aircraft, officially retired the first day of 2011, only a few days after his 60th birthday.

Chappell began his military career when he was drafted in 1970. Following a year in Vietnam as a cavalryman, he left the military and worked in several different civilian jobs. During his time away from the military he learned to fly fixed-wing aircraft.

Chappell then decided he wanted to fly helicopters and turned to the Nebraska Army National Guard.

Chappell joined the Nebraska National Guard in 1983 and was trained as a helicopter pilot. He earned the rank of warrant officer and served as an Army aviator his entire National Guard career. He said he didn't want anything to do with the military after Vietnam, but made the decision to join the Nebraska Army National Guard because of one desire.

"Wanting to fly," said Chappell. "I would have never got back in if it wouldn't have been for flying. If I wasn't flying I wouldn't be here today."

Chappell, who lives in Kearney, Neb., with his wife Lila, said he looks forward to spending more time at home, but he isn't totally sure what he'll do with his extra time.

"I'll find something to do, I can't sit around the house," he said. "I do a lot of traveling on the motorcycle in the summer time...so we'll probably do a lot of traveling this summer."

He added that he may pursue a job with a company that has a training program for civilian and military aviators.

Chappell said the biggest thing he will miss is the people he's met along the way

and the younger Guard members he's had a hand in training. Still, he said, he realizes it's time to go.

"It's time to let somebody else do it," he said. "I'll miss the flying and flying with these kids...I'll miss the people."

"You can't be here for 25 to 30 years without knowing and getting a lot of close friends," he added.

Maj. Grant Siedenburgh, flight operations officer for the Army Aviation Flight Facility #1 in Lincoln, said Chappell is a consummate professional who brought much to the Nebraska National Guard.

"Chief Warrant Officer 5 Chappell brought thousands of civilian flight hours and countless aviation related experiences," said Siedenburgh. "This expertise has helped Nebraska Army aviation in ways that will positively affect the organization for years to come."

Chappell honed his skills and experience throughout the years during multiple deployments within the U.S. and overseas. His overseas deployments include Operation Desert Shield/Storm in Saudi Arabia, Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and Kuwait, and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. He also flew during missions in support of the Hurricane Katrina relief



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

**At The Controls:** Chief Warrant Officer 5 Burdette Chappell sits at the controls of a Nebraska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter one last time, Dec. 30.

operation and the response to the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

"Contributions by Chief Warrant Officer 5 Chappell have meant that multiple combat deployments and overseas deployment training events were executed flawlessly," said Siedenburgh. "His ability to teach new and veteran aviators throughout the spectrum of flight operations was unmatched."

Chappell's main goal during his career was simple: "Make good pilots," he said. "My whole goal was to go out and train a pilot to keep from killing himself...or hurting someone else."

And his advice to younger pilots is also simple: "You always

*"His ability to teach new and veteran aviators throughout the spectrum of flight operations was unmatched."*

— Maj. Grant Siedenburgh

go out with the attitude of 'hey, I can always learn something every time I go fly,' and that's what I try to instill in all the pilots—every time you go flying never stop learning," he said. "The day you stop learning you better quit flying because you're going to kill yourself."

Siedenburgh said it's difficult when an organization loses someone with as much knowledge and experience as Chappell's.

"The Nebraska National Guard will be losing a long-time professional aviator that has helped make the aviation community and the Nebraska National Guard a premier organization," said Siedenburgh. "The retirement of Chief Warrant Officer 5 Chappell will leave a gap in the aviation ranks that will be filled by an up and coming aviator. The loss of such a fine aviator can be justified only by his scrupulous career."

Chappell said the Nebraska Army National Guard has served as a huge part of his life.

"The Nebraska National Guard has given me everything I've wanted and more, so I can't complain," he said.

And if given the chance to do anything differently throughout his career?

"I wouldn't change anything," he said. "Life is learned—you learn things all through your life and I wouldn't change my life."

"Lived hard," he added. "Partied hardy."

"Actually, looking back on it, it went fast...it went real fast."



## Guard Family NEWS You Can Use



# National Guard kids to be honored in April

April will be a busy month for Nebraska National Guard military kids as the state observes the National Month of the Military Child.

Among the activities will be a proclamation signing ceremony at the State Capitol in Lincoln, Neb., scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on April 13. Cookies and juice will be offered after the ceremony.

For additional information or to RSVP for the proclamation signing ceremony, contact Diana Shottenkirk at (402) 309-7176.

Along with the proclamation ceremony, the American Legion in Valparaiso, Neb., will be hosting a Month of the Military Child event on April 16. Among the activities planned are hayrack rides, fire engines, hotdogs and much more.

Operation Military Kid will be sponsoring a Month of the Military Child camp for special needs military children, April 15-17, at Camp Eagle near Fremont, Neb. Activities may include horseback trail rides, fishing, archery and a camp fire, weather permitting. For more information, contact Tony Lewis at [tlewis@ne.easterseals.com](mailto:tlewis@ne.easterseals.com)

Additionally, the 155th Air Refueling Wing Airmen and Family Readiness Program has scheduled a tour of the University of Nebraska's Memorial Stadium for Nebraska Army and Air National Guard children on April 5 at 10:30 a.m. The tour,

which will last approximately one hour, will begin at the Osborne Complex located at 600 Stadium Drive in Lincoln.

Those interested in participating in the tour must RSVP by March 30 with Melonie Vore or Karen Jordan-Anderson at (402) 309-1597/1588.

Month of the Military Child events will also be held at the University of Nebraska's Morrill Hall, April 22-23, which will be offering free admission for military children 18 and under, and at the Strategic Air and Space Museum, located near Ashland, Neb., which will be offering free admission throughout the month of April for military children 12 and under.

Fees for some activities will apply.

For more information about these two events, contact Melonie Vore or Karen Jordan-Anderson at (402) 309-1597/1588.

## Operation Hidden Egg scheduled for April 3 at Nebraska Guard air base

Operation Hidden Egg has been scheduled for 1-3 p.m. at the Nebraska National Guard air base on April 3. For more information contact Diana Shottenkirk at (402) 309-7176 or Melonie Vore or Karen Jordan-Anderson at (402) 309-1597/1588.

## Commissary sets up shop in Lincoln hangar



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Checking Out The Savings:** Military members and their families stroll through makeshift aisles during the Feb. 4-5 Commissary On-Site Sale at the Nebraska Army National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility #1 in Lincoln, Neb. According to Lori Neumann, project coordinator, a total of 423 people shopped at the AASF #1, purchasing \$28,861.02 of merchandise. Those statistics do not include sales by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, which also set up shop in the Army Guard hangar. Future on-site sales are already planned at other sites in Nebraska. For more information, contact the Family Support Program Office at (402) 309-7332/7333.

# Holly Petraeus aims to bolster military families' knowledge

WASHINGTON (AFPS) – Holly Petraeus hopes to hear from service members and their families about their financial issues and pitfalls in the coming months as she leads up efforts to create the Office of Servicemember Affairs.

The information she gathers will be integrated into the formation of the new office, which aims to strengthen and support military families financially as part of the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

"Under the leadership of Ms. Holly Petraeus, the Office of Servicemember Affairs in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau will forge a close collaboration with the Department of Defense that will benefit military members and families," said Clifford L. Stanley, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

As a military spouse, Petraeus "has keen awareness of the challenges associated with the military lifestyle," Stanley said.

"Her work with the Better Business Bureau's Military Line has given her a full view of the financial concerns held by service members and their families."

Service members rate stresses from financial concerns "as second only to

work and career," Stanley said, adding that Petraeus "understands the consequence this type of stress can have on an individual's capability to perform their mission."

Elizabeth Warren, assistant to the president and special advisor to the secretary of the treasury on the bureau, announced Petraeus' new post on the bureau's implementation team, Jan. 6.

"This is the kind of leadership we need on behalf of military families, and we need it early," Warren told reporters Jan. 6 during a teleconference with Petraeus. "Not glued on at the end, but early, while we're designing this agency. We need to be able to build in experiences and perspectives of service members."

With Petraeus at the helm, the Office of Servicemember Affairs will work closely with the Defense Department to deliver top-notch financial education, to monitor and respond to complaints and questions, and to ensure that federal and state agencies coordinate their activities to improve consumer protection measures for military families, Warren said.

As a longtime advocate of military families, Petraeus is familiar with the financial challenges they most often face.

She previously served as the director

of Better Business Bureau Military Line, a partnership between the BBB and the Defense Department's Financial Readiness Campaign, which provides consumer education and advocacy for service members and their families.

And on the personal front, her son, brother, father, grandfather and great-grandfather all served in the military. Her husband, Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, is the commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force and U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

During the teleconference, Petraeus said her first priority is to set up a framework for hearing about financial issues from military families and those who support them.

Part of that effort will involve traveling to speak directly to those affected. In the first of a series of trips, Warren and Petraeus were to visit Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio in January to hear from military families and financial counselors about their most pressing financial challenges. They will integrate what they learn into the new office and the consumer agency, Warren said.

Once they pin down specific issues, Petraeus said, she'll work closely with the bureau so officials can take aim against bad practices. Her office also will collaborate

with DoD to educate military members so they can better guard themselves against financial predators and debt, she added.

Petraeus cited debt and the terms of that debt as two of the most pressing issues for military members and their families.

"There are serious financial problems, and they lead to a lot of repercussions: loss of security clearance and just the ability to do the best job they can do because they're preoccupied with financial matters," she said.

Petraeus said she's concerned about the proliferation of "bad deals and outright scams on the Internet, and how difficult it's been to even find out who has loaned you that money or who has run off with your money and to enforce against them."

"There's a lot of work to be done there," she added. "It's an area that's exploding. It's just too easy to set up a scam or bad deal on the Internet."

Another area of concern is businesses taking advantage of junior service members barely out of basic training. "Some of these deals are waiting for them before they even get to their first duty station," Petraeus said.

# Nebraska Air National Guard's Chief Council offers scholarship

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon  
Assistant Editor

Members of the Nebraska Air National Guard and their dependents have a new opportunity to help offset the rising cost of a college education.

The Nebraska Air National Guard's Chief Council is offering a one-time \$500 scholarship to members of the Nebraska Air National Guard or their dependents who are pursuing their first degree in post-secondary education. The scholarship is being offered to current or retired members, their spouse or child.

This is the first time the Chief's

Council has offered the scholarship, and its goal is to further the education of a deserving recipient.

"We feel that the caliber of young people that we have in our organization has gone up," said Chief Master Sgt. Douglas Schulz, component maintenance flight chief in the 155th Maintenance Squadron and a member of the Chief Council.

"Our young people are very well educated and very knowledgeable about what's going on in the world and they're also very well in-tune with the fact of how important it is to have a good education so that they can develop their own personal careers."

To apply for the scholarship, the

Chief Council is requesting a typed letter of application and resume, not to exceed two pages each, including:

- Scholastic achievement and activities while in high school and/or thus far in college;
- Comments on applicant's career objectives;
- College entrance exam score;
- Military affiliation and goals;
- Address applicant's perspective of the Air Force Core Values and how they fit applicant's life;
- Any other pertinent information.

They also require one letter of recommendation and a copy of the applicant's most recent transcript.

The deadline for applications is 4 p.m., Sunday, March 1.

Once all applications have been turned in, the Chief Council Scholarship Committee will score them and select the most deserving individual. A check will be issued directly to the recipient's college at the beginning of the semester, upon proof of registration.

Schulz stressed the importance of qualified applicants taking the time to apply for the scholarship.

"There are so many opportunities for our young people to get scholarships and many of them have outstanding capabilities and outstanding attributes and yet they are so involved in their life that they don't take the time to seek out scholarship offers," said Schulz.

"Tuition continues to rise and books continue to rise, getting a scholarship, even though it may not be a huge amount, ...will benefit their endeavors."

"Those of us that have been in the military for a long time have seen how education has helped us benefit," he added. "We feel it's important that we continue that process. To encourage our young people to improve their education only provides for better leaders in the military and better leaders in our civilian communities as well."

Applications and questions should be directed toward the chief of the unit the applicant belongs to.

## PROMOTIONS

### Army National Guard

**Major General**  
Timothy J. Kadavy

**Major**  
Dustin A. Wilkie

**First Lieutenant**  
Kyle D. Dellevoet

**Chief Warrant Officer 5**  
Robyn R. Huskey

**Chief Warrant Officer 4**  
Douglas A. Benes

**Chief Warrant Officer 3**  
Eric M. Wiczorek

**Master Sergeant**  
Cynthia D. Vose

**Sergeant First Class**  
Ryan K. Faulkner  
Joseph A. Jackson

**Sergeant**  
Anna P. Bach  
Raquel D. Chavez  
Nicholas J. Evans  
Matthew R. Fiedler  
Lucas L. Geyer  
James G. Halstead

Christopher K. Lohman II  
Kristopher D. Lydon  
John J. Matheson  
Matthew D. Morrison  
Patrick S. Poffenbarger  
Seth A. Weyeneth  
Patrick J. Williams

**Specialist**  
Ashley R. Adkins  
Nicholas J. Anderson  
Jacob N. Campbell  
Evan M. Carlson  
Trent J. Cook  
Tyler C. Foote  
Jacob J. Fosket  
Anthony D. Garvin  
Jacob A. Gaspari  
Amanda L. Gross  
Dustin D. Hamilton  
Laura D. Henke  
Erik A. Hernandez  
Dallas L. Isley  
Jessica D. Kassebaum  
Michael J. KIELTY  
James P. King  
Kody R. Kuchta  
Tyler S. Lamb  
Steven C. Lewis  
Megan M. Liekhus  
Katie T. Lopez  
Justin Metcalf  
Trevor L. Munster

Amanda L. Odvody  
Daniela Perez  
Jessica F. Phillips  
Christopher L. Preister  
Kaleb L. Puffer  
John D. Rawlinson  
Kevin M. Reasor  
Robert M. Reichert  
Kelley R. Sabata  
Taylor C. Sanchez  
Freeman S. Sandquist  
Jeremy L. Scarf  
Bryson D. Wagner  
Alexander T. Weaver  
Anastasia B. Whisenhunt  
Tyler M. White  
Arthur Q. Willets

**Private First Class**  
Adam L. Beck  
David M. Cushing  
Michael W. Denklau  
Mariano Dorado  
Heidi J. Krueger  
Maxwell M. Maguire  
Amanda M. Martinez  
Ryan J. Rogers  
Clayton K. Shaw  
Sonny M. Swanson

**Private Two**  
Mark A. Diaz Jr.  
Jonathan J. Harre

Caleb C. Henry  
Andrew M.L. Jones  
Dustin T. Pennington  
Zachary D. Peterson  
Michael T. Potthast  
Peter M. Weber

**Air National Guard**  
**Lieutenant Colonel**  
John Buhrmann

**Technical Sergeant**  
William M. Britten

Matthew W. Gullickson  
Daniel C. Hamrick  
Craig K. Moseman  
Shaun R. Tebo  
Brandon L. Viet

**Staff Sergeant**  
Bret H. Frohner  
Christine M. Koenig  
Adam R. Krotz  
Aimee J. Lempke  
Christopher J. Sautter  
Megan R. Sears

Jeffrey A. Tlamka  
Matthew S. Wiesner

**Airman First Class**  
Taylor T. Ashmore

## In Memoriam

Gerald B. Lawson

## AWARDS

**Army National Guard**  
**Legion of Merit**  
Chief Warrant Officer 5 Steven L. Weber

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
Maj. Theodore E. Hanger  
Maj. Kelly R. Hoskins  
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eric V. Cole  
Sgt. 1st Class Kevin E. Bachman  
Sgt. 1st Class Michael D. Goodwate  
Staff Sgt. Charles W. Collins Jr.

**Army Commendation Medal**  
Capt. Cory S. Hinrichs  
Capt. Charles D. McWilliams  
Sgt. 1st Class Mary K. Pease  
Sgt. 1st Class Michael G. Uhing  
Staff Sgt. Ryan E. Thompson  
Spc. Anthony L. Clark

**Army Achievement Medal**  
2nd Lt. Tommy N. Vu  
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Douglas A. Shively  
Sgt. 1st Class Jason P. Sharp  
Staff Sgt. James R. Bussen  
Staff Sgt. Andrew J. Filipis  
Staff Sgt. Jake T. Whitaker  
Sgt. Robert D. Bare

Sgt. James B. Benal  
Sgt. Chad A. Kingham  
Sgt. Anna C. Knope  
Sgt. Kyle S. Kunkee  
Sgt. Tyler M. Miles  
Sgt. Alan L. Rosenthal  
Sgt. Jedediah J. Struck  
Spc. Rodney M. Aulner  
Spc. Trevor R. Bellows  
Spc. Andrew P. Cook  
Spc. Shane W. Gouker  
Spc. Michael A. Hansen  
Spc. Michelle K. Lindgren  
Spc. Nicholas D. Lonowski  
Spc. Cody B. Lubeck  
Spc. Angel R. Rodriguez  
Spc. Kyle T. Sawyer  
Spc. Caleb C. Schoneman  
Spc. Christopher J. Smith  
Spc. Garrett J. Sund  
Pfc. Erick Cruz  
Pfc. Lyndon C. Raatz  
Spc. Anna Ehlers  
Sgt. John Scholes

**Nebraska National Guard**  
**Meritorious Service Medal**  
Sgt. 1st Class Nicole D. Kordik

**Nebraska National Guard**  
**Commendation Medal**  
Capt. Scott R. Henrickson  
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Blake S. Bivona  
Staff Sgt. William D. Jacobsen  
Spc. Teddy M. Shiers Jr.

**Nebraska National Guard**  
**Individual Achievement Medal**  
Maj. Theodore E. Hanger  
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Joseph R. Amen  
Sgt. 1st Class Dominik G. Chase  
Sgt. Kyle D. Demaree  
Sgt. Tyson Gould  
Cdt. Kevin G. Black  
Spc. Chip M. Hartman  
Spc. Dustin M. Vetrovsky  
Spc. Ryan A. Yarnell  
Pfc. Andrianna Ayala  
Pvt. Brittney M. Backstrom

**Air National Guard**  
**Air Medal**  
Master Sgt. Michael F. Hommen

## RETIREMENTS

### Army National Guard

Maj. Robert E. Miller  
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kelli R. Brewer  
1st Sgt. Michael R. Oliver  
Sgt. 1st Class Ronald A. Davey  
Sgt. 1st Class Robert L. Sons  
Sgt. 1st Class Scott D. Wiedeman  
Staff Sgt. Charles W. Collins Jr.

Staff Sgt. Angela D. Hansen  
Staff Sgt. Steven M. Peterson  
Sgt. Robert J. Baldrige  
Pfc. Michael E. Mueller

### Air National Guard

Maj. Gen. Robert B. Bailey  
Lt. Col. Larry M. Murray

Chief Master Sgt. Alan G. Maier  
Master Sgt. Alan M. Brown  
Master Sgt. Kevin J. Miller  
Master Sgt. Larry D. Navratil  
Tech. Sgt. Brian L. Brunton

# Shorttakes

## Outstanding Airman of the Year for 2010 announced

By Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

Assistant Editor

The Nebraska Air National Guard released the names of the 2010 Outstanding Airman of the Year (OAY) winners in January.

OAY winners are chosen from Airmen nominated by supervisors and/or peers. OAY winners will go on to compete in their respective national-level competitions.

### Senior Noncommissioned Officer category:

Senior Master Sgt. Ronald J. Polivka, an intelligence flight superintendent for the 170th Operations Support Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., was born in David City, Neb., and graduated from Pius X High School in Lincoln, Neb., in 1986.

Polivka enlisted in the Nebraska Air National Guard in June 1986 as a photo interpretation specialist.

He attended the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and graduated with a degree in Business Management in 1991.

He worked as a production manager for a medical testing facility in Lincoln until accepting a full-time position as a personnel system manager with the 155th Military Personnel Flight.

In 2008 he transferred to the 170th OSS at Offutt AFB and serves as the non-com-



Polivka

missioned officer-in-charge of intelligence operations. Polivka has deployed multiple times including deployments to Afghanistan, Qatar, Spain and Guam.

He is involved in the community and volunteers his time coaching a variety of youth sports for the Lincoln YMCA.

### Noncommissioned Officer category:

Tech. Sgt. Corrina Bartels, a full-time operations intelligence specialist with the 155th Operations Group, was born in Hastings, Neb. and graduated from Meridian Public High School in Daykin, Neb., in 1999. She then attended UNL.

Bartels enlisted in the Nebraska Air National Guard in 2003 and following basic military training became an information management specialist for the 155th Operations Support Flight.

Bartels graduated from UNL in 2004 with a degree in Psychology. In 2006 Bartels retrained into her current position.

She distinguished herself by earning the commander's award for top graduate at both of her Air Force technical schools. In 2009 Bartels deployed to Joint Base Balad, Iraq, for six months where she served as an Intelligence NCOIC.



Bartels

### Airman category:

Senior Airman Amanda Koepping is a surgical services technician with the 155th Medical Group.

Koepping enlisted in the Nebraska Air

National Guard in 2007 and following BMT became the only Airman ever to achieve a perfect score on her final skills check-out at the Surgical Technician Training Course at Sheppard Air Force Base where she was recognized as one of two distinguished graduates.

Since returning to Lincoln, she has completed three years at Nebraska Wesleyan University and is currently attending the College of Saint Mary School of Nursing where she maintains a 3.8 GPA and expects to graduate in the spring of 2011.



Koepping

### USAF Base Honor Guard Program Manager category:

Master Sgt. Jody L. Schmidt, an equal opportunity specialist with the 155th Air Refueling Wing Equal Opportunity Office, was born and raised in Lincoln, Neb.

Schmidt enlisted in the Nebraska Air National Guard in 1994 as an information specialist in the 155th Logistics Squadron. She joined the EO office in 2005 and attended the Equal Opportunity Training at Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute in January 2006.

Schmidt served three years in the Counter Drug Program as a drug demand assistant,



Schmidt

the drug demand coordinator and then assumed the responsibilities of budget and personnel for Counter Drug.

While working full-time, Schmidt earned a degree in Human Resources/Organizational Development from Doane College.

She has been a member of the base Honor Guard program since 1995 and has served as NCOIC for the program for more than four years. Schmidt is currently a full-time technician in the Human Resource Office at the Nebraska Joint Force Headquarters. She resides in Lincoln.

### USAF Base Honor Guard Member category:

Staff Sgt. Ryan L. Armes is a financial management and comptroller journeyman assigned to the 155th Air Refueling Wing's Comptroller Flight.

Armes was born and raised in Omaha, Neb., and graduated from Daniel J. Gross Catholic High School in May 2003.

Armes attended UNL for one year before transferring to Southeast Community College.

He enlisted in the Nebraska Air National Guard in 2006 and has served in a variety of positions including travel pay technician, lead defense travel administrator and accounting technician.

Armes joined the Base Honor Guard in 2007 and remains an active member. Armes earned a bachelor's degree in Leadership from Bellevue University in 2009. He resides in Lincoln.



Armes

## Communications flight commander moves to job in Joint Force Headquarters

By Airman 1st Class Mary Thach

Staff Writer

After serving five years as the commander of the 155th Air Refueling Wing Communications Flight, Capt. Christopher Ganshert relinquished command in a formal ceremony during the February drill.

Ganshert will be moving to the Joint Forces Headquarters as one of three battle captains in the Joint Operations Center.

The center will operate 24-hours-per-day



Ganshert

*"Everything we do is gravitating toward joint operations, especially with domestic operations and state."*

— Capt. Christopher Ganshert

and will train both Army and Air National Guard officers.

"Everything we do is gravitating toward joint operations, especially with domestic operations and state. One of (Maj. Gen. Judd) Lyons' goals is to incorporate the Air Guard

more in joint domestic operations, where in the past the Army Guard would take those responsibilities," said Ganshert.

Joint Force Headquarters has many areas of responsibility, but overall, there is a need for officers to be able to serve with other branches of service, said Ganshert.

The ability to understand the differences inherent for each branch of service will allow personnel assigned to a joint environment to work together to effectively accomplish the mission, he added.

Situations can become complicated if a task is assigned to a joint force mission and the officers lack experience working with other branches of service.

Once Ganshert and his fellow Air National Guard officers have gained the needed experience in a joint situation, they will rejoin the

wing and establish leadership roles.

"In the past, working your way up through the wing doesn't give good joint experience. That is the whole reason for moving downtown," said Ganshert.

"In the future there is going to be a lot of chances for people to work jointly and to get that experience now before you are thrown into it, just makes sense," he said.

Relinquishing command was a difficult decision Ganshert said. However, he added that he looks forward to many opportunities in the future as the Nebraska Air National Guard and Army Guard learn to work together.

"Do the right thing, do your best and be honest" were the captain's last words that he offered to the audience of the ceremony. "With these three things, success is sure to follow," Ganshert said.

# Accidents Happen

■ Planning on accidents makes big difference when they actually occur

Preparations for training year 2012 have begun as commanders and staffs diligently prepare plans for all training requirements incorporating Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) and Table of Distribution and Equipment (TDA) changes, Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) cycles and unit readiness data.

Soon, commanders will present their 2012 Yearly Training Briefs (YTB) to the adjutant general and primary staff members for approval. Throughout the planning cycle, attention to details early will result in better trained and ready units.

Risk assessments are a critical piece in the development of training plans, as key leaders carefully consider each day and event. However, even with the most detailed planning, risks will remain. As such, leaders need to "Plan On Accidents."

In May 2010 the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade (BFSB) and a robust Support Task Force (STF) conducted annual training as part of the eXportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) rotation at Camp Guernsey, Wyo.

The 67th BFSB, supported by the STF, conducted their final pre-mobilizations tasks, which included aggressive, realistic training and a culminating event. During the exercise there were inherent risks for all Soldiers executing or supporting the training events.

One evening was especially dangerous as the following four events occurred in the span of one hour: A Soldier suffered chest pains; a UH-60 Black Hawk medical evacuation helicopter was limited due to maintenance; tornado sirens sounded with a funnel cloud visible on horizon; and a civilian and military vehicle collided downrange with casualties.

After action reviews of these events were conducted and it was determined that actions by the leadership were critical to the safety of the Soldiers and contracted participants involved. It was evident that prior to the AT period, the leadership incorporated training plans, to include a pre-accident plan, rehearsed battle drills relating to vehicle accidents, severe weather procedures and basic medical response procedures.

It is imperative that all parties, to include range control and permanent parties, participate in the accident battle drills. Furthermore, risk assessments prior to and during AT were prepared, reviewed and revised during operations.

The AAR concluded that:

- Range safety guidelines were in place and enforced;
- A medical response plan was in place and rehearsed;
- A contingency plan was exercised and a MEDEVAC helicopter launched;
- Severe weather plans were in place and followed;
- A civilian driver caused the accident, no one was seriously injured;
- A school trained Safety noncommissioned officer was on staff for the STF;

## Safety Talk

By Col. Richard Dahlman  
Nebraska Army National Guard  
Operations and Plans Officer

- Suitable safety planning tools were used;
- And a pre-accident plan was on file and followed.

The U.S. Army Safety Center (USASC) website contains several accident avoidance tools to assist leaders and Soldiers. Although thorough preparation and rehearsals can minimize accidents, a commander cannot control every aspect of his or her environment. He or she he needs to be prepared to respond to an accident.

Four specific tools address the areas of Ground Operations, Motor Vehicle Operations, Range Operations and Pre-Accident Plans:

**Ground Risk Assessment Tool (GRAT):** The Ground Risk Assessment Tool was developed by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center to augment the Composite Risk Management (CRM) planning and decision-making process. It assists in the identification, assessment and control of hazards associated with specified missions or tasks. The webpage (listed below) lists 11 subcategories ranging from FOB Operations to Disaster Relief Operations.

**Driver's Training Tool Box:** The U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center has developed this toolbox to assist commanders, examiners and instructors in the management of driver training. The toolbox provides a central location for the materials necessary to establish and maintain an effective driver training program. It contains more than 15 categories including sample SOPs, graphic training aids and video presentations that can be a one stop training aid.

**Range and Weapons Safety Tool Box:** The U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center has developed this toolbox to aid commanders and leaders in the management of range operations and safe weapons handling.

The toolbox provides a centralized collection of resources to establish and maintain an effective range safety training program. It includes training support packages, OIC/TSO certification and other presentations.

**Preparing a Pre-Accident Plan:** Units should develop a pre-accident plan as part of their annual training or field training exercise preparation. Most experienced Safety NCOs know to go to DA PAM 385-1 Appendix B for their guide to preparing a pre-accident plan.

This is a tool to ensure that critical aspects of rescue and investigation are performed in a timely and efficient manner.

You can obtain a sample of a pre-accident plan from the State Safety Office at (402) 309-1833. These tools and others can be found on the USASC website at: <https://safety.army.mil/groundsafety/TOOLS/tabid/459/Default.aspx>.

# Keeping fellow Soldiers safe professional, personal calling

As I traveled around the state this past year with Brig. Gen. Roma Amundson visiting Soldiers during annual training and during the December drill weekend, I couldn't help but reflect on the days when I was the state safety manager.

At every visit with the troops we would bring up the subject of keeping Soldiers safe. As I'm getting ready to retire from this great organization, Brigadier General Amundson asked me to make some final comments about Soldier safety.

I thought about the wisdom of aligning the Army Safety Center under the umbrella of the Force Protection Program to include changing the name of The Army Safety Center (located at Fort Rucker) to the Combat Readiness Center.

I thought about safety before Sept. 11, 2001, and the difference in how commanders and leaders provide safety for Soldiers today.

Our mission has changed in many ways since I managed the State Safety Program, but in a sense it's still the same. The names of buildings and programs have changed, but the fundamental principles of keeping Soldiers safe have not.

Someone once told me the more things change the more they stay the same. I think that is true with the safety of Army National Guard Soldiers. Keeping Soldiers from getting hurt and reducing the number of accidents should be a leader's highest calling in the military.

As a leader of Soldiers "can there be a more important duty than to keep a Soldier from being involved in an accident, from a disabling injury or even in the worst case scenario death?"

Prior to 9/11 safety officers and NCOs received constant training on risk assessment and risk management and how to implement countermeasures to reduce the possibility of an accident.

We still train that way today.

Prior to 9/11 the biggest threat to Soldiers' safety and the number one cause of death was Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) accidents. Army leaders emphasized Defensive Driving to counter the POV deaths.

During my tenure as the safety manager, we launched a statewide Defensive Driver Course that was developed by the National Safety Council.

The Nebraska Army Guard required the full-time Army Guard workforce and Nebraska Military Department employees to take the Defensive Driving class and many classes were offered to part-time Soldiers as well.

No one will ever know how many vehicle accidents we prevented, but I still remember as I'm sure many of you do the principles of being a defensive driver.

Today Soldiers serving stateside still have POV accidents, which are generally caused by speed, followed closely by that terrible problem of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Leaders must do their part and emphasize to their troops not to drink and drive, and not to drive too fast.

Today the Army faces a similar problem

## Chief's Business

By Chief Warrant Office 5  
Steve Weber  
State Command Chief Warrant Officer

with motorcycle safety. It's not the number one threat to Soldiers returning from combat, but it is a problem unit leadership needs to be concerned about.

The Army and the Guard offer a Motorcycle Safety Certification Course which I would encourage all Harley Davidson drivers to attend. If you are driving a Harley you are probably a little more of a mature Soldier (like me) and we know that the younger guys like speed. Younger Soldiers drive the fast bikes.

I challenge all of you Harley drivers to be good leaders and do the right thing. Get enrolled in a motorcycle safety class and grab that younger Soldier with the fast Yamaha rocket and make him attend a motorcycle safety class with you.

When your commander appoints you as a safety officer or safety NCO, don't think of it as extra duty or something to detract from doing your military job. Think of it as an opportunity to do something special, as a chance to excel and be noticed. You were selected because the commander trusts you to enforce the safety standard.

I've always thought that the safety business all boils down to attitude. When your attitude is one where you'll do whatever it takes to keep your fellow Soldiers from getting hurt, then, and only then, will you be successful. If not, you will have to shoulder the responsibility and bear the embarrassment of a poor safety record or worse, a tragic loss of life.

Over the many years I've conducted safety inspections of all our units/maintenance shops and facilities. It's easy to tell when safety is made a priority and which leaders need a safety attitude adjustment.

In recent years the Army and the Guard have been having a problem with Soldiers taking their own lives. Suicide prevention must be a priority as it clearly relates to protecting the force.

Commanders and leaders need your help to stop anyone from considering suicide as an option. We must stand shoulder to shoulder and have each other's back. Let's together permeate our ranks with the attitude to "Not Give Up on Life."

As I move on to new endeavors I hope you will keep the emphasis on protecting our force, our greatest resource, our Nebraska Citizen Soldiers. Make the safety of all our Soldiers a first thought rather than a second thought. Be proud of the fact that you are keeping someone from being injured or hurt badly.

To all our deployed Soldiers in "harm's way," put safety first and come home safe.

Every Soldier is a safety officer. If you think of it as a higher calling it just might change your attitude.

# Willingness or Willfulness: Which will you choose?

Each day we are confronted with diversity and change whether at work, home, or with friends.

In each given moment of each day we have one of two decisions to make: be willing or be willful when confronted by change.

Willingness is doing just what is needed in each situation, accepting that change is a fact of everyday life.

So, those who are willing respond to the situation in the most effective way possible, will most likely see the best outcome, both short term and long term.

Willingness is rolling with the ebb and flow of life and taking control only of those things of which one has control and putting worry and concern only towards the situations in the here and now that can shape the future.

Willfulness is refusing to make changes when opportunity for change is presented and needed. It is denying the reality that change is inevitable and refusing to be an active part of change. It may present itself as taking a passive role or refusing to help with a project that may spark uncertainty.

Willfulness is choosing to attempt to sabotage the change that others are trying to make or sitting on your hands and refusing to not go along with the change, and also refusing to give ideas that may help shape the change.

## Healthy Coping

By Viola Raschke  
Director of Psychological Health  
Nebraska National Guard

Rather than attempting to understand and help mold the change that is coming, someone who is willful will instead attempt to put down the ideas of others or refuse to participate in the change.

Thus, he who is willful is often left behind and confused.

Here are some examples taken from: <http://www.dbtselfhelp.com/html/willfulness.html>

### Willingness and willfulness

Hitting baseballs from a pitching machine is a metaphor for willingness. Like the pitching machine that keeps throwing balls at you, life throws reality at you. You need to keep your eye on the ball to hit it and swing. As each ball comes, focus on giving it your best shot.

Willfulness, crying, defiance or denial does not stop the ball. If you stand in the way of the ball, BAM!, the ball hits you.

You will not hit any balls if you stand there doing nothing. Ignoring the ball does not make it stop coming. Willfulness is taking your best swing at the ball.

### Life is like a game of cards

It makes no difference to a good card player what cards are dealt. The objective is to play each hand as well as possible.

As soon as one hand is played, another hand is dealt. She puts the last game behind her and focuses on the current game. She is mindful to play the current hand the best she can. She knows that if she plays her cards skillfully, she is doing the best she can. She can only control what cards she plays, not the hand she is dealt or how the others play.

When she plays her cards, she lets go of what she cannot control. Win or lose, she accepts how the cards fall. When one game is over, she focuses on the next hand of cards.

How will you play the next hand life deals you? With acceptance of a tough reality? Turning your mind to how you can make the best of a tough situation? Willing to look for solutions?

How will you work to improve your willingness and the willingness of those around you? How can you approach those who are willful and help them in turning the corner?

## Veterans Health Fair

Come find out what the VA-Lincoln can provide for its veterans.

Health booths from each department will be set up to provide useful information and answer questions.

Wednesday, March 9  
4 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
VA-Lincoln Auditorium  
600 South 70th Street,  
Lincoln, Neb.

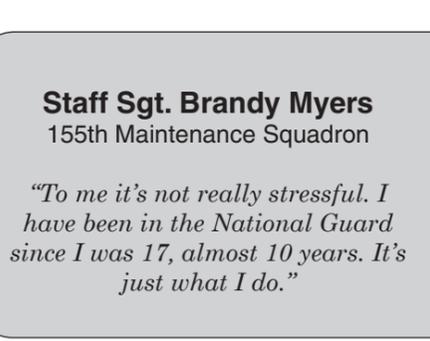
# Street Talk

“How do you manage the stress that being a member of the National Guard brings?”



**Staff Sgt. James Fox**  
155th Maintenance Squadron

*“I go to the gym; I get support from my friends and have a ‘fan club’ on Facebook.”*



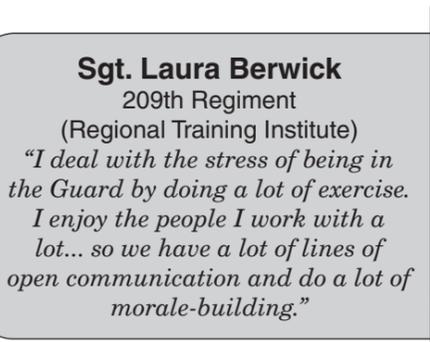
**Staff Sgt. Brandy Myers**  
155th Maintenance Squadron

*“To me it’s not really stressful. I have been in the National Guard since I was 17, almost 10 years. It’s just what I do.”*



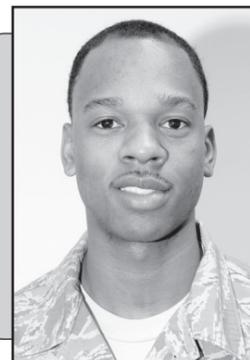
**Master Sgt. William Cary**  
209th Regiment  
(Regional Training Institute)

*“I try to make it work as a team effort and emphasize the teamwork that the Guard brings.”*



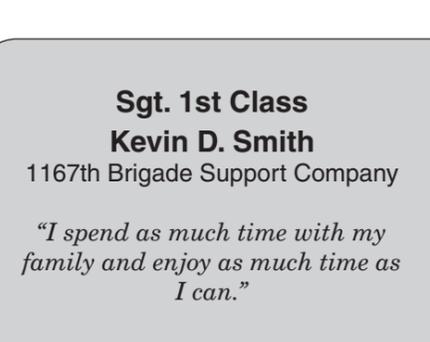
**Sgt. Laura Berwick**  
209th Regiment  
(Regional Training Institute)

*“I deal with the stress of being in the Guard by doing a lot of exercise. I enjoy the people I work with a lot... so we have a lot of lines of open communication and do a lot of morale-building.”*



**Airman 1st Class Jonathan Wright**  
155th Maintenance Squadron

*“I deal with stress by praying, meditating, just trying to keep my focus.”*



**Sgt. 1st Class Kevin D. Smith**  
1167th Brigade Support Company

*“I spend as much time with my family and enjoy as much time as I can.”*

## Mentoring immensely important

**W**hat’s one of the most important documents in your military personnel file... one that determines your future more than any other document? Conversely, what’s the document that is often the one that’s most poorly managed, disregarded, and hastily done?

Any guesses? It’s one and the same...your Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Rating Form (NCOER) and Officer Evaluation Rating Form (OER).

In the 31 years that I’ve been a commissioned officer, it’s the one constant that I’ve seen determine either the success or lack thereof in Soldiers’ careers.

As we know, the NCOER/OER sets up an orderly process of formal mentoring and performance counseling – a time honored processes within the military through which leaders influence those junior personnel in their personal and professional development. Mentoring and performance counseling allow leaders to develop those people who will eventually replace them. It’s one of the most critical roles of senior leaders – both commissioned officers and NCOs – preparing people to replace them.

The NCOER/OER is the document that describes your potential as a rated individual for future assignments, command, schools, promotions and retention. As a result of selection of future leaders, this document determines the quality of the organization’s leadership, management and the eventual direction of its course.

Maj. Gen. Randy Manner, acting director of the National Guard Bureau’s Joint Staff, is making performance counseling a top priority on his watch simply because, as he has said, “It’s the right thing to do. We owe it to our younger Soldiers to mentor them and give constructive feedback regularly and personally.”

If we as leaders do not take the time to write thoughtful evaluations, we are hurting the development of future leaders and missing an opportunity

to influence the direction of the Nebraska National Guard.

At least two elements drive carelessness in the completion of NCOER/OERs – technology and time.

As good as technology is, it can short-circuit the system with negative results. I’ve seen OERs where comments on the support form are *directly and verbatim* imported into the rater’s portion of the OER to include not only accomplishments, but observations on potential as well as recommendations for assignments and future schools.

While recommendations for future assignments and schools can obviously be discussed between the rater and the rated officer, comments on potential for command and promotion are the realm of the rater and senior rater.

Furthermore, if I, as the senior rater, only see the same accomplishments that are on both the OER support form and the OER, there’s precious little additional information that I can draw upon in order to write my senior rater comments.

As a senior rater I like to see how the accomplishments of the rated officer tie in with stated objectives. I like to see many accomplishments so as to determine the depth and breadth of that officer’s accomplishments. If I only see what was “pre-selected” as important in the rater’s portion with no opportunity to see what else the rated officer has done, then I’m left with a very small window to make my own assessments.

Time is also a driver of deficiencies in NCOER/OERs. Rated Soldiers sometimes don’t take the time to write how their accomplishments meet objectives in specific and measurable ways. They often only write a few accomplishments leaving me not much to assess for potential.

### Another Voice

Brigadier General

**Roma Amundson**



So technology and time usurp the intention of the NCOER/OER, which is thoughtful mentorship and performance counseling. This, in turn, corrupts the intent to identify the best NCOs and officers to become the organization’s future leaders.

We need to return to managing the NCOER/OER process as it was intended – to provide mentorship and offer performance counseling on a regular basis. So let’s review the process.

#### Rated individuals:

Remember that you drive the process. It’s your career, so manage your NCOER/OER well. Take responsibility for it.

Set appointments on a quarterly basis to talk with your rater. This is *your* responsibility; take this opportunity to learn to know your rater.

Identify your accomplishments and describe them in detail; show how they relate to your rater’s objectives. Use multiple pages if necessary. *Don’t disregard anything as being insignificant*; anything showing your level of commitment and involvement with the Nebraska National Guard is worth noting.

Use your NCOER/OER Support Form as an opportunity to promote yourself; don’t be hesitant to do so.

#### Raters:

Write out your own NCOER/OER Support Form; know your own performance objectives.

Pass out your support form one level up and two levels down. Use the NCOER/OER process to let Soldiers know what you expect of them. Set aside a sufficient amount of time to really talk to your subordinates when they set an appointment with you.

When writing the evaluation, address accomplishments, potential for future assignments and command, retention and schools to attend.

Remember that the greatest contribution you make as a leader within the Nebraska National Guard is to train and develop your replacements. The NCOER/OER is one avenue through which you do that.

## Talented Military Department artist’s passing leaves huge personal void

**T**he Nebraska Military Department seems a lot less colorful today.

On Feb. 7, Gerry Lawson, an exceptionally talented graphic artist who worked for the Nebraska Military Department for 37 years, lost his short battle with cancer. His passing leaves a void in

our agency that I think will be felt for years to come and a personal void that I’m not sure will ever be filled again.

I first met Gerry back in the summer of 1991 when I was working part-time for the Nebraska National Guard as a typical college student looking for something interesting to do. At that time I was fortunate enough to be asked to cover several stories for the Prairie Soldier and work on several projects for the state public affairs office.

If I remember right, I was a stereotypical Army Guard specialist working in the state headquarters for the first time. I was nervous being around so many people of high rank and people I’d never met.

Fortunately, my path crossed with Gerry Lawson, who at that time had an office on the main floor of the adjutant general’s headquarters. I don’t remember a whole lot about that first meeting, but I do still remember the amount of time that Gerry spent with me that summer helping me with my projects and giving me helpful hints as I worked.

Most of all, I remember how Gerry actually spent time asking me about my family, where I’d grown up, what

I was studying in school. In short, Gerry took the time to get to know me as a person, rather than just another of his many “customers.”

About 18 months later, I was hired full-time to be editor of the Prairie Soldier. It was a job that allowed me to interact with Gerry on a much more regular basis that would have profound impacts on me even today. In essence, he took me under his wing.

I soon learned that Gerry Lawson was an incredibly talented artist and also a remarkably dedicated employee who often worked late into the night, or well into the weekend, even giving up days of planned vacation time, to ensure that projects were not only done on time, but were done with the professional polish that Gerry was famous for.

The results of those labors are all around us on our walls, on our books, on our recruiting pamphlets and other places too numerous to count.

As I sit here writing this column today, I realize that I’m going to remember Gerry for all those interesting things that he created. Mostly, though, I’m going to remember Gerry for his friendship, his mentorship and his quiet guidance.

### My Turn

Editor, Prairie Soldier

**Kevin J. Hynes**



From the time I started working for the Nebraska National Guard until this past autumn, Gerry was always there when I needed him. When I had a crazy idea for a graphic for the news-

paper, Gerry always produced a graphic with his own special twist that was invariably better than my original idea.

When I was having a bad day, I could always stop in his graphic arts studio and spend some time talking to him about football, about politics, about family or just about anything that came up, and I always left feeling better about myself and the work I was doing.

I think that was truly the essence that Gerry brought to this department. He had this truly unique gift that made other people feel better about themselves and their circumstances. He knew how to joke with people, how to tell a great story and also how to guide people to the answer they were searching for.

He also had a talent for making all of the rest of us look good.

Gerry touched many, many lives during his 37-year-long career in the Nebraska Military Department. He leaves a legacy that is admirable as anyone I know; a legacy of service to this agency, this state and this nation that will be felt for a long time.

Gerry’s friendship, though, is something I don’t think I’ll ever be able to truly replace.

# Field of Dreams

## ■Nebraska Army Guard Soldier serving in Iraq takes field with NFL greats

By Spc. Kayla Tarr

1167th Brigade Support Company

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq —From midget football leagues for the kids, to Saturday games at Nebraska's Memorial Stadium that draw a large portion of the state's population to Lincoln, Neb., nothing quite represents Nebraska traditions like football season.

That's why it wasn't surprising that the members of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1167th Brigade Support Company jumped into a base flag football tournament

with so much gusto only a few weeks after arriving on Joint Base Balad.

The 1167th BSC team played admirably, but they didn't win the tournament. That loss didn't stop Spc. Tyler Klabenes from dominating the agility event of an NFL Combine competition a few weeks later and securing himself a spot to play with the winners of the flag football tournament in this year's Tostitos Connect-to-Home bowl.

This is the second year that Tostitos has partnered with the USO to sponsor the game, bringing a host of football legends to play alongside the



Photo by Spc. Kayla Tarr

**Endzone Celebration:** Zach Thomas and Spc. Tyler Klabenes (17) celebrate following Klabenes's touchdown during a Dec. 21 flag football game in Iraq.

Soldiers currently serving in Iraq.

For 20-year-old Spc. Klabenes, who started playing football in 7th grade, it was the chance of a lifetime; for the rest of his platoon, it meant they had a personal stake in the game.

The game took place on Dec. 21. After just one practice a day earlier, Klabenes was thrown on to the field with football greats Rodney Peete, Thurmon Thomas, Andre Reed, Jevon Kearse and Zack Thomas.

With a few more mixed service members, they comprised "Team Liberty" under the guidance of Coach Gene Stallings. Their opponents on "Team Freedom" were led by Coach Bobby Bowden.

Members of the 1167th showed up in force to support Klabenes, and were even joined by Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Perrone, 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade command sergeant major, who was visiting Joint Base Balad that day.



Photo courtesy of the USO

**Sprinting Toward Paydirt:** Spc. Tyler Klabenes, a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 1167th Brigade Support Company, streaks toward the goal line after pulling in a Zach Thomas pass during a Dec. 21 flag football game in Iraq. Thomas is a former Miami Dolphin linebacker.

They munched on free chips and salsa —Tostitos Brand, of course— and settled in to be the loudest cheering section on the field.

Team Liberty led in points almost the whole game, but near the end, Team Freedom caught up and surpassed them.

Just when things were looking grim, Zack Thomas made a pass to Klabenes, who ran it all the way in for a touchdown.

The 1167th cheering section went crazy, and it looked like Klabenes had scored the winning touchdown for Team Liberty. However, in the last second of the game, Team Freedom completed a Hail Mary pass to win the game 44-42.

Being a Nebraska-based unit, the 1167th BSC knows how to cope with a loss, and in true form, completely overlooked the outcome of the game in the excitement of post-game autographs.

Klabenes brought Zack Thomas back to the 1167th BSC crowd for a group picture and Thomas was a good sport about signing autographs for everyone. Thomas signed his own jersey and presented it to Klabenes and also promised to send him a jersey from his days in the Miami Dolphins.

The taste of the football rituals similar to those going on at home was a huge morale booster for a unit where most members live and breathe Nebraska football. Even those who don't care much for the sport couldn't help but get caught up in the excitement.

Highlights of the game were broadcast during the Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 1 and are still available on the Tostitos Facebook page.

To see pictures and videos from the game, visit [www.facebook.com/Tostitos](http://www.facebook.com/Tostitos) or the USO website: [www.uso.org](http://www.uso.org).



Photo by Spc. Kayla Tarr

**Fan Club:** (From left) Sgt. Dennis Hatfield, Spc Aaron Rockford, then-Staff Sgt. Joseph Jackson and Spc. Leonard Robinson show their support for fellow Nebraska Army National Guardsmen Spc. Tyler Klabenes who was selected to play in a special Dec. 21 flag football game with several NFL football greats that was sponsored by the USO.

## Avoiding common pitfalls crucial when starting, maintaining fitness regimen

By Airman 1st Class Katherine Windish  
Air Force News Service

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy (AFNS) — Fitness is one of the most important keys to living healthy. It's also no secret that remaining in good physical shape is not only important for one's body, it's also essential to military readiness.

Though physical training is instilled into service members from the moment they join, many still make common mistakes that may seem small, but in the long run, can hinder physical fitness and negatively impact their bodies.

"There are four parts to healthy living: exercise, nutrition, rest and genetics," said Eleanora Paronuzzi-Rucker, a 31st Force Support Squadron fitness assessment cell monitor. "Three out of the four can be controlled and, if done right, can help you lead a full and healthy life."

When the FAC monitors were asked what mistakes people often make, they came up with the following eight that most people can relate to:

### Procrastination

"We've all heard or have been guilty of saying, 'I'll start my workout regimen on Monday,'" said Tech. Sgt. Adam Salonish, a FAC monitor. "The hardest part of working out is going to the gym. Getting there is the issue. Once you get there, you're motivated."

He suggested to get a workout partner. "Workout buddies help motivate you," he said. "If someone else is relying on you to go to the gym with them, you'll make more of an effort and be more likely to actually go."

A workout buddy should provide motivation, not distraction, to maximize each other's potential, he added. Paronuzzi-Rucker recommends working out during a lunch break or waking up earlier in the morning. Also, people may bring their children and spouses to the gym.

"Make an hour for yourself every day,"

Paronuzzi-Rucker said. "If you don't spend an hour taking care of yourself, you won't be fit to take care of anyone else."

### Crash dieting

"Many people think that by skipping meals, they're cutting calories," Paronuzzi-Rucker said. "What it really does is put the body into survival mode and it starts storing fat."

She suggested eating regularly rather than trying to skip meals. "The only way to lose weight is to eat," Paronuzzi-Rucker said. "Maintain a balanced diet with plenty of variety. Plenty of small, healthy meals throughout the day will help increase your metabolism and keep you from getting hungry."

Keep balance, variety and moderation in mind when planning meals, she said. Websites such as [mypyramid.gov](http://mypyramid.gov) can provide guidance on how to eat healthfully.

### High expectations

"So many people come to the gym and expect to see results in just a couple of weeks," Salonish said. "It typically takes four to six weeks to see results with a consistent healthy diet and exercise regimen." He said people shouldn't get discouraged by the process. Getting and staying healthy is a lifelong commitment, and it may take time to get where one needs to be.

"You just have to keep working at it," Salonish said.

### Over training

"Another way people negatively react to



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Alex Salmon

**Avoiding The Pitfalls:** Starting and maintaining a physical fitness regimen consisting of exercise, nutrition, rest and genetics, requires being mindful to avoid common fitness mistakes.

up to bigger weights as muscles get stronger.

Also, rest days are just as important as work out days because the body uses it to allow muscles to grow."

### Unprofessional advice

"Proper form is crucial to working out," Paronuzzi-Rucker said. "Without proper form, you aren't getting the full benefit from the exercise, and you could seriously hurt yourself. Many people take advice from others working out at the gym who are usually not certified and give incorrect advice."

It's recommended that people get professional advice from certified specialists at the health and wellness center, the fitness assessment cell, primary care physician or a personal trainer.

### Taking supplements

"Don't be fooled by the covers of muscle magazines; supplements are not good for the average person," Salonish said. "Unless you're working out several hours a day like the paid models in those magazines, supplements are

results that are slow in coming is to over train," Paronuzzi-Rucker said. "Over training can be dangerous, and it can keep your muscles from developing."

Taking it slow is a good way to ensure the body can keep up with the training, she said. People should start with light weight training and be sure to take some rest. "Too much weight right away can hurt the body," Paronuzzi-Rucker said. "Start off small and work

only going to give you unnecessary calories and fat that you can't burn off."

Instead of supplements, people should eat a balanced diet, he said. The amount of protein, calories and fat in supplements and protein shakes promote bad weight gain, according to fitness officials. The amount of protein needed for a 1.5 hour workout can come from a piece of chicken.

"Eating a balanced diet will give you all the nutrients, energy and protein you need," Salonish said.

### Relying on false motivators

False motivators, like expensive equipment, shoes or clothes are motivational until the newness wears off, Salonish said.

He suggests people save their money. "Go to the gym, or get out and go for a run where there are fewer distractions, and you're more likely to focus," Salonish said. "Don't waste your money on a piece of expensive equipment that will be used for a month and then collects dust."

As for new shoes and clothes, people can work out just as well without the newest styles or expensive equipment, he said.

### Being ashamed

"Too many people don't want to go to the gym because they feel that they're being judged by others," Paronuzzi-Rucker said. "Whether it's for their weight, fitness level or how much they can lift, people worry that they're not as good as the other people they see at the gym and that others are judging them."

People should stop worrying about what other people will think and concentrate on what they're at the gym for, she said.

"Everyone is there for the same reason — to get in shape," she said. "The people at the gym who are lifting heavy weights, or are running long distances on the treadmill weren't always like that. Just like you, they had to start somewhere, and they aren't going to judge you for trying."