



Two inducted into Guard Museum Hall of Fame3



Wounded Warrior pheasant hunt5



Winter is here, so make sure you're prepared . . .8

PLAINS GUARDIAN

VOLUME 59 No. 1 *Serving the Kansas Army and Air National Guard, Kansas Emergency Management, Kansas Homeland Security and Civil Air Patrol* FEBRUARY 2015

Kansas National Guard receives holiday gifts



Gov. Sam Brownback joins Walmart employees and members of the Kansas National Guard to pack holiday gift bags donated by Walmart. The bags of holiday food and a Walmart gift card were given to selected Kansas military families. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
Public Affairs Office

Kansas National Guardsmen spend their time giving, serving and sacrificing, and two of the nation's top corporations showed their support and thanks during the 2014 holiday season.

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation donated holiday food gift bags to the Kansas National Guard. Union Pacific Railroad donated a check for \$15,000 to the Kansas Guard's Emergency Military Relief Fund.

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback teamed up with Kansas

Guardsmen and Walmart employees Dec. 17 to pack gift bags with a turkey, stuffing, potatoes, cranberry sauce, a pumpkin pie and a Walmart gift card at the Walmart on 37th Street in Topeka. Gift bags were also assembled in Hays, Iola, Salina, Shawnee and Wichita and were then distributed by Kansas Soldiers and Airmen to fellow Guard members.

Brig. Gen. Scott Dold, chief of the Joint Staff, Kansas National Guard, said that the holiday gift bags were given to the families of selected Soldiers and Airmen.

"It's always nice, especially for our young Soldiers and

"It's always nice, especially for our young Soldiers and Airmen to be recognized. They give so much. We're here for our communities, state and nation. We'd do it without thanks, but we sure appreciate when someone does say 'Thank you.'"

**Brig. Gen. Scott Dold
Chief of the Joint Staff
Kansas National Guard**

Airmen to be recognized. They give so much," said Dold. "We're here for our communities, state and nation. We'd do it without thanks, but we sure appreciate when someone does say 'Thank you.'"

The Walmart Foundation assists veterans, military men and women and their families year-round, and currently employs more than 72,000 veterans, according to Scott Markley, national media relations, Walmart.

"It is not only our duty, but our honor to support our men and women in uniform not only when they are on the battlefield, but also when they return home and transition to civilian life," said Markley.

The holiday spirit of giving was further demonstrated Dec. 18 as Union Pacific Railroad presented Maj. Gen. Lee Tapanelli, Kansas adjutant general, with a \$15,000 check as Kansas Guardsmen packed the Adjutant General's Conference Room at the State Defense Building in Topeka.

More than 20 percent of Union Pacific's workforce consists of veterans, and Ben Jones director of public affairs, Union Pacific, said "This is our way to give back to the state of Kansas and the men and women in our military."

Union Pacific has more than 2,200 miles of track in Kansas. Tapanelli said the donation says a lot about Union Pacific's commitment to the military.

"We're very appreciative of this generous gift," said Tapanelli. "At this time of year, when there's so much need out there, to receive such generosity is really beyond words."

(Continued on Page 2)

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Air Guard command chief master sergeant embraces dual role as Topeka police chief

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
Public Affairs Office

Reaching the pinnacle of one's chosen career field can take a lifetime of dedication, sacrifice and hard work.

Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown, who serves as the top enlisted man in the Kansas Air National Guard as the state command chief master sergeant, has done it twice.

Brown is also a longtime police officer and the former assistant police chief of the Kansas City, Kansas, Police Department. He recently swore into his new role as the chief of the Topeka Police Department in Topeka.

He credits his nearly 30 years of military service for teaching him how to lead.

"Enlisting in the United States Air Force at such a young age, I was able to get leadership training very early on in my adult life," said Brown. "As a member (of the military), you begin to get leadership training at 17 or 18 years old, which is beneficial to prepare you for leadership roles. Other career fields don't offer that kind of training at such an early age."

(Continued on Page 2)



Maj. Gen. Lee Tapanelli (left), the adjutant general, congratulates Col. James Brown following Brown's swearing in ceremony as the new chief of police for the city of Topeka. Brown is also the state command chief master sergeant for the Kansas Air National Guard. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

Kansas Airmen interact with Air National Guard leadership

By 1st Lt. Matt Lucht
184th IW Public Affairs

In any military branch, decisions come from the top of the chain of command. In the National Guard, the national decision makers are seldom seen or heard at a local level. Kansas Air National Guard's enlisted force had an opportunity Sept. 5-7 to interact with and hear current information from Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling, command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard.

"The Airmen got to see their Air National Guard primary representative firsthand and got to ask him questions," said Chief Master Sgt. Russell Brotsky, command chief of the 184th Intelligence Wing. "It was big."

While in Kansas, Hotaling visited the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Topeka, and 184th Intelligence Wing, Wichita, to hear questions or concerns from the Airmen.

"You can ask me anything you want," said Hotaling. "The gloves are off and it can be about the highest level to whatever is happening here, you can ask me those questions."

Airmen were interested in hearing about the new performance review procedures, fitness requirements, professional military education and future of the Guard retirement program. Hotaling answered the

questions openly and honestly.

"One of the neat things about Chief Hotaling is that he is very candid on his answers and responses," said Command Chief Master Sgt. Patrick Moore, command chief of the 190th ARW. "You might not hear exactly what you want to hear from him, but he says exactly what the reality is."

"He brought a great message," said Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th IW Public Affairs. "He created a vision using his aim points and talked about how we can use them to build a strong future for ourselves and the Air National Guard. His message was well received by the Airmen who attended the all call."

The visit also gave Kansas an opportunity to showcase the Family Program Support Services to Marie Hotaling, Chief Hotaling's wife.

"One of the big things for Kansas that kind of went under the radar was that Marie Hotaling came to talk to our family services, the first state family services to be nationally accredited," said Command Chief Master Sgt. James Brown, command chief of the Kansas Air National Guard. "So, it was a really productive trip not only to have the command chief here, but also his wife."

The visit gave the Airmen of the Kansas Air National Guard a chance to share their



Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling, command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard, answers questions from members of the 184th Intelligence Wing. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Maria Ruiz, 184th IW Public Affairs)

concerns and get some valuable information from national leadership.

"It was really good exposure for the Kansas Air National Guard," said Brown.

"We try to get the heavy hitters from the National Guard Bureau to visit as much as they can so we remain relevant and on their radar."

Headquarters, 169th CSSB, hosts change of command ceremony

Capt. Hedrick Cintron took command of the Kansas National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, during a change of command ceremony Dec. 7, at the Olathe Armory. During the ceremony, Capt. Andrew Tapley turned over command to Cintron.

Lt. Col. Carla Hale, commander of the 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, presided over the event to symbolically pass responsibility for the welfare and training of the 84 soldiers of the company to Cintron.

Capt. Hedrick Cintron

Capt. Hedrick Cintron enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2005 and served with the 556th Military Intelligence Company until 2007 when he received his commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Valley Forge Military College, Wayne, Pennsylvania.

Cintron was then assigned to Company B, 635th Armor Regiment in May 2007 and served as a leader of Headquarters Platoon for his first year as an officer. His next assignment was with the 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, where he served as a platoon leader until August 2012. He first came to the 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion via the 778th Transportation Company in September 2012.

Key assignments in the Kansas Army National Guard included operations officer, 778th Transportation Company; platoon leader, Detachment 2, 778th Transportation Company; and supply management officer, HHC, 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

Cintron's awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Service Ribbon and Kansas National Guard Achievement Medal.

His military education includes the Armor Officer Basic Course, Fort Knox, Kentucky, and Multifunctional Logisticians Captains Career Course, Fort Lee, Virginia, where he graduated with honors.

Cintron earned an associate's degree from Valley Forge Military College and a bachelor's degree from Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas.

Cintron currently serves full time in the Kansas City area as a law enforcement officer and resides in Grandview, Missouri, with his wife Elizabeth and son Delko.

Capt. Andrew Tapley

Capt. Andrew Tapley enlisted in the Kansas Army National Guard in 2002 as a chaplain's assistant with the 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Olathe. He received his officer commission in 2004

through the Kansas National Guard Officer Candidate School, Salina.

Tapley was assigned as the executive officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 35th Infantry Division. In that capacity, he deployed to Louisiana and served in the Emergency Operations Center for Hurricane Katrina. In 2005, he deployed with the 635th Regional Support Group in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as the theater port liaison. In 2006 he deployed with the 35th Infantry Division as the Headquarters and Headquarters Company executive officer and unit movement officer in support of Kosovo Force 9.

In 2008, Tapley was assigned to the 137th Transportation Company as a platoon leader. In 2011 he was assigned to the

(Continued on Page 6)

Command chief master sergeant is new chief of police

Continued from Page 1

He enlisted in the Air Force in 1985 and worked with medium nuclear weapons in Germany. After the Cold War ended, and the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was enacted, the United States and Soviet Union agreed to disassemble the weapon system to which he was assigned.

Brown then applied and was accepted to become a drill instructor at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, but he chose to leave the military and go back home and serve his hometown community in the KCKPD. It was only as he was processing out of active duty that he learned of the Air National Guard, specifically, the 190th Air Refueling Wing, located in Topeka.

The National Guard appealed to him because it offered him the ability to pursue his civilian career as a police officer while continuing to serve in the military part time in the "traditional" National Guard sense — drilling one weekend every month, and for a two-week annual training period, typically in the summer.

The National Guard's dual mission to serve both state and nation also appealed to him.

"Supporting and defending our communities in Kansas is very important to me and my family," said Brown. "My role in the Kansas Guard has been spent training and preparing other Kansas Guardsmen for natural and manmade disasters and civil

unrest, here at home. To date, I have been involved in training over 4,000 Kansas Guardsmen to answer the call to serve our great state."

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, Kansas adjutant general, expressed his full confidence in Brown's ability to lead the Topeka Police Department.

"The city of Topeka is gaining an excellent leader and someone who has been an asset to this state for a long time," said Tafanelli.

For Brown, his military experience has been the perfect complement to his career in law enforcement.

"Law enforcement and being an Airman have a lot in common," he said. "The values, the ethical standards and behaviors are similar. The rank structure parallels that of the military. The two very much parallel in how we perform and how we train."

Brown also noted similar responsibilities to his subordinates, being at the top of the chain of command in each role he serves.

"The roles have a lot in common," said Brown. "I'm very much in favor of the well-being of the Airmen and the police officers. Morale, welfare, training and education are a high priority."

While his full-time job as the Topeka police chief will keep him busy, Brown said that he intends to continue serving in the Kansas Guard: "It's my family."

Holiday gifts

Continued from Page 1

The Kansas Military Emergency Relief Fund was set up to provide emergency financial aid to help military families with the cost of food, housing, utilities and medical services incurred while a member of the family is on active military duty. In addition to helping Kansas National Guard members, the fund is also available to assist members of the military reserve forces in Kansas.

"Any day you can give back is a special day," said Jones. "Especially when you can

tie it back to the values that we have as a company to hire military men and women that makes it extra special."

Brownback said it's critical to tell service members, especially those deployed and away from home at Christmas, that "We're really thinking of them and we appreciate them all the time."

"Thank you, God bless you and Merry Christmas," said Brownback. "People here are thinking about you and looking forward to having you home next Christmas."



Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, accepts a \$15,000 check from Ben Jones, Union Pacific Railroad, for the Kansas Military Emergency Relief Fund as a show of the railroad's support for the military families of Kansas. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

Two inducted into Museum of the Kansas National Guard's Hall of Fame

By Sgt. Kyle Galvin

105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The Museum of the Kansas National Guard inducted retired Col. William "Bill" Vonderschmidt and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Dale L. Putman as the two newest members in its National Guard Hall of Fame in a ceremony at the Ramada Inn, Topeka, Nov. 2.

National Guard senior leadership, family and friends attended the event to honor the two Soldiers for their achievements and service to the nation and the state of Kansas.

The event kicked off with a posting of the colors by the Adjutant General's Ceremonial Platoon. Chaplain (Col.) David Jenkins, state chaplain for the Kansas National Guard, gave the invocation followed by an introduction of special guests and the Board of Directors by Col. Mike Erwin, master of ceremonies.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, praised the inductees for their dedication and service to their country.

"These men are the real deal," said Tafanelli. "On behalf of all citizens of Kansas, thank you for everything you have done."

Retired Col. William Vonderschmidt

Retired Col. William Vonderschmidt was born in Falls City, Nebraska, and attended Hiawatha High School, graduating in 1964. He enlisted in Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery on Sept. 30, 1965.

Vonderschmidt was attending the Kansas National Guard Officer Candidate School when his unit was mobilized for federal duty in the spring of 1968. His class, OCS

12, was accelerated and Vonderschmidt was commissioned as a second lieutenant and reported for active duty May 13, 1968.

While on active duty, he completed the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course and the Jungle Operations Training Course, after which he was sent to Vietnam. He was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division as a forward observer and aerial observer from January - December 1969.

During his service in Vietnam, Vonderschmidt earned a Silver Star, the third highest military decoration for valor. His quick thinking and reaction, laying down close artillery support on the enemy, saved numerous lives.

He went on to complete the Field Artillery Advanced Course in 1978 and the Command and General Staff College Nonresident Course in 1985 and many other schools.

Through his career, Vonderschmidt served in a variety of command and staff positions including commander of Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, where he and Command Sgt. Maj. Dale Putman worked together; as commander of the 1st Battalion, 127th Field Artillery; commander of the 130th Field Artillery Brigade; and several staff positions in the 35th Division Artillery.

The retired colonel was also branch-qualified as an engineer officer and served as a director of Facilities Engineering for the State Area Command. He was assigned as the deputy commander of STARC and later as the deputy commander of the Kansas Army National Guard.

His final assignment was the Chief of the



Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, congratulates retired Command Sgt. Maj. Dale Putman on his induction into the the Museum of the Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame. Putman and retired Col. William Vonderschmidt were inducted into the Hall of Fame during a ceremony on Nov. 2 at the Ramada Inn, Topeka. (Photo by Sgt. Kyle Galvin, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Joint Staff - Land Component.

Vonderschmidt retired in 2006 with more than 40 years of commissioned and enlisted military service.

"I never thought I'd be a lifer," said Vonderschmidt. "Six years was almost half my life when I joined."

Though retired, he remains active in many organizations within his community.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Dale Putman

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Dale Putman was born in Junction City, Kansas, and graduated from White City High School in 1964. He joined the Kansas National Guard with a friend as the Vietnam War was heating up. He was assigned to 242nd Engineers, which became the 169th Engineer Company, Bridge Platoon in 1965.

He attended Basic Training and Advanced Individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Hoping to go to Vietnam, he was mobilized for federal service with the 69th Brigade in 1968 and assigned to Fort Carson, Colorado. However, his unit was not deployed to Vietnam. He returned home and received an honorable discharge in 1970.

Putman re-enlisted in 1974 and was assigned to his old company, the 169th Engineers, as a maintenance squad leader. Over the next 12 years, Putman's career saw rapid growth as he climbed the ranks, achieving

the rank of command sergeant major in 1986.

He served as command sergeant major of the 69th Infantry Brigade before joining forces with fellow Hall of Fame inductee Vonderschmidt. Together, they commanded the 130th Field Artillery Brigade.

In 2003, he became the first command sergeant major of the Joint Forces Headquarters - Land Component, Kansas Army National Guard.

However, Putman had one last dream that he hoped to accomplish during his military service, completing a combat deployment.

Six months before his 60th birthday and his initial retirement date, Putman was given the opportunity to realize that dream when he was tasked as the command sergeant major senior mentor with the Headquarters Security Support Command, Combined Security Transition Command, Afghanistan. He and his men mentored their Afghan National Army counterparts in conducting daily security operations for the Afghan president and defense minister.

"After not being able to go to Vietnam, deploying to Afghanistan is one of the proudest moments in my life," said Putman.

He retired from the military in 2007 after 39 years of service.

Putman continues to keep busy participating in several organizations.

Stacey begins role as senior NCO for 184th Intelligence Wing

By Staff Sgt. Ryan Smith

184th IW Public Affairs

The 184th Intelligence Wing held a change of authority ceremony on Nov. 1. Chief Master Sgt. William Stacey accepted the responsibilities of the wing's command chief, relieving Chief Master Sgt. Russell Brotsky of his duties. Lt. Col. Cody Jacobs, commander, 161st Intelligence Squadron, served as the master of ceremonies.

The command chief master sergeant is the senior enlisted leader in the wing that acts as a liaison between the commanders and the enlisted force by addressing shortfalls or challenges.

Brotsky served as the wing's seventh command chief for three years. During his tenure, he had a strong voice in the wing's direction of professional development and adhering to the Air Force's core values.

"Chief Brotsky was a chief that would do anything for anyone and any Airman," said Col. Jeffrey Jordan, commander, 184th IW. "When President Eisenhower was asked

what he looks for in a leader; he just said one word: selflessness."

Brotsky reiterated the core values that each member of the Air Force should live by and concluded his remarks with a gesture of gratitude.

"Thank you for allowing me to be your command chief," said Brotsky.

Stacey reassured the unit that the direction, vision and goals wouldn't be altered during his tenure. He was also confident that the command staff would stay the course in addressing the unit's future.

"We have uncertain times and we don't need you to focus on that. That is our job," said Stacey. "Focus on the job you are in today and become the mission experts at every position you are at. The 184th needs it, the state of Kansas needs it, and the nation requires it. If you are not ready, you are irrelevant."

Following the ceremony, Brotsky celebrated his 37 years of military service with a retirement ceremony.



Chief Master Sgt. William Stacey, center, salutes Col. Jeffrey Jordan, commander of the 184th Intelligence Wing, during a change of authority ceremony in which Stacey accepted his duties as the wing's eighth command chief master sergeant on Nov. 1. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Maria Ruiz, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs)

Jayhawks give despite setbacks

By 1st Lt. Matt Lucht
184th IW Public Affairs

This is the time of year red kettles and bell ringers are collecting spare change from kind-hearted patrons.

Master Sgt. Troy Evans, 184th Munitions Squadron, and Staff Sgt. Heather Bolden, 127th Command and Control Squadron, did their own version of bell ringing and organized this year's Combined Federal Campaign for the 184th Intelligence Wing Sept. 1 - Dec. 6. The wing goal was set at \$60,000.

"You have thousands of charities that your money goes to," said Evans. "It really depends on where you want it to go. I tell everyone, 'Find something in your heart that you know where you want to pledge.'"

Personnel cuts from the wing were a concern for this year's organizers, but they still wanted to try to exceed last year's collections of \$57,000.

"That is a lot of money to give to a cause," said Bolden. "A very selfless act to do and even around the holidays when people want to do for their families and they are giving to help better someone else's lives. It is a pretty awesome."

Jayhawks made donations with a one-time donation or yearly deduction from their paychecks. Evans used his skill of organizing food sale events to raise additional funds.

"All in all, we had seven different fundraisers like selling tacos, burgers and a chili feed that made an additional \$7,000," said Evans.

Bolden and Evans both enjoyed pushing towards the goal for a good cause.

"It is phenomenal to be a part of helping out other people, it's very impacting," said Bolden.

"Charity is kind of my thing," said Evans. "I have done a bone marrow drive here and we have collected 500 kits so far on this base. I love charity and I am just going to continue with CFC. Charity is kind of in my blood, I don't know why but it is."

But as the last bell was rung for the campaign, the Jayhawks didn't just reach their goal, they surpassed it by raising more than \$70,000.

"I know that it takes a lot to give money and a lot give to their church or other charities but, to step up above and beyond is one of the greatest things," said Evans.

By working together, we can accomplish our goals

By Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli
The Adjutant General

By now, most of us have at least thought about our goals for 2015 and determined whether we will work to implement them. This is a good time to revisit our goals and get re-energized if we've lost sight of them. Without a focus on a collective target, we will fail to achieve all that we can. I ask you to join me in working to improve the following areas: 1) Readiness 2) Customer Service 3) Communication and 4) Partnerships.



Maj. Gen.
Lee Tafanelli

Readiness

In our organization, we must live and work in a state of readiness, ensuring we are prepared for whatever may be thrown our way by Mother Nature or our nation's enemies. Whether in emergency management, homeland security, the National Guard, or one of the many support areas of our agency, the success of our response efforts is dependent on our preparedness level as an organization. While we consistently conduct drills and training to test our systems, we must each get involved in these events to ensure we work through our ongoing challenges and don't become complacent.

It is critical we also consider our per-

sonal state of readiness, mentally and physically, to ensure we are at our best to do the job we've been asked to do, whether provide information technology support, conduct payroll and human resources activities, work in our emergency operations center or deploy for a Kansas disaster or overseas. Each of us is critical to the organization's success and our individual readiness can greatly affect whether the agency succeeds in difficult times.

Customer service

Individuals come in contact with each of us every day, expecting us to provide some type of service. Whether it's a coworker needing guidance or a retired National Guard member asking for military records or a county emergency manager wanting assistance with training or grants, others are looking to us for help and it is our responsibility to provide it.

Government traditionally has had a perception of providing poor customer service, but I ask each of you to work diligently to help change that perception for our department and government overall. We are facing a number of challenges and we simply can't afford to provide poor customer service or be seen as less than the best. If we do, we will fail and our future operations will be in jeopardy. We should be proud of the work we do and strive to do it with excellence for ourselves, our co-workers, and our state and nation.

Communication

Communication is one of the biggest challenges for any organization, especially



Every employee of the Adjutant General's Department, military and civilian, from those working at Joint Forces Headquarters in the State Defense Building, Topeka, to those in the small town armories in the far-flung corners of the state, must work as a team to improve the agency's performance in readiness, customer service, communication and partnerships. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

one as large as ours with such diverse roles and responsibilities and with multiple services being provided throughout our organization. It consistently comes up as one of the items we can improve and ultimately it is up to each of us to improve it. It seems easy, but it takes significant effort. Individually, we must constantly be thinking of how we can communicate the necessary information to our coworkers and employees to ensure they can better do their jobs.

Supervisors have a greater responsibility to improve communication because they have more information. They must take the time to ensure employees are kept informed so they can better do their job. But each of us, in every part of the agency, can and must make a concerted effort to improve our communication efforts, providing clear, consistent information about where we are headed in our respective departments, what's being accomplished and what needs to be accomplished.

Our best efforts are often diminished due to poor communication. It does take time, time we may think we don't have for that additional conversation or meeting or dis-

ussion. Unfortunately, poor communication often eats up more time than we realize and results in a loss of productivity or even unnecessary work due to unclear direction. This is something we simply can't afford.

Partnerships

Over the years, this agency has developed a number of key partnerships with local, state and federal entities, as well as the private sector. These partnerships are critical to our future success, especially given our challenging budget environment. We can achieve more by combining resources and ideas. We must continue to foster those relationships, but also look for new partnerships that would make sense for our agency. We should also consider new ways of doing business with current and future partners rather than focusing on how things have always been done.

Together, as we move toward these collective goals of readiness, customer service, communication, and partnerships, we will see significant results in our respective areas, individually and as an organization. Let's work together to make the rest of 2015 a great year!

Keep your records updated

By Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hector Vasquez
State Command Chief Warrant Officer

Now that winter is here, please remember to continue to exercise since the winter months typically bring with them some additional pounds. It's a lot easier to maintain physical fitness than to start an exercises program all over again, so please ensure that you take some time to keep up your physical fitness.



Chief
Warrant Officer 5
Hector Vasquez

As we begin a new year, I would like to thank everyone for your support and assistance improving the Kansas Warrant Officer Cohort. Currently, the Kansas Army National Guard warrant officer strength sits right at 85 percent, which has ranked us as one of the top 10 states throughout the entire Army National Guard. This year, we are projecting to send a record number of candidates to the state Warrant Officer Candidate School course, and with that we are expecting to see a continued increase in our warrant officer strength. Although we've reached a milestone never before achieved in KSARNG warrant officer history, we must not relax. Keep an eye out for Soldiers within your ranks that appear to be a good fit for the Warrant Officer Cohort and get them linked up with Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sam Bonham (samual.c.bonham.mil@mail.mil) or me (hector.a.vasquez4.mil@mail.mil). Thanks again to everyone who brought in leads and suggestions to improve and grow the KSARNG Warrant Officer Cohort. Your assistance is very much appreciated.

The beginning of a new year is a good time to review and update your military bio and records in the Interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System. All Soldiers are responsible for maintaining their own records, so if you don't take care of your records, then no one else will.

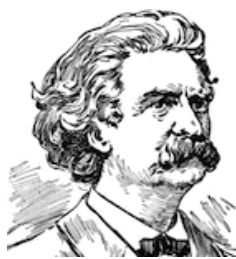
Now that warrant officer promotion

The beginning of a new year is a good time to review and update your military bio and records in the Interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System.

boards no longer require Soldiers to appear, it is more important than ever to ensure that your records are correct and up-to-date. I have received several notifications of warrant officers who are delinquent in various categories such as Army Physical Fitness Test, height/weight and security clearance renewal. Although we as warrant officers have been relatively "safe" from retention boards for many years, it appears we may be upon a point in our history where we might not have time to correct deficiencies in our records before it's too late. Therefore, please make every effort to keep yourself out of this category by thoroughly and routinely reviewing your records and making updates/corrections in a timely manner. With strength such a critical topic in the forecasting of future force structure, we simply cannot afford to lose warrant officers because they're being lazy.

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

Again, thank you all for the support and dedication that you give to not only the Warrant Officer Cohort, but the KSARNG. I look forward to working with all of you throughout this coming year.



There are basically two types of people. People who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things. The first group is less crowded.

Mark Twain

PLAINS GUARDIAN

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

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

Circulation: Approximately 16,000
Printed under contract with the U.S. Government Printing Office

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Veterans, sports figures join Wounded Warriors for pheasant hunt

By 1st Lt. Matt Lucht
Public Affairs Office

Fields near Meridan, Kansas, create the perfect environment for hunters and dogs to sharpen their skills and possibly bring home dinner. But the group that gathered at Muddy Creek Whitetails on Oct. 26 didn't just attend for the hunting experience.

"We are taking five wounded veterans from Fort Riley and two Kansas National Guard wounded veterans pheasant hunting today," said Jacob Edwards, the event coordinator. "The day is all about them. We are going to take them out and give them a half day of the best fun they could ever imagine.

"It's my goal when I take them hunting to give them a rewarding, passionate time," said Edwards. "I know a lot of veterans use hunting as a resource to cope with things and it is a good resource. It is really relaxing and it gets you away from the world. That is why it is a passion for me and that is why I like to take veterans hunting."

The veterans had the opportunity to hunt with Maj. Gen. Lee Tapanelli, Kansas adjutant general; Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, and former and current professional baseball and football players.

"When you look at some of the others that you have out here, that have come from major league baseball," said Tapanelli, "along with a lot of the guides that are out here and the individuals that are supporting us, it's really all of them that want to say thank you to our veterans that serve with such distinction."

"It is so neat to do things for other people," said Ed Hearn, former Major League Baseball player and World Series champ. "I have the opportunity to speak around the country and you know so often we think of 'I,' 'I,' 'me,' 'me' and these guys and ladies go out and put their lives on the line for us."

Although not every shot hit the target and some birds got away, everyone had fun and enjoyed the success of the hunt.

"The ultimate goal is to have fun and provide a fun, relaxing time," said Edwards.

It was a goal that was met by all participants of the pheasant hunting expedition.

"Being able to be outside and being around other people, veterans and other wounded warriors really helps me relax," said Sgt. Krystal Nelson, Fort Riley.



The bird is up and a hunter prepares to take aim during a Wounded Warrior pheasant hunt Oct. 26. Several veterans from the Kansas National Guard and Fort Riley, and retired professional sports players joined the Wounded Warriors for the hunt. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)

Guardsmen engage students in health and fitness program

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
Public Affairs Office

Push-ups and laughter don't usually happen simultaneously, but in Scranton, Kansas, peals of joy from third and fourth grade students at Scranton Elementary School could be heard in Topeka, some 20 miles away, as members of the Kansas National Guard were on hand Dec. 19, 2014, to lead physical fitness training.

In today's society, it's easy for kids and parents to make poor choices in nutrition and fall into a sedentary lifestyle, letting exercise go by the wayside. Fuel Up to Play 60 is an in-school nutrition and activity program founded by the National Dairy

Council and National Football League, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, with a simple goal – to get kids eating healthier and moving more.

Lisa Crook, the school's health aid, said Scranton Elementary has been participating in the Fuel Up to Play 60 program for a year and a half. Crook challenges her students to meet certain goals over the school quarter and those who meet the goal are rewarded.

"It's an incredible program that encourages healthy eating and exercise," said Crook. "Our goal is 60 minutes a day, but in order to meet that goal, they have to do it 75 percent of the time."

Their reward last quarter was an appearance at their school by members of the Kansas Guard.

"I wanted to pick a group that was in Topeka that represented wellness, and the Kansas National Guard came to mind," said Crook. "The National Guard is a great example of keeping a healthy lifestyle since exercise is an important part of their life."

Six Guard members representing the Army and Air Guard gave a presentation on health and wellness with various food items as props to show the students the value of nutrition. After the presentation, kids who achieved fitness goals were invited to participate with the Guard members in a physical fitness round robin consisting of military exercises such as the push-up, sit-up and wall sit. Students rotated stations after one minute.

"This is a really great way for us to get a good variety of folks from our organization out here and be a presence in the community," said Maj. Amy Blow, Joint Forces Headquarters occupational health manager,

Kansas National Guard. "The National Guard has a big presence in Topeka and to be able to come out to these outlying communities and show them what we do is being good role models. We really take that seriously and we want to show these kids we live and breathe (a healthy lifestyle) and they can too."

Crook said the idea of the program is to show the students that exercise doesn't necessarily have to be a chore and can actually be fun.

"It's awesome to have the National Guard here," said Crook. "The kids loved it. They look up to (military members) and see (them) as heroes. Being able to see Guardsmen doing physical fitness and being able to do it with them makes it more fun."

Blow said that there are many programs available for free online. Visit <http://supporters.fueluptoplay60.com> or scan the Q code at the right for more information.



Tech. Sgt. Melanie Nelson, Kansas National Guard, demonstrates proper push-up technique to Scranton Elementary students in Scranton, Kansas, Dec. 19, 2014. Scranton Elementary invited the Kansas Guard to lead nutrition and physical fitness demonstrations as part of their students participation in the national Fuel Up to Play 60 program. (Photo by Sgt. Zach Sheely, Public Affairs Office)

Heroic actions merit medal



Maj. Gen. Lee Tapanelli, Kansas adjutant general, presents the Airman's Medal to Tech. Sgt. Shawn Rucker, 161st Intelligence Squadron, for lifesaving actions he took on Nov. 24, 2012. While driving home after a shift at McConnell Air Force Base, Rucker noticed a large amount of smoke in his neighborhood. When Rucker discovered that his neighbor's house was partially engulfed in flames, he called 911. Rucker and one of the homeowners rushed into a neighbor's burning home in Wichita to rescue a sleeping resident despite the risk of personal harm. Together they pulled her from the home and took her to safety. Rucker was awarded the medal at a ceremony on Oct. 20, 2014. (Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs)

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD G1 PERSONNEL GATEWAY

- ARNG 101
- Post-9/11 GI Bill Program
- Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA)
- Military Family Life Consultant
- Dealing with Deployment
- Yellow Ribbon Program

FEATURING
INFORMATION ON
ARNG SOLDIER &
FAMILY SUPPORT &
BENEFIT PROGRAMS

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- Family Assistance Centers (FACs)
- TRICARE Medical Benefits
- Family Readiness Groups
- Stateside Spouse Education Assistance

A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ARNG HR RESOURCES

The Gateway provides vital information that Soldiers and families need to know about ARNG HR programs & processes. Visit the Gateway to find comprehensive pages on how to take advantage of ARNG programs including medical, educational & financial benefits as well as deployment support & family programs. Each page features resources such as application instructions, answers to frequently asked questions, contact information, and links to forms and Guard-specific resources.

<https://g1arng.army.pentagon.mil>



Kansas Guardsman leads Armenian NCO development course

By Sgt. Zach Sheely
Public Affairs Office

Noncommissioned officers are responsible for daily activities in the military, from enforcing rules and regulations, to training troops and just about everything in between – simply put, NCOs are the backbone of the military.

Master Sgt. Brent Anders, first sergeant of the 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Kansas Army National Guard, embodies that backbone, and is a walking, talking personification of the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer.

Anders took his expertise of more than 20 years in the Army to Yerevan, Armenia, Sept. 13-26 to share his leadership skills and knowledge with Armenian soldiers. Anders has been involved in multiple engagements to assist the Armenian Ministry of Defense in NCO development.

Kansas and the Republic of Armenia have been partnered in the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program for more than a decade. The program partners U.S. states with ally countries to support the command's security cooperation objectives.

"This is part of an ongoing mission to help the Armenians as they develop their NCOs to become more empowered and useful," said Anders. "They are evolving their

use of NCOs in a way that is more like how the U.S. military uses our NCOs, as opposed to antiquated Soviet era techniques."

According to Anders, those techniques involve officer-led maneuvers and functions. Through Armenia's experiences with the U.S. and other countries, they've come to realize that their own military can be improved through training and strengthening their NCO corps.

Command Sgt. Maj. James Moberly, Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas Land Component command sergeant major and noncommissioned officer in charge of the State Partnership Program, said that the Kansas Guard, along with partners from Marine Forces Europe and the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, are helping the Armenians improve their force. He said that leadership development is one of the most important facets of Kansas' partnership with Armenia and Anders is the perfect NCO to facilitate that.

"(Anders) is a senior infantry NCO with a Ranger tab who is senior instructor qualified," Moberly said. "He's a top notch instructor, and a Soldier all Soldiers can look up to and learn from."

Anders has made education his life's work and is working toward his doctorate degree in adult learning at Kansas State



Master Sgt. Brent Anders, front, leads Armenian soldiers on a road march during a noncommissioned officer development course in Yerevan, Armenia, September 2014. Anders conducts the course as part of the state partnership between Kansas and the Republic of Armenia. (Photo by Gevorg Hayrapetyan)

73rd Civil Support Team helps VA prepare for outbreaks

By 1st Lt. Matt Lucht
Public Affairs Office

When medical attention is needed, a doctor or a nurse is called. When training required experts on personal protective equipment for a contagious disease outbreak, the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center called the Kansas National Guard's 73rd Civil Support Team.

"The CST is here to provide the subject matter experts of someone who has spent a lot of time in the suits donning and doffing, to give us their expertise, teaching skills and abilities of how to do it properly," said John Muther, VA Medical Center's executive assistant to nurse executive.

Ten members of the 73rd CST conducted four training sessions Oct. 28 for approximately 120 medical professionals from Wichita and the surrounding area who would have direct contact with contagious patients in the event of an outbreak.

"With everything that is going on in the world today it's especially important for us to get out here and teach them proper techniques on how to further protect themselves," said Airman 1st Class Damon Moran, 73rd CST.

With several confirmed U.S. cases of the Ebola virus, the VA Medical Center is

preparing. If an infected patient comes to the hospital for treatment, procedures and equipment would already be in place for safe treatment for that patient and medical staff.

"We are looking at a scenario of one to two patients in the community that might have traveled somewhere and brought the virus back with them and happen to be a veteran that wants come to the VA for their care," said Muther. "It gives the comfort level of the person getting in and out of the suit knowing that they are trained by the CST, who are well respected in the nation as being the subject matter experts of what they do."

Practice makes perfect and that is why these medical personnel are becoming more familiar with their equipment and continue to exercise their procedures and prepare.

"We train a lot on this stuff and we do it all the time, but practice makes perfect and so it would be better if they can keep fresh on this and continue to do it," said Moran.

The VA Medical Center has several other exercises planned, but are ready if they have to treat for Ebola or other contagious diseases.

"We want to take our time and make sure that we do a good job in preparing and hopefully we don't have to do it for real," said Muther.



Two members of the Kansas National Guard's 73rd Civil Support Team demonstrate the proper protocols for donning bio-hazard suits for medical professionals at Wichita's Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center Medical Center Oct. 28. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)

University. He has developed multiple tools to help him train Soldiers using the Army Learning Model.

Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Beam, training NCO, Kansas Army National Guard, is Anders' assistant in the course and said that along with teaching the basic roles and responsibilities of NCOs, they also teach suicide prevention, sexual assault and harassment prevention and resiliency, new concepts to the Armenian military.

Beam said that Anders' civilian education, military background and desire to teach make him a great instructor.

"He's in his element when he's teaching," Beam said.

Anders modeled the course after the Army's Noncommissioned Officer Education System and the Marine Corps' Sergeant Course, and it involved hands-on instruction, demonstrations and practical exercises – but it wasn't all spent in the classroom.

"A key element to this most recent course was a road march," said Anders. "This allowed for multiple leadership roles and the opportunity to use the instruction that was learned in previous classes. Various scenarios were presented during the road march that forced the soldiers to take charge and gain valuable leadership experience."

Anders stressed that an effective NCO is two things at once: a leader and a trainer.

"We, as NCOs, must constantly work at improving our capabilities in being superior leaders and effective trainers," he said.

Along with his years of NCO experience, Anders has another special qualification to lead this course – his wife is a native Armenian.

"My wife was born in Armenia and came to Kansas to get her master's degree at

"Armenians are a smart people with a willingness to learn. I really appreciate their warm hospitality. I enjoy instructing and trying to create the best learning environment."

*Master Sgt. Brent Anders
105th MPAD*

Kansas State on a special U.S. government scholarship," Anders said. "She is very happy that I am able to help Armenia and that I get to visit her family."

Anders acknowledged that Armenian NCO development will be an ongoing effort, with the end goal being a completely self-sustaining Armenian NCO corps.

"There is still a lot of work to develop NCOs in the Armenian military," he said. "Armenians are a smart people with a willingness to learn. I really appreciate their warm hospitality. I enjoy instructing and trying to create the best learning environment."

Despite the long road ahead, Anders sees the big picture.

"The State Partnership Program is mutually beneficial in that it allows Kansas Soldiers to participate in real-world missions with the goal of helping a U.S.-friendly country like Armenia improve its capabilities," he said. "It's a huge honor to be part of a nation's evolution in its establishment of its Army's NCO corps and senior NCO leadership ranks. I'm instilling in them what it takes to be leaders of men and women."

Headquarters, 169th CSSB hosts change of command ceremony

Continued from Page 2

731st Transportation Company as their operations officer. Tapley took command of Headquarters and Headquarters Company 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in January 2013.

Key assignments in the Army National Guard include commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion; motor/rail transportation officer, 287th Sustainment Brigade; operations officer, 731st Transportation Company; and detachment executive officer, 635th Armor Regiment.

Among his awards and decorations are the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Army Overseas Service Ribbon, Kansas

National Guard Meritorious Service Ribbon, NATO Non Article 5 Balkans Service Medal, Kosovo Campaign Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Ribbon, National Guard Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Louisiana National Guard State Emergency Duty Service Ribbon, and the Humanitarian Service Medal.

His military education includes the Transportation Officer Basic Course and Quartermaster Captains Career Course Phase I.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in liberal arts from Excelsior College, Albany, New York.

Tapley lives in Manhattan, Kansas, and is employed by the Kansas National Guard as the Readiness Sustainment Maintenance Site property book officer.

Kansas National Guard Medical Detachment named No. 1 in nation

By Capt. Laura Webb
 Kansas Medical Detachment

The Kansas National Guard Medical Detachment was recently recognized as No. 1 in the nation in medical readiness for a medium-size state. The announcement was made at the annual Army National Guard Medical Team Conference at Camp Dawson, West Virginia.

“Through the efforts of the Medical Detachment and G-1 Medical, Kansas held number one for medical readiness for 12 consecutive weeks for all 50 states and four territories and has remained in the top 10 percent for medical readiness over the past six months,” reported Col. Gordon Kuntz, detachment commander.

The mission of the Kansas Medical Detachment, headquartered in Lenexa, is to plan, program, provide and sustain health force protection and medical/dental support to meet operational, training, and mobilization medical readiness requirements of ARNG units and Soldiers.

“Medical Detachment personnel are extremely dedicated, committed and talented,” said Kuntz. “They maintain a high degree of professionalism and flexibility during Periodic Health Assessment missions and work proficiently in a resource constrained environment. I’m very proud of the personnel assigned to and that work in support of the Medical Detachment.”

Medical readiness is directly tied with funding for medical operations within the United States. The Medical Detachment conducts PHA missions on two Fridays every month and during their monthly drill.

While medical readiness is the primary mission of the Medical Detachment, the unit members must meet the same requirements as any other Soldier in the National Guard, as well the requirements of their individual medical specialties. The unit recently completed its annual training in Salina to conduct the exercises required and usually accomplished by other units throughout their year-long training schedule. This training included the APFT, land navigation and weapons qualification.

New training was added to the schedule this year that was challenging as well as entertaining. One of the favorite events for the year was the litter obstacle course. During this training scenario, four-person teams extricated a victim from a roll-over vehicle accident, loaded the victim onto a medical litter and navigated an obstacle course that included two low barriers, a simulated barbed-wire field and a water obstacle which required the victim to be carried over the heads of the medical teams. The exercise was concluded by safe passage of the victim and team over a high wall barrier and a race to the finish line.

Another favorite event was supported by the 1077th Ground Ambulance Company and Company C, 2nd Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment (General Support Aviation Battalion). Teams practiced loading and unloading the ground ambulance, called in a 9 Line Medevac Request to the aviation support and loaded fellow members of their team onto the medevac. Once loaded, the team members were flown over the training site and surrounding area.


During the same time, other teams practiced Soldier movement exercises, including navigating a danger area, movement along windows and doors, and clearing a building. The culminating event put these techniques into practice as the officers of the unit took on the enlisted personnel during a lively match of paintball in order to capture the target individual, played by Kuntz.

The final days of annual training were completed with a unit dining-in and training tailored to leadership, professional development and medical practice.

“This is the one time of the year that specific time is set aside for the unit to come together for internal training, team building and administrative business,” said Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Goza, acting first sergeant. “This past year has provided many challenges, but I have been impressed with the growth of the personnel within the unit and the great things they have accomplished.”



A medical team with the Kansas National Guard Medical Detachment practice stabilizing a mandible fracture. (Photo by Lt. Col. Charles Radmer, Detachment 1, Company B, 35th Infantry Division)



ENLISTED PROMOTION SYSTEM

STATE WIDE VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

See list of current vacancies on Page 11


What are State Wide Vacancy Announcements? How do they work?
 The State Wide Vacancy Announcements are a process by which we fill noncommissioned officer vacancies when we do not have anyone qualified on the Enlisted Promotion List (EPL, or commonly known as the EPS list) and after working through the exhausted list procedures (IAW AR 600-8-19, Chapter 7 and the KSARNG EPS MOI). The SWVA is actually the last step in the exhausted list procedures (outlined in Annex F of KSARNG EPS MOI) and became an option to use in late 2012. We added this process to our EPS procedures in the 2012 EPS year and we sent out the first announcements in October 2012. During the 2013 EPS cycle, we sent out 35 announcements and filled 30 of them. To date for this EPS cycle, we have issued 70 SWVA and have filled 30 of them.

What does this mean for you?
 These positions could potentially give you an opportunity to get a new Military Occupational Skill, a new unit, and as many as two promotions.

How do I apply?
 You must meet the requirements listed on each announcement. Announcements are initially advertised for 30 days on the website <http://kansastag.gov/OPP.asp?PageID=557>. If there are no applicants then they are re-advertised as open until filled, and will be filled by the first eligible person who applies. Do not delay as it is also possible that we fill these positions with prior service Soldiers.

IMPORTANT FY 2015 EPS INFORMATION

<h4 style="text-align: center;">RECENT CHANGES TO EPS</h4> <p>Supplemental Board- Soldiers who become promotable for E5, E6, and E7 after Feb. 1 will be boarded in August and added to the bottom of the EPS list</p> <p>There will be no Stand by Advisory Boards (STAB) for 1SG</p> <p>SSD 1 or WLC are required for promotion to E5 but not required to be boarded</p> <p>SSD 2 replaced ALC Common Core and is required to be promoted to E6</p> <p>SSD 3 is required to be boarded and promoted to E7</p> <p>SSD 4 is required to be boarded and promoted to E8</p>	<h4 style="text-align: center;">What do I have to do?</h4> <p>Review your iPerms file and ensure everything is up to date. If you have something in your file that may require further explanation to the board, you might write a letter to the board, which will be added to your board file.</p> <p>It is highly recommended that you have a DA Photo. EPS boards are not appearance boards, so a photo can mean a big difference.</p> <p>All Soldiers being boarded must sign a 4100 online. http://ngksc2-intraweb/ks4100/</p> <p>Commanders must sign 4100s for Soldiers boarding for E7 and above</p> <p>E8s and promotable E7s who wish to be boarded for 1SG must submit a 4187 through channels requesting to be boarded</p> <p>Soldiers boarding for E5 must have three 4101s completed by their leadership</p>
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Scan here for jobs listing website

IMPORTANT DATES

<p>October 31 - EPS MOI is Published. The MOI can be found on the 4100 Website under the Help Tab</p> <h4 style="text-align: center;">EPS BOARD</h4> <p>Feb. 1 - Effective date of board (TIG, TIS, NCOES, SSD)</p> <p>Feb. 1 - 4100s completed</p> <p>March 13 - List is Published</p>	<h4 style="text-align: center;">SUPPLEMENTAL BOARD</h4> <p>June 30 - 4100s are available online</p> <p>June 30 - All documents are due in iPERMS</p> <p>Aug. 1 - 4101 Packets due</p> <p>Aug. 1 - Effective date of board (TIG, TIS, NCOES, SSD)</p> <p>Aug. 1 - 4100s completed</p> <p>Aug. 7 - List is Published</p>
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POC: Staff Sgt. Phim Khamphouvong (785) 274-1113
 Sgt. 1st Class Kristina Griffin (785) 274-1069



A team of medical personnel navigate a water obstacle during the litter obstacle course. (Photo by Lt. Col. Charles Radmer)



Campaign highlights the dangers of household chemicals

By Steve Larson
Public Affairs Office

There's an old saying that "oil and water don't mix." Try as you might, they just won't do it.

However, there are many other chemicals one should never even try to mix because the result can be harmful, even fatal.

And you probably have many of them in your home.

Throughout November, the Technological Hazards Section of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management reminded the public that "Don't Mix Chemicals! Read the Label First!" The goal of this campaign was to reach out to the public to educate them on the dangers of mixing common household chemicals. Gov. Sam Brownback signed a proclamation Oct. 24 designating November as "Don't Mix

Chemicals, Read the Label First Month" in Kansas.

"Take two common household chemicals, ammonia and chlorine bleach," said L'Tayna Christenberry, program consultant, Kansas Division of Emergency Management. "Each by themselves should be handled with care; they should never be mixed together. When mixed together they create hazardous fumes."

Mixing chemicals can be harmful to humans, animals and the environment. During November, KDEM set booths up at businesses, super markets and other locations to share information on general household hazardous chemical safety and proper hazardous waste disposal, as well as alternative ways to make household cleaners and other fun items, like body gel, tooth paste, and lotions.



Gov. Sam Brownback signs a proclamation Oct. 24 designating November as "Don't Mix Chemicals, Read the Label First Month" in Kansas. (Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, Public Affairs Office)

Use caution when turning on the heat this winter

By Mende Barnett
Office of the State Fire Marshal

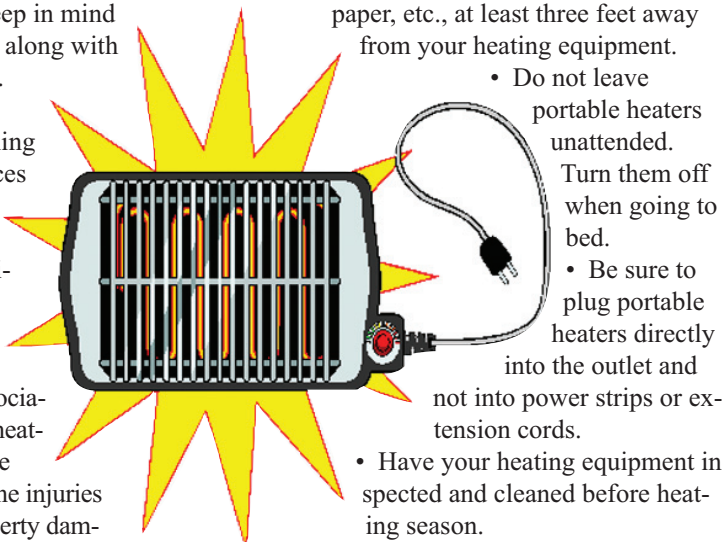
Old man winter has arrived early this year which means Kansans could be unknowingly putting themselves at risk for fire related injuries.

While you are keeping your family warm and comfortable during the drop in temperatures, keep in mind the risks that come along with heating your home.

Portable space heaters, wood burning stoves, and fireplaces are just a few of the heating equipment that residents use.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, 81 percent of heating fire deaths, more than two-thirds of the injuries and half of the property damage involve stationary or portable space heaters, including wood stoves.

"Home fires are prevalent this time of year and keeping Kansans safe is our priority," said Doug Jorgensen, Kansas State Fire Marshal. He suggests following these tips from the NFPA to reduce risk of a home heating fire:



- Select heating equipment that is rated by the manufacturer for the size of space you intend to heat.
- Have any installation done by a professional, if possible, and make sure all fuel-burning equipment is vented to the outside.
- Keep combustibles, such as blankets, paper, etc., at least three feet away from your heating equipment.
 - Do not leave portable heaters unattended. Turn them off when going to bed.
 - Be sure to plug portable heaters directly into the outlet and not into power strips or extension cords.
- Have your heating equipment inspected and cleaned before heating season.
- Always use the right kind of fuel specified by the manufacturer for fuel burning space heaters.
- Cooking appliances should not be used to heat a home.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping room and on every level of the home. Test them once a month.

Early on-set of winter a reminder to be prepared

Despite winter's early arrival across the state and nation, if this is a typical Kansas winter much more severe winter weather, including accumulating, drifting snow and icy conditions, is ahead of us.

The National Weather Service, in conjunction with Kansas Division of Emergency Management, select a day each fall to remind Kansans of the potential hazards associated with winter weather. In 2014, that day was Dec. 1. State agencies took the opportunity to encourage Kansans to prepare for another Kansas winter if the recent cold weather hasn't already prompted them to do so.

"As we've already seen, the temperature can drop quickly," said Angee Morgan, deputy director of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. "We don't know exactly what this winter has in store for us, so it's best to be prepared. Now is the time to check your home and vehicle emergency kits and replenish any outdated supplies."

Road travel is discouraged during extreme storm situations; however, if you must travel in those conditions the Kansas Highway Patrol encourages taking extra precautions to keep yourself and your family safe.

"Keep at least a half a tank of gas in your car at all times in case you get stranded or stuck in traffic," said Col. Ernest Garcia, Kansas Highway Patrol superintendent. "Arrange your travel plans so you can leave well ahead of bad weather and keep an emergency kit in your car."

Recommended items to include in your vehicle:

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

- Emergency flares
- Fluorescent distress flag

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

If you must travel when winter road conditions are deteriorating, then plan ahead to get the latest road information from the Kansas Department of Transportation.

"If you must travel, be sure you know road conditions before you leave by calling 5-1-1 or visiting the Kandrive website at kandrive.org. And give the snow plows plenty of room to work," said Mike King, secretary of the Kansas Department of Transportation. To find information on road conditions when not in the state, call 1-866-511-5368.



The Kansas Department of Health and Environment encourages Kansans to plan ahead and dress appropriately for bitterly cold weather and to know the warning signs of hypothermia.

"Weather conditions in Kansas can change quickly, so it's important to have warm clothing, and extra layers ready, and if you have to stay outside on bitterly cold days, make plans to get inside to warm up on a regular basis," said Dr. Robert Moser, secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. "Taking regular breaks from working outdoors in the cold can also help prevent injuries."

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

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

The Federal Emergency Management Agency also has a short animated video on winter weather preparedness. It can be viewed at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVpGJ_Xl_w or scan the Qcode at the right with a smartphone.



Hitting the road? Make sure your kit is ready



If you're planning a trip this winter, make sure your car emergency kit is stocked. (Infographic from the Federal Emergency Management Agency)

Kansas, Corps of Engineers support Armenia in disaster workshop

By Sharon Watson
Public Affairs Office

A joint disaster response exercise took representatives from the Kansas Adjutant General's Department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to Yerevan, Armenia, this past fall to share lessons learned and best practices.

The event involved more than 100 participants from various Armenian government agencies, known as ministries in Armenia, along with U.S. officials, all focused on how the country would respond to a major earthquake. A representative from Japan also spoke on lessons learned from the Fukushima earthquake in 2011.

Members of the corps' Civil Military Emergency Preparedness Program assisted the Armenian government in designing the exercise, while representatives from the Adjutant General's Department, Kansas Division of Emergency Management and the Corps of Engineers provided presentations on response efforts to earthquakes in Kansas and the U.S.

Steve Stouter, CMEP program manager for the exercise, said a key benefit of the exercise is the relationship building between the U.S. and Armenia.

"Increased national and regional security is a high priority as well as the mutual assurance of future cooperation," said Stouter.

The CMEP exercise works with the Kansas National Guard's State Partnership Program, which has partnered Kansas with Armenia since 2003 to exchange information on similar challenges, including the best way to respond to and recover from disasters.

"We want to make sure we're building upon historical and previous events, what we've done, what we've learned, what the country has learned within their ministries," said Stouter, "and ensure that we continue the process of improving disaster response so that future disasters do not affect as many people, and response and recovery time is drastically reduced.

"Because of the large number of ministries that are present at our CMEP event, this allows for a much larger cooperation across ministries and improved intercooperation of ministries, thereby, allowing for improved disaster response," Stouter noted.

Cait Purinton, Kansas Division of Emergency Management state exercise officer, presented information during the event on the exercise planning Kansas has done to prepare for a major earthquake along the New Madrid fault line in the Midwest and how the state would need to respond to the effects it would have.

"This exercise enabled us to exchange ideas and experiences on how to prepare for and manage earthquake response," Purinton said.



Representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Kansas Division of Emergency Management and the Adjutant General's Department joined members of Armenian emergency response organizations for an emergency response and preparedness conference in Yerevan, Armenia, in September 2014. (Photo by Sharon Watson, Public Affairs Office)

inton said. "Listening to the Armenians discuss how their response plans and capabilities have evolved since the Spitak earthquake in 1988 was a valuable learning opportunity for me."

Geospatial Information, or GIS, plays a significant role in helping exercise planners by providing maps and other detailed data for the participants.

Jesse Smith, Kansas Division of Emergency Management GIS coordinator, joined the team to assist with the exercise and discussed the role GIS plays in Kansas exercise planning and response.

"GIS provides a great vehicle for situational awareness and documentation, which are both crucial to organizing an efficient response. The Armenians have used their international partners to aid in building their GIS processes and educating the administrators. Kansas and Armenia can both learn best practices from each other to enhance disaster response. These opportunities also help us identify how we can aid each other during disaster events."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Kansas Adjutant General's Department staff has worked with Armenia almost annually since 2008 on similar disaster response exercises involving various scenarios ranging from earthquakes to floods to a nuclear power plant disaster.

"These exercises bring together the Armenian government participants who would be required to respond to these large scale disasters in a real event, and allows them to discuss all the actions they would take if the event happened today," said Stouter. "The U.S. and Kansas participants present lessons learned from various disasters we've experienced to offer new ideas and best practices for what has worked for us.

"The goal is to help them to improve how they work with one another in a crisis, and determine if any changes are needed in their planning to address some of the significant challenges the exercise puts before them," Stouter said.

The CMEP program, which includes similar work in other countries around Armenia, is designed to promote cooperation between countries throughout the region.

Tony Hill, with the U.S. Corps of Engineers, has participated in similar exercises for several years in Armenia, and he notes significant progress is being made in disaster response and recovery planning efforts there.

"The exercises help the Armenians expand their goals to continually improve their response capabilities," said Hill. "They are building upon previous events and setting new goals to achieve in disaster response. It's rewarding to see what they have accomplished."



Jesse Smith, Geospatial Information System coordinator for the Adjutant General's Department, presents information on the role of GIS in exercise planning and response to participants in an emergency management conference in Yerevan, Armenia, in September 2014. (Photo by Sharon Watson, Public Affairs Office)

Budget cuts result in force reduction at 184th Intelligence Wing

By 1st Lt. Matt Lucht
184th IW Public Affairs

The 184th Intelligence Wing, McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, has a rich history of service to the nation since 1941. But as the military needs of the nation have changed, so have the missions of the 184th.

Due to mission realignments and defense cuts, the 184th IW is expected to lose 159 of its 552 full-time positions by the end of fiscal year 2015. Those numbers equate to nearly 30 percent of the wing's full-time force.

"If you are one of the Airmen who isn't going to have a job at the end of the day and you have mortgages, or kids in college, it's tough," said Col. Jeffry Jordan, wing commander, 184th IW. "There is no doubt about it, we are trying to do everything we can to help."

The majority of the personnel cuts are from the 127th Command and Control Squadron and the 184th Munitions Squadron. These two units account for 122 full-time and 43 part-time positions that are being eliminated. The remaining cuts will possibly come from the 177th Information Aggressor Squadron by Sept. 30, 2015, although no final decisions have been made.

"This has nothing to do with the quality

of the Airmen we have," said Jordan. "This is largely a budgetary decision."

Federal cuts to the Department of Defense are causing the loss of personnel to the 184th IW, but because of selected missions, Kansas is taking deeper cuts than most states. If all of the expected cuts are made to the 184th workforce, that will account for almost half of the total jobs lost among all Air National Guard units, according to Maj. Earl Brown, spokesman for the National Guard Bureau. Nationwide, for fiscal years 2014 and 2015, nearly 330 full-time positions have been cut.

The 184th IW leadership has been working to place the affected Airmen in other vacant positions in the wing and has reached out to the 190th Air Refueling Wing in Topeka and the Air Force Reserve unit at McConnell, 931st Air Refueling Group for possible placement options.

"Our Airmen are Kansans. Some of them, most of them grew up in Kansas, have families here," said Jordan. "It's not the best job market to try to find employment in, so for those folks that don't have that stability, it's very significant."

The wing is estimating that by the end of fiscal year 2015, they will be forced to lay off 25 full-time Airmen.



Master Sgt. Mike Shields, 184th Munitions Squadron, loads pallets of precision guided weapons components on a C-5 aircraft. The Munitions Squadron is one of the wing's units that will be affected by the personnel cuts. (Photo provided)

Post 9/11 GI Bill offers many education benefits

By Capt. Tom Warth
Education Services Officer

If you served a combined period of 90 days or more on a deployment, or in an active duty component to include the Active Guard and Reserve, you are eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill. The Post 9/11 GI Bill will pay for the net cost of in-state tuition and fees charged for public undergraduate, graduate, and PhD programs, a housing stipend based on an E5 with dependents basic allowance for housing for the school's address and up to \$1,000 for books and supplies for traditional National Guard Soldiers and Airmen based on how many months of qualifying service you have. If you are an active duty Soldier or Airman, including AGR, you receive the same benefits minus the housing stipend because you are already receiving a housing stipend in the form of basic allowance for housing.

Here is another amazing part of the Post 9/11 GI Bill: you can transfer it to your spouse or children. If you are eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill, have served six qualifying years towards retirement in any service, including National Guard, reserves or active, you can request to transfer all those benefits to one or more of your dependents. In order to transfer you will have to make sure your spouse or children are listed in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System and agree to serve four years past the date you request the transfer. If you request today, and your expiration, term of service is in five years, you have met the four-year commitment.

If you are ready to transfer benefits, go to the website <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect>. You can sign in using a Common Access Card or create a log-in ID. Once you have logged in, on the right side of the screen will be a link that says Transfer Education Benefits. There will be some instructions and benefits you will have to acknowledge before you can transfer, and if you are eligible for any other GI Bills -- there are three others, but you can only transfer the Post 9/11 -- you will have to give up one before you can use the Post 9/11 GI Bill. If you are not sure which bill you want to use or give up, email me and we will walk through which bill is the best for you. After you submit, you will get an email with further instructions. Once the process is complete, you will get a memo from the Department of Defense saying your transfer is approved.

You can always take your benefit back if you change your mind, but you can only transfer while you are in the service, either actively drilling or on active duty. If you do not intend on using your Post 9/11 GI Bill in the immediate future, and plan on staying in the Guard four more years, why not transfer your benefits? That way, if anything happens to you, your family will have your benefits. If you die before transferring your benefits, those benefits go with you to the grave.

And of course there are many other education assistance programs available. It is important to explore all of these programs to ensure you are getting the most assistance possible while advancing your educa-

It is important to explore all of these programs to ensure you are getting the most assistance possible while advancing your education level.

tion level. The Kansas National Guard Education Services Website, www.kansastag.gov/nguard.asp?pageID=497, is an excellent place to find information and links to all of the programs noted above, and many others. The Kansas Board of Regents has many scholarships and grants that may apply to you or your family depending on the education programs they

are enrolled in. Private organizations such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, local churches, or other organizations may also have scholarships available as well. One of the most important steps to take as a student is to fill out your Free Application for Federal Student Aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov. There are many government programs available depending on your income level and other factors. This should be an important first step when deciding how to pay for college.

As always, the entire staff of the Education Services Office is available to assist you as you move forward with your education. We will continue to update you with any changes as soon as we know about them. Please feel free to email me at Thomas.m.warth.mil@mail.mil or visit our webpage for more information.

Applications open for Kansas National Guard Foundation scholarships

The Kansas National Guard Foundation will again award scholarships for Kansas resident high school seniors who have at least one parent in the Kansas National Guard. The scholarships will be available for the 2015-2016 college school year. Scholarships will be awarded in increments of \$1,000 up to a total of five scholarships. Deadline for submission of applications will be March 1, 2015. Five scholarships were awarded to high school seniors last year.

Eligibility and selection criteria can be found in the Scholarship Program Applica-

tion found on the KNG Foundation website at <https://sites.google.com/site/kansasnationalguardfoundation>. Questions can be addressed and applications can be submitted to the foundation's e-mail address at ksngfoundation@gmail.com.

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

STATE WIDE VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS <http://kansastag.gov/OPP.asp?PageID=557>

CONTROL NUMBER	MINIMUM GRADE	POSITION	LOCATION	CLOSING DATE
2013-SWVA-006	SPC (E4)	89B, E5, 105/04 (1 Position)	DET 2 250TH FSC, CLAY CENTER	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2013-SWVA-018	SGT (E5)	27D, E7, 134/02 (1 Position)	HSC (-) 35TH IN DIV, FORT LEAVENWORTH KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2013-SWVA-032 2013-SWVA-033	SGT (E5)	00D, E7, 109/04 (2 Positions)	HSC (-) 35TH IN DIV, FORT LEAVENWORTH KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-008	SGT (E5)	46Z, E7, 111/01 (1 Position)	HSC (-) 35TH IN DIV, FORT LEAVENWORTH KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-009	SGT (E5)	46Z, E7, 112/02 (1 Position)	HSC (-) 35TH IN DIV, FORT LEAVENWORTH KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-034	SPC (E4)	68X, E6, 111/02 (1 Position)	KSARNG MEDICAL DETACHMENT, LENEXA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-052	PVT (E1)	36B, E5, 301A/05 (1 Position)	JOINT FORCE HQ KANSAS-LC, TOPEKA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-056	PVT (E1)	91A, E5, 112/03 (1 Position)	2137TH SUPPORT CO (FORWARD), MANHATTAN KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-060	PVT (E1)	91L, E5, 122/10 (1 Position)	DET 1 995TH MAINT CO, CONCORDIA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-062	SPC (E4)	74D, E6, 103/07 (1 Position)	HHC 169TH CBT SUST SPT BN, OLATHE KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-064	PVT (E1)	46R, E5, 102/07 (1 Position)	105TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFF DET, TOPEKA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-065	PVT (E1)	36B, E5, 001/09 (1 Position)	BATTLE CMD TRAINING SPT UNIT, FORT LEAVENWORTH KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-067	SPC (E4)	38B, E6, 121/02 (1 Position)	287TH SUSTAINMENT BDE, WICHITA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-069	PVT (E1)	68X, E5, 131/04 (1 Position)	287TH SUSTAINMENT BDE, WICHITA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-070	PVT (E1)	89A, E5, 108/06 (1 Position)	287TH SUSTAINMENT BDE, WICHITA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-071	PVT (E1)	88N, E5, 128/06 (1 Position)	DET 1 287TH SUSTAINMENT BDE, HAYS KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-077 THRU SWVA-082	PVT (E1)	88M, E5, 104/03 (7 Positions)	DET 1 778TH TRANS CO, MANHATTAN KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-086	SGT (E5)	92G, E7, 102/01 (1 Position)	1161ST SPT CO (FWD), HUTCHINSON KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-087	PVT (E1)	12N, E5, 103/02 (1 Position)	DET 1 242D ENGR CO HORZ CONSTR, WICHITA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-089	PVT (E1)	12N, E5, 102/03 (1 Position)	242D ENGR CO HORZ CONST (-), COFFEYVILLE KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-093	SPC (E4)	35F, E6, 102/03 (1 Position)	287TH SUSTAINMENT BDE, WICHITA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-094	PVT (E1)	27D, E5, 127/03 (1 Position)	DET 1 287TH SUSTAINMENT BDE, HAYS KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-097	SPC (E4)	46Q, E6, 111/02 (1 Position)	HQ (-) 35TH IN DIV, FORT LEAVENWORTH KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-099	PVT (E1)	12K, E5, 103/02 (1 Position)	226TH (-) VERT EN CO, AUGUSTA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-101	SPC (E4)	88N, E6, 241G/08 (1 Position)	ARNG STAFF ELE, JFHQ KS-LC (-), TOPEKA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-102	PVT (E1)	89B, E5, 105/03 (1 Position)	DET 1 1161ST SPT CO (FWD), PRATT KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-103	PVT (E1)	12N, E5, 109/02 (1 Position)	242D ENGR CO HORZ CONST (-), COFFEYVILLE KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-105	SPC (E4)	68J, E6, 335/13 (1 Position)	DET 1 CO B 35TH IN DIV, FORT LEAVENWORTH KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-107	PVT (E1)	89B, E5, 108/07 (1 Position)	287TH SUSTAINMENT BDE, WICHITA KS	OPEN UNTIL FILLED
2014-SWVA-108	SPC (E4)	94H, E6, 113/13 (1 Position)	287TH SUSTAINMENT BDE, WICHITA KS	20150114
2014-SWVA-109	SGT (E5)	92S, E7, 111/04 (1 Position)	287TH SUSTAINMENT BDE, WICHITA KS	20150114
2014-SWVA-110	SPC (E4)	92Y, E6, 241F/09 (1 Position)	ARNG STAFF ELE, JFHQ KS-LC (-), TOPEKA KS	20150114
2014-SWVA-112	SGT (E5)	27D, E7, 109/03 (1 Position)	HHD 635TH REG SPT GROUP, TOPEKA KS	20150116

35th Infantry Division veteran receives French Legion of Honor



Col. Dave Johnson, 35th Infantry Division chief of staff, speaks with Donald Breslend during the French Legion of Honor award presentation in Montpelier, Vermont, Nov. 17. Breslend was awarded the French Legion of Honor for having served with both the 134th and 137th Infantry Regiments of the 35th Infantry Division during World War II in France. (Photo by Jim Green)

By Staff Sgt. Jennifer Milnes 35th Division Public Affairs

Donald Breslend, a 35th Infantry Division World War II veteran who now resides in Springfield, Vermont, was awarded the French Legion of Honor in Montpelier, Vermont, Nov. 17. Recipients of this prestigious award are appointed to the rank of Knight of the Legion of Honor.

Breslend, who turned 18 in January 1944, was drafted and deployed to the front lines of France. Within the course of eight weeks, Breslend served with both the 134th and 137th Infantry Regiments of the 35th Infantry Division. During the Battle of the Bulge, Breslend was shot through his right hand and sent to England to recover. By the time of his release, the war was largely over and Breslend was released from service.

Retired Sgt. 1st Class Jim McClay, a former 35th Infantry Division member, found out about Breslend through the 35th Division Association and nominated Breslend and two other WWII veterans for the award through the honorary French consul general in Vermont.

"Always on my mind was the fact that every day that goes by there are veterans lost forever," said McClay. "It just seemed like an appropriate action for someone who gave so much for this great country."

McClay was there for the presentation of the award along with Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin; Maj. Gen. Steven Cray, the adjutant general of Vermont; and Col. Dave Johnson, 35th Infantry Division chief of staff. Johnson, who has spent the majority of

his military career in the division and whose father was also a World War II veteran, was honored to be a guest speaker for the event.

"It strikes a very personal chord to be able to continue to honor that generation of soldiers who fought for our nation's freedom and who, at the same time, paved the way in shaping our rich and illustrious heritage," said Johnson.

The 35th Infantry Division fought with great distinction in both World War I and World War II, where they fought at Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes-Alsace and across much of Central Europe.

"Recognizing and paying homage to these alumni members, shows our younger soldiers that they're a part of something bigger than just their section or the group that drills here," said Johnson. "There's something much bigger than that – our history, our lineage and honors."

To receive the French Legion of Honor, veterans of all armed forces must still be living and have fought in at least one of three main campaigns of the Liberation of France. These campaigns include Normandy, Northern France and Provence/Southern France.

Donald Breslend was accompanied by his wife and family members as the Honorable Fabien Fieschi, French consul general, awarded him and two other World War II veterans the French Legion of Honor.

"Thank you for your courage and dedication," Fieschi said. "It is truly a privilege to decorate you today with the Legion of Honor as a token of France's eternal gratitude."

Different paths lead to service

By 1st Lt. Matt Lucht
184th IW Public Affairs

In 1974, Tech. Sgt. Kirk Porter, a ground mission supervisor for the 161st Intelligence Squadron, 184th Intelligence Wing, had just graduated high school and was on a career path that even he didn't know was there. That unknown path started with attending the Air Force Academy north of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

"When I was going through, you had an option to go to helicopter training or fixed wing training and they only had 25 spots available to academy graduates," said Porter. "There were 75 people that wanted helicopter training and 25 slots. I kind of lucked out and got a slot."

After graduating as a second lieutenant, Porter went to Fort Rucker, Alabama, for Huey helicopter training. But after flying for a number of years, Porter wanted to try teaching.

"I was fortunate to get a sponsorship from the academy to teach math, which required a master's degree," said Porter. "I went to Stanford, graduated in 1986 and went back to the academy as a teacher this time. I taught for four years, mostly engineering math and physics courses."

After his time as an instructor at the Air Force Academy, Porter decided that he wanted to pursue other areas that weren't tied to the military. After 12 years of active-duty service, Porter hung up his wings and started working for Motorola in their semiconductor industry. But by 2006, the semiconductor industry had changed and Porter wanted another change too.

"When I got out of the Air Force, I had no intention of coming back. I didn't even go into the reserves," said Porter. "I thought 'Well, it was a good experience and off to something new.' But when I saw the opportunity with the Guard in Kansas

with the Intelligence Squadron, I thought that I would give it a shot because it sounded interesting and something that I would enjoy."

At the time of Porter's enlistment, the Intelligence Squadron didn't have any officer openings. Porter was interested in the intelligence mission and just wanted to be a part of that mission. As luck would have it, everything went through and Porter enlisted one day prior to the age limit cutoff.

With Porter's diverse background, some fellow Airmen seem confused about his career path.

"I think a lot of them don't understand and wonder why someone would go from a captain to working in a fairly high-tech industry like semiconductor manufacturing and then to an enlisted position, where the prestige isn't there," said Porter. "They are probably looking at it 'Is this a decision that a 22-year-old would make?' Well of course not. But what I hope that they see is that life goes in cycles; you have to approach each phase in your life as the situation presents itself."

Porter is proud that he experienced each phase and also that a part of his background is displayed on his uniform, his pilot's wings, which elicits mixed reactions from others.

"Sometimes it is a goofy look, sometimes it is a salute because they think that I am officer because of my wings and sometimes it just raises a conversation," said Porter.

Porter, who is set to retire from the Kansas Air National Guard in January 2016, offered some advice to younger Airmen.

"I hope that the Airmen that I work with say, 'Here is a guy that has taken a completely different career path and he seems to be doing ok,'" said Porter. "I think that it is important for people to see that whatever life throws at you, you can adapt."



After graduating from the Air Force Academy, 2nd Lt. Kirk Porter attended helicopter pilot training at Fort Rucker, Alabama, in 1978. (Photo provided)

How to Avoid Falling in Love



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Single Soldiers only event which will begin at 7pm Friday evening and conclude by noon on Sunday.

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Registration closes on February 27.

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For more information please contact the Chaplain Office at 785-274-1514 or jimmy.d.boss.mil@mail.mil



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